

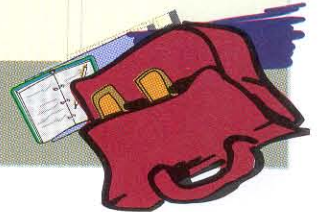
more serious crimes such as murder or robbery. Misdemeanors are less serious crimes such as simple assault or minor theft.

Civil laws regulate relations between individuals or groups of individuals. A **civil action** (lawsuit) can be brought by a person who feels wronged or injured by another person. Courts may award the injured person money for the loss, or they may order the person who committed the wrong to make amends in some other way. An example of a civil action is a lawsuit for recovery of damages suffered in an automobile accident. Civil laws regulate many everyday situations, such as marriage, divorce, contracts, real estate, insurance, consumer protection, and negligence.

Sometimes behavior can violate both civil and criminal laws and can result in two court cases. A criminal case is brought by the government against a **defendant**, the person accused of committing the crime. A civil case is brought by the **plaintiff** (the person or company harmed) against the defendant (the alleged wrongdoer).

In a famous series of cases, former star football player O.J. Simpson was prosecuted in connection with the death of his former wife, Nicole Brown Simpson, and her friend, Ron Goldman. The Los Angeles district attorney was the **prosecutor** in this criminal case. In order to win a conviction, the district attorney had to prove that O.J. Simpson was guilty **beyond a reasonable doubt**. This means that if the jury (or the judge in

The Apathetic Bystanders



The Case of . . .

On March 13, 1964, Catherine "Kitty" Genovese was attacked and stabbed to death in a highly populated area of Queens, New York. During the half-hour ordeal, 38 people heard Kitty's screams for help and watched from their windows. Twice the killer was scared off by the sound of voices and the realization that he was being watched. However, both times, when it became obvious that nobody was going to call the police, the killer returned to finish off his victim. Rather than give any aid to Kitty, such as calling the police or an

a. Why do you think the bystanders took no action?

b. Did the bystanders commit a crime by not acting? Give your reasons.

c. Did the bystanders do the right thing?

d. Should the law hold citizens responsible for not helping out in cases such as this one?

PROBLEM 1.6

ambulance, all 38 bystanders chose to pull their shades, draw their blinds, and ignore Kitty's urgent pleas for help as her life was taken by the deranged attacker.