

Changing careers

the thin line dividing lawyers, thespians and dictators

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Many people now involved in the arts or entertainment completed a law degree and practised law before they decided that a career change was in order.

This begs the question: what initially attracted these people to the law?

Perhaps one should seriously ponder the fact that there are very few professions in which a person can don a wig and silk dressing gown, and then proceed to walk around the CBD without being subjected to an exposé by *A Current Affair*, or finding themselves starring on *YouTube*.

Both the prosecution and defence lawyers in the infamous OJ Simpson trial provide a good example of the move from the law into the arts.

Defence attorney Johnnie Cochran (who also defended Michael Jackson and Puff Daddy) was, of course, the model for Jackie Chiles, *Seinfeld's* resident attorney. Following his legal career, Cochran hosted a television show and appeared on programs such as *The Hughleys* and *Family Matters*, among others.

Not to be outshone, prosecutor Christopher Darden also appeared on television, playing a detective in *The Trophy Wife's Secret*. Following the intense news coverage of the trial, perhaps the lawyers thought they looked good on the small screen.

A key attribute developed by a career in law is the ability to be persuasive. Perhaps this is something that has helped Victor Zammit in his subsequent professional work.

Zammit, a former practising Australian lawyer, is now a journalist who writes about the afterlife. In calling his book, *A Lawyer Presents the Case for the Afterlife: Irrefutable objective evidence*, Zammit tries to persuade readers to believe him on the basis that he is a lawyer.

Perhaps it's the possibility of being the centre of attention that attracts some people to the law.

Julio Iglesias, the 60-something Spanish singer who recently swore that he wouldn't have plastic surgery *again* (because he might not look like himself), studied law at Complutense University in Madrid. Although Iglesias suspended his studies due to his singing career, he finally completed his degree in 2001, spreading it over about 35 years.

And the list goes on. The number of people who have completed a law degree only to end up in a seemingly unrelated profession is remarkable.

However, it is not so perplexing an issue when one thinks of the countless transferable skills that a law degree provides.

As such, while I have taken a satirical approach with regard to the possible ulterior motives for entering the law, no offence is intended: it is impossible to know why anyone would do a law degree.

Furthermore, it is perfectly possible that some people may choose to do a law degree simply to gain an understanding of the law. Take Fidel Castro, for instance, who studied at the University of Havana. From law student to dictator – a seamless career change. ■

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