

## **COMMONWEALTH v. HOOD**

### **BACKGROUND**

This mock trial is based upon the legend of Robin Hood, but updated to modern times. We should at least have a Robin Hood hat for the main star.

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 Prince (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 Prince 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 Prince is and then Robin can be the star witness at the end!

## MARIAN FITZWALTER

I am a maid, working at a local hotel. I earn minimum wage and rent a beat up old apartment in Stroudsburg. The landlord is the evil John Prince, the meanest slumlord in all of the subdevelopment known as Sherwood.

I've done everything I can to raise enough money to pay my rent each month, but evil John Prince keeps increasing it.

I have 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 my 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, my rent was increased from \$400 a month to \$750 a month. I told John I could not pay the rent, and he got a hammer and nail and posted a notice on my door stating that if the rent was not paid by the 15<sup>th</sup> of April, he would enter the dwelling and forcibly remove her from the premises.

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

*Upon cross examination, Marian will admit the following:*

Yes, I am in love with Robin Hood, and that is why I did not tell the Sheriff who had given me the money. I certainly knew that John Prince walked down that alley every afternoon to make a deposit at the bank, but I don't know if I ever told Robin that.

Yes, I voluntarily signed the lease but I had no idea he would try to raise the rent so high and so often!

## JOHN PRINCE

I am a businessman, and I treat all my tenants fairly. Marian is lying when she says I don't fix things that need fixing; I always do.

I do have leases with all my tenants which allow me to recover my costs – I'm not supposed to lose money being a landlord now, am I? If they didn't like the lease, they didn't have to sign it.

When Marian didn't pay the April rent, I posted a notice to her door giving her time to move out; wasn't that generous of me? I mean, I could have just thrown her out, you know.

On the 15<sup>th</sup>, I arrived at noon, bringing with me the Sheriff of the Nottingham subdevelopment. Instead, Marian handed me the money (and demanded a receipt)! I was very upset, and said to the Sheriff "This money bag looks exactly like the kind I use! And I had some money stolen just last night!"

I refused to take the money (since I knew it was mine) but the sheriff said that unless I could prove it was definitely mine, I could not do that. I said, "Curses, foiled again!", and accepted the money as payment on the rent, but told Marian that because of the theft, I would have to raise the rent again next month to \$900.

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

*Upon cross examination, John will admit the following:*

I never hire lawyers; they're all evil. I make my own leases. I had no idea my lease is considered illegal by the Stroudsburg politicians, but if you ask me, their law is illegal because it interferes with my right to enter into contracts!

So what if she is kicked out on the street? What concern is that of mine? Are there no poorhouses? Are there no orphanages?

## SHERIFF OF NOTTINGHAM

It's not easy being the Sheriff; I have to constantly keep order in the development. Kids running around making noise, riding their bicycles everywhere, littering – it seems that everyone I meet is a criminal.

John Prince is a good friend of mine, and he asks me to help him evict people all the time.

When John reported the theft to me, I investigated the area and found a few arrows and a feather which matches the one found by Marian. I immediately 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. Upon seeing him, I immediately arrested him. He's a thief and a villain and should be placed in jail for many years!

*Upon cross examination, the Sheriff will admit the following:*

John Prince sometimes pays me extra to go kick people out of their homes for him when they don't pay the rent. Sometimes they tell me that they did pay the rent, but that's none of my business, I kick them out anyway. I remember last Christmas when I had to evict a widow, but she found a cardboard box to sleep in that night. The orphans weren't too happy when we closed down the orphanage either, but maybe they should have thought about that when they bought wood for their fire instead of paying their rent!

I always hated Robin Hood. He is always playing tricks on me and he's such an obnoxious goody two shoes. I admit I had no proof when I arrested him, I just assumed it was him because of that stupid feather. That was enough evidence for me!

Yes, it's true that wild turkeys sometimes go through that graveyard and drop their feathers, but who cares? I know it was Robin Hood based on my years of experience as a Sheriff.

Yes, it is true that I have been accused many times of beating up suspects, but they were resisting arrest!

## ROBIN HOOD

*(It might be fun for his/her attorney to have been presenting the case as one where the DA did not have enough evidence to convict, only to have Robin confess. The attorney could then become flustered over this, as if that was unexpected.)*

I am Robin Hood, and I cannot lie. I took the money from John Prince and gave it to Marian, but I do not consider that stealing.

You see, 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!

*Upon cross examination, Robin will admit the following:*

Yes, I have a record for theft here in Monroe County; but I only stole from the rich to give to the poor. One time I was convicted for stealing from one of the many rich mansions in Sherwood, but I didn't steal them. I then took the items, hocked them, and gave the money to the orphanage so they could buy blankets for the winter. I have never kept any of the money I have taken.

How do I get by? Well, I usually keep around 10% of all I steal to cover my expenses. Arrows aren't cheap, you know! I do give to charity quite often, of course.