

**Task 2 THE ETHICIST.**

**You will hear a talk from a programme about legal and ethical issues. Read the statements below and choose the right answer. You will hear it TWICE.**

**1. The first female speaker**

- a. wonders whether her friends' actions are legal.
- b. says her friends like to take pictures of comical situations.
- c. is concerned that personal data might be included within the captions.

**2. The male speaker in reply**

- a. dismisses these students' behaviour as a stress-coping technique.
- b. demands more safeguards should be taken.
- c. explains that patients are not really likely to recognise themselves.

**3. Also, he**

- a. seems to be an expert counsellor in medicine.
- b. has resorted to other people for their opinion and information.
- c. establishes a difference between punch lines and cartoons.

**4. The underlying consequence of these acts is that they**

- a. might lead to an improvement in patient - doctor relationships.
- b. have prompted several medical schools to consider these issues more deeply.
- c. might develop a tendency in soon-to-be doctors to overlook their patients' humanity.

**5. As for the second issue, the female speaker**

- a. asked her father-in-law to pay for her car repair.
- b. told him she would give him his money back.
- c. wished she hadn't been told about it.

**6. According to the reply,**

- a. there would be no problem in asking the shop to charge the bill to her own account.
- b. she should ask someone else for help.
- c. what is shocking is the reason why she told him off.



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## LISTENING N° 2. With The Ethicist, I'm Randy Cohen.

### Letter number 1

Some of my [Facebook](#) friends are medical students who post cellphone pictures of patients with what these friends believe to be comical maladies, with captions like “A 5-foot-9 Hispanic male walks into a bar . . .” under a picture of a patient with a piece of rebar piercing his abdomen. The postings don't include faces or names but still seem questionable. Doesn't this violate patient privacy? NAME WITHHELD, NEW YORK

Were these soon-to-be doctors engaging in such gallows humor only among themselves, it might be a harmless way to cope with deeply disturbing situations. But although these med students rightly strive to disguise their human punch lines — no, sorry, patients, patients — that is insufficient. It is essential that those photographed are not identifiable to others, of course, but it is also important that the patient does not recognize himself online. A doctor should not embarrass a patient or otherwise add to his discomfort, a likely outcome should the patient encounter such a posting. The chances of that happening increase as the injuries depicted grow more grotesque and less commonplace. How many 5-foot-9 Hispanic males are impaled with reinforcing rod? It will not improve the doctor-patient relationship when that Facebook image goes viral and the latter learns that the former treats him like a cartoon.

A doctor that I consulted acknowledges that battlefield humor can be a benign response to harrowing circumstances but tells me in an e-mail that “public displays of such humor on the Internet, along with photos that even if not identified could be identifiable, is inappropriate and unprofessional.”

There is a deeper problem. Rather than simply giving doctors sufficient emotional distance to function effectively, this sort of horsing around might harden their hearts, making them less able to regard a patient as fully human. Such a transformation is not inevitable, but it is worth considering, particularly in a doctor's training. And that's what many med schools do, says the doctor I consulted: “At my own institution, our anatomy professor has paid great attention

to this issue right from Year One, when students confront their cadavers in the gross anatomy lab, with a series of well-conceived educational efforts.”

### **Letter number 2**

While visiting from out of state, my father-in-law generously paid for some expensive repairs to my car. After he put away his credit card, he asked if I would mind if he wrote this off as a business expense to his trucking company in another state. Flustered, I scolded him not to tell me if he was going to break the law. Should I have also made the shop refund his money and paid the bill myself?  
NAME WITHHELD, OREGON

You are appropriately reluctant to participate in your father-in-law’s little scam, but you’re not in a position to demand much from the repair shop — probably not the removal of a charge from someone else’s credit card. The person you must persuade to let you quit the gang and go straight is your father-in-law himself (assuming he wasn’t just making one of those jokes that isn’t quite a joke). I concede that it can be awkward to challenge someone you hope will pass you the gravy at the next family dinner. (Perhaps your spouse can gently intervene). It is disconcerting that you scolded your duplicitous in-law not for being dishonest, not for involving you in dishonesty, but for telling you what he was up to. You might strive for more than preserving your ignorance in a satisfyingly pristine state