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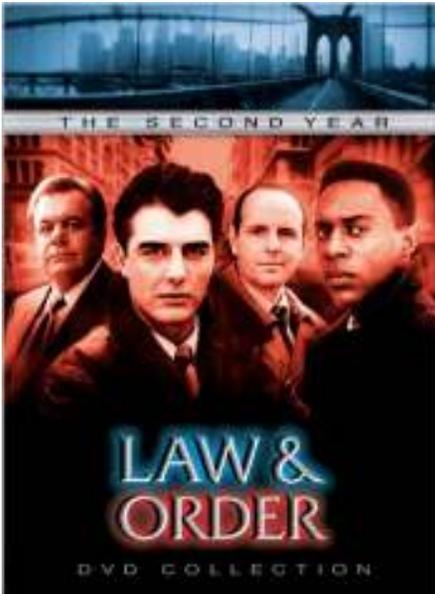
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8 arresting workplace lessons from 'Law & Order'



"Law & Order"—which was on [NBC](#) for 20 seasons—peaked many [viewers'](#) interest in...well, [law](#) and order. But aside from ripping stories from the [headlines](#) and showing us how investigations work, there are some [workplace](#) lessons that can be learned by watching the show.

- 1. If you must go to work drunk, be sure to pick up some [Altoids](#) before you [talk](#) to your employees.** Dr. Edward Auster is a brilliant [physician](#) and a hopeless drunk. When he [kills](#) a patient in the emergency room, his whole staff can attest to the fact that he regularly shows up drunk to work. Although Auster denies it during his trial, he makes the mistake of showing up drunk to court on the day he is testifying and removes any reasonable doubt. (**Episode:** Prescription for Death, Season 1)
- 2. Literacy is important in any profession.** When drug dealer Michael Ingrams is stiffed by a real estate agent in a deal, he needs to get revenge for the fraud. Obviously, it only makes good business sense to hire a contractor to do this dirty work for him, but little does he know his teenage hit man is illiterate. As a result, the hired killer goes to work at the wrong house. (**Episode:** Mushrooms, Season 1)
- 3. Keep your partner away from your partner.** Broadway producer Joshua Foster seemed to have it all before he was killed—a new show about to get off the ground, a new [business partner](#), and a beautiful actress [fiancé](#). But when his life partner cheats on him with his business partner, Joshua threatens to shut down the show—which results in both partners conspiring together to kill him. (**Episode:** His Hour Upon the Stage, Season 2)
- 4. Leave your machismo at the office door.** Executive Assistant District Attorney Ben Stone is highly competitive—so much so that he breaks his wrist playing [tennis](#) with his Assistant District Attorney. But when he goes against his defense attorney rival, Arthur Gold, during a case, Stone lets his machismo get in the way and risks losing the trial—and possibly setting a group of murderers free. (**Episode:** Severance, Season 2)

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5. Never trust someone who works on commission. Barbara Spiegelman is an elderly widow that just started a May-December romance with a clothing designer. When she ends up dead, her new boy toy is naturally a suspect. It turns out, however, that her social-climbing attorney—Kevin Doyle—thought his client was worth more to him dead than she was alive, thanks to the millions he would collect from her estate. (**Episode:** Right to Counsel, Season 3)

6. If you want to get revenge on a rival colleague, make sure you know where he lives. Physicist Edward Manning steals a revolutionary scientific idea from struggling scientist Max Weiss. Weiss, who is having

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trouble supporting his family, gets revenge by sending a bomb to his rival. However, he didn't realize that Manning had moved when he separated from his wife, and as a result the unsuccessful scientist ends up killing her instead. (**Episode:** Big Bang, Season 4)

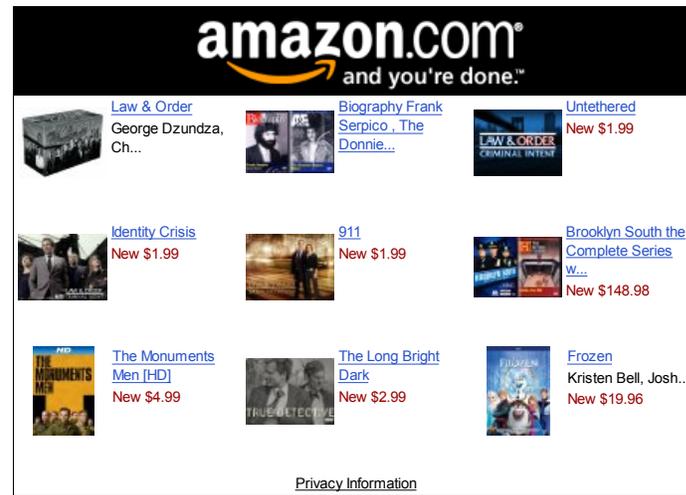
7. Never try to swindle a swindler. Lawyer Arthur Kopinsky is defrauding his clients by telling them he can find the hidden money that convicted swindler Willard Tappan stole from them—in exchange for hefty upfront payments. In the meantime, he is also blackmailing Tappan—which causes the felon to manipulate a victim of both men to kill the attorney. (**Episode:** Scoundrels, Season 5)

8. Don't mix business with pleasure. Paul Kopell is a hotshot attorney that gets too involved with his mob clients—spending time at their homes, going out for drinks, and bribing a juror to hang their trials. Once Executive Assistant District Attorney Jack McCoy [hears](#) the scheme to kill the bribed juror discussed in a wiretapped conversation, kissing the mob boss's ring won't even help keep Kopell out of jail. (**Episode:** House Counsel, Season 5)

This article originally appeared on my [Workplace Communication Examiner](#) page on September 25, 2009.

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Posted by Kenya McCullum at November 30, 2010 

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