

# Ethics Alarms

## About

*Updated 2016*

Welcome!

*The content published here, just to get this out of the way, is copyrighted and original unless otherwise noted. If you want to use it for any purpose, I expect a link and attribution, both on ethical and legal grounds.*

My name is **Jack Marshall**. I'm an ethicist, which means I make my living teaching, consulting, speaking and writing about ethics, and a lawyer, and the president of ProEthics, Ltd. I write this blog. If you want to know more about me, there is a biography below.

Ethics Alarms is *not* about me, however. It is about *ethics*, defined as the study of right and wrong, and how to become better at telling the difference. Although I will frequently discuss issues involving law and the legal system, none of the opinions here should be taken as legal opinions, because they aren't. My field is ethics, I specialize in legal ethics, but with rare exceptions, I no longer practice law.

**Ethics Alarms** are the feelings in your gut, the twinges in your conscience, and the sense of caution in your brain when situations involving choices of right and wrong are beginning to develop, fast approaching, or unavoidable. The better your alarms work and the sooner they start sounding, the more likely you are to do the right thing, or at least to use good ethical reasoning to decide what to do. This is a blog that aspires to help keep everyone's ethics alarms in good working order....including mine.

**How?** By pointing out ethical problems and dilemmas from all segments of society, professions and experiences of life. By applying principles of ethical analysis, and reaching conclusions about what is right, what is wrong, and what remains uncertain. By developing tools, terms and approaches to solving ethics conflicts and dilemmas, and by discussing, arguing, disagreeing, opening doors of perception and closed minds, and by helping us be more alert to ethical issues in our own lives.

I will usually make strong statements and espouse definite positions in the posts here. The objective isn't to be "right," though if I post an opinion, I believe it. The objective is to provoke thought about the issue that isn't controlled by biases, pre-conditioned reflexes, ideology or rationalizations. This is the same successful formula I employ in the ethics seminars I facilitate across the country for corporations, associations, non-profits, student groups and law firms. I don't need you to agree with me; there are often many legitimate ways to judge an ethical problem. I do need you to follow the Comment Policies. Check them out, please.

**Ethics Alarms** is a project of [ProEthics, LTD](#), an ethics training and consulting firm based in Alexandria, Virginia. The firm emerged to counter the widespread belief that ethics had to be boring and technical, and stands for the proposition that most people are engaged by ethics and care about the resolution of right and wrong when the issues are discussed directly and dynamically.

**Ethics Alarms** is the blog successor to [The Ethics Scoreboard](#), the ethics commentary website that will continue to serve as an ethics archive and resource.

Like the Scoreboard, **Ethics Alarms** is dedicated to starting discussions, not ending them, despite the tone of certitude that often invades its commentary. Creating an ethical culture is the shared obligation of everyone, and each of us needs to think critically about what is right and wrong, make our opinions known, and never hesitate to communicate those opinions for fear of being “judgmental.” We *should* be judgmental—civil, fair, open-minded, and also willing to hold ourselves to the highest standards of conduct. Living ethically is not always easy, but it becomes easier with thought, debate and practice.

This blog takes positions, attempting to be bold without being reckless. When there is an error or misstatement, I will correct it. When I am wrong, I will admit it. When I have made a mistake, I will apologize for it.

As with the Scoreboard, I will attempt to reply to as many comments as possible. Please keep yours civil and on topic, without foul language or political rants. **Ethics Alarms** takes the position that anonymous posts are unethical, and discourages them, but will begin by allowing them if they abide by the rules of the blog and there is a name of some kind attached to the comment. If you are determined to use a name other than your own, I request that you send me an e-mail with your real name. I can be reached for this and any other purpose at [jamproethics@verizon.net](mailto:jamproethics@verizon.net)

Now, if it matters, here is the bio:



Jack Marshall

**Jack Marshall**, the primary writer of **Ethics Alarms**, is president and founder of [ProEthics](#). He has taken the experience gleaned from a diverse career in law, public policy, academia and theater, and applied it to the field of legal, business, workplace and organizational ethics. A graduate of Harvard College, where he specialized in American Government and leadership, and Georgetown University Law Center, he practiced criminal law in Massachusetts and organization law in the District of Columbia, and led non-profit organizations devoted to education, public policy research, and health.

With Pulitzer Prize-winning historian Ed Larson, he compiled and edited [The Essential Words and Writings of Clarence Darrow](#), published in 2007. He also wrote the one-actor drama, “A Passion for Justice: An Evening With Clarence Darrow,” which premiered in 2001 and was produced at Maryland’s Olney Theater, starring Paul Morella.

His commentary on topics ranging from leadership to ethics to popular culture have appeared in *O Magazine*, *The Virginia Monthly*, *The Weekly Standard*, *Trial*, and numerous state bar publications. He has been featured on numerous radio shows, including PBS’s Religion and Ethics Weekly, NPR’s “Tell Me More” with Michelle Martin, and many local and internet broadcasts. He served on the adjunct faculty of the Washington College of Law at American University in Washington, D.C., teaching legal ethics from 2006-2008.

He is also an award-winning stage director, and from 2005 to 2015 was the founding artistic director for [The American Century Theater](#), a professional non-profit theater company dedicated to producing classic American plays. He lives in Alexandria with his wife and partner, Grace Marshall, their son Grant, and their Jack Russell Terrier, Rugby. Like many who are interested in the nature of good, evil, justice, and chaos, Jack Marshall is a lifetime fan of the Boston Red Sox.

---

**Share this:**

[Twitter](#) [LinkedIn 1](#) [Facebook 44](#) [Reddit](#) [Print](#) [Email](#)