

Name:



Homework

Philippe Petit: Hero or criminal?

Philippe Petit was a street artist who performed for tips. He juggled, rode a unicycle, and walked on tightropes. Police say he picked people's pockets while performing. Often, Philippe broke the law to do the things he wanted to do. In fact, he was arrested more than 500 times!

Was Philippe Petit a hero or a criminal? Some people say he was an artist who helped people dream. Others call him a criminal.

Read on and decide for yourself.



In 1968, Philippe Petit was 18 years old. One day, he went to the dentist. While he was waiting, he saw a newspaper with pictures of the new World Trade Center. Two giant towers were under construction in New York City.

A daring idea came into his mind. Philippe wondered if he could put a wire high up between the two towers. With his tightrope skills, he could walk on the wire. Philippe wanted to dazzle the world. "I loved those towers and I knew I had to conquer them," Philippe told *Newsweek* in 2001. He wanted to inspire people. He also wanted people to pay attention to the beauty of the towers and the sky.

Philippe spent six years planning to make his dream come true. He had a group of friends who helped him. Philippe flew to New York City. He pretended to be a French reporter and took pictures of the towers. He also hired a helicopter and took pictures of the towers from the air. He said they were for a magazine. He made fake ID cards for his friends and for himself.

On August 6, 1974, Philippe and his friends snuck by the security guards. They climbed up to the roofs of the towers. At night, Philippe and his gang rigged a wire between the two towers. At dawn, Philippe walked on the wire, high up in the sky. Later, Philippe said that he felt free when he walked on the wire and that his dream became a reality.

On the street below, people saw Philippe walk and were amazed. He was a quarter mile up in the air. Thousands of people stopped and watched him walk and dance. They were spellbound. They said it was unbelievable. They had never seen anything so beautiful before. They thought Philippe was a hero.

When the police shouted to Philippe to stop, he just ignored them. He continued dancing and walking on the wire, waving to the crowd below.

Finally, when Philippe walked off the wire, the police arrested him. They pushed him down the stairs and handcuffed him. The city took Philippe to court. They said Philippe had pulled off a "very professional" job.

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The police argued that what Philippe did was illegal. He had broken the law. Philippe could have easily fallen and died. The wire rigging was dangerous and could have caused the towers to snap. If something had gone wrong, thousands of people could have died.

But the judge dropped charges against Philippe and "sentenced" him to perform for children in Central Park.

Many years later, Philippe said that he believed that everyone should have a dream. He wanted people to try and make their dreams come true . . .

Source: <http://www.thedailybeast.com/newsweek/2001/09/23/highwire-act.html>

Read the passage again.

Underline facts that make Philippe a hero, like this:

Philippe wanted to dazzle the world.

Double underline facts that make him a criminal, like this:

Often, Philippe broke the law to do the things he wanted to do.

Pick the 3 most important facts and list them below.

→ Facts that make Philippe Petit a hero:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

→ Facts that make Philippe Petit a criminal:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Look at your list and decide whether you think Philippe was a hero or criminal.

I think Philippe was a _____.