

Socratic Circle: Chilon of Sparta

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In his retirement, the elderly Chilon said, "I've never broken the law in my entire life!" Yet in one case, it was not quite clear. One day, Chilon's friend was facing trial, and Chilon himself was to be the judge in the case. Chilon knew that his friend was guilty of the crime, but he was unsure about whether or not to convict his friend of the crime. On the one hand, if Chilon *convicted* his friend, then he'd lose their friendship. Yet on the other hand, if Chilon *didn't* convict his friend, then he wouldn't be obeying the law. In the end, Chilon had ruled that his friend was guilty of the crime in question. Yet after handing down the guilty verdict, Chilon persuaded a friendly judge to pardon his friend of the crime. In the end, Chilon's criminal friend wasn't punished for the crime. So, did Chilon do the right thing? Or, did he do something wrong? Explain.