**Defining Deviance and Crime**

Source: **The Shadow Line: Deviance and Crime in Canada** (1993)\*

**Instructions:** Read ‘Defining Deviance and Crime’ and answer the following questions. Your responses should reflect your understanding, as well as your own ideas and opinions regarding concepts.

**Questions**

Introduction

1. How does one (you!) explain our fascination with deviance and crime and especially violence?

Defining Deviance

1. How do we define ‘deviance’ or deviant behaviour? Provide a working definition.
2. Negative reactions to deviant behaviour serve as mechanisms of social control. Discuss with a consideration for ‘informal’ and ‘formal’ negative reactions – can you think (provide) examples?

Objectivism and Subjectivism

1. Explain what is meant by the objective and subjective approaches to the definition of deviance. Which perspective do you think makes the most sense?

The Link Between Deviance and Rarity

1. Explain the relationship between deviance and crime.
2. How does one (you again!) define ‘crime?’ Explain.

Voluntary and Involuntary Deviance

1. What is the difference between voluntary and involuntary deviance? How might the public and authorities (police, psychiatrists, social workers, etc.) respond differently to involuntary and voluntary deviant behaviour?
2. Canadian law considers children under the age of 12 incapable of committing a crime, while youth between the ages of 12 and 18 are treated differently with respect to penalties and punishments. Explain.

Deviance and Social Context

1. What is the impact of social context on the designation of behaviours, ideas, traits as deviant?
2. Different age groups have different conceptions of deviance. Can you cite an example of how you and your parents differ on conceptions of deviance? Specifically, provide an example and explain the differing views experienced.
3. What factors or characteristics beyond age, differentiate our understanding of conceptions of deviance and deviant behaviours.

Criminal Law

1. What are the central characteristics of criminal law as outlined in this article? Discuss how each (there are 4!) impacts both accused persons and law-abiding citizens.

Elements of Criminal Law

1. Define ‘actus reus’ and ‘mens rea.’ What relevance do they have to criminal law?
2. The law holds those accountable who lack intent if they are ‘negligent’ or ‘reckless.’ Explain.

Criminal Defenses

1. What are the major defenses that can be invoked to counter a criminal charge?

\*Note: the pop culture references are a little dated, as much as some of the conceptions of deviance.