

First and Last Name

ENG 100

Assignment #3: Film-Based Assignment

Due: Draft #1 posted to your webpage by 11:59 pm on 10/20 / Draft #2 posted to your webpage by final portfolio deadline (if you choose to revise this assignment and not assignment #3)

Prompt: Please watch the film *John Q* and write a persuasive argument that answers ONE of the following questions:

- Imagine you are a lawyer in the case against John Archibald—aka John Q (Denzel Washington's character), and you must give a final statement before a verdict is decided. Please write an argument that convinces a jury to either convict or not convict John Archibald for his alleged crimes (kidnapping, attempted murder, and armed criminal action). In your final statement, you can focus on just one count (for example, kidnapping) or you could focus on two or all three counts against John Archibald.
- As a member of American society, can you evaluate John Archibald's actions as morally justifiable?
- Did John Archibald act as a hero or a villain?
- Did John Archibald act as a rational man or a man struggling with temporary insanity?
- What system is more to blame for this hostage situation? America's health care system or America's class system?
- If John Archibald killed himself in the hospital, should Dr. Raymond Turner and Rebecca Payne be tried for accessory to murder?
- Would it have been unethical for Dr. Raymond Turner to allow John Archibald to kill himself as part of a medical plan to perform life-saving heart surgery on Michael Archibald?
- Would it have been immoral for John Archibald to kill himself so he could donate his heart to his son, Michael Archibald?
- Did the hospital administration and doctors act ethically in the way they handled Michael Archibald's health care?

Drafts: You will begin your first draft in class.

- Draft #1: 500-word source-based paper that uses informal citation of the film *John Q* (to be included in midterm portfolio)
- Draft #2: 1,000-word source-based paper that uses formal citation (MLA or APA style) with at least four sources (if you choose to revise this piece and include in final portfolio)

Purpose: Persuade

Audience: Your primary audience: folks who would disagree with your position. Your secondary audience: classmates, your instructor, and people who visit your website.

Focus: Your focus will depend upon the question you choose and the position you develop. You must reference scenes and material from the film. One tip: consider defining terms such as *hero*, *villain*, *morals*, *ethics*, *kidnapping*, *rational*, *temporary insanity*. This is a smart move—depending on the word(s) you are using in your assignment—so you can give the audience a clear explanation of how you intend to use this word to support your argument.

Thesis: Your thesis statement should clearly communicate the focus of your essay. Please include a topic and position. Here are a few sample thesis statements (do not copy and paste these into your essay; create your own version):

- John Archibald acted immorally when he decided to kill himself.
- John Archibald should be found guilty because he kidnapped innocent people, threatened to murder his hostages, and he strengthened these threats through the use of a handgun.
- John Archibald acted as a hero because he was a victim of the system and had little options left to save his son's life.
- John Archibald should be found not guilty because he was temporarily insane, he didn't murder anyone, and his actions served the better good for America's health care system.

Style: This is a short essay, so please choose only the most important details necessary to provide background information and specific supporting points for your thesis and argument. Please avoid using sweeping, unsupported statements. Rather, rely on specific evidence from the movie to support your claims. Further, use language/ tone that is approachable yet credible. Think about what style would best persuade your audience to convict or to not convict John Archibald.

Opposing argument/rebuttal: Restate the opposing lawyer's argument and provide your counter-argument:

- I understand the prosecutor has argued that John Archibald is a criminal who threatened people's lives. However, John Archibald never used a loaded gun, and, in the long run, his heroic actions will help change our medical system so future lives can be saved.
- The defense attorney wants you to believe that John Archibald is a hero—and he may be a nice man. But that does not excuse John Archibald from acting as a criminal—not a hero—and endangering the lives of so many innocent people. His son may view him as a hero. But his hostages and our criminal system views him as a criminal.

Product: This essay must be around 500 words for the first draft and formatted as follows: Times New Roman, double-spaced, one-inch margins all-around. Please include an original title centered at the top of the essay. These don't count as original titles: *John Q* or *Q*. We will use these criteria to evaluate your essay:

- _____ Your thesis statement provides a topic and position.
- _____ You use specific quotes and scenes from the movie to support your argument.
- _____ Your argument is well organized, persuasive, and developed in an effective manner.
- _____ Your writing is appropriate and compelling for your audience.
- _____ Your essay addresses at least one opposing argument.
- _____ Your essay is approximately 500 words (1,000 words for draft #2)
- _____ Your essay shows signs of careful proofreading, with minimal grammatical or spelling errors.