

2024 National Online Forensics Pine/December Mock Trial

Fact Pattern:

State vs. Jordan Vega

On the morning of May 12th, 2023, at approximately 9:45 a.m., the downtown branch of Brookfield Savings Bank was robbed. A masked individual entered the bank, brandished a handgun, and demanded money from the tellers. The suspect was described as approximately 5'10" with a slim build and wearing a black hoodie, gloves, and a ski mask. Witnesses reported that the suspect spoke with a deep voice and appeared calm but threatening.

The robber left with \$25,000 in cash and fled the scene on foot. The Brookfield Police Department quickly responded and began a search of the surrounding area. Security camera footage showed the suspect running into an alleyway, but the trail was lost.

Later that day, Jordan Vega, a 28-year-old Brookfield resident, was arrested based on a tip from an anonymous caller. Vega, who was recently laid off from a local factory, was found in possession of \$2,000 in cash and was staying in a motel on the outskirts of town. Vega denies any involvement in the robbery, claiming the cash was borrowed from a friend to cover living expenses.

The prosecution argues that Vega matches the physical description of the suspect, has a financial motive, and was found with a suspiciously large amount of cash soon after the robbery. The defense counters that there is no direct evidence linking Vega to the crime, such as DNA or fingerprints, and asserts that Vega has an alibi for the time of the robbery.

2024 Brookfield Criminal Trial (Jury Trial)
Mock Trial

Witness Statements:

Witness Statement 1: Prosecution - Detective Carla Moreno

"I am Detective Carla Moreno, and I led the investigation into the robbery of Brookfield Savings Bank. We received an anonymous tip pointing to Jordan Vega as the suspect. When we arrested Vega, we found \$2,000 in cash on their person, some of which matched the sequential serial numbers of the stolen bills. However, we did not recover the handgun or clothing described by witnesses. While we lack physical evidence like fingerprints or DNA, Vega's financial struggles and proximity to the scene make them a strong suspect."

Witness Statement 2: Prosecution - Taylor Greene, Bank Teller

"I was working as a teller during the robbery. The suspect was calm but menacing, and I felt terrified. While the suspect was wearing a mask, their height and build match Jordan Vega's appearance. I can't say with certainty it was Vega, but the resemblance is striking, especially when comparing their posture and voice."

Witness Statement 3: Defense - Jordan Vega

"I did not rob the bank. On the morning of May 12th, I was at a diner across town having breakfast. I borrowed the \$2,000 from a friend to pay for my motel and other expenses after losing my job. I have no idea how some of the cash could have matched the stolen money, but I had nothing to do with the robbery."

Witness Statement 4: Defense - Maria Lopez, Diner Waitress

"I was working at the diner the morning of May 12th, and I saw Jordan Vega there around 9:30 a.m. They ordered breakfast and stayed until about 10:00 a.m. I didn't keep a close eye on them the whole time, but I'm fairly certain they were still there during the time of the robbery. I can't be 100% sure of the exact timing, though."

Jury Instructions:

Ladies and gentlemen of the jury, you are tasked with determining whether Jordan Vega is guilty of armed robbery in connection with the incident at Brookfield Savings Bank on May 12th, 2023. The State must prove beyond a reasonable doubt that Jordan Vega committed the robbery and knowingly took money from the bank while using or threatening to use force or intimidation.

The law defines armed robbery as the unlawful taking of property from another person or entity by force or intimidation while armed with a deadly weapon. To find Vega guilty, you must be convinced that:

1. The defendant was the individual who committed the robbery.
2. The robbery involved the use or threat of force.
3. The defendant knowingly and intentionally committed the act.

If you find that there is reasonable doubt regarding any of these elements—for example, whether Vega was the individual who committed the robbery or whether the cash found on Vega is conclusively tied to the crime—you must find the defendant not guilty.

This is a jury trial, and your decision must be based solely on the evidence presented in court. Carefully weigh the testimony of all witnesses and the arguments made by both the prosecution and defense. Your verdict must be unanimous.