



## Should the past determine the present? You decide

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If you're like me, you often find yourself wondering what you're going to talk about around the dinner table every evening. I mean there's only so much you can say about the economy, politics, religion, or your brother-in-law's meth business.

So, being the thoughtful person I am, I thought I'd help you out; it's just the kind of guy I am. The next time you get together for supper, why not consider the following scenario.

Let's say 50 years ago, your great-grandfather, through some clever finagling, managed to steal my great-grandfather's house. And not only that, in the process he killed my great-grandmother, who he was secretly having an affair with, but made it look like an accident.

Moreover, your great-grandfather found the \$10,000 that my great-grandparents kept in coffee cans at the top of the cupboard in their kitchen.

Why would my great-grandparents have \$10K in coffee cans in the top of their cupboard you might ask? Well, many of our great-grandparents lived through the Great Depression so they didn't trust banks. They always wanted plenty of cash on hand "just in case."

Anyway, your great-grandfather subsequently put that \$10,000 in the stock market. Turns out, he had a real knack for investing. Over the course of only a few years, he became a multimillionaire.

After amassing his fortune, his relatives urged him to leave the backwoods of Kentucky and move to Beverly Hills, but that's a different story.

Fast forward. Your great-grandfather ultimately passed his wealth to your grandfather, who eventually passed it to your father. Unfortunately, your father was killed in a freak pickle ball accident. As a result, you became filthy rich.

Being a digital native who fancies himself on the cutting edge of technology, you decided to invest in a new social media platform designed to expose corruption in local, state and national politics. It didn't take long for you to become a well-known media mogul.

At the same time, my family never recovered from what your great-grandfather did and consequently we barely survived through the years. To this day I'm living paycheck-to-paycheck.

Here's where it gets interesting.

Due to your meteoric rise as an entrepreneurial tycoon and cultural icon, 60 Minutes decided to profile your business as well as your family history. As part of their investigation, they uncovered irrefutable evidence of your great-grandfather's crimes, including his theft and murder.

In fact, the case they made to the entire world on the episode featuring you was ironclad. They have proof of everything your great-grandfather did.

Although the statute of limitations has long since passed on theft, as you know, there is no statute of limitations for murder. But since your great-grandfather passed some decades ago, there is really nothing that could be done criminally for his unlawful acts.

After the episode aired, I was contacted by a representative of Morgan, Hughes & Stuart Attorneys at Law. They told me that since you acquired your fortune through nefarious means, I have a very good case if I want to sue you to get what rightfully belongs to me.

Not sure what to do, I ran this offer past my family, friends and co-workers, who offered a variety of advice. Some said, “I think you should definitely sue to take back what was wrongfully taken from your forebears.” Others said, “If I were you, I’d see if the other person’s family is willing to voluntarily share their wealth with you.”

Still others said, “I think you should just leave the past in the past. After all, you had no control over what happened all those years ago.” Finally, some said, “Their great-grandfather’s descendants didn’t personally steal anything from you or murder you, so you can’t blame them.”

OK. So now you have something to talk about at dinner tonight.

Then again, if this doesn’t sound like anything your family would find interesting, you could always discuss where you stand on reparations for the descendants of former slaves.

I guess you get to decide.



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