

COMMONWEALTH v. HOOD

BACKGROUND

This mock trial is based upon the legend of Robin Hood, but updated to modern times.

NOTE: For ease of reading, masculine pronouns were used, but obviously these parts can be played by anyone.

PARTS TO ASSIGN

Prosecutor
Sheriff of Nottingham
John/Joan King (theft victim)

Defense Attorney
Robin Hood (defendant)
Marian/Marion Fitzwalter (defense witness)

POSSIBLE EXHIBITS

Lease
Bag of money with a big "\$"
Feathers
Rent Laws of Stroudsburg

THE CASE

This is a criminal case because we find the kids understand "guilty" and not guilty" better than they do comparative negligence.

Robin Hood is charged with theft, and has an interesting "defense" to throw upon the jury. Each lawyer and actor should read this entire document to understand the full story.

John King should testify first about the theft and how it occurred. Next the Sheriff can testify as to how he caught Robin.

Defense will call Marian to talk about how terrible John King is and then Robin can be the star witness at the end!

FACTS

Marian is a maid, working at a local hotel. She earns minimum wage and rents a beat up old apartment in Stroudsburg. The landlord is the evil John King, the meanest slumlord in all of the subdevelopment known as Sherwood.

Marian has done everything she can to raise enough money to pay her rent each month, but evil John King keeps increasing her rent.

Marian has a month by month lease which allows the landlord to raise the rent for "just cause". John has been ordered by the health board to repair the home many times and to fumigate it to

get rid of the roaches and every time he has to do those things, he considers them "just cause" for a rent increase.

In April of 2007, Marian's rent was increased from \$400 a month to \$750 a month. She told John she could not pay the rent, and he got a hammer and nail and posted a notice on her door stating that if the rent was not paid by the 15th of April, he would enter the dwelling and forcibly remove her from the premises.

Maid Marion was very upset and didn't know what to do, because there was no way she could raise that much money on the minimum wage. She went to sleep crying but was awakened the next morning by a knock on the door. When she went to see who was there, she found a bag of money on the doorstep – just enough to pay the rent! She also found a feather.

John arrived at noon to force her out, bringing with him the Sheriff of the Nottingham subdevelopment. Instead, Marian handed him the money (and demanded a receipt). John was very upset, and said "This money bag looks exactly like the kind I use! And I had some money stolen just last night!"

John was going to just take the money (since he was convinced it was his) but the sheriff said that unless he could prove it was definitely his, he could not do that. Saying "Curses, foiled again!", John accepted the money as payment on the rent, but said that he would have to raise the rent again next month to \$900.

As they left, the sheriff then inquired of John what had happened. John explained that he was taking his bag of money to deposit in the bank the day earlier when he was attacked and the money stolen. He had been walking down Quaker Alley in Stroudsburg, passing by the old cemetery, when out of nowhere an arrow swooped past his head, knocking his hat off. He couldn't tell where it was coming from so he just ran as others swished by, and as he was running for his life, he dropped his money. He didn't see who had picked it up.

When he reported this to the sheriff, he investigated the area and found a few arrows and a feather which matches the one found by Marian. Putting two and two together, he sought out Robin Hood, a known ne'er-do-well who has no known address but is often found hanging out on the streets of Stroudsburg. Finding him wearing a hat with a matching feather, the sheriff immediately arrests Robin and charges him with theft.

During the trial, Robin should take the stand and then confess. (It might be fun for his/her attorney to become flustered over this, as if that was unexpected.)

Robin's confession should go something like this:

"John King steals from the poor every day; he charges more rent than he is legally allowed to charge, and if anyone here is a thief, it is him! I have here a copy of the Rent Laws of Stroudsburg which clearly state that all rents can only be increased yearly on any individual tenant, and then by a maximum of 10%. John King is breaking the laws!

I admit that I scared him into dropping the money he stole from the good, hardworking people of Monroe County, but I didn't keep it – I gave it back to the people he stole it from! I am no thief!"