



THE GNLU CENTRE FOR RESEARCH IN CRIMINAL JUSTICE SCIENCES

ISSUE 16 | JANUARY, 2026

THE CRIME & JUSTICE GAZETTE

NEWSLETTER

MESSAGE FROM THE CENTRE-HEAD



It is my utmost pleasure to write this message in the sixteenth edition of the Crime and Justice Gazette, a newsletter by the GNLU Centre for Research in Criminal Justice Sciences. Truth, courage & bravery, these qualities stand must for every criminal case that is to be instituted, investigated, and tried.

Our Hon'ble Director Sir, Prof (Dr.) S. Shanthakumar, who laid the foundation of this Centre, in September 2019, made its mandate clear that GCRCJS should bring out study, research, and training in every aspect of criminal justice, and the present Newsletter, is one step towards that direction.

This is the result of the hard work of our student team, which has infinite zeal and never-ending motivation. I wish the team every success and also hope that this newsletter will fill the gap of information in the field of criminal laws for its readers. My best wishes to whoever has made this newsletter a reality, to the editors, to every team member as contributors, and to every reader, who will let us know about improvements and enable further excellence in this endeavor.

*Prof. (Dr.) Anjani Singh Tomar
Professor of Law, GNLU, Gandhinagar
Head, Centre for Research in Criminal Justice Sciences*

MESSAGE FROM THE TEAM



The GNLU Centre for Research in Criminal Justice Sciences (GCRCJS), since its establishment, has been a pioneer in inculcating the culture of research and analysis in the field of criminal justice and criminal law. Since its inception in 2019, the Centre has successfully managed to conduct several activities such as competitions, discourses, webinars, conferences, workshops, etc. in the field of criminal law. GCRCJS is committed to shaping diverse and unique perspectives in the area of criminal law through the lens of academic research and to bringing the debates and discussions regarding issues of significance in the aforementioned area to the forefront.

Owing to this vision and commitment of ours, we hereby present to you the sixteenth edition of “The Crime & Justice Gazette” which aims to bring to you a mix of pieces revolving around the contemporary issues of Criminal Law, and other fun activities for your perusal. We would like to express our heartfelt gratitude to our Hon'ble Director Sir, Prof. (Dr.) S. Shanthakumar, and our Faculty Convenor, Prof. (Dr.) Anjani Singh Tomar, for their unwavering support, as well as for believing in us and encouraging us to put the best of our efforts into the growth of the Centre. We would also like to thank the student editorial team of the Centre for their support in the creation of the sixteenth edition of the Newsletter!

DISCLAIMER: The authors' opinions expressed in the newsletter are their own, and neither GCRCJS nor GNLU is responsible for them. The case briefs solely summarize the current state of the cases' verdicts or orders, and do not cover anything with respect to future proceedings or appeals. The newsletter is only for internal circulation in GNLU and will be available only on the GCRCJS official webpage at a later date.

CONTRIBUTORS



Faculty Convenor

Prof. (Dr.) Anjani Singh Tomar

Faculty Member

Dr. Saira Gori

Student Convenors

Mr. Shivam Agrawal

Mr. Vatshal Raval

Student Advisor

Mr. Shubh Naik

Student Co-Convenors

Ms. Durlabhya Singh

Ms. Sonia Dhawan

Editor-in-Chief

Ms. Bhavyaa Sharma

Ms. Megha Pillai

Content Contributors

Mr. Anant Sharma

Mr. Chaitanya

Mr. Karthik Ranga

Mr. Neeve Anand

Ms. Nesa Sharma

Ms. Sonia Dhawan

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Page 01	●	Preface	
Page 02	●	Rolling the Dice on Reform, The Promotion and Regulation of Online Gaming Bill, 2025	
			Anant Sharma
Page 06	●	The Boy in the Box: When Forensic Genealogy Gave a Name Back to “America’s Unknown Child”	
			Karthik Ranga
Page 10	●	An Unsolved Tragedy: The JonBenét Ramsey Mystery	
			Neeve Anand
Page 13	●	Breaking Bones and Barriers: How Kathy Reichs Transformed Forensic Science and Inspired a Generation of Women in Criminal Justice	
			Nesa Sharma
Page 16	●	The GCRCJS Explainer: What’s the Difference Between Bail, Parole, and Furlough?	
			Sonia Dhawan
Page 19	●	Jumbled Words	
			Anant Sharma
Page 20	●	Crossword	
			Chaitanya

PREFACE

Welcome to the sixteenth edition of 'The Crime and Justice Gazette'!

In this issue, the newsletter continues its engagement with the evolving contours of criminal justice, moving across jurisdictions, disciplines, and forms of inquiry. The contributions collectively reflect how questions of crime, investigation, and regulation are shaped by place, time, and technology, while remaining anchored in the human consequences that law ultimately seeks to address.

The journey begins with India's Complete Ban on Online Money Games, which analyses the Promotion and Regulation of Online Gaming Bill, 2025. Here, the site of investigation moves from crime scenes to legislative frameworks, as the article explores how law responds to technological growth, social harm, and the tension between innovation and public welfare in a rapidly expanding digital economy. The issue then turns to Philadelphia with The Boy in the Box: When Forensic Genealogy Gave a Name Back to "America's Unknown Child". Tracing the identification of Joseph Augustus Zarelli, the article demonstrates how modern forensic genealogy can succeed where decades of traditional investigation could not. It is a study in scientific persistence and moral reckoning, showing how identity itself can become a form of justice restored. From there, the focus shifts to Boulder in An Unsolved Tragedy: The JonBenét Ramsey Mystery. This piece examines how early investigative lapses, media scrutiny, and institutional choices shaped one of the most enduring cold cases in modern criminal justice history. At the same time, it highlights how advances in forensic science continue to reopen possibilities for truth in cases long considered stalled.

Together with the other contributions in this edition, these articles illustrate how criminal justice is never confined to a single geography or method. Instead, it unfolds through interconnected inquiries that adapt to new tools, new risks, and new forms of accountability. We hope this issue encourages readers to trace these connections thoughtfully and to reflect on how diverse approaches collectively deepen our understanding of justice in practice.

Thank you for joining us on this pursuit of knowledge, analysis, and meaningful dialogue. We hope this newsletter serves as a valuable resource in your exploration of criminal law.

ROLLING THE DICE ON REFORM

THE PROMOTION AND REGULATION OF ONLINE GAMING BILL, 2025

Anant Sharma



India's complete ban on online money games significantly affects platforms for money-based casino games like poker and fantasy sports, this includes India's widely popular and homegrown fantasy cricket apps, which mark a fundamental change in the way the Indian government is trying to balance the innovative and advancing digital economies, while keeping in mind the protection of all citizens. The "[Promotion and Regulation of Online Gaming Act, 2025](#)" [1] brings a comprehensive and sudden shift in India's online betting and gaming industry. This commentary analyses the evolution of India's opinion and legislative stance, the key provisions of the new Act and their rationale, and its economic and industry impacts.

INTRODUCTION

Online gambling and betting, which was previously not much talked because of being overshadowed

by the incomprehensible growth of India's internet economy, attracted hundreds of millions of people with the bait of instant financial gains. Over the past decade, multiple cases of gambling addiction, financial ruin, fraud, extortion, and even multiple suicides linked to these very betting platforms sparked a formal regulatory need. The 2025 Act fills the regulatory gap and puts a ban on all online money games, introducing new regulatory bodies, and blocking the financial networks that nourished these platforms, while on the other hand also encouraging skill-based gaming and e-sports.

THE REGULATORY VACUUM: ONLINE GAMBLING BEFORE 2025

India's legal approach to gambling and betting was always incoherent, the roots to which can be found in [ancient Indian texts like Mahabharata](#) [2] where it is referred to as a pastime as well as a

vice, it was further regulated by the British through colonial statutes such as the Public Gambling Act of 1867 [3] which mainly focused on physical gambling establishments and did not expect the legal and regulatory challenges of the digital era, since then the rapid growth in technology and vastly unregulated sector of online gambling enabled the creation of apps and websites for Indian gamers and gamblers. This unregulated loophole or vacuum allowed gambling platforms, including those featuring fantasy sports or card games, to capitalise on the ambiguities offered by the law. As a result, law enforcement departments were unable to keep offshore servers and misleading advertisements in check. These sophisticated platforms operated with no regulation or oversight. The reach of these sites is staggering, as by 2023, online gaming platforms in India had reached 450 million users [4], all of whom contributed to widespread instances of mounting debt and addiction, along with high-profile cases of tax evasion.

AN OVERVIEW OF INDIA'S NEW ONLINE GAMING LEGISLATION

The Promotion and Regulation of Online Gaming Act 2025 is India's newest piece of legislation to regulate digital gaming harms, trying to end the grey zone that existed in the legislation that allowed malpractices to flourish. This new Act talks about a total ban on all online money games, regardless of whether the game's outcome depends on skill or chance. The legislation prohibits not only the hosting of these games but also their advertising and promotion. This Act also forms a regulatory authority, whose primary tasks would be the licensing, monitoring, and classifying online games, maintaining a clear separation between exploitative money games and competitive entertaining games, educational games, or skill-based games. Robust mechanisms like these enable financial blocks against transactions linked to betting. This Act also gives digital authorities broad powers to block access to non-compliant or illegal platforms under the Information Technology Act, 2000. [5]

LEGISLATIVE REASONING

The Act was required due to a series of social, economic, and legal issues. Most important among these is the harm caused by online gaming apps, which are known to cause addiction, family distress, and financial ruin, with the Union Minister for Electronics and Information Technology estimating that Indian users collectively lost more than ₹20,000 crore [6] through such games. The harm to mental health is also equally disturbing, with media reports confirming a spike in depression, anxiety, and even suicides linked to repeated gambling losses [7]. These platforms also act as enablers of money laundering, where people use these discrete and concealed digital pathways to hide from law enforcement agencies and transfer large sums of unaccounted money, making the citizens and economy of this country vulnerable to criminal exploitation. Security agencies have also pointed out the rise of betting platforms being linked to terror financing and illegal messaging, [8] which acts as a growing national security risk that needs oversight. The lack of legislative intervention and quality oversight has allowed these shady digital markets to be open to both legal and fiscal scrutiny. This, in turn, makes it necessary for a radical approach to bring online gambling under the ambit of long-standing bans already in place for physical gambling establishments. The Act also highlights a growing and budding industry of e-sports and educational games. It reflects government recognition of the digital creative economy's growth potential without making the consumers vulnerable to criminal exploitation.

KEY PROVISIONS OF THE ACT

The Act aims to eliminate online money gambling in its entirety through a complex and exhaustive legal framework. Most notably, it enacts an absolute ban on online platforms offering money games, irrespective of whether they are based on skill, chance, or a combination of both. [9] This ban completely removes the legal loophole and grey area that previously enabled multiple

operators to exploit particular mechanics and methods of gameplay to seem different from actual gambling. Another notable provision prohibits all forms of digital and physical advertisements, celebrity endorsements, and the promotion of such games, imposing penalties for violators, including those in the media and influencer roles.

To put a beak on illicit revenues, the Act also outlaws all forms of transactions that are found to be linked to online betting. It also acts directly by directing banks, fintech firms, and payment processors to implement stringent checks and balances by denying services to blocked entities. This Act introduces a national regulatory authority to oversee a new and foolproof system of registration, classification, and regular monitoring of digital games. This regulatory authority is also empowered to supervise grievances lodged by users, issue compliance codes, and push and oversee internet intermediaries to block access to the now illegal services, as enabled under Section 69A of the Information Technology Act, 2000. [10]

These regulations have also been further harmonised with the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita, 2023, [11] which encodes appropriate penalties, including a minimum of one year's imprisonment, extendable up to seven years, coupled with fines for betting and gambling happening unlawfully. The IT Intermediary Guidelines, 2021, [12] are also responsible for empowering these new provisions and clarifying the obligations of digital platforms and payment gateways. On the other hand, the Goods and Services Tax regime also puts unlawful overseas-based suppliers of gaming services under scrutiny, mandating them to register and follow compliance norms that apply to any domestic business. The Consumer Protection Act, 2019, [13] operates in tune with these measures to put a stop to deceptive advertising, prohibiting both misleading claims and the use of influential media personalities to validate illegal online gambling. Government advisories, along with all the aforesaid statutes over the past several years issued by the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, and the Ministry of Education, further structure

and strengthen these prohibitions by warning media, advertisers, and schools about the dangers of online gambling and by promoting fun, healthy, and educational forms of gaming among the youth.

IMPACT ON THE GAMING INDUSTRY

The impact of the Online Gaming Act on the digital gaming industry will be substantial, especially for segments of the industry that had previously operated in grey area, allowing online gambling under the guise of distinct gameplay. Platforms offering fantasy and real-money betting games will be forced to end operations within Indian jurisdiction, transforming their general model now to be officially sanctioned, non-monetary gaming (such as e-sports) or exiting the market altogether. The surge of investments in e-sports and educational gaming is also expected due to its explicit recognition and governmental support, promising new opportunities for skill development and professional competition. Simultaneously, the payments and fintech sector will need to implement checks and balances to ensure compliance, tracing and denying transactions that are found to be linked to banned activities. In contrast, advertising, broadcasting, and influencer marketing, which previously caused the harmful propagation of these illicit activities, must now carefully assess their sponsors to stay clear of legal ramifications. Finally, overseas foreign gaming operators are also set to face geo-blocking, along with legal action, if they fail to comply and act according to the new rules, with taxation and registration requirements brought to the forefront.

MY OPINION: THE ACT AND THE BAN

The "Promotion and Regulation of Online Gaming Act, 2025" is a necessary intervention by the legislature. One which was overdue in the face of national concerns regarding public mental health crisis caused due to financial hardships, social welfare by safeguarding society against criminal exploitation, and overall strengthening financial institutions, and national interests which all

justified urgent reforms. The evidence, which encompasses widely reported mental health crises, financial devastation of families, and links to criminal and terror financing, leaves little doubt about the sector's worst abuse of legal loopholes and grey areas. The prioritisation of citizen welfare over illicit revenue by corporate giants through this Act highlights the government's forward-looking outlook.

Although the Act's absolute intentions are revolutionary, the hardships brought forth by its execution are notable. In this process of colouring in grey areas previously left unchecked, this Act poses a risk of criminalising participants in culturally significant and cognitively valuable games historically seen as "skill-based". This might also cause investors to steer away clear of responsible segments of the gaming industry.

Enforcement issues are likely to follow as always; people will continue to work around these regulations by using VPNs, cryptocurrency, and other technologies, which now becomes paramount. This ultimately demands the constant adaptation of law enforcement agencies to these developments. Additionally, this Act will also face difficulties in spreading educational and cognitive values of gaming without proper campaigning and awareness, where it is needed the most.

In summary, this ban is a bold and necessary move that restores the priority of public interest and social welfare in India's ever-growing digital landscape. It will be interesting to observe how it navigates the tension between protecting citizens and allowing healthy innovation. This task will require inclusive dialogue and adaptation among lawmakers, industry stakeholders, and the broader society.

FOOTNOTES

[1] *Promotion and Regulation of Online Gaming Act 2025 (India)*.

[2] *Ajit v Bhide, 'Compulsive gambling in ancient Indian texts' [2007] 49 Indian J Psychiatry 294.*

[3] *Public Gambling Act 1867 (India)*.

[4] *Press Information Bureau, 'Promotion and Regulation of Online Gaming Bill, 2025' (PIB, 20 August 2025) <https://www.pib.gov.in/PressNoteDetails.aspx?NoteId=1550758&ModuleId=3> accessed 12 September 2025.*

[5] *Information Technology Act 2000 (India)*.

[6] *PIB, 'Promotion and Regulation of Online Gaming Bill' (n 1).*

[7] *K V Kurmanath, 'Debt, despair and the dark side of online gambling in Telangana' (The Hindu, 9 December 2025) <https://www.thehindu.com/news/national/telangana/debt-despair-and-the-dark-side-of-online-gambling-in-telangana/article69383395.ece> accessed 9 December 2025.*

[8] *Deccan Herald, 'Illegal online betting, gambling firms act as channels for money laundering and terror financing, says report' (3 October 2023) <https://www.deccanherald.com/india/illegal-online-betting-gambling-firms-act-as-channels-for-money-laundering-and-terror-financing-says-report-3101631> accessed 9 December 2025.*

[9] *Online Gaming Act 2025, s 5.*

[10] *IT Act 2000, s 69.*

[11] *Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita 2023, s 112.*

[12] *Information Technology (Intermediary Guidelines and Digital Media Ethics Code) Rules 2021 (India)*.

[13] *Consumer Protection Act 2019 (India)*.

THE BOY IN THE BOX

WHEN FORENSIC GENEALOGY GAVE A NAME BACK TO “AMERICA’S UNKNOWN CHILD”

Kartik Ranga

DISCOVERY OF A TRAGIC MYSTERY (1957)

On February 25, 1957, the battered body of a young boy was discovered in a cardboard box in the Fox Chase neighborhood of Philadelphia. The child, believed to be around four to six years old, was nude, malnourished, and showed signs of severe physical trauma. He had been wrapped in a flannel blanket and placed inside a discarded J.C. Penney bassinet box. [1]

The horrific discovery shocked the city and soon became the infamous “*Boy in the Box*” case: Philadelphia’s oldest unsolved homicide. Investigators plastered the Boy’s postmortem photographs on posters across the region in a desperate attempt to identify him and catch his killer. [2]

Despite hundreds of leads, the child’s identity remained elusive. Detectives chased theories that he might have been a Hungarian refugee or a kidnapped New York toddler, and they investigated local foster homes and traveling carnival workers, all to no avail. An Ohio woman even came forward decades later, claiming that

her abusive mother had purchased a boy and killed him, but authorities could not corroborate her story. [3]

As the years passed, the nameless victim was buried in a local potter’s field and came to be known as “America’s Unknown Child.” The case haunted generations of Philadelphians and law enforcement officers, with each new detective vowing to uncover the truth. [4]



Fig. 1: Crime Scene where Zareli was found

DECADES OF INVESTIGATION AND DEAD ENDS

Over the next six decades, the “Boy in the Box” mystery attained international notoriety. It perplexed professionals and amateur sleuths alike, inspiring numerous theories. Police meticulously catalogued clues: the Boy’s hair appeared freshly cut (clumps were found on his body); his fingernails were trimmed; and there were indications he had been bathed shortly before or after death. [5]

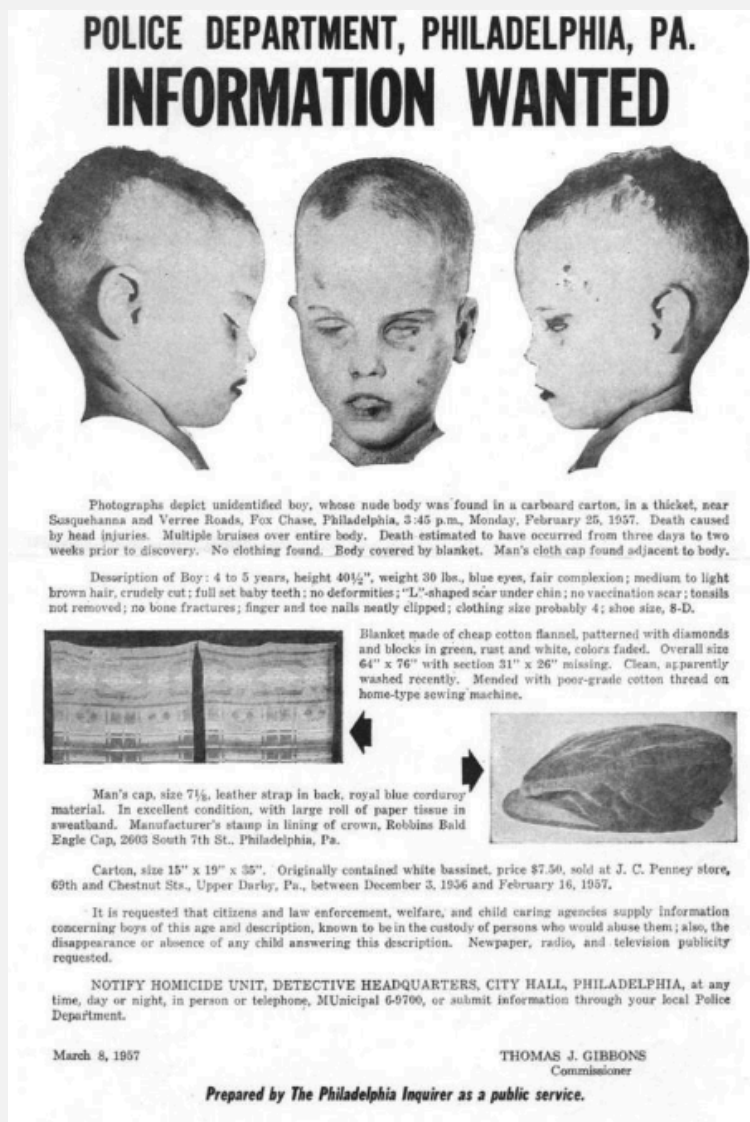


Fig. 2: Posters showing Zarelli's postmortem photos that were distributed during the initial investigation

The 1957 investigation was exhaustive for its time: door-to-door canvassing, national newspaper alerts, and the then-unorthodox tactic of photographing the Boy’s body dressed in clothing to simulate a living appearance. [6] Yet no missing child report matched him. It later emerged that he

had never even been issued a birth certificate or Social Security Number, suggesting that his short life had been spent in the shadows. [7]

In 1990, the Vidocq Society, a volunteer club of retired detectives and forensic experts, took up the case, bringing modern techniques and renewed attention. But still the Boy’s identity and the circumstances of his death remained a stubborn mystery, marked only by a gravestone at Ivy Hill Cemetery that read “Heavenly Father, Bless This Unknown Boy.” [8]



Fig. 3: Zarelli's Gravestone before identification (before 1998)

FORENSIC BREAKTHROUGH WITH DNA

The emergence of forensic DNA analysis offered new hope. In 1998, the boy’s remains were exhumed from his original grave to extract a DNA sample, though tests at the time yielded no match. He was reburied at Ivy Hill Cemetery with the honorary name “America’s Unknown Child.”



Fig. 4: Zarelli's Gravestone before identification (after reburial in 1998)

Two decades later, in 2019, Philadelphia investigators obtained a court order to exhume

the body once again, this time for advanced DNA sequencing. The recovered genetic material was uploaded to genealogical databases, and specialized forensic genealogists began constructing the child's family tree.

This technique, the same investigative genetic genealogy that identified California's "Golden State Killer" in 2018, soon paid off. Researchers found a match to relatives on the Boy's maternal side and, through painstaking public-records analysis, identified a woman who was likely the Boy's mother. [9] Further digging uncovered a crucial missing document: the Boy's birth certificate, which listed both his parents. After 65 years of silence, the "Boy in the Box" finally had a name, confirmed through multiple DNA tests: Joseph Augustus Zarelli. [10]

Academic scholarship has noted how such investigative genetic genealogy represents a paradigm shift in cold-case resolution, enabling "familial reconstruction from distant DNA matches" that can restore identities even in decades-old cases. [11]

IDENTIFYING JOSEPH AUGUSTUS ZARELLI (2022)

On December 8, 2022, the Philadelphia Police Department announced the results of the investigation: the Boy in the Box was identified as Joseph Augustus Zarelli, born January 13, 1953. He was just four years old when he died.

Police Commissioner Danielle Outlaw emphasized that this marked "only the close of one chapter" of the story, as the case was now officially a homicide investigation with a named victim. She praised the "hard work, dedication, passion, and doggedness" of investigators in giving "America's formerly unknown child Joseph Augustus Zarelli a voice."

Detectives disclosed that Joseph had lived with his family in West Philadelphia (near 61st and Market Street) and was one of several siblings. Both of his biological parents were deceased by 2022, and authorities withheld their names out of respect for Joseph's surviving siblings. Notably, no one had ever reported young Joseph missing in 1957, a



Fig. 5: Forensic facial reconstruction by Carl Koppelman showing what Zarelli may have looked like when he was alive



Fig. 6: Joseph Augustus Zarelli

poignant reminder of how invisible his short life and death had been.

In January 2023, on what would have been Joseph's 70th birthday, a new grave marker bearing his name was unveiled at Ivy Hill Cemetery, replacing the old "Unknown Child" stone. [12]



Fig. 7: Joseph Augustus Zarelli's grave marker post identification

UNRESOLVED QUESTIONS AND THE PURSUIT OF JUSTICE

Identifying Joseph solved the central mystery of who the Boy in the Box was, but not who killed him or why. Philadelphia police have made clear that the homicide case remains open and active.

However, the passage of nearly seven decades presents immense challenges. "It's going to be an uphill battle for us to definitively determine who caused this child's death," admitted Captain Jason

Smith of the Philadelphia Police homicide unit. Many original witnesses or suspects may have died, and much physical evidence has deteriorated over time. Investigators have their “suspicions” about who may have been responsible, but they have not disclosed those theories publicly.

Because murder carries no statute of limitations under Pennsylvania law, a prosecution could still be pursued if sufficient evidence emerges even after all these years. [13] For now, authorities hope that revealing Joseph’s name will stir new leads or old memories. They have urged anyone with information to come forward, and a \$20,000 reward has been posted for tips leading to an arrest and conviction. [14] As Commissioner Outlaw poignantly observed, the Boy in the Box’s plight “haunted this community, the Philadelphia Police Department, our nation, and the world” for generations. Now, at long last, Joseph Augustus Zarelli has his name restored; what remains is the pursuit of justice for a little boy lost, and the hope that no victim of crime will ever again have to wait so long to be given back their identity.

[8] *ibid.*

[9] ABC News (Australia) (n 2).

[10] Henley (n 1).

[11] Rockne Harmon, ‘The Evolution and Impact of Forensic DNA on Cold Case Resolution’ (2018) 52 *University of Richmond Law Review* 101, 112–14 <https://scholarship.richmond.edu/lawreview/vol52/iss4/5>.

[12] Josh Marcus, ‘The “Boy in the Box” Was Finally Identified. DNA May Now Unravel the Mystery of Eight Others Buried Next to Him’ *The Independent* (15 January 2023) <https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/americas/crime/boy-in-box-potters-field-philadelphia-cold-case-b2666661.html>.

[13] 42 *Pennsylvania Consolidated Statutes* § 5551 [2024] <https://law.justia.com/codes/pennsylvania/title-42/chapter-55/section-5551/>.

[14] Avril (n 5).

FOOTNOTES

[1] Jon Henley, *Philadelphia Police Identify Body of ‘Boy in the Box’ After 66 Years*, *The Guardian* (8 December 2022), <https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2022/dec/08/philadelphia-police-boy-in-the-box-cold-case>.

[2] ABC News (Australia), ‘Philadelphia Police Identify 1957 “Boy in the Box” Murder Victim as Joseph Augustus Zarelli’ (9 December 2022) <https://www.abc.net.au/news/2022-12-09/philadelphia-slain-boy-in-box-identified-police/101753304>.

[3] *ibid.*

[4] 6abc Philadelphia, ‘Joseph Augustus Zarelli: Philadelphia Police Identify Body of “Boy in the Box”’ (8 December 2022) <https://6abc.com/post/boy-in-the-box-identified-philadelphia-cold-case-watch-news-conference-live-name/12544392/>.

[5] Tom Avril, ‘Boy in the Box Joseph Augustus Zarelli: Name, Identification, More on Philadelphia Case’ *The Philadelphia Inquirer* (8 December 2022) <https://www.inquirer.com/news/boy-in-box-philadelphia-joseph-zarelli-name-identity-20221208.html>.

[6] *ibid.*

[7] *ibid.*



THE JONBENÉT RAMSEY MYSTERY

AN UNSOLVED TRAGEDY

Neeve Anand

INTRODUCTION

In the winter of 1996, six-year-old JonBenét Ramsey was found dead in the basement of her family home in Boulder, Colorado. What began as a straightforward missing child case quickly evolved into a chilling mystery that remains unsolved decades later, continuing to haunt investigators and the public alike. This article delves into the background of the murder, the ensuing investigation, and the current status of the case.

BACKGROUND

Just a day earlier, the Ramsey family enjoyed a festive Christmas celebration, unaware of the nightmare that would unfold the next morning. On December 26, [1] JonBenét was discovered missing, prompting her parents to alert the police. A ransom note demanding \$118,000 was found in the house, stating that the supposed kidnappers would contact the family by 10:00 a.m. When no such communication was received, a Boulder police detective asked the family to search the property. During this search, JonBenét's body was located in a small basement room. It was then that JonBenét's lifeless body was discovered in a small

basement room. The subsequent autopsy concluded that JonBenét had been sexually assaulted and strangled, and that her skull had been fractured. Furthermore, DNA from an unidentified individual was discovered underneath her fingernails and in her underwear. What followed was a highly complex and widely publicized investigation, one that exposed significant shortcomings in law enforcement and left both the public uncertain about what had actually occurred.

CHALLENGES

Former Police Chief Mark Beckner later confessed that the police had significantly mishandled [2] the crime scene, which severely hindered the collection of sufficient evidence necessary to progress to trial. Notably, the Ramsey parents were not separated and were allowed to leave the premises before giving comprehensive statements regarding their alibis. Beckner also acknowledged that the police force was understaffed and exhibited laxity, partly due to the holiday season, which further compromised the investigation's effectiveness. Moreover, while the Boulder

detectives would attempt to frame a case against the parents, District Attorney Alex Hunter allowed the Ramseys' attorney to review police files and physical evidence and insisted that detectives treat the Ramseys as victims rather than potential culprits. Over the years, investigators chased many possible leads. One of the most publicised cases came in 2006, when John Mark Karr suddenly confessed to the crime. However, his story could not hold up for long as the DNA evidence ruled him out, and it later became clear he had not even been present in Boulder when the murder took place.

In 2008, improved DNA testing techniques went a step further and cleared the entire Ramsey family. Even so, another twist followed when documents from the 1999 grand jury proceedings were finally released. They showed that the grand jury had actually voted to indict Patsy and John Ramsey for child abuse and for allegedly helping the killer. The case never moved forward, though, as the district attorney at the time decided that the evidence was not strong enough to justify filing charges. [3]

RECENT DEVELOPMENTS

John Ramsey, [4] the father of the six-year-old victim, has recently met with law enforcement to advocate for a thorough review and new testing of crime scene evidence, hoping that the modern developments in technology, such as genetic and DNA advancements, can bring him peace and finally resolve the murder case. John Ramsey was unhappy with the police force for decades, in part due to their inefficient investigation, while also carelessly framing him as a suspect over a considerable period of time. Ramsey also took part in a Netflix docuseries called "Cold Case: Who Killed JonBenet Ramsey," where he expressed his optimism about the recent changes in the Boulder Police Department's leadership. Another theory has recently gained popularity, suggesting that an intruder entered the house and committed the act. [5] The field of DNA technology has indeed experienced remarkable growth in recent times, offering some new hope. Touch DNA technology, also known as trace DNA analysis, can detect

genetic material left from minimal contact with items, such as clothing, and has the potential to reveal DNA profiles from individuals who had minimal contact with evidence items. Alternatively, forensic genetic genealogy [6] has also undergone significant advancements, and many labs have demonstrated extraordinary capabilities in analyzing degraded samples and mixed DNA profiles.

CONCLUSION

The Murder of JonBenét Ramsey continues to be one of the most perplexing and enduring mysteries in criminal justice history. It remains unsolved despite exhaustive court hearings, investigations, and technological advancements in the field of forensic science. The tragedy also highlights the need to preserve crime scene integrity, remain efficient in the investigation, and maintain thorough, unbiased investigations from the onset. John Ramsey's determination in finding the culprit behind the hideous act, along with leadership changes in the Boulder Police Department and advancements in forensic technology, injects new hope into the pursuit of justice. It is yet to be seen whether the ongoing work of the law enforcement, the constant interest of the media, and the dedicated involvement of the father of the victim will eventually lead to the identification of the perpetrator and the subsequent trial process.

FOOTNOTES

[1] Maureen Puffer-Rothenberg, 'Ramsey murder case' (EBSCO Research Starters, 2022) <<https://www.ebsco.com/research-starters/history/ramsey-murder-case>> accessed 2 December 2025.

[2] William M Welch, 'JonBenét Ramsey death investigation mishandled' USA Today (25 February 2015) <<https://www.usatoday.com/story/news/2015/02/25/jonbene-t-ramsey-death-investigation-mishandled/24032039>> accessed 2 December 2025.

[3] Maureen Puffer-Rothenberg, 'Ramsey murder case' (EBSCO Research Starters, 2022) <<https://www.ebsco.com/research-starters/history/ramsey-murder-case>> accessed 2 December 2025.

[4] Doc Louallen, 'JonBenet Ramsey case gets renewed attention 28 years after her murder' (ABC News, 13 December 2024) <<https://abcnews.go.com/US/jonbent-ramsey-case-gets-renewed-attention-28-years/story?id=116601351>> accessed 9 December 2025.

[5] The JonBenét Ramsey Murder, 'Unraveling One of America's Most Infamous Cold Cases' (John D Rogers Law, 9 June 2024) <<https://johndrogerslaw.com/the-jonbenet-ramsey-murder-unraveling-one-of-americas-most-infamous-cold-cases>> accessed 3 December 2025.

[6] Factual America, 'DNA Breakthrough: JonBenét's Killer Unmasked? Cold Case Team Closes in on Shocking Truth' (Factual America, 21 December 2024) <<https://www.factualamerica.com/cold-case-jonbenet-ramsey/dna-breakthrough-jonbents-killer-unmasked-cold-case-team-closes-in-on-shocking-truth>> accessed 3 December 2025.

WOMEN IN BREAKING BONES AND BARRIERS CRIMINAL JUSTICE SC

Nesa Sharma



HOW KATHY REICHS TRANSFORMED FORENSIC SCIENCES AND INSPIRED A GENERATION OF WOMEN IN CRIMINAL JUSTICE

Dr. Kathy Reichs is a prominent figure in the world of forensic science, demonstrating that the feminine gender is not a barrier in this traditionally male and science-dominated field. She was born in Chicago in 1948 and went on to become one of the most esteemed forensic anthropologists in the world, not only through her work but also through the media's portrayal of her as a positive character who opened doors for many women.

It is worth noting that Reichs never initially considered a career in forensic science. Initially, she was called "the bones lady" by the police, and she started to shift her interest from archeobiology and the study of ancient bones to the forensic side. Her story thus represents how women often find their way through unexpected chances and their bravery in transforming their skills to adapt to new challenges.

Subsequently, she laid a solid academic basis for her career. She earned her bachelor's degree in anthropology from American University in 1971, followed by a master's degree in 1972, and a doctorate in physical anthropology from Northwestern University in 1975. Thus, she was

one of the lucky few (her number was 111) who were certified by the American Board of Forensic Anthropology as forensic anthropologists, an indication that she was well qualified for a profession that was already highly selective.

Her academic career includes notable appointments at Northern Illinois University, the University of Pittsburgh, Concordia University, McGill University, and the University of North Carolina at Charlotte, [1] where she holds the title of Professor Emeritus. Unlike the majority of people's jobs, very few go no further than ordinary lab work, but Reichs does just that. [2] She gave expert testimony before the United Nations International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda to assist in the identification of genocidal victims and contributed remarkably to the advancement of international justice.

She also took part in disaster response, for example, working with the Disaster Mortuary Operational Response Team to identify victims at Ground Zero after the terrorist attacks of 9/11. [3] Her international humanitarian activities consisted of unearthing mass graves in Guatemala and identifying war remains through her

collaboration with the Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency, where the latter targeted WWII, Korea, and Southeast Asia. The FBI agents' teaching on detecting and recovering human remains, [4] and sharing her expertise with law enforcement professionals who rely on forensic evidence to solve crimes, was part of her daily routine. Being bilingual, she was particularly fluent in French, which enabled her to become the only certified French-speaking forensic anthropologist in North America and to consult for the Quebec police, demonstrating to them the significance of different skill sets in highly specialized fields. [5]

Coming out of the mundane, if not downright dreary, literary world, she managed to raise the profile of women in criminal justice through her movement into popular media. Reichs's first novel, *"Déjà Dead"*, [6] won the Arthur Ellis Award for Best First Novel in 1997. Consequently, a series of more than 20 books featuring Temperance "Bone" Brennan, the main character, has been established, with over 20 novels already published.

The depiction of her life and work in the television series *"Bones"*, [7] which significantly contributed to the acceptance of forensic evidence as legitimate proof in court, not only lasted twelve seasons but also brought forensic anthropology into the everyday lives of millions of people worldwide. Reichs, who was a producer of the show, addressed the scientific credibility. [8] issue alongside the creation of powerful female characters, thus pointing women in the way to overcome obstacles in forensic careers. The importance of this visibility is hard to overstate. When "Bones" first appeared on screen in 2005, Reichs belonged to a very exclusive club of only 32 certified forensic anthropologists. By 2011, that number would have more than doubled to 82, primarily due to the popularization of the discipline through literature and television. This growth pattern reflects the positive impact of women's presence in traditional STEM fields on the teaching and learning of the next generation of female scientists. Such representation was crucial for encouraging girls and young women to

consider careers in forensic science, much like it was for professional female figures in traditional STEM fields.

Reichs demonstrates how women can become credible scientists and participate in broader social advocacy for the legal system. Her professional trajectory is similar to that of the pioneering women in STEM, who not only achieved personal success but also made significant efforts to improve the lives of others. People's perceptions of forensic science and women's potential in the criminal justice system have fundamentally changed as a result of her forensic work, novels, and TV consulting.

This aspect is particularly significant, as the fields of forensic science and criminal law are closely intertwined, with the scientific component of forensic evidence serving as the primary connection between the two. In general, while talking about criminal law, forensic scientists are doing their work in the legal system itself as they show up in courts as expert witnesses testifying, deciding who gets to see what evidence (by applying the rules of evidence), and processing DNA, fingerprints, and digital evidence as part of proving the crimes' elements in the criminal court.

It has been rightly noted that forensic science has a notably higher proportion of women compared to other STEM fields, partly due to strong female figures such as Reichs, who encourage women to enter the field by showing them that the profession is about helping others and contributing to justice. Reichs' legacy is that she will not only be remembered for her work as a forensic scientist, author, and TV personality who brought forensic evidence to life through her writings but also for the fact that she paved the way for women in the future who will be able to walk through the doors of justice with their science especially in this area where forensic evidence has become the kingmaker of the courtroom.

FOOTNOTES

[1] 'Kathy Reichs' (Department of Anthropology, 11 May 2023)
 <<https://anthropology.charlotte.edu/node/89/>> accessed 8 September 2025.

[2] 'Kathy Reichs - Trivia' (IMDb)
 <https://www.imdb.com/name/nm1933983/trivia/?ref_=nm_dy_k_trv> accessed 9 September 2025.

[3] 'About Kathy' (Kathy Reichs)
 <<https://kathyreichs.com/about-kathy/>> accessed 9 September 2025.

[4] 'About Kathy' (Kathy Reichs)
 <<https://kathyreichs.com/about-kathy/>> accessed 9 September 2025.

[5] 'Reichs among "30 Most Innovative Women Professors"' (Reichs among '30 Most Innovative Women Professors' | Inside UNC Charlotte | UNC Charlotte)
 <<https://web.archive.org/web/20160727144318/http%3A//inside.uncc.edu/news-features/2016-02-01/reichs-among-%E2%80%9930-most-innovative-women-professors%E2%80%99>> accessed 9 September 2025.

[6] Inm, 'Kathy Reichs: The Ice Queen of Crime' (The Independent Features RSS)
 <<https://web.archive.org/web/20081201090538/http://www.independent.co.uk/arts-entertainment/books/features/kathy-reichs-the-ice-queen-of-crime-408662.html>> accessed 9 September 2025.

[7] IMDb, 'Kathy Reichs | Writer, Producer, Actress' (IMDb)
 <<https://www.imdb.com/name/nm1933983/>> accessed 9 September 2025.

[8] 'This Much I Know: Kathy Reichs, Forensic Anthropologist and Writer, 60, London' (The Guardian, 25 October 2008)
 <<https://www.theguardian.com/lifeandstyle/2008/oct/26/1>> accessed 9 September 2025.

THE GCRCJS EXPLAINER | BAIL - PAROLE - FURLOUGH

Sonia Dhawan

WHAT'S DIFFERENCE?



Profile A

Summary: A is accused of the offence of stalking under Section 78(2) of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita, 2023. A has approached the Court seeking bail.

Your Lordship, the accused is charged with a serious offence. Granting bail may result in the accused absconding and failing to appear for trial.



Bail is the rule and jail is the exception. The accused is a first-time offender, and mere apprehension of absconding is not sufficient to deny bail.



Profile B

Summary: B is a convict sentenced to six years of imprisonment. He has completed more than one year of actual imprisonment. B has applied for parole to take care of his ailing father.

The convict has completed the minimum required period of imprisonment. However, if parole is granted, strict conditions must be imposed. Parole is a temporary release granted on humanitarian grounds. It is not a suspension of the sentence. The convict is permitted to go on parole for 30 days, subject to conditions.



I am only here for 30 days and I have to keep reporting them on demand.



Profile C

Summary: C is a convict sentenced to 20 years of imprisonment. He has already undergone a few years of his sentence and has maintained good conduct in prison.

Your conduct in prison has been satisfactory. I grant you furlough for 14 days, subject to conditions. This is a short break, but I must return on time.



	BAIL	PAROLE	FURLOUGH
MEANING	The conditional release of an accused awaiting trial, contingent upon execution of a bond and assurance of appearance on demand.	The conditional and short-term release of a convicted prisoner for specific reasons, while necessitating return and regular reporting.	A short-term release of a long-term prisoner without any specific reason with a condition to return and report, which facilitates the reformative approach.
OBJECTIVE	To ensure the accused's presence at trial and uphold the presumption of innocence. [1]	To allow prisoners an opportunity to resolve their personal and family problems and enable them to maintain their links with society.	To provide a break from the monotony of long-term imprisonment and facilitate reformation.
PROVISION	<p><i>Section 478-487, Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita 2023:</i> Provisions as to Bail and Bonds.</p> <p>The Supreme Court laid down guidelines to ensure that bail procedures are streamlined and followed uniformly across the country. The judgment directed lower courts to adhere strictly to the principles governing bail to prevent arbitrary detention. [2]</p>	<p>Every state maintains its own distinct set of rules for the administration of Parole and Furlough.</p> <p>Example: Parole and Furlough in the state of Gujarat is governed by The Prisons (Bombay Furlough and Parole) Rules, 1959.</p>	
CONDITIONS FOR THE GRANT	<p>Under <i>Section 478, Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita 2023</i>, bail is a right for bailable offences. As said, “<i>bail is the rule and jail is the exception.</i>” [3]</p> <p>Under <i>Section 480, Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita 2023</i>, bail is not a right for non-bailable offences. The court has the discretion to grant or refuse bail based on various factors, including the nature and gravity of the offense, the criminal history of the accused, and the possibility of the accused tampering with evidence or intimidating witnesses.</p> <p>Other factors a court may consider are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The accused is under the age of sixteen years. • The accused is a woman. • The accused is sick or infirm. 	<p>Parole is granted under specific reasons [4] and a prisoner should prove a necessity, such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Death of a family member; • Marriage of a family member; • Serious illness of a family member; • Any other emergent circumstances. 	<p>No reason is required to apply for a furlough. However, the prisoner does not have an absolute legal right to claim furlough. This has been inferred from <i>Rule 17, The Prisons (Bombay Furlough and Parole) Rules 1959</i>. [5]</p>
GOVERNING AUTHORITY	The relevant court as per <i>the Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita 2023</i> .	Divisional Commissioner. [6]	Deputy Inspector of General of Prisons. [7]

DURATION	It is valid until the disposal of the case or until the order is modified or cancelled by the Court, and you can apply for bail as many times. However, the Supreme Court observed that High Courts should not routinely grant interim bail to the same applicant repeatedly. Either the Court should grant regular bail or deny the same, but insofar as interim bail, the relief shall be granted only in specific exigencies as an exception. [8]	Parole is granted for a maximum period of 30 days. [9] <i>[Rule 19, The Prisons (Bombay Furlough and Parole) Rules 1959.]</i> Parole can be extended multiple times up to a cumulative limit of 90 days. [10]	Furlough is granted for a maximum period of 14 days. [11]
IMPACT ON SENTENCE	Not applicable.	The period spent on parole is excluded from the computation of the sentence term. [12]	The period spent on furlough is included in the computation. [13]
CANCELLATION	A bail can be cancelled if the conditions of the bail bond are violated, or if new evidence emerges, that changes the circumstances of the case. The prosecution can apply for cancellation of bail under <i>Sections 480(5) and 483(3), Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita 2023</i> .	If the conditions of parole are not abided by the parolee, he may be returned to serve his sentence in prison. [14]	If any of the conditions on which the furlough was granted have not been fulfilled, the same can be cancelled. [15]

FOOTNOTES

[1] *Sanjay Chandra v Central Bureau of Investigation*, (2012) 1 SCC 40.

[2] *Satender Kumar Antil v CBI*, 2022 SCC OnLine SC 825.

[3] *State of Rajasthan, Jaipur v Balchand @ Baliay*, 1977 AIR 2447.

[4] *Asfaq v. State of Rajasthan & Ors.*, (2017) 15 SCC 55.

[5] *State of Gujarat v Narayana*, 2021 SCC OnLine SC 949.

[6] *Rule 18, The Prisons (Bombay Furlough and Parole) Rules 1959*.

[7] *Rule 2, The Prisons (Bombay Furlough and Parole) Rules 1959*.

[8] *Asim Mallik v The State Of Odisha*, 2025 LiveLaw (SC) 475.

[9] *Rule 19, The Prisons (Bombay Furlough and Parole) Rules 1959*.

[10] *Rule 25, The Prisons (Bombay Furlough and Parole) Rules 1959*.

[11] *Rule 3, The Prisons (Bombay Furlough and Parole) Rules 1959*.

[12] *Rule 20, The Prisons (Bombay Furlough and Parole) Rules 1959*.

[13] *State of Haryana v Mohinder Singh*, (2000) 3 SCC 394.

[14] *Rule 27, The Prisons (Bombay Furlough and Parole) Rules 1959*.

[15] *Rule 14, The Prisons (Bombay Furlough and Parole) Rules 1959*.

JUMBLLED WORDS

Anant Sharma



1. NOTICUROECP

Hint - The legal process of proving someone guilty is called?

2. TNMICIDETNI

Hint - A formal charge or accusation of a serious crime is called?

3. ONERMSAIED

Hint - A less serious crime is called?

4. LEPA

Hint - Defendant's response to charges is called?

5. RAWNATR

Hint - Judicial authorization for arrest/search is called?

6. TAQULATCI

Hint - A Not-guilty verdict is called?

7. CENEDIVE

Hint - What is used to prove facts in court?

8. BOIRTOPAN

Hint - Supervised release instead of prison of an inmate is called?

9. PARENTMENT

Hint - Defence claiming police induced the crime is called?

10. SUBAHEARCPQS

Hint - This Latin term means, Challenge to unlawful detention.

11. SICULPRDECOTI

Hint - What are the facts and circumstances of a crime called (Latin)?

12. TRETISUINTO

Hint - Court-ordered repayment to a victim is called?

13. ERASNME

Hint- This Latin maxim means, Mental state/intent element of a crime.

14. OPEDITSION

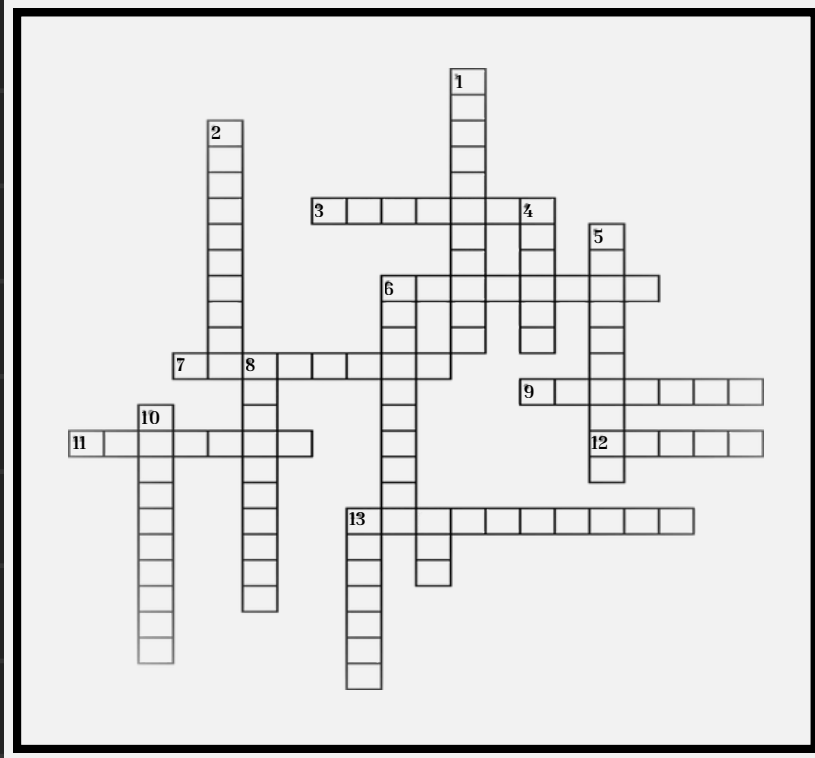
Hint - Testimony taken out of court under oath is called?

15. DIDENIRTAEDCDIO

Hint - This Latin maxim means, The binding legal reasoning of a case.

CROSSWORD

Chaitanya



ACROSS

3. Person who sees an event or gives testimony under oath in court.
6. Legal term for assisting or instigating someone in committing an offense.
7. Conduct or speech inciting people to rebel against the authority of a state.
9. Lying under oath in a judicial proceeding.
11. The mental element required to establish criminal intent.
12. An act punishable by law.
13. False statement harming a person's reputation.

DOWN

1. Formal document submitted by police listing charges.
2. Type of offence allowing the police to arrest without a warrant.
4. Court order compelling a witness to appear or produce evidence.
5. Agreement between two or more persons to commit an unlawful act.
6. A person who knowingly helps another in committing a crime; often treated as a partner in guilt.
8. Legal principle aimed at discouraging crime through punishment.
10. Court order to stop a wrongful act until the trial ends.
13. Legal term for robbery committed by five or more persons, usually armed.
14. First written report of cognizable offences.

C&JG

THE CRIME AND JUSTICE GAZETTE

ISSUE 16 | JANUARY, 2026



Blog

crimeandjustice.blog



Linkedin

linkedin/gcrcjs



Instagram

[@gnlu_gcrcjs](https://instagram/@gnlu_gcrcjs)



Contact Us

gcrcjs@gnlu.ac.in

NEWSLETTER

by GNLU CENTRE FOR RESEARCH IN CRIMINAL JUSTICE SCIENCES (GCRCJS)