

## Case No 1 The people versus Mr Needle

Characters

Clerk of court

Magistrate

Accused (Mr Needle)

Prosecution Lawyer

Mr Brambery

Defence lawyer

Witness (Miss Cynthia)

Clerk of the court: the court is now in session on the 19<sup>th</sup> July 1894. Presiding is the right Honourable.

I call case 1. The people Versus John Needle.

Constable brings in accused

Magistrate: John Needle. You are accused of stealing food from Mr Bramsbury's General store on 05<sup>th</sup> July at 4:30pm.

How do you plead. Guilty or not guilty?

Accused: Not guilty

Prosecution Lawyer: I call my first witness – Mr Bramsbury.

Clerk: (Swears in first witness) Do you Mr Bramsbury swear o tell the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth – so help me God.

Mr Bramsbury: I do

Prosecution Lawyer: In your own words, Mr Bramsbury, could you please tell the court what happened on 5<sup>th</sup> July at 4:30pm, in your store.

Mr Bramsbury: While I was busy in the back of the store, I heard a scuffling scrapping sound from the front. On investigating the noise, I saw that rat bag needle dragging out a sack of Prime Flour. By the time I could catch up with him he had loaded the flour onto the cart and taken off with great haste.

Prosecutions Lawyer: And had Mr Needle left money to pay for said goods.

Mr Bramsbury: Not at all and when I called out after him he had gestures back at me in a most rude manner.

Accused: You dirty rotten liar. I was waving goodbye to my cousin Cynthia who was still in the store at the time.

Magistrate: Order! Order in the court! One more outburst like that and I will have you removed – Mr Needle.

Prosecution Lawyer: We have no further questions.

Defence Lawyer: (stands and walks over to the witness) Mr Bransbury- how long have you known the accused!

Mr Bransbury: For about 6 years and his good life for 5 years before that scoundrel came and stole her away.

Defence Lawyer: Mr Bransbury, it is Mr Needle we are talking about here, not his wife or your previous relationship with her.  
(Court – Murmurings – gossip sounds)

Magistrate; Order in the Court! Stick to answering the questions Mr Bransbury.

Defence Lawyer: And was Mr Needle a regular paying customer?

Mr Bransbury: Well yes and no. He was always behind in his payments.

Defence Lawyer: Ah – Mr Bransbury – then you would freely admit that Mr Needle had a regular account with you.

Mr Bransbury: Well at one time yes. But I was about to close it on account of his late payments.

Defence Lawyer: Thank you Mr Bransbury. I have no further questions. You may step down.

Mr Bransbury: He stole the flour! He should go to .....

Magistrate: (Leaning over) Thank you! Mr Bransbury that will be all.

Defence Lawyer: I call my first witness Miss Cynthia Bottom.

Clerk: Do you swear to tell the truth. the whole truth. And nothing but the truth so help you god.

Miss Cynthia: I do.

Defence Lawyer: Could you please tell us what took place.

Miss Cynthia: Certainly. Mr Needle was in a hurry to return home to his poor sick wife and as Mr Bransbury was nowhere to be seen, he left a not with me to hand to him. It was then that Mr Bransbury came raging from the back of the shop, rudely pushing me side and racing out after Mr Bransbury.

Defence Lawyer: And what may I ask was on the note that Mr Needle handed to you?

Miss Cynthia: I have the note here.

Defence Lawyer: Could you please read that note to the court.

Miss Cynthia: Please charge my account 1 bag of prime flour. I will fix up the account at the end of the month as usual.

Defence Lawyer: Did you pass the note onto Mr Bransbury.

Miss Cynthia: Well yes, I tried. But he was in such a rage that he just screwed up the note and threw it on the floor before storming off to the back of the store again. Well I was not about to stay and be insulted, so I picked up the note and left. If you ask me, I'd say he was still jealous of Mr Needle for taking Mrs Needle away from him.

(Court – More murmurings and gossips)

Magistrate: Order! Strike that comment from the records.

Defence Lawyer: I have no further questions

Prosecution lawyer: Did Mr Bramsbury read the note you handed to him?

Miss Cynthia: Well no, as I explained.....

Prosecution lawyer: Clearly Mr Bransbury had no idea at all that Mr Needle had intended to pay for the flour. I have no further questions you may step down.

Magistrate: Are there any further witnesses?

Lawyers: No, your Honour.

(Calls the lawyers to the Bench) – Discussions continue for a few seconds)

(Magistrate make his decision)

Clerk: Will the accused stand, The Right Honourable will now announce his verdict.

Magistrate: Mr Needle. Theft is indeed a serious offence. The penalties which I need not remind you are severe. However, given the evidence before me I have no other choice but to find you not guilty, but you will, Mr Needle pay in full your account to Mr Bramsbury at the end of the month. And then after, negotiate with him any further accounts for the purchase of goods from his store. Case dismissed. The court will now take a recess.