

OBJECTION GAME:

The People v. Dr. Grimesby Roylott

Types of Objections

1. Relevance

What is relevance? For evidence to be relevant to a case, the evidence must make an action more or less likely than the action would be without the evidence.

Example of an irrelevant question: What did you have for breakfast that morning?

2. Leading Question

What is a leading question? A leading question *suggests* an answer to the witness and often also suggests a “yes” or “no” answer.

When is a leading question allowed? Although leading questions cannot be used for direct examination, cross-examiners may use them.

Example of a leading question: Isn't it true that you saw the defendant run into the alley?

3. Narrative Answer

What is a narrative answer? A narrative answer goes beyond the scope of the question asked.

Example of a narrative answer:

Attorney: What did you see when you walked into your house?

Witness: Before I walked into the room, I was outside, and it was such a beautiful day. The sun was out, and I had a quick conversation with the mailman. However, it was a little hot, so I decided to go inside. I opened my front door and immediately knew I had been robbed! The sofa was kicked over, trash was everywhere, and my television was gone! I quickly went outside and called 911. I know it Josh who did it.

4. Non-responsive Answer

What is a non-responsive answer? The witness's answer does not respond to the asked question.

Example of a non-responsive answer:

Cross-examiner: Isn't it true you hit Leslie?

Witness: Leslie hit me first! She was asking for it, acting like a jerk and humiliating me in front of all my friends.

5. Improper Opinion

What is an improper opinion? An improper opinion occurs when a counsel asks a witness for either an unqualified or an unnecessary opinion. These are the two kinds:

- i. "Objection. Counsel is asking the witness to give an expert opinion, and this witness has not been qualified as an expert."
- ii. "Objection. Counsel's question calls for an opinion which would not be helpful to understanding the witness's testimony."

Example of an improper opinion:

Attorney: What caused Stanley to get a heart attack?

Dwight: I've never been to medical school, but I'm sure it was all the donuts he consumes in the breakroom.

6. Lack of Personal Knowledge

What is a lack of personal knowledge? The witness cannot answer this question because it calls for something that the witness has no knowledge of.

Example: Was the driver drunk at the time of the hit and run?

7. Speculation

What is speculation? Closely tied to Lack of Personal Knowledge, speculative questions ask a witness to testify to the motives, intentions, or reasons behind the actions of another without knowledge of said motives, intentions, or reasons.

Example of speculation: Why do you think he did murdered Jack?

8. Hearsay

What is hearsay? Hearsay is giving a response to a question based off of what a witness *heard* someone else saying.

Example: Velma, you said you heard that Paul wanted to kill your husband Charlie?

OBJECTIONS

Objection #1- Sherlock Holmes

Prosecutor: What did Helen tell you Julia said before dying?

Sherlock: "It was the Speckled Band."

Object? Yes.

Why? Hearsay. Helen told Sherlock that those were Julia's final words. Sherlock did not hear Julia say them.

Objection #2- Dr. Watson

Prosecutor: What oddities did you notice in Helen's room?

Watson: There was a bell-rope attached to nothing, a ventilator with no link, and the bed was drilled down.

Object? No.

Why? N/A

Objection #3- Helen Stoner

Cross-examiner: Where did you live before England?

Helen: We have lived a few different places, but just before England, we lived in India.

Object? No.

Why? N/A

Objection #4- Sherlock Holmes

Prosecutor: Why did Helen wanted your help and not the police?

Sherlock: I have exceptional powers of deduction, and Helen wanted someone to investigate her sister's death and to protect herself from a similar fate.

Object? Yes.

Why? Speculation. The question asks for Sherlock's speculation on the motives of another character.

Objection #5- Dr. Watson

Cross-examiner: You received your medical degree from the University of London, didn't you?

Watson: Yes.

Object? No.

Why? If a direct examiner had asked the question, an objection could be raised for leading the witness. However, this type of question is acceptable with cross-examination.

Objection #6- Grimesby Roylott

Defense: Why do you keep anti-venom in your bedroom?

Roylott: I own a pet snake, and accidents do happen. A large snake is hard to control, and in the incident of an emergency, I sought to be prepared.

Object? No.

Why? N/A

Objection #7- Grimesby Roylott

Cross-examiner: In India, you hit a defenseless native butler, didn't you?

Roylott: The butler was extremely incompetent, and I had recently been severely robbed.

Object? Yes.

Why? Non-responsive answer

Objection #8- Sherlock Holmes

Defense: How did you become involved with this case?

Sherlock: I was first called in by Ms. Helen, who feared for her life. She shared with me that she believed that her sister had been murdered. Her sister had died mysteriously some months before in the middle of the night, and Helen suspected Roylott. Her sister, Julia, had slept in the room next to Roylott. Roylott suddenly ordered maintenance on Helen's room, and she had to move into her dead sister's room. Now, Helen feared that she might meet the same fate as her sister. So, I came into investigate the validity of her claims.

Object? Yes.

Why? Narrative answer. The defense asks a question that begs for a narrative answer.

Objection #9- Sherlock Holmes

Prosecutor: Could someone have been killed by a snake bite from the Speckled Band?

Sherlock: Absolutely. The snake is very fatal.

Object? Yes.

Why? Improper opinion. The prosecutor is asking Sherlock for an expert opinion, but Sherlock has not been qualified as an expert.

Objection #10- Housekeeper

Defense: What was the daughters' relationship with their stepfather?

Housekeeper: It was always very tense. The daughters resented him for using money from *their* mother to pay off his own legal issues and the disrepair of his home.

Object? No.

Why? N/A

Objection #11- Helen Stoner

Defense: Have you ever gone to university?

Helen Stoner: No, I never had the desire.

Object? Yes.

Why? Relevance. This question does not relate to this case.

Objection #12- Grimesby Roylott

Defense: The ventilator and bell-rope were unfinished because you ran out of money, correct?

Roylott: Yes. I had planned to spruce up the room for my step-daughter, but the finances did not allow me to finish.

Object? Yes.

Why? Leading question. The defense leads the witness to a "yes" or "no" answer, and this is forbidden on direct examination.

Objection #13- Grimesby Roylott

Prosecutor: Why did you want to install a ventilator?

Roylott: I wanted to improve the circulation of her bedroom without endangering her, as an open window would do.

Object? No.

Why? N/A

Objection #14- Sherlock Holmes

Prosecutor: What did Julia hear when she opened the door to her sister's room on the night of her sister's death?

Sherlock: She heard whistling.

Object? Yes.

Why? Hearsay. Sherlock did not hear the whistling; Julia did.

Objection #15- Helen Stoner

Prosecutor: What was your relationship like with your father in India?

Helen: My step-father and I have always had a difficult relationship, and I was always rather wary of him. In India, he beat one of our butlers. However, once my mother passed away and we moved to England, our relationship became even more strained. Our house was almost completely in disrepair, and he even allowed gypsies on our land. He frequently gets into fights, and I recently had to help him with a local police court case.

Object? Yes.

Why? Narrative answer.

Objection #16- Sherlock Holmes

Prosecutor: Why did Roylott connect the bed to the floor?

Sherlock: He attached it to the floor to ensure Julia and her sister were in close proximity to the entrance of the snake.

Object? Yes.

Why? Speculation.

Objection #17- Dr. Watson

Defense: Why was Roylott wheezing, and why did his symptoms stop?

Watson: Roylott had been bitten by the snake and exhibited symptoms common of a snake bite. He injected himself with anti-venom, which stopped the symptoms.

Object? No.

Why? Watson can be deemed an expert because of his previous experience.

Objection #18- Grimesby Roylott

Prosecutor: If you did not intend to hurt Helen, why did you keep anti-venom in the house?

Roylott: As is obvious from my own bite, the snake is dangerous. Why would I have attempted to hurt Julia with a snake that I could not control myself?

Object? Yes.

Why? Non-responsive answer. The prosecutor asks Roylott about the anti-venom, but he instead states the implausibility that he would harm Julia with an uncontrollable snake.

Objection #19- Phinius McQuincy

Defense: What do you believe the cause of Julia's death was?

McQuincy: Unknown causes. I ran through every possibility and could not determine a cause.

Object? No.

Why? McQuincy is an expert.

Objection #20- Phinius McQuincy

Prosecutor: Did Roylott have the tools and knowledge to kill Julia with a snake?

McQuincy: I do not believe that Roylott could have killed her using milk, a whistle, a dog-whip, and a snake.

Object? Yes.

Why? Improper opinion. McQuincy is not an expert on snakes, and the question asks him to be one.