

A Q&A Interview with Famed Criminal Attorney Vince Imhoff

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Q: Vince, it's great talking to you. How long have you been an attorney?

A: It's a pleasure speaking with you as well. Currently 30 years.

Q: I wanted to start by asking what personality traits you think make a great attorney? What separates the great ones from the rest?

A: I believe it is a caring for your client's case. How much it impacts you emotionally, and how that impact causes you to solve those issues. That's what really matters. Even more so than the economic impact.

Q: So, great attorneys seem to have the ability to adopt the client as some of themselves?

A: Yes. There's an empathy that happens that's much different than the empathy you have when meeting people on the street. It makes all the difference.

Q: Is that something that can be taught? Or is it already embedded in a human?

A: I think that yes, empathy can be taught. However, it also has to be there in the first place, and you have to have a natural feel for it. After that, the more you do it the more impactful you realize it is, and how successful you can become with it. It's basically like practicing any other skill.

Q: Vince, you have had a 30-year career as a prominent attorney. In what ways has the legal world changed today as opposed to 30 years ago?

A: I think it reflects society in that it is a little "meaner." Now, everything is more about "Me," and people seem to be more in their own bubble. It creates a real "Us vs Them" philosophy.

Q: So, technology has been an enemy of civility?

A: You could say that, yes. I think so.



Vince Imhoff, Famed Criminal Attorney

Q: You run a law firm. What is it you do that has helped you prosper in that aspect?

A: We talk to everyone on our team about empathy. What it means to them and how they can use it while working. We make sure that everyone is on the same page.

Q: You have an economic practice that might be considered unusual. Most law firms are compensated by the hour, correct?

A: Yes.

Q: And you don't. You charge the fee for the entire case, no matter where it takes you. Is that true? Were you a pioneer in coming up with that method?

A: Yes, it's true, but the process has been around a while in criminal sentence work. It happens because clients don't have the resources to go back over and over to solve their issues. So, making them an hourly client would disadvantage them. Our method caps their expenses so they know exactly how much it will cost. It reduces much of their anxiety as well as our own.

Q: How important is that flat-fee logic to the success of your firm?

A: I think it's very important in that it allows us to focus on our client without having to focus both on the clock and the pay, while other attorneys might.

Q: If somebody has been charged with a crime, regardless of what it is, what is your single piece of advice for someone in that situation?

A: My most important advice is to say "shush." The more silence the better. You don't want to give away your whole case before it even starts.

Q: Thank you so much for that. It was great talking to you today, Vince.

A: No problem at all. Cheers.

Originally from Chicago, Vince Imhoff is admitted to practice law in Illinois, California, and Pennsylvania. He obtained his Bachelor's degree in Political Science from Lewis University and earned his JD from the Illinois Institute of Technology/Chicago-Kent College of Law in 1989. From 1990 to 1997, Imhoff was a Cook County, Illinois Public Defender (Chicago). In 1997, he entered private practice as a solo practitioner.

In 2003, Imhoff founded [Imhoff & Associates, PC](#). In 2005, he became the Managing Director of The Cochran Firm, Criminal Defense section. After Mr. Cochran passed away, Imhoff re-established Imhoff & Associates, PC and left the Cochran Firm.

From 2000 through 2002, Imhoff was the assistant coach for the trial team at Loyola University of Chicago, School of Law. He is currently a member of the State Bar of California, State Bar of Illinois and the State Bar of Pennsylvania. He is also a member of the California Public Defenders Association, Santa Monica Bar Association (Treasurer 2012-2014, Board Member 2008-2014), Lesbian Gay Lawyers Association (Secretary 2009-2011, Board Member 2009-2015), San

Bernardino County Bar, San Fernando Valley Bar Association, California Attorneys for Criminal Justice (CACJ), and the National Association of Criminal Defense Lawyers (NACDL).

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