Foreword to the Binary Solution
Casebook for the Deconstruction
By Anna Ivey. Esq.

former Dean of Admissions at University of Chicago Law School &
Author of *Ivey Guide to Law School Admissions)*

When I first crossed paths with Eva Lana (founder of Binary Solution and all-around LSAT guru), I was like many former law school applicants: I remembered the LSAT as an annoying hoop I had had to jump through to get into law school, and once I had gotten into law school, the LSAT became useless to me. After many conversations with Eva over the years, I now realize I was wrong.

Eva taught me a whole new appreciation for the LSAT. I am not someone who by temperament or talent loves standardized tests. I have always despised taking them, and I'm thrilled that they are behind me. As I sat in on more and more of Eva's presentations, however, and paged through her ever-evolving casebook (which is now in your hands, or on your screen), I learned that the makers of the LSAT are actually pretty crafty. They write devilishly clever questions that seem designed to keep you out of law school, but in fact they actually measure skills that will be instrumental once you get in.

Luckily for you, Eva is even craftier than the LSAT's designers, and she's figured out how they think. What Eva has taught me over the years about the LSAT exceeds a short introduction, but let me focus on two important insights she shared with me, and that she is letting me share with you:

1. Reduce the LSAT to as few steps and categories as possible.

Most people have figured out that the LSAT is a test of logical reasoning. Formal logic can be taught, and it can be learned. If you haven't taken a formal logic class in college (which I highly recommend if you plan on taking the LSAT), then any decent LSAT class should be giving you a crash course in formal logic.

Eva took that insight one step further, however, and figured out that just about every question on the LSAT is some flavor of this-or-that proposition. That's why her method is called "Binary Solution." Binary means having only two components, as in:

- either/or
- if/then
- can be true/must be true

This binary approach -- either/or, if/then, and so on -- means that you don't have to master 1,001 other rules of formal logic. Even better, it means you don't have to master 1,001 different ways of categorizing LSAT questions, because most, if not all, of the test's questions have a binary structure.

Some LSAT courses and methods like to create giant and unwieldy taxonomies of LSAT questions. (Taxonomy is the science of classifying things, like classifying species in biology). As the test prep student, you can spend

way too much time in practice, and during the real test, just trying to figure out which of these gazillions of categories a particular question fits into. Eva's method saves you lots of time, time that you can better spend actually solving the question. A big part of Eva's philosophy is: Why make extra work for yourself? Why multiply steps unnecessarily? If the question requires only two steps to solve, she's not going to make you sit there and march through five steps.

Why does that matter so much? Because fundamentally the LSAT is a test of speed. Yes, it tests your logical reasoning. Yes, it tests whether you know what words mean. As many test-takers learn the hard way, though, the test isn't rocket science if you have all the time in the world to complete it. But you don't. The way that the test separates the OK test-takers from the superstars is by speed. Can you answer these questions correctly in a short, stressful, fidgety, I'm-hungry-and-need-a-power-bar amount of time? Three steps versus seven, or four sub-categories categories instead of 14, can make all the difference.

Is her method easy? No. Formal logic is not for slouches, and Eva teaches it a very high level. (My head hurts a little bit when I sit in on her class, in a good way.) The LSAT is not a general intelligence test. It's measuring a specific skill that can be taught and learned. Some people will be able to master it better than others, but wherever your needle starts out on that gauge, if you're willing to put in the work, Eva's test prep method can move that needle, sometimes substantially. Admissions officers sometimes talk about the LSAT as if it measures innate skills, and they try to discourage people from spending money on test prep. That's hooey. Formal logic is no more an intuitive skill than differential calculus or verb conjugation. Some people are better at it than others, but it's learnable.

Bonus points: Because Eva is so good at reducing the LSAT to its basic building-blocks, and because she has been dissecting it and reverse-engineering it for so long, she can actually predict what kinds of questions are likely to show up on future tests. If I were studying for the LSAT right now (thankfully I am not), that would be a great advantage to have.

2. Good test prep will teach you skills that matter -- a lot -- in law school.

The LSAT isn't just an annoying hoop, as I one thought. If you tackle your LSAT prep in a smart way, you'll be sharpening skills that will make you a better law student and lawyer. We all know that formal logic matters to legal practice. You make arguments, you anticipate counterarguments, you find weaknesses in arguments. You compare and distinguish cases based on logic. You fit the different parts of a statute together based on logic. It turns out that the makers of the LSAT try to make the test directly relevant to the skills you'll need in law school.

You're not in law school yet, so you probably don't know yet what "mens rea" is, or what "strict liability" is. That's OK, because Eva will show you how LSAT questions tie closely into real law school examples. If you learn how to fly through these kinds of exercises on the LSAT, you will be able to fly through real law school problems much more quickly too. You will have *learned a method for learning the law*, and that's half the battle for success in law school. So Eva will not only help you get in, she'll also help you excel once you're there.

So congratulations. By signing up for a great test prep course you've taken an important first step towards success in law school. The amount of time and effort you're about to invest in your LSAT skills will pay off for years to come.