Shakespeare for Lawyers: Rhetorical Power in the Courtroom - Part 3

Total: **83 Minutes**

Speakers:
Michael DeBlis III

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While it's true that the quote, "Let's kill all the lawyers" came from the stroke of Shakespeare's pen in Henry VI, Part 2, Act IV, Scene 2, there are many things that we, as lawyers, can learn from the Bard. There is a striking similarity between the Elizabethan theater of the 16th and early 17th centuries and the courtroom, perhaps because the courtroom hasn't changed much since its origins back in the late 1700s. In the same way that Shakespeare's plays were performed on a stage before live audiences without video cameras, green screens, animation, and special effects, so too is a trial. It is for this reason that Shakespeare's text was meant to be heard more than it was meant to be seen. In this way, Shakespeare's text is like sheet music. Until the actors breathe life into the words on stage, they are nothing more than blots of ink on paper. This is just as true for our written arguments. Until we get up before a jury and speak the words, they are empty, hollow, and devoid of life – like a stuffed animal. This speaks to the importance of delivery. Remarkably, the lawyer who stands before a jury finds himself in the very same position as that of a Shakespearean actor: he or she must rely exclusively on their words, their voice, and their bodies, including their gestures and their mannerisms, to tell the story. If we are to be zealous advocates for our clients, there is no better time than now to learn the tools and devices that made William Shakespeare the greatest dramatist of all time. So we must learn to harness the tools that the actors of Shakespeare's day used to move audiences, chief among them the power of rhetoric.

Topics include -

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- We Have Five Senses, Not One, How do our senses affect us in the Courtroom? (5 min.)
- Remembering sounds can help to access the emotions they trigger inside you (22 min.)
- A smell can help open up the personal emotions you need to feel (20 min.)
- The five senses are one big super-sense: Touch (23 min.)
- Does taste trigger an emotional response? (5 min.)
- What visuals create a response in you? (8 min.)

Total: 90 minutes

Speakers

Michael DeBlis III, Esq, LL.M

Michael is a trial lawyer. He graduated Cum Laude from The Thomas M. Cooley Law School and Summa Cum Laude from the Thomas Jefferson School of Law with his Masters of Law in Taxation. Michael is known for his charismatic personality and his unyielding dedication to his clients.

Michael spent the first five years of his legal career as a public defender in the NJ Office of the Public Defender cutting his teeth on some of the most serious felony cases to pass through the state courts of New Jersey. He then joined his father's law practice, DeBlis Law, expanding the practice into civil tax controversies and international tax compliance.

As a graduate of the National Criminal Defense College, Michael has trained under some of the best-known criminal defense attorneys in the country. That experience has taught him that justice for a person accused of a crime is only won through a full understanding of the client and the case.

To that end, Michael attempts to understand each client's case as a convincing narrative, not just as a set of innocuous facts and arcane legal rules.

When he's not in the courtroom, you can find Michael on stage. As a professionally trained actor, Michael's passionate about helping trial lawyers harness the power of persuasion and positive communication in the courtroom in order to connect to the jury on a human level.

Michael's training as an actor allows him to combine a unique blend of left-brain thinking with right brain artistry to make even the most dull and abstract areas of the law come to life.

Michael is a prolific writer and a passionate blogger. He has written articles that have been featured in leading tax journals and "Law 360."

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Michael is a living example of the tremendous power that comes from combining passion, preparation, persuasion, and positive communication in the courtroom. His courage and relentless work ethic has earned him a reputation as a zealous advocate and one of New Jersey's rising stars of the legal profession.

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