

Officer Sean O'Reilly

(Fictitious character based on real events)

I appreciate the opportunity to justify many actions that have been taken by police officers in order to maintain peace and security in our cities. We are being accused in this hearing of restricting the rights of citizens and unfairly punishing foreigners. I want to set the record straight.

First of all, I have been a police officer for 20 years. I have risked my life every day to protect the citizens of our city against criminals and those individuals who do not respect the Constitution and the rule of law. I deal every day with the worst people our society has. I also want to say that our legal system affords these individuals more rights than they would enjoy almost anywhere else in the world. They are treated better and more carefully by our officers than they would be in most other countries. I say this with pride. I became a police officer because I respected the law and wanted to protect others who do as well. I know I have a duty to arrest unlawful people but to do it respectfully and within the boundaries Congress, our President, and Supreme Court allow.

With your group, pause in your reading to discuss and answer these questions:

1. Is this character real or fictitious? What is his current situation?
2. What is O'Reilly's view of his job? Why does he take it so seriously?

That being said, we have a real danger facing us. We are experiencing large numbers of recent immigrants who have completely different views than we do. Many people will say this is prejudiced of me, and maybe I am. We Irish police officers have been accused of being racists. Well, here's how I see it. My people have been discriminated against in the past as well. We Irish were treated terribly in the British Isles, which is why so many of our families came to the United States. Once we got here, we were treated just as badly. We were called lazy alcoholics who beat our wives and children. Here's the difference. In spite of this treatment, we volunteered to fight in the Civil War when sons of good, solid families did not want to risk their lives. We put our lives on the line for a brand new country that treated us terribly. We went to work in the factories and suffered the way many of these recent immigrants are suffering. The difference is we weren't trying to start a revolution by stirring up people to change the economic and political system. These foreigners are complaining about racial discrimination, but they bring it on themselves by giving speeches that criticize the War we just fought and calling for a different form of government and economic system. They are calling for birth control and eliminating marriage.

With your group, pause in your reading to discuss and answer these questions:

3. How does Officer O'Reilly explain his views about recent immigrants? What complaints does he have about them?

4. How does he say these immigrants are different from his own family? What justification does he use to show he his family was different when the immigrated to the U.S.

The main way this affects me is we get called to these rallies to keep the peace. You should hear these speeches where they are rallying people to revolution. If we allowed these speeches to go on, they would be running through the streets looting, burning, and vandalizing property or worse. We must stop them before they have a chance to create mass chaos. The same is true of the strikers. The leaders say they always call non-violence, but I think it is said with a wink. This way they avoid blame and can blame us when things get ugly. We get called by a factory owner like Mr. Ford or Mr. Jones because there is a strike or protest at their factory. When we arrive we are usually far out numbered and we never know what those strikers do or don't have. They often throw coal through windows; throw broken bottles or pipes, etc. We have to defend ourselves and make a judgment. These scenes are chaotic and uncertain and we officers have the need to protect ourselves.

What I'm saying is that in order to maintain the peace and security of our great nation, the police must be able to stop these meetings and speeches from taking place. The leaders incite the recent immigrants, many of whom do not speak the language or know the laws and customs, to do their dirty work for them. Instead of the leaders taking action, they incite these ignorant, desperate people who will get in trouble and spare the leaders any blame. Well, they are the problem and it is their speech and ideas that are to blame. They need to be stopped before our cities erupt into war zones.

With your group, pause in your reading to discuss and answer these questions:

5. Why does O'Reilly think it's justified to stop the protests and rallies, even though it is limiting their freedom of speech?