

What Stephen Colbert Can Teach Us About Cross Examination

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Cross examination is one of the more powerful tools at a lawyers disposal. It allows a lawyer to use leading questions to suggest the answer to the opposing witness. Knowing what admissions will help or hurt the case, a lawyer can tailor a series of leading questions designed to advance their clients interests. So what can Stephen Colbert teach a lawyer about cross-examination? The answer is a lot.

Many lawyers fail to use leading questions when cross examining. In failing to use this advantage lawyers let witnesses control the flow of information and potentially allow for more damaging answers to come out. Controlling a witness with leading questions can minimize this risk.

Few people use leading questions better than Stephen Colbert. When interviewing his guests he often gets them to admit to ridiculous facts. These 'admissions' are obtained through leading questions. The guests often agree even when the substance of the admission is outrageous and not accurate. You can access Stephen's interviews at <http://www.thecomedynetwork.ca/> and see how direct questions can lead to helpful (or in Stephen's case, amusing) answers.