M’Naghten Rule

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Synonyms

[M’Naghten test](#)

Definition

Historically, insanity was not considered a defense, but was a way to be acquitted from a crime as a result of a mental illness. The test was named after Daniel M’Naghten, a British man who was a defendant in a murder case in 1843. He was acquitted due to being found insane. The M’Naghten test or M’Naghten rule states that a person may be insane if at the time of committing the crime, the accused person was under the effect of mental illness and did not know the nature or quality of the act he was doing. If the person accused did know what he was doing, the M’Naghten test assesses whether the person knows what he did was wrong.

Cross-References

- ▶ [Actus Reus](#)
- ▶ [Insanity](#)
- ▶ [Insanity Defense](#)
- ▶ [Mens Rea](#)

References and Readings

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