

2024 (NOF) Birch Invitational
Mock Trial
Fact Pattern:
State vs. Harper Thompson

In the quaint town of Willow Creek, a shocking theft of a priceless heirloom rocked the community on May 7th, 2023. The stolen property, a centuries-old diamond necklace known as the "Willow Creek Jewel," was a cherished possession of the town's historical society and held immense sentimental value.

The investigation swiftly honed in on Harper Thompson, a local antique dealer with a reputation for acquiring rare and valuable items through questionable means. Harper had been seen frequenting the historical society's museum in the weeks leading up to the theft, sparking suspicion among town residents.

The theft occurred during the evening hours of May 6th, when the museum was closed to the public. Security footage revealed a figure resembling Harper Thompson entering the museum shortly before closing time and leaving a few hours later, carrying a suspiciously bulky bag. However, the figure's face was obscured, making positive identification difficult.

Harper Thompson was apprehended on June 2nd, 2023, by Detective Amanda Hayes. At the time of arrest, Harper was found in possession of various valuable antiques, though the Willow Creek Jewel was not among them. Despite the circumstantial evidence, Harper vehemently denied any involvement in the theft, claiming to have been framed by a rival antique dealer.

The State has charged Harper Thompson with grand theft and burglary. The defense contends that the evidence against Harper is purely circumstantial and insufficient to establish guilt beyond a reasonable doubt.

Witness Statements:

Witness Statement 1: Prosecution - Detective Amanda Hayes
"I am Detective Amanda Hayes, responsible for investigating the theft of the Willow Creek Jewel. Our investigation uncovered compelling evidence implicating Harper Thompson in the crime. Security footage captured a figure resembling Harper entering and leaving the museum around the time of the theft, carrying a

suspicious bag. However, due to poor lighting and obscured facial features, positive identification was challenging."

Witness Statement 2: Prosecution - Margaret Green, Museum Curator

"I am Margaret Green, the curator of the Willow Creek Historical Society Museum. On the night of May 6th, I noticed Harper Thompson lingering near the exhibit showcasing the Willow Creek Jewel. Later, when reviewing security footage, I observed a figure resembling Harper entering the museum shortly before closing time. While I cannot definitively say it was him, his presence raises suspicion."

Witness Statement 3: Defense - Ethan Thompson, Harper's Brother

"I am Ethan Thompson, Harper's brother. On the night of May 6th, Harper was with me at our family's antique shop, which is located on the other side of town from the museum. He stayed with me until closing time, and we didn't leave the shop until well after the museum was closed. Harper had no opportunity to commit the theft."

Witness Statement 4: Defense - Dr. Melanie Stevens, Forensic Expert

"I am Dr. Melanie Stevens, a forensic expert specializing in trace evidence analysis. Despite extensive examination, we found no physical evidence linking Harper Thompson to the theft of the Willow Creek Jewel. The absence of fingerprints or DNA evidence suggests that if Harper was involved, he took precautions to avoid leaving any trace behind."

Jury Instructions:

Ladies and gentlemen of the jury, you are tasked with determining the guilt or innocence of the defendant, Harper Thompson, in the theft case before us. The State has charged Harper Thompson with grand theft and burglary.

The burden of proof rests with the State, who must prove Harper's guilt beyond a reasonable doubt. This means that if there is any reasonable doubt in your minds about Harper's guilt based on the evidence presented during this trial, you must find him not guilty.

Remember, this is a jury trial, and your role is crucial in ensuring justice is served. Pay close attention to the evidence presented by both the prosecution and the defense, and

deliberate carefully before reaching your verdict. Your decision will shape the outcome of this case and determine Harper Thompson's fate.