

ADMINISTRATION OF JUSTICE

Opening Activity

Whodunit #4?

The Case of the Wrong Briefcase

Name: _____ Period: _____ Row: _____

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN OF THE JURY:

When a person is found with stolen property by the police it does not necessarily mean they are automatically a thief and guilty of the theft.

Keep this in mind as you review and consider the facts in this case. Since you will be in a criminal court for today's case, the State will be the accuser. In this case, the State, is being represented by the district attorney, and has accused Sammy Jackson of robbing Stephanie's Jewelry Store. Sammy Jackson is the defendant in this matter, has pleaded innocent and claims that his arrest is a mistake on the part of overzealous police to solve this crime.

The State opened the case by calling the owner of Stephanie's Jewelry Store as its first witness. She has testified as follows:

"My name is Stephanie Ono, and I own Stephanie's Jewelry Store in Rockvale Mall. I was working alone in the jewelry store on Wednesday afternoon, November 4th, when a man walked in at exactly 4:30. The reason I noticed the time was because I had just put a new collection of diamond watches from Germany on display and just set the correct time on them. What caught my attention about the defendant is he had a handkerchief over his face and I thought that was odd until I also noticed the outline of a gun sticking out of his pocket. That is when I became scared."

The man ordered Stephanie Ono to empty a case of jewels and all of the store's cash into a black briefcase. The robbery took only minutes to complete, and the thief made his escape on foot.

At four o'clock the next afternoon, Sammy Jackson entered the lobby of the Hilton Hotel, checked out of his room and walked over to the luggage checkroom. Jackson pointed to a black briefcase on one of the shelves, which the bellman retrieved and gave him. As he handed the bellman a tip, a hotel detective noticed that Jackson's briefcase matched the description of the briefcase used in the jewelry store robbery. He arrested Jackson and called the police.

When the police arrived they informed Mr. Jackson they had reason to believe his briefcase may have been used in the robbery at Ono's Jewelry Store the previous day. One of the police detectives opened the briefcase and emptied its contents on a table in the manager's office as a look of shock and surprise spread over Jackson's face. The contents of the briefcase turned out to be the stolen jewelry.

Sammy Jackson appeared to be dumbfounded by the contents. He claimed he had pointed to the wrong briefcase in the hotel checkroom because this was not his briefcase. This briefcase was not his, he said, but an identical briefcase that had to belong to someone

else. He told the investigator that his briefcase contained a computer, business papers, pens, a calculator, and it was locked.

The police returned to the luggage checkroom and questioned the bellman. The man thought there might have been two briefcases in the checkroom, although a second black briefcase was nowhere to be found.

EXHIBIT A is a picture of the briefcase and jewelry the police recovered.

The State has drawn your attention to the shape of this briefcase, its handle, and lock. The State submits that this is an unusual looking briefcase, and that it is very unlikely, if not impossible, that another briefcase looking just like it would be checked into the same hotel on the same day.

The State also presented **EXHIBIT B**, a list of the contents of Sammy Jackson's pockets at the time he was arrested. His wallet contained \$710 in cash, a sizable sum for a person spending only one night in town. The State alleges that the \$710 in Jackson's wallet is the money stolen from the jewelry store.

No gun was found in Jackson's pocket. The State claims a simple explanation. Sammy Jackson robbed Stephanie's Jewelry Store by pretending the object in his pocket was a gun. In reality, it was only his pointed finger.

On the basis of all this evidence, Sammy Jackson was accused of the jewelry store robbery.

Sammy Jackson has given the following testimony:

"My visit to your city was supposed to be a simple overnight trip. I read an article several years ago that the Rockvale Museum has its annual art sale during the first week of November each year, and I wanted to buy a painting because I just started collecting art last year. I may not be an art expert, but I know what I like. Last year, I purchased pictures of sailing ships and mountain scenes. But this time, I wanted something really stupendous to go over the sofa in the living room. I have saved up more than nine hundred dollars to buy a painting this trip."

Jackson's schedule was easy to reconstruct. He arrived by bus on Wednesday morning and checked into the Hilton Hotel. The Museum opened at noon. Mr. Jackson was one of the first persons to enter the Museum. He spent the entire afternoon there. But to his disappointment, he could not find any artwork he liked.

EXHIBIT C is a torn Museum ticket stub for the day in question. The Museum hours were from one to five o'clock p.m. The robbery of Stephanie's Jewelry Store took place at 4:30 p.m. While there was no witness who can testify they saw Sammy Jackson in the Museum the entire time, the ticket stub shows he indeed visited the Museum.

When the Museum closed, Sammy Jackson stated he went back to his hotel, disappointed his trip was in vain had dinner and went to bed. The following day, he checked out of the hotel at noon. Since his bus did not leave until later that afternoon, Jackson locked his black briefcase, checked it in the hotel's luggage checkroom, and went to get something to eat at a local restaurant. Following lunch he walked around town window shopping, returned to pick up his briefcase at the Hilton, and he was promptly arrested.

Sammy Jackson claims that he is the victim of an unfortunate coincidence.

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN OF THE JURY: You have just heard the Case of the Wrong Briefcase. You must decide the merit of the State's accusation that Sammy Jackson robbed Stephanie's Jewelry Store. Be sure to carefully examine the evidence in **EXHIBITS A, B, and C.**

Did Sammy Jackson rob Stephanie's Jewelry Store? Or had he indeed picked up the wrong bag?

THESE ARE YOUR EXHIBITS OF EVIDENCE

EXHIBIT A

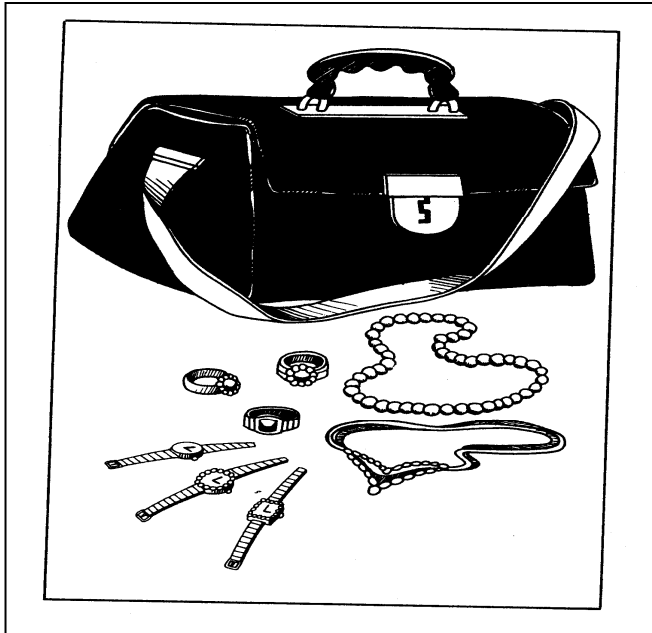


EXHIBIT B

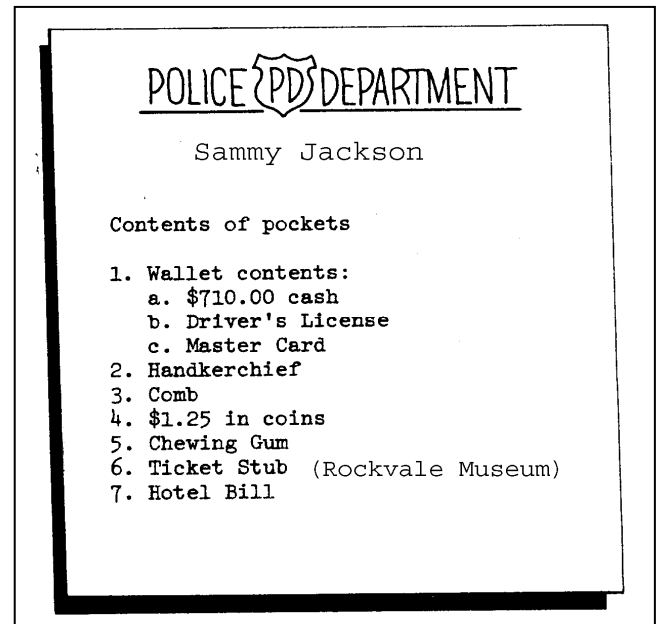
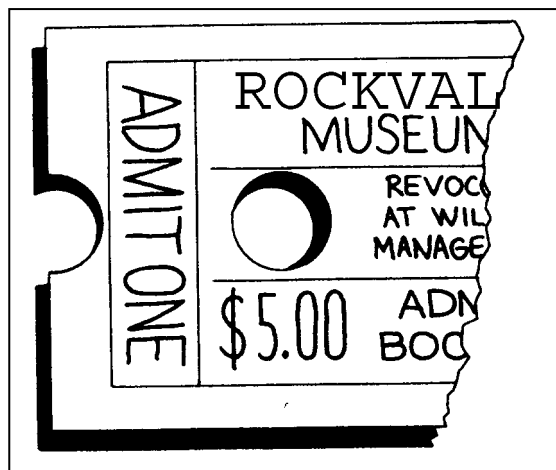


EXHIBIT C



THE VERDICT! (Explain your decision)
