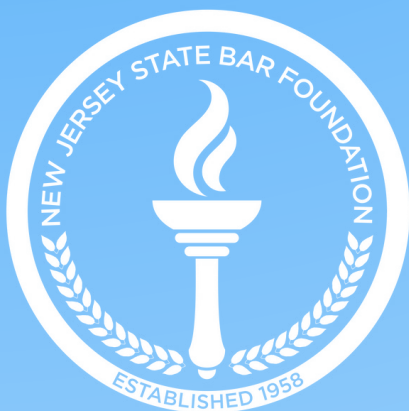


# MOCK TRIAL EXERCISES

Featuring winning cases from the  
New Jersey State Bar Foundation's

Law Fair  
2025 Competition

FOR GRADES 3–6



# Preface

Since 1992, the **New Jersey State Bar Foundation** has sponsored a unique, law-related education opportunity for elementary school students — the Law Fair Competition.

Students in grades three through six are invited to create original mock trial cases. The cases are judged on the basis of originality and educational value in teaching students about their legal rights and responsibilities. Winners are selected in each grade level. The trials are then conducted before student audiences at special Law Fair programs in the spring. The third- through sixth-grade audiences serve as juries.

Following are the winning students' cases from the Law Fair 2025 Competition. They may be used as a guide to prepare a submission to the Law Fair Competition or as a classroom exercise. Law Fair helps to fulfill civics education requirements, such as New Jersey Learning Standard 6.3.8 CivicsPR.5, engagement in simulated democratic processes which includes judicial proceedings.

Please note that some of the cases may contain “laws” created by the students for the purposes of this competition, which may not necessarily be actual laws. Since these mock trials were written by children, the content should not be considered technically accurate.

*These materials are produced for educational purposes only. The content for each submission*

*was created by the winning team and should not be interpreted to reflect the views or positions of the New Jersey State Bar Foundation. To make the scenarios more meaningful and allow students to reflect on actual conflicts they may confront, the submissions sometimes touch upon issues reported in some of the challenging news stories of the day; however, please note all characters, names, events and circumstances are fictitious. No resemblance or reference to real individuals, events or circumstances is intended or should be inferred.*

Because this booklet contains cases written by students from third through sixth grades, teachers should review the cases written by students in the upper grades before distribution in order to determine whether they are appropriate for younger children.

Law Fair has won national recognition for educational excellence from the American Bar Association and the American Society of Association Executives.

This project is made possible by funding from the IOLTA Fund of the Bar of New Jersey.

If you would like to participate in the Law Fair Competition, please call 732-937-7519 or e-mail [sboro@njsbf.org](mailto:sboro@njsbf.org).

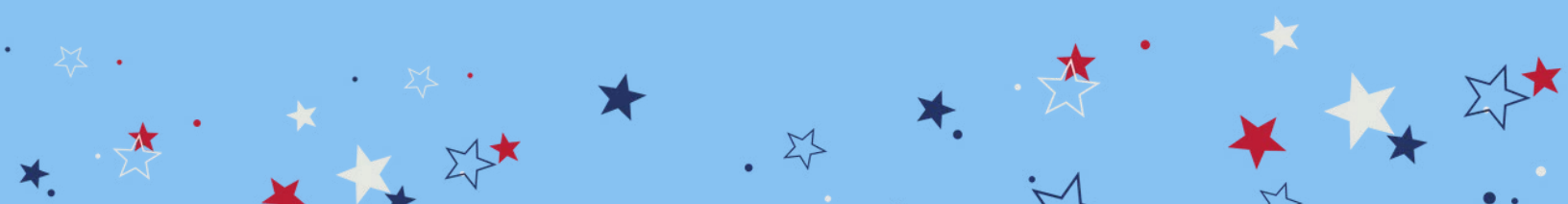
For information about other free, law-related education services available from the New Jersey State Bar Foundation, visit us online at [njsbf.org](http://njsbf.org).

© 2025 New Jersey State Bar Foundation.  
All rights reserved.



# *Contents*

The Case of the Stolen Wedding Ring .....	4
The Case of the Missing Purse .....	7
State v. Ivanna Vote .....	10
The Case of the Kidnapped Therapy Dog: Sara Dunkett v. Wolf Place Dog Kennel .....	15
The Case of the Missing Package: State v. Matthew Dobber .....	19
State v. Eden F. Reefud .....	23
Soccer Stadium Collapse: Orange and Alvarez v. Build It Now .....	27
The Case of the Extreme Blue Fire Chicken Sandwich: King v. Chicken Heaven .....	32
Fire Insurance Fiasco: Porol de Mann v. Good Insurance .....	36
The Case of the Not So Balanced Beam: Linguine v. Rising Stars Gym .....	40
The Titanic Crash .....	45
Scarred by a Stingray .....	48



The background features a light blue sky filled with various stars in white, red, and dark blue. On the right side, there are several balloons in white, blue, and red, some partially visible. The overall theme is celebratory and patriotic.

# The Case of the Stolen Wedding Ring

## ***School***

**PS #25 Nicolaus Copernicus**

Jersey City

Grade 3

First Place

## ***Teacher***

Christina Cole

## ***Students***

Reign Alvarez

Priyanshi Behera

Siena Brown

Shriya Dammur

Aditri Joshi

Ganeev Joshi

Bidisha Kunwar

Safana Malik

Aryan Misra

Maiya Narain

Arya Patel

Alina Shaik

Aahna Sharma

Anay Shrote

Anvesh Singh

David Walker

## FACTS

On April 24, 2024, Susie Sheepley held her rehearsal dinner at Beach Maria. That evening, she entrusted her wedding ring to her friend Amy Kate, who placed it in a bag and agreed to keep it safe. For most of the dinner, the bag remained on the table, where Susie’s friends Indie, Amy, and Lisa were seated.

Throughout the evening, several guests left the table to get food, use the restroom, or dance. Susie also stepped away multiple times to mingle with her guests. While Amy had agreed to watch the bag, she was not at the table the entire time. Indie saw Amy take the bag with her to the bathroom—the only time it was removed from the table.

In the bathroom, Amy showed the ring to her friend Lisa as they admired its beauty. Afterward, they left together, and Amy returned the bag to the table. At the end of the night, Susie took the bag back to her hotel. The next morning, she discovered that the ring was missing.

## ISSUE

Did Amy Kate steal Susie’s wedding ring?

## WITNESSES

### ***For the Prosecution***

Susie Sheepley  
Indie Anna Jones

### ***For the Defense***

Amy Kate  
Lisa Patel

## WITNESS STATEMENTS

### ***Testimony of Susie Sheepley***

My name is Susie Sheepley, and my wedding ring was stolen sometime between my rehearsal dinner and when I returned to my hotel room. My childhood best friend and bridesmaid, Amy Kate, was responsible for watching the ring. I entrusted it to her

because I trusted her completely. She placed the ring in a bag, which she left on the table during dinner.

Since my engagement, Amy has frequently commented on how jealous she is of me getting married and how beautiful my ring is. During dinner, I saw Amy take the bag into the bathroom with our friend, Lisa Patel. They entered together, and when they returned, Amy placed the bag back on the table.

Later that night, when I got back to my hotel room, the ring was gone.

### ***Testimony of Indie Anna Jones***

My name is Indie Anna Jones, and I attended my friend Susie Sheepley’s wedding rehearsal dinner. During the dinner, I saw Susie ask Amy Kate to hold her wedding ring since she would be busy mingling with guests. Amy agreed and placed the ring in her bag, which remained on the dinner table for most of the night.

The only time the bag left the table was when Amy took it to the bathroom, accompanied by our friend Lisa Patel. While in the bathroom, I saw Amy take the ring out of the bag and show it to Lisa. When they returned, Amy placed the bag back on the table.

Later that night, after the dinner, Susie called me to her hotel room, visibly upset, her ring was missing! She asked if I had noticed anyone near the bag, and the only people I saw close to it were Amy and Lisa. I felt awful for Susie; she was devastated.

### ***Testimony of Amy Kate***

My name is Amy Kate, and I’m one of Susie’s bridesmaids. At the rehearsal dinner, I was entrusted with looking after her wedding ring. Susie gave me the ring before dinner, and I placed it in her bag. I felt honored that she trusted me with something so important, especially since I was overjoyed about her

upcoming wedding.

During dinner, I accidentally spilled soda on my dress and had to go to the bathroom to clean up. My friend Lisa came with me to help. While we were in the bathroom, Lisa asked to see the ring, so I took it out of the bag, and we admired it together, talking about how lucky Susie was to be getting married. When I started cleaning my dress, I handed Lisa the bag to hold. Once I was done, she returned it to me, and we left the bathroom together.

Back at the table, I placed the bag where it had been all night. After dinner, I returned the bag to Susie, and we all headed to our hotel rooms. Later that night, I got a call from Susie—she was distraught because her ring was missing. I feel horrible that it's gone!

### ***Testimony of Lisa Patel***

My name is Lisa Patel, and I'm a friend of Susie's. I attended her rehearsal dinner party, where I saw Susie give her ring to our friend, Amy Kate. Amy Kate placed the ring in Susie's bag for safekeeping.

During dinner, Amy Kate accidentally spilled soda on her dress, and I accompanied her to the bathroom to help clean it. While we were there, Amy took the ring out of the bag, and we admired it for a moment before she went into a stall. I held the bag for her while she cleaned up. Once she was finished, we left the bathroom together and returned to the table, where Amy placed the bag back in its original spot.

We spent the rest of the evening eating and dancing before heading back to our hotel rooms. Later that night, I received a call from Susie. She was very upset because her ring was missing.

## **INSTRUCTIONS**

The prosecution must prove beyond a reasonable doubt that there was intentional theft from the rehearsal dinner.

## **SUB-ISSUES**

1. Was the bag left on the table unattended sometime during the night?
2. Was anyone else in the bathroom when Amy Kate and Lisa went together?
3. Did Susie misplace her bag long enough from the end of the rehearsal dinner to her walk to her hotel room?
4. Were there any security cameras in the venue that could be reviewed?

## **CONCEPTS**

1. Burden of proof
2. Credibility of witnesses

## **LAW**

2C:20-3 — Theft by unlawful taking or disposition

a. Movable property. A person is guilty of theft if he unlawfully takes, or exercises unlawful control over, the movable property of another with purpose to deprive him thereof.

The background is a light blue gradient. It is decorated with numerous stars in red, white, and dark blue, some solid and some outlined. On the right side, there are several balloons in red, white, and dark blue, some partially visible. The overall theme is patriotic and celebratory.

# The Case of the Missing Purse

## ***School***

**P.S. #25 Nicolaus Copernicus**

Jersey City

Grade 3

Second Place

## ***Teacher***

Stephannie Lopez

## ***Students***

Vianny Batista

Ashly Criollo

Mayar Elkoumy

Ailyn Sanchez

Irene Velez

## FACTS

On July 15, 2023, in Jersey City, New Jersey, at approximately 4 p.m., a purse was reported missing. The purse was taken from William Jackson Park on Zabriskie Street. A lady, Jennifer Lopez, was at the park with her daughter Lily. Lily asked her mom to push her on the swings. When Jennifer returned to the bench where she left her purse, her purse was missing. At that time another visitor at the park, Evy Fluffy, said she saw a man, Jake Fasal, take the purse. Jake was at the park with his friend, Nath Junior. Nath Junior said that Jake did not take the purse.

## ISSUE

A purse was missing from William Jackson Park.

## WITNESSES

### *For the Prosecution*

Jennifer Lopez  
Evy Fluffy

### *For the Defense*

Jake Fasal  
Nath Junior

## WITNESS STATEMENTS

### *Testimony of Jennifer Lopez*

My name is Jennifer Lopez. I am 20 years old. During the afternoon of July 15, 2023, I took my three-year-old daughter to the park. At first, she was playing with her ball but then she asked me to go on the swings. I parked the stroller in the swing area and put my purse on the bench. Then I walked away to help Lily. When I came back to the bench, I noticed my purse was gone.

### *Testimony of Evy Fluffy*

My name is Evy Fluffy. I am 25 years old. I went to William Jackson Park on July 15, 2023, with my niece Mia. Mia is six years old. I was babysitting that day. We went to the park around 3:15 after Mia came home from summer camp. The first thing we did was

feed the birds. Then we went to the slide. The slide is next to the swings at the park. While helping Mia up the stairs for the slide, I saw a man, Jake Fasal, bend down and put a purse from the bench into his backpack and walk away. I walked over to Jennifer, told her what I saw, and I immediately called the cops.

### *Testimony of Nath Junior*

My name is Nath Junior. I am 30 years old. I have been friends with Jake since kindergarten. I took my son to the park on July 15, 2023, and asked Jake to come with me to keep me company. I was playing soccer with my son Nelson, who is seven years old. After a little while Jake's phone rang and he walked away from us. I saw him walk around the park. His shoe was untied, and he finally stopped to tie his shoe where the swings are located. He proceeded to bend over, tie his shoe and then he met back up with us and said he needed to go. I remember he was in a hurry, but I don't know who called. He then left the park. I have known Jake for a long time; he would never steal anything.

### *Testimony of Jake Fasal*

My name is Jake Fasal. I am 28 years old. I have been friends with Nath since kindergarten. On the afternoon of July 15, 2023, I went to William Johnson Park with Nath and his son. After playing soccer with them, my phone rang. It was my boss. He seemed pretty angry. I walked away to take the call and realized my shoe was untied. I stopped in the swing section and bent down to tie my shoe. I stood up to finish the call and my boss said there was a mix-up with a catering order that I signed off on, and I needed to get to the restaurant right away. I told Jake that I had to leave and left the park in a hurry. I never saw the purse, and I would never steal.

## INSTRUCTIONS

The prosecution must prove beyond a reasonable doubt that there was intentional theft from William Jackson Park.

## **SUB-ISSUES**

1. Were there any other eyewitnesses?
2. Which witness is more credible?
3. Is Ms. Lopez responsible for leaving her purse unattended?

## **CONCEPTS**

1. Burden of proof
2. Credibility of witnesses

## **LAW**

In New Jersey, stealing a purse is considered purse snatching, which is a type of assault. The penalties for purse snatching depend on the circumstances of the crime but can include jail time and fines.

The background features a light blue sky filled with various stars in red, white, and dark blue. On the right side, there are several balloons in red, white, and blue, some partially visible. The overall theme is patriotic and celebratory.

# State v. Ivanna Vote

## ***School***

**Chesterfield Elementary**

Chesterfield

Grade 4

First Place

## ***Teacher***

Nicole DiMaiuta

## ***Students***

Annelise Cruz

Arjun Karthik

Ayethi Palla

## FACTS

On October 29 at 1 p.m. in Trenton, NJ, Ivanna Vote did in-person early voting for the 2024 Presidential Election. Ivanna and her friend Terry Taken went to the park to go for a walk that same day. Ivanna accompanied Terry to go vote early as well because she said she'd keep her company and wait with her. When they arrived at the polling place, they saw how long the lines were and decided to leave. Terry said she would come back on Election Day.

When Terry got home, she realized her ID was missing. A couple of days later, Ivanna found it at the park and returned it to Terry. On November 5, Election Day, Terry went back to finally vote, and when she did, a worker named Parker Polling said she had already voted. Terry insisted that she did not vote, so Parker gave her a number to call for voter fraud. Since Ivanna Vote was the last person to have Terry Taken's ID, she is now being accused of the crime of identity theft through voter fraud.

## ISSUE

Did Ivanna Vote commit the crime of identity theft through voter fraud?

## WITNESSES

### ***For the Prosecution***

Parker Polling  
Terry Taken

### ***For the Defense***

Victor Vote  
Ivanna Vote

## WITNESS STATEMENTS

### ***Testimony of Parker Polling***

My name is Parker Polling, I am 21 years old, and I live in Trenton, NJ. I've lived here for most of my life and currently attend The College of New Jersey. At TCNJ, I am studying criminal justice because I want to become a lawyer one day. As a future lawyer, I am very

passionate about politics and care a lot about voting. Picking the right person for president is extremely important. That's why, when I saw a sign looking for polling workers in Trenton, I decided to apply. Even though I was very busy with schoolwork, I still wanted to take the opportunity. I had to go to several training sessions before I could officially become a poll worker. After that, I was then told I would work some in-person early voting days and on Election Day as well.

On October 29, 2024, at around 9:30 a.m., I drove to the polling location to work one of the in-person early voting days. Once I got there, I saw that there was already a really long line of people. Whenever I'm working, there's a few steps I must follow before I let a person vote. At around 1 p.m., a couple came in to vote, which ended up being Mr. and Mrs. Vote. When it was their turn in line, Victor came up to me and voted first. Then, Ivanna voted right after him. About two hours later, my shift was over and as I was walking to my car, I saw Mrs. Vote again. This time, I saw her with someone else, which seemed a little strange since I knew she had already cast her vote.

On November 5, Election Day, I was working and told my coworker about how I saw the same lady twice at the polling location and found it odd. I described what she looked like, and my coworker said he saw that same lady here on another day as well, which was so bizarre. After that, I looked up and saw the same person who was with Mrs. Vote in the car when they drove by. I discovered that her name was Terry Taken and she was coming in to place her vote as well. When she took out her driver's license and gave it to me, I looked up her information in our system. However, I was extremely shocked at what I saw. I blinked my eyes twice to make sure I wasn't seeing things. My screen said that Terry had already voted, which was the first time I've ever seen this happen. I called over another experienced coworker to make sure I did everything correctly. I then had to tell

Mrs. Taken that it said she had already voted. She looked very confused after I said this, then demanded, “You have to check this again! I haven’t voted yet, so this can’t be possible.”

Unfortunately, I had to tell her that the system says she already voted. Terry’s face started burning up and she repeated that she didn’t. I felt sorry for her and told her if she was suspicious of someone using her ID to vote, that she should call a number for voter fraud since that’s what I was told to do. Right after that, she left looking very confused and sad at the same time.

### ***Testimony of Terry Taken***

My name is Terry Taken, I am 29 years old, and I live in Trenton, NJ in a small townhouse with my husband and two kids. I’m an author and illustrator for children’s books, so I mainly work from home. Since I’m on my computer all day long, I enjoy taking breaks. I prefer going outside for some fresh air on a long, calm walk. Additionally, I get inspired by nature, so I try to go on at least one walk a day. I used to walk alone, until I met Ivanna Vote. Ivanna and I met at the beginning of April this year at the park because my children are friends with her kids. Ever since then, we’ve become close, and Ivanna now joins me on my walks.

On October 29, 2024, at 2 p.m., Ivanna and I went for our daily walk in the park, as usual. Ivanna mentioned that she went to early voting beforehand. She asked me if I went to vote yet and I told her I didn’t and wasn’t sure if I was going to for this election. Ivanna insisted and was a little pushy, stating that I have to vote. From what she said, I learned that she’s very passionate about voting. Ivanna immediately made us leave the park and said she was going to come with me to make sure I voted. I found the whole thing really weird, but I ended up going just to make her happy.

When we arrived, I looked through the window and saw the longest line that I’ve ever seen. I told Ivanna I would just come back on Election Day because I didn’t have the time or patience to wait. Ivanna looked a bit upset and disappointed after I told her that. When I got home after the long day, I realized my ID was missing. I texted Ivanna to ask her if I left my ID in her car, but she said she looked and couldn’t find it. I then figured it might be in my house or maybe it was somewhere in the car that Ivanna missed. A couple of days after that, I got a call from Ivanna saying she found my ID. When I asked her about where she found it, she hesitated and then said it was at the park. I was happy that my ID was found, but Ivanna was still acting a bit unusual.

On November 5, Election Day, I pulled into the polling place in Trenton to vote as I promised Ivanna. I walked inside and went in line to wait for my turn. Thankfully, it was much shorter than it was a few days ago. When I got to the front of the line, the polling worker asked for my ID, so I handed it to him. A minute later, the worker’s face looked very confused. He then called over someone, which seemed like his boss, and told me that I had already voted. I felt my cheeks burning from both embarrassment and anger. I demanded that I had not voted already, and the worker said if I was suspicious of someone using my ID to vote, then I need to report it. He was kind enough to give me a number to call for voter fraud, and that’s when it all came to me. Since Ivanna was the last person to have my ID and demanded that I should vote, I believe she used my ID to vote.

### ***Testimony of Victor Vote***

My name is Victor Vote, and I am 40 years old. I have lived in Trenton, NJ for 12 years and have been married to my wife Ivanna for 10 years. We have three children that are five, six, and eight years old. I currently work as a Zamazon delivery worker, and I have been working for this company for nine years. Due

to my job, I am always very busy and work long hours. Sometimes, I work for 10 hours a day, so my schedule tends to get out of hand.

On October 29, 2024, I had an evening shift, so Ivanna and I went to do early voting before that. I can't vote on Election Day because of my work hours, so I wanted to get it done. After we voted, I went home to get ready for work and Ivanna went on a walk. She told me she was going with her friend Terry Taken and that she would be back in a few hours. About two hours later, as I was delivering packages, I got a call from Ivanna. She mentioned that she drove Terry to the polling location since she wanted to vote. However, Ivanna said they never went inside because the lines were too long. Two days later, Ivanna said that she found Terry's ID in the park. She told me she would return it tomorrow because it was already getting dark. The next day, Ivanna wanted to get Terry's ID back to her as soon as possible. Therefore, she planned to return the ID to Terry and then go grocery shopping after.

A few days after Election Day, out of nowhere the police showed up to our house and started asking my wife questions. I was really confused and asked the officer what was going on. Now my wife Ivanna is accused of stealing and using Terry's ID to vote. My wife didn't do anything that they were saying! All Ivanna did was find and return an ID to her good friend Terry. Ivanna cares about voting, but she would never go this far.

### ***Testimony of Ivanna Vote***

My name is Ivanna Vote, and I am 38 years old. I've been living in Trenton, NJ for 10 years now with my husband, Victor Vote. We have three precious children that are five, six, and eight years old. I love being a mom, so I picked a job that allowed me to stay at home and have flexible hours. This gives me the opportunity to spend more time with my kids since they're so young. When I'm not working, I enjoy taking my kids to the park and that is actually how I met my

friend Terry Taken. On October 29, 2024, my husband and I went to vote early because he had to work later that evening and we wanted to go together. After we went, I got a text from Terry asking if I wanted to go for a walk. Since the kids were still at school, I told Victor that I was going to go with her and would be back in an hour or so. While Terry and I were walking she told me that she wasn't even sure if she was going to vote in this election. I am very passionate about the election, so I happily encouraged her to vote because every vote counts. Terry took some time to think about it and finally agreed. I excitedly offered to accompany her, so she wouldn't have to wait alone. I drove us to the polling place since I knew where it was and had just gone. Once we pulled up, Terry saw how long the lines were and said she would just come back on Election Day. I was a little disappointed because I was really excited for her and finally convinced Terry to go.

Later that same day, I got a text from Terry asking me if she left her ID in my car. I quickly checked, but didn't see it earlier, so I knew it wasn't there. Then, a couple of days later I went on another walk at the park. Terry couldn't come because she was too busy with her kids. While walking, I stopped for a little break and saw Terry's ID on the ground. I immediately picked it up, called Terry to let her know I found it, and came home. As I said before, I really care about this election and knew Terry would need her ID if she were to vote too. That's why I wanted to get it back to her as soon as possible. I told Victor that I found Terry's ID and would return it tomorrow because it was already getting late.

The next day, I told my husband that I was leaving to return the ID and would stop to buy some groceries on my way home. When I got to Terry's house, she kept questioning me about the details of where I found her ID, which was a little strange. I told her that I found it in the park, but she kept on giving me a weird look. A few days later, the police showed up at our house and started asking

me questions about Terry's ID and voting. Now I am being accused of identity theft through voter fraud. Of course I care about voting, but I would never commit a crime to interfere with who wins the election. I'm innocent!

## **INSTRUCTIONS**

The prosecution must prove beyond a reasonable doubt that Ivanna Vote is guilty of committing the crime of identity theft through voter fraud.

## **SUB-ISSUES**

1. Was Ivanna mad that Terry didn't vote early?
2. Did Ivanna lie about where she found the ID?
3. Why was Ivanna acting strange when she gave Terry her ID back?
4. Did Ivanna do anything with Terry's ID before she returned it to her?
5. How close are Ivanna and Terry?
6. Did Parker make a mistake while checking Terry's ID?
7. Did Parker receive all the proper training for the job?
8. Was the system that Parker used working correctly?

## **CONCEPTS**

1. Identity theft
2. Voter fraud
3. Circumstantial vs. direct evidence
4. Burden of proof: beyond a reasonable doubt
5. Accusation
6. Intent

## **LAW**

Under N.J.S.A. 2C:21-17 it states that impersonation/identity theft can include the following: impersonating another or assuming a false identity for the purpose of obtaining a benefit for himself or another or to injure or defraud another.

The background is a light blue sky filled with various stars in red, white, and dark blue. On the right side, there are several balloons in red, white, and blue. The title is written in a large, bold, black font.

# The Case of the Kidnapped Therapy Dog: Sara Dunkett v. Wolf Place Dog Kennel

## ***School***

**Avon Elementary**

Barrington

Grade 4

Second Place

## ***Teacher***

Joan Stetser

## ***Students***

Evan Greshock

Evelyn Heine

Brandon Martinac

Rosie Watson

Sebastian Zepeda

## FACTS

On July 19, 2023, Sara Dunkett was working in her office at Nova School, in Barrington, New Jersey, doing work to prepare for the new school year. Ms. Dunkett has been the guidance counselor at Nova School for the past 10 years and she was working on student schedules. She left her dog Lola in her office, behind a gate, while she went to the main office to make copies.

When she returned, Lola was GONE! She saw broken glass on the floor and the screen was out of the window. She could hear Lola barking in the distance, so she used her dog translator app and determined that Lola was yelping for help. She found dog treat crumbs on the floor with some broken dog treats. She was so upset at the loss of her dog that she got in a car accident on the way home from school. Ms. Dunkett suffered a concussion, and her car was totaled. Ms. Dunkett called the police, and Officer Dan came and took down the facts.

On July 19, 2023, at approximately 8:30 a.m., Rob Err went to Nova School in Barrington, NJ. He needed to pick up a dog from a school in the Barrington School District for the doggie day care he works for, Wolf Place Dog Kennel in Mt. Laurel. His boss told him to pick up a large doodle dog. Now Ms. Dunkett is suing Rob Err and the Wolf Place Dog Kennel for damages and emotional distress.

## ISSUE

1. Is the Wolf Place Dog Kennel liable for lost wages/damages and emotional suffering because their employee made a mistake?
2. Is Rob Err liable for not checking the dog chip ID, which would have identified that he had the wrong dog?

## WITNESSES

### *For the Plaintiff*

Sara Dunkett  
Nellie Berr

### *For the Defense*

Rob Err  
Isha Barks

## WITNESS STATEMENTS

### *Testimony of Sara Dunkett*

I have been the guidance counselor at Nova School for the past 10 years. I was so happy when I got my dog Lola certified to be a school therapy dog. Lola loves her job at school and is friends with many of the staff and students. The district just got a new school therapy dog at Woodland Middle School, named Annie, and she is a doodle as well.

I work about 10 days in the summer, and I love it as no one is around, and I can get a lot of work done. On July 19, 2023, at approximately 8:30 a.m., I left Lola in my office with a gate across the door when I went to make copies. When I came back, there were dog treat crumbs on the floor with broken glass all over. I noticed the window was wide open. Lola was gone! I could hear her yelping in the distance. I used my dog translator app to see what Lola was saying. It said, "Help, help."

On the way home that day, I was so upset that I got into a car accident. I suffered a concussion, my car was severely damaged, and I am now suffering from PTSD. My car was totaled, and I only got \$2,000 for it, and I can't buy any car for that miniscule amount of money. Because of the PTSD, I had to miss a lot of work time and ran out of sick days, so I did not get paid for some of the days and I lost some income. I am suing Rob Err and Wolf Place Dog Kennel for damages in the amount of \$50,000, for pain and suffering.

### *Testimony of Nellie Berr*

My name is Nellie Berr. I have lived next to Nova School for over 20 years. On July 19, 2023, I was working in my garden, and I saw a white van, with a Wolf Place Dog Kennel sign on the side, pull up in front of the school. I noticed it because it was parked illegally, in

the bus lane, and facing the wrong direction. It had a license plate that said LUV 2 ROB. I saw a man walking towards the window of the school. He lifted up the screen and the man held out something. I could see the school therapy dog come to the window. The school therapy dog is a black doodle. When the dog got close, he put a leash on her and he helped her jump out of the window. The dog did not look like she wanted to leave. The man put her in the back of the van and sped away. I noticed the man had a mullet and many tattoos.

I have used the Wolf Place Dog Kennel myself. They usually scan every dog for their ID chip to make sure they have the right animal. I did not see the driver of the van do this.

### ***Testimony of Rob Err***

I work at Wolf Place Dog Kennel in Mt. Laurel, NJ, and I just recently celebrated my 10-year anniversary with the company. I am 28 years old. One of the services that we provide is picking up dogs for their kennel stay, so on July 19, 2023, that is what I did. My boss, Isha Barks, told me to go to a school in Barrington. I was to pick up a dog, a doodle, for their kennel stay. I was in a hurry because there were about 10 dogs to pick up that morning.

I could not get into the school because it was summer and there was no secretary to let me in. I walked up to the window, and I peeked in, and I saw a doodle and called her over. I popped out the screen and I held a piece of hot dog to bribe her, and she came closer to the window. I put the leash on her and called her to jump out of the window. When she jumped up, she knocked over a glass vase of dog treats and the glass shattered all over the floor. I put her in the van, and I was on my way to my next stop in Voorhees.

### ***Testimony of Isha Barks***

I have been the owner of Wolf Place Dog Kennel for over 25 years. My kennel provides

many services. We have a doggie spa, doggie day care, long-term kennel stays and vet services.

Rob Err has worked for me for over 10 years. He is a very sweet young man. Rob always shows up for work on time and completes his assignments. He only ever mixed up a dog one other time, when he was first working for me. It was two identical pugs who lived together. He was supposed to pick up one of the pugs for a vet visit and he got them mixed up. Since then, he has not made any other mistakes. When he made the mistake last time, I said, "You must check every dog's ID chip, with the ID scanner."

I sent Rob over to the school in Barrington, New Jersey, to pick up a doodle. Unfortunately, Rob forgot to check the dog's ID chip. I felt really bad about the mix-up. As of now, Rob is no longer an employee of Wolf Place Dog Kennel. He picked up a doodle in Barrington, but it was supposed to be the doodle from middle school! The middle school just got a new therapy dog that is also a doodle.

## **INSTRUCTIONS**

By a preponderance of the evidence the plaintiff must show that Rob Err and the Wolf Place Dog Kennel are liable for damages. Meaning the lawyers for the plaintiff, Sara Dunkett, must show that it is more likely than not that Rob Err and Wolf Place Dog Kennel are responsible for damages for emotional distress, and the cost of the car.

## **SUB-ISSUES**

1. Should Isha Barks have fired Rob Err when he took the wrong dog the first time?
2. Should Sara Dunkett have left her dog when she went to the office?

## CONCEPTS

1. Burden of proof: preponderance of evidence
2. A business can be held liable for the negligence of their employees.

## LAW

In New Jersey, infliction of emotional distress may be intentional, or it may be negligent. To establish negligent infliction of emotional distress, an injured person must show that:

- The defendant (person from whom compensation is sought) had a duty not to engage in behavior that posed an unreasonable risk of emotional harm to another person.
- The defendant failed to meet that standard, doing things that a reasonable person would expect to cause severe emotional distress.
- Because of the defendant's failure to act reasonably, the plaintiff suffered.

In *Portee v. Jaffee*, 84 N.J. 88 (1980), the New Jersey Supreme Court set the standard by which plaintiffs may obtain damages resulting from their emotional distress. Quite simply put, the recovery permissible by *Portee* is for negligent infliction of emotional distress resulting from witnessing the injury of another.

A company can be sued for an employee's actions under the legal principle of "respondeat superior," which essentially means that an employer can be held liable for the wrongful acts of their employees committed within the scope of their employment; this is considered a form of vicarious liability.

The background is a light blue sky filled with various stars in red, white, and dark blue. On the right side, there are several balloons in red, white, and blue. The title is written in a large, bold, black font.

# The Case of the Missing Package: State v. Matthew Dobber

## ***School***

**Stonybrook Elementary**

Kinnelon

Grade 4

Honorable Mention

## ***Teacher***

Kathryn Marie Talbot

## ***Students***

Jack Bauer

Logan Papendick

Annaliese Behlmann

Grant Rosenberger

Baxter Denison

Madden Schall

Jacob Levitt

Ella Wolowec

Logan Muller

Lyla Zienowicz

Josephina Palmer

## FACTS

On January 27, 2021, at 3:50 p.m., a group of three 18-year-old boys, Matthew, Alex and Scott, went ding dong ditching at Mr. and Mrs. Potts's house. Mr. Potts and Mrs. Potts are 87 years old. They answered their door to find no one there. Then again, at 5:23 p.m., their doorbell rang. Mr. Potts went to answer the door to find no one there. For the third time, at 6:30 p.m., they heard their doorbell ring. Mr. Potts went to the door to see what was going on.

Meanwhile, Mrs. Potts got a notification that the Amazon driver delivered a package. The Potts were waiting to sign for a new computer, which was scheduled to be delivered that day, but the package was missing from their doorstep, and they did not see the delivery driver either. There was a dog walker walking by the Potts's house, and the Potts's dog began barking from inside. The dog walker noticed what she considered to be suspicious behaviors from the three boys and contacted the local police department.

When Mr. and Mrs. Potts looked outside, they saw three boys running in different directions: two running one way and a third running in the opposite direction. All of the teenagers were wearing black hoodies. The Potts recognized one of their neighbors, Matthew, as one of the teenagers who was running, and he was carrying a box.

## ISSUE

Did Matthew steal the Potts's package?

## WITNESSES

### ***For the Prosecution***

Bill Potts

Maddie Mallows

### ***For the Defense***

Matthew Dobber

Scott Millford

## WITNESS STATEMENTS

### ***Testimony of Bill Potts***

My name is Bill Potts, I live on Main Street at number 1628, and on Wednesday, January 27, 2021, I was watching TV when I heard the doorbell. It was around 3:50 in the afternoon, and I went over to the door to see who it was and thought it was a package I was expecting, but there was no one there, so I settled myself back into my blanket. "Ding dong" rang the doorbell again at 5:23 p.m., but again, there was no one at the door. When the bell rang a third time, I was starting to get annoyed and nervous, but my wife said that she got an alert that our package was delivered, so I went to check, but there was no package or Amazon driver.

I went and stayed by the window when I saw Matthew and the other boys. The next thing I know, I see the three boys running from the house. I don't know who the other boys were, but I did see Matthew. On the other side of the street, I saw Maddie walking her dog, Logan. I noticed that Matthew was running from my house with something in his hands right after I got a package notification from Amazon. Not only do I think it was Matthew who was ringing my doorbell, but I think Matthew stole my package.

### ***Testimony of Maddie Mallows***

My name is Maddie Mallows, and I took my dog Logan for a walk at 5:30ish on January 27, 2021, after getting home from work and noticed the three boys running around near the Potts's property. Then after feeding my dog, I took him out again. At that time, it was 6:30 p.m. I was out walking my dog Logan, a Doberman Pinscher. I saw three boys running up to Mrs. and Mr. Potts's house and they were all wearing black, so I could not tell who they were. When I saw them go up to Mrs. and Mr. Potts's house, it seemed suspicious to me, so I continued to watch them and called the police. Then I saw them hide behind a large tree when Mr. Potts opened the door and saw nothing. I saw them snickering. Then the police came. I said, "I saw two boys

running with their backs to me. They were also ding dong ditching here earlier, and I recognized Matthew running the other way with a package in his hands.”

I told the Potts what happened, and they thanked me. I also told them that I was not quite sure, but I am guessing it was Matthew who did it.

### ***Testimony of Matthew Dobber***

My name is Matthew Dobber and I am here to tell you why I am not responsible for stealing Mr. and Mrs. Potts’s package on January 27, 2021. When Maddie was walking her dog, she saw me carrying a package and she thought that I was stealing it. I was not stealing it. Back at my house, I noticed that the name on the package said Melanie Potts. I wanted to be a kind neighbor and drop her package off at her house and explain to her that it got delivered to my house by mistake. I was also spotted running back to my house. I don’t want to admit it because it is a little embarrassing, but this was because I have a fear of dogs and I was trying to get away as fast as I could. Also, I was running back to my house because it was a very cold night, and I wanted to get back to the warmth of my home.

The reason that I didn’t get to drop off the package was because once I saw the dog, I sprinted back to my house to get away as fast as possible. Scott, Alex and I were just playing and didn’t mean any harm. We had nothing to do with a stolen package. We were simply just being kind and returning the Potts’s package since it was delivered to my house by mistake. Yes, I was out earlier that night ding dong ditching, but I did not steal any package! I am graduating high school soon as an all “A” student. I donate money to the homeless all the time and I would never steal something that does not belong to me. Especially not something as expensive as a computer.

### ***Testimony of Scott Millford***

My name is Scott Millford, and I am here to confirm what Matthew explained. On Wednesday, January 27, 2021, my best friend Alex and I were at Matthew’s house, and the doorbell rang. A package had just been delivered, but the package wasn’t ours. The package turned out to belong to Melanie Potts right down the street. I figured that I could just bring it to her house with Matthew and Alex. But when their dog started barking, we ran away. So they believed we had done a ding dong ditch again as we admit we were doing earlier that day, but that wasn’t even close, we were just quickly dropping off her package to be nice. The dog barking made him unable to drop off the package. After this we ran away because it was freezing, and Matthew was terrified of dogs. We wore black hoodies because we like that color, and we did not suspect it would make us look suspicious. We had ding dong ditched her earlier but this time we were just dropping off the package.

## **INSTRUCTIONS**

The prosecution must set out such a convincing case against the defendant that the jury believes beyond a reasonable doubt that the defendant is guilty.

## **SUB-ISSUES**

1. Did the black hoodies make the boys look more suspicious?
2. Did the “ding dong ditching” earlier in the evening lead Mr. and Mrs. Potts to believe that Matthew really stole their computer?
3. Was it too dark to see clearly?
4. What witnesses are most credible?
5. What was the Potts’s relationship like with Matthew before this incident?

## **CONCEPTS**

1. Circumstantial evidence v. direct proof
2. Credibility of witnesses
3. Burden of proof: beyond a reasonable doubt

## **LAW**

New Jersey's theft laws classify theft as a disorderly person's offense or a crime of the first, second, third, or fourth degree. The penalty depends on the value of the stolen property, the type of theft, and the defendant's record.

The background is a light blue gradient. It is decorated with numerous small stars in red, white, and dark blue. On the right side, there are several large, glossy balloons in red, white, and blue, tied with gold strings. The overall theme is patriotic and celebratory.

# State v. Eden F. Reefud

## ***School***

**Wedgwood Elementary**

Sewell

Grade 5

First Place

## ***Teacher***

Therese Colligan

## FACTS

Eden F. Reefud, a 25-year-old medical student with a part-time job at Target, made a reservation for 7 p.m., Sunday, February 14, for herself and her lifelong best friend, Jewelly S. Parkle, at their favorite restaurant for Galentine's. At about 6:30 p.m. Eden left Target to meet her friend at the restaurant, La Cucina Della Tradizione Italiana. Eden was walking to the restaurant, when a man in all black, allegedly Justin T. Rubble, bumped into her. She felt her Vera Bradley backpack move and shift on her back. She quickly felt the pocket to see if everything was there and continued walking.

When Eden arrived at the restaurant and was seated, she noticed a man wearing all black sitting several tables away from her and claimed it was the same man who bumped her on the street. Allegedly, that was Justin T. Rubble. While waiting for Jewelly, Eden decided to order her and Jewelly's favorite wine and appetizers. She then needed to use the restroom, leaving her belongings behind. Upon returning to her seat, Eden noticed Mr. Rubble had been moved to the table next to her. Eden reported feeling a bit nervous but decided to pull out her laptop from her backpack to study for an exam while waiting for Jewelly. At that time, Eden received a text from Jewelly that she was sick and had to cancel. Eden was disappointed but decided not to leave since she was studying and needed to eat anyway. She continued to order dinner, which she decided to pay for with her credit card.

When Eden finished her food, she pulled out her backpack to get her wallet, but it was not there. Eden claims that Mr. Rubble, who had since left the restaurant, stole her wallet either when he bumped into her on the street or when she used the restroom. Eden claimed she tried to explain this to the server, but the server did not believe her and accused her of trying to get a free meal.

As a result, the server got the manager who

claimed that Eden looked very nervous and jumpy. Anita P. Aymment, manager, said the amount of the check was \$1337.98, which included food and tip. Ms. Aymment offered Eden to call someone for help, but Eden insisted there was no one who could come. Therefore, the manager was very suspicious. Additionally, Ms. Aymment said Mr. Rubble's reservation was for 6 p.m., and he was no longer in the restaurant, thus could not have been the one to bump her on the street. Ms. Aymment called the police. Consequently, Eden was arrested and charged with theft by deception for not being able to produce payment.

## ISSUE

Is Eden guilty of deliberately pretending to lose her wallet in order not to pay for her food, which is theft by deception?

## WITNESSES

### *For the Prosecution*

Anita P. Aymment  
Justin T. Rubble

### *For the Defense*

Eden F. Reefud  
Jewelly S. Parkle

## WITNESS STATEMENTS

### *Testimony of Anita P. Payment*

On Sunday at 5:45 p.m., I was helping my workers organize files while my servers were seating people and working the front desk. At 6 p.m., a regular, Mr. Justin T. Rubble, came in for his reservation. He often comes to Cucina Della Tradizionale Italiana for dinner and is a very well-known guest of ours.

Later, I saw a woman come in at 7 p.m. She sat at the table alone for a very long time before she ordered. Finally, after looking at her phone several times, she ordered and then excused herself to go to the ladies' room, leaving her things behind. Upon returning, her appetizers and beverages were served. She sat down, pulled out a laptop, munched on

her very expensive charcuterie and sipped on her fine Italian wine, and started working. I thought nothing of it and continued to organize files and accept calls.

Later one of my servers came into my office and told me a lady refused to pay for her meal and asked for my assistance. It was the same woman that I saw earlier. She insisted that a man, fitting the description of Justin T. Rubble, whose reservation was an hour earlier and who had already left the restaurant, had moved tables and stolen her wallet.

Eden ordered a bottle of the most expensive wine in the world named, Barbaresco Cricchet Paje diRoagna, imported from Italy costing \$749.99; a very expensive Filet Mignon Tortellini Alfredo with extra alfredo sauce costing a whopping \$89.99; a big bowl of lobster bisque soup with fresh lobster costing \$30.00; a Caesar salad with romaine lettuce imported from Venice, Italy named La Rosa Del Veneto radicchio, costing \$45.00; and a charcuterie appetizer with some of the most expensive charcuterie meats in the world, including a ¼ pound of prosciutto, a ½ pound of Culatello di Zibello, and a ¼ pound of Caciocavallo Podolico cheese, all imported from Italy, costing \$200.00. All totaled, the check was \$1,114.98 without the tip. The server was supposed to get an additional 20% tip, which she relies on to help pay for personal matters such as bills and grocery shopping.

Eden was very jumpy, nervous, and stressed, so she was probably worried about getting caught. I called the police, telling them that she was trying to eat for free and was accusing another customer at our restaurant of stealing her wallet.

### ***Testimony of Justin T. Rubble***

On Sunday evening at 5 p.m., I made a reservation for 6 p.m. at my favorite restaurant, Cucina Della Tradizione Italiana. I took an Uber to the restaurant. I was seated quickly and shortly after I saw a girl enter the

restaurant by herself. She looked a little bit flustered, but I didn't think anything of it. Since I come here frequently, I have earned VIP status and get preferred seating. She kept staring at me. Then she went to the bathroom.

When the waiter came out, they spilled my food all over the table, so I had to move tables. When she came back, the woman looked even more startled because I was at a different table. When she sat down, she pulled out her computer, continually looked at her phone, all while constantly staring at me. When I finished my dinner, she was still there and had ordered quite a spread.

I paid my bill and went home once my Uber picked me up. I am upset because I didn't do anything to her. There's no way I could have done this, and I am not lying. She is accusing me of stealing her wallet, but I have never seen it before. I didn't steal anything.

### ***Testimony of Jewelly S. Parkle***

I was on Facetime with Eden, my lifelong best friend, when she was on her way to the restaurant. She was showing me her new pink and gold wallet that she had gotten from her mom for her birthday. She explained that it had been passed down from generation to generation. She wanted to meet with me at this fancy restaurant called Cucina Della Tradizione Italiana. This was at the time at which she probably bumped into the man because in the background I was able to hear a man's voice saying, "Oh sorry." I was a little concerned but did not think anything of it.

When I was getting ready to meet Eden, I suddenly felt ill and canceled the meeting with her. I usually pay the bill when we go out together because she is working part time at Target and is a medical student. I know that she has been very stressed with school and probably needed to eat something to give her enough energy for her studies. I also highly doubt that Eden would lie or try to steal anything. I've known her for a very

long time, and she is a really nice person.

### ***Testimony of Eden F. Reefud***

While I was walking to the Cucina Della Tradizione Italiana restaurant, I was on the phone with my best friend Jewelry, and I was showing her my new wallet that I had just gotten for my birthday from my mom that has been passed down from generations in my family. I shoved it back into my backpack. Then, a mysterious man wearing all black bumped into me. I went into the restaurant and waited for Eden, who said she was on her way.

After waiting a long time, I ordered some wine and charcuterie, went to the ladies' room, and then I got the text from Jewelry that she had gotten sick. At that point, I was tired and hungry, so I figured I'd just charge my food to my credit card, so I stayed, worked and feasted. When I was done, I reached into my backpack, but my wallet was gone. I tried to tell the waiter and manager that a man in all black had bumped into me earlier and he had not ordered anything, he was just staring at me, from the seat of another table. My friend was going to help pay but when she canceled, I was just going to pay with my credit card. I tried to tell them that the man next to me took it, but they did not believe me. Then they picked up their phone to call the police, claiming I was trying to get out of paying when I knew for a fact that I was not. I had no one to call for help, so I got arrested for stealing food! I'd NEVER do that. I'm so embarrassed.

## **INSTRUCTIONS**

The prosecution must show, beyond a reasonable doubt, that Eden stole from the restaurant.

## **SUB-ISSUES**

1. Was Eden's wallet stolen?
2. Did Eden forget her wallet?
3. Did someone else bump into Eden on the street?

4. Were there working surveillance cameras?
5. Did Eden bump into somebody, or did somebody bump into her?
6. Does Justin have a criminal record?
7. Did the server steal her wallet?
8. Was her wallet still deep in her backpack?

## **CONCEPTS**

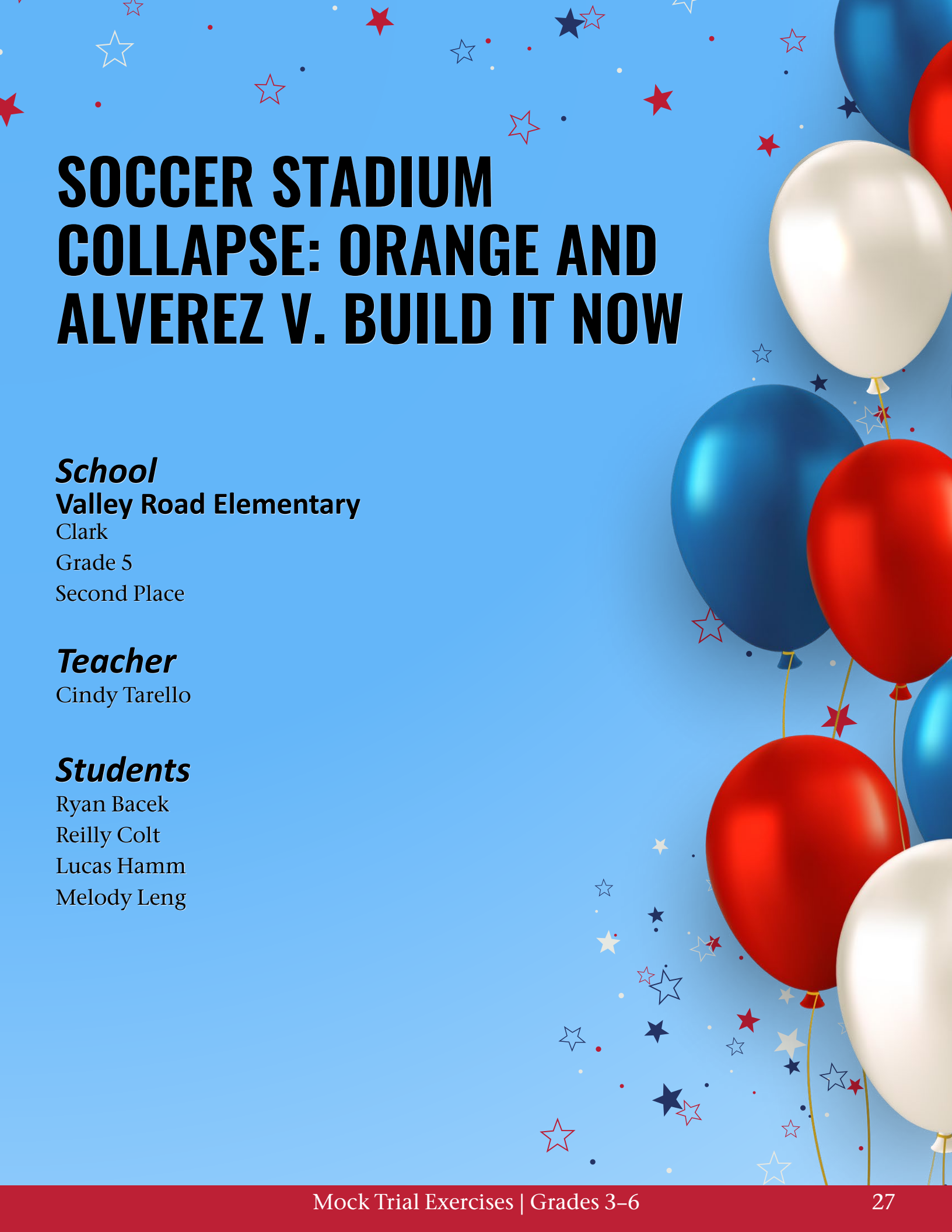
1. Credibility of witnesses
2. Theft by deception

## **LAW**

Theft by deception is a crime that involves using trickery to obtain property from another person. It's also known as "conning." Theft by deception is a serious crime in New Jersey.

To prove theft by deception, a prosecutor must prove the following:

- That defendant obtained the property of another;
- That defendant purposely obtained the property by deception;
- That the victim relied upon the deception in parting with the property.

The background is a light blue sky filled with various stars in red, white, and dark blue. On the right side, there are several balloons in red, white, and blue. The text is positioned on the left side of the page.

# **SOCCER STADIUM COLLAPSE: ORANGE AND ALVEREZ V. BUILD IT NOW**

## ***School***

**Valley Road Elementary**

Clark

Grade 5

Second Place

## ***Teacher***

Cindy Tarello

## ***Students***

Ryan Bacek

Reilly Colt

Lucas Hamm

Melody Leng

## FACTS

On Saturday, November 15, 2025, at 9 p.m., the high school soccer state championship for New Jersey was played in Summerset, NJ. Mike Johnson High Jaguars played the Saint Agnes Wolverines. During the summer of 2025, BUILD IT NOW, a building company, was building a stadium and a special soccer ball for Summerset Township. They guaranteed that the stadium would be built on time with great quality. They started running behind and rushed the build to finish on time. The Township of Summerset approved the facility. The soccer league was expected to raise a lot of money from the game to boost the town's economy, and they scheduled the state game according to plan.

Once the game started, Jack Orange of Mike Johnson High Jaguars scored 3 points easily. During the game with seconds remaining, the score was tied 3-3, but Mike Johnson High was awarded a penalty kick after a nasty slide tackle was made inside the box by one of the Saint Agnes defenders. Their star player, Jack Orange, who never missed a penalty kick, was going to kick the penalty. While Jack was kicking the ball, he twisted his ankle seriously on the turf and missed the penalty kick. During overtime the commentators' stand broke because a supporting pillar collapsed with two commentators, one going by the name Hugo Alvarez inside the tower sustained injuries and required medical care. They took a two hour delay, sent both commentators to the hospital, and continued the game at 1 a.m.

In penalty kicks, the Saint Agnes Wolverines were up 3(4) to 3(3), but Engaro Zidane, who came in for Jack Orange, took one more penalty for Mike Johnson High. He did a grand kick and the ball deflated halfway through and went straight to the goalkeeper. Saint Agnes won the championship 3(4) to 3(3), which left all of the Mike Johnson High fans disgusted and baffled.

Later on, Jack Orange's doctor informed him

that he snapped and broke his ankle and could no longer play soccer until after surgery and months of rehab and therapy. He was also informed that he may never be able to play at that level again. Jack Orange is devastated that he is losing his MLS contract and is suing BUILD IT NOW for the cost of \$500 thousand in overall medical expenses and pain and suffering. Hugo Alvarez got a broken arm and broken ribs; he is suing BUILD IT NOW for \$20 thousand. BUILD IT NOW denies the charges, saying that the Summerset Building Department checked the build and said that the building was okay to use.

## ISSUE

Is BUILD IT NOW responsible for premises liability and contract fault negligence?

## WITNESSES

### *For the Plaintiff*

Jack Orange  
Hugo Alvarez

### *For the Defense*

Dwane Goodman  
Jonathon Graff

## WITNESS STATEMENTS

### *Testimony of Jack Orange*

My name is Jack Orange, I am the greatest soccer player in all of New Jersey. I was playing in the 2025 championship game of New Jersey, and I thought there was no way we would lose because I was there. During the game I scored 3 goals without trying. It was easier than walking, with seconds left it was 3-3 and our team was awarded a penalty kick. I knew that I, the amazing Jack Orange, was going to take the penalty and make it, saying I never miss a penalty. I would've made it if the dumb turf didn't sink my foot. I snapped my ankle and had to sit out the end of the game. We ended up losing the game because I wasn't playing the rest of it.

The next day I went to my doctor, and he said

I wouldn't be able to play high level soccer again! I was so disappointed because I had a huge deal with the MLS because of my skill but I still am the best player I know and ever will know! There are rumors that in the rubble of the stadium, including mostly cinder blocks and metal, that supposedly had a logo of Summerset Building Company, proposing the idea that Summerset had refined the build, but it has no evidence. I am suing BUILD IT NOW, who constructed the horribly made building, for \$500 thousand. I am also suing BUILD IT NOW for contract fault for not constructing a quality stadium.

### ***Testimony of Hugo Alvarez***

My name is Hugo Alvarez, and I am the commentator of the state final. I was one of the announcers in the game. In overtime my commenter tower fell. I suppose I should have been more careful beforehand. I saw many screws loose as well as a wobbling sensation as I stood. My enquiry before the tower fell was that I was being paranoid to a high degree, but my enquiry was just that, an educated guess. During play, my commenter tower started to shake, but I remained calm as I had not enquired about the information that the strange noise and shaking sensation was the pillar giving out. I, as well as the commenter tower, fell to the turf. My fellow commentator got injured, but because his injuries were less severe, he wished not to engage in legal action.

I am suing for \$20 thousand due to my two broken ribs, one broken arm, and scratches from falling. The game had to be delayed due to this abnormal phenomenon. It affected my life in the most unpleasant ways, such as not being able to do my chores that brings me into a calm state. Without the sensation of cleaning, I cannot be as calm as I usually am. As you can tell, I am really stressed about this situation. My tone is off the charts with insanity. BUILD IT NOW has taken a big part of me. My life will never truly be the same until I can clean again. This situation is

disastrous for me.

### ***Testimony of Dwane Goodman***

My name is Dwane Goodman, and I am the CEO of BUILD IT NOW. I named this company after my desire to build things when I want to and how I want to! My company is not responsible for such an act! We would never do anything wrong, because I am the leader! All of us had carefully constructed this build, and you dare to denounce it! I, myself, was at the build site, making sure that it was the best! When I build things, I build them right and I build them now! The coach asked to build the stadium, and our team checked every inch of the building to make sure everything was built sturdy and correctly to code!

After the incident, when we checked the rubble, the cinder blocks and metal did not read BUILD IT NOW but read Summerset Building Company. From my knowledge of past events, like this one, I believe that they did not trust our BUILD IT NOW company and decided to refine our build! It angers me that they believe the incident was our fault, but that is my truth! I do not think we should be held accountable for Jack Orange's and Hugo Alvarez's injuries; it is 100 percent not our fault. Although we did do the build, why would they rush it? Even though the build was rushed, I believe and think, as do all of my other workers, the build was built correctly.

### ***Testimony of Jonathon Graff***

My name is Jonathon Graff, and I had the honor of being head of the stadium build by BUILD IT NOW. I am slightly upset that people think it is BUILD IT NOW's fault for the upsetting tragedy that occurred. My lovely job as the head of the stadium building process consisted of making sure everyone was working hard, keeping everyone safe, and making sure everyone was enjoying their job. I am happy to say all of our workers were lovely people and I enjoyed working alongside them. I don't

believe they would cut corners like that and endanger those nice people.

After all, the lovely people of Summerset approved our build. The people who approved our build said directly to me that it was up to code and amazing. I don't believe those nice people would lie. Do you? If they didn't approve of our build's quality, I believe they would have said something. Granted our build was rushed, that is no lie, but with the kindness of Summerset, it was not rushed too much so that we had to cut corners. When we looked in the rubble, we noticed that the cinder blocks said Summerset Building Company. I believe they poorly refined our build and had the audacity to blame the damage on us! We may not have evidence for it, but I promise we are not lying about what was on that rubble.

## INSTRUCTIONS

The plaintiff must prove by a preponderance of the evidence that BUILD IT NOW is at fault for the claims and is at fault for Jack Orange's and Hugo Alvarez's injuries, pain and suffering.

## SUB-ISSUES

1. Did Jonathon Graff and Dwayne Goodman lie about the message in the rubble?
2. Is it Summerset's fault for approving the build?
3. What is BUILD IT NOW's record for their structures?

## CONCEPTS

1. Negligence: Failure to use reasonable care, resulting in damage or injury to another.
2. Contract Fault: A party's failure to fulfill their obligations or duties specified in a contract, either by breaching the terms or through negligence.
3. Premises liability: It is only just to make the person or the people who caused your injuries pay for them.

## LAW

**Negligence:** "Negligence refers to the failure to exercise an expected degree of care in order to minimize the risk of injury to another. To be 'negligent,' then, is to be the cause of an injury to another for failing to act as a reasonable person should." -<https://www.findlaw.com/>

"In New Jersey, punitive damages are capped at up to five times the amount of compensatory damages or \$350,000, whichever is greater." - <https://www.burakoff-law.com>. Depending on the severity of the damage, the cost will differ. Compensatory damages are money awarded to an injured party that compensate for damages, injury, or another incurred loss. Compensatory damages are awarded in civil court cases where loss has occurred as a result of the negligence or unlawful conduct of another party.

"In all negligence actions and strict liability actions in which the question of liability is in dispute, including actions in which any person seeks to recover damages from a social host as defined in section 1 of P.L.1987, c.404 (C.2A:15-5.5) for negligence resulting in injury to the person or to real or personal property, the trier of fact shall make the following as findings of fact:

1. The amount of damages which would be recoverable by the injured party regardless of any consideration of negligence or fault, that is, the full value of the injured party's damages.
2. The extent, in the form of a percentage, of each party's negligence or fault. The percentage of negligence or fault of each party shall be based on 100% and the total of all percentages of negligence or fault of all the parties to a suit shall be 100%.

**Contract Fault:** "One of the elements that the plaintiff must prove is defendant's breach of contract. Failure to perform a contract in accordance with its terms constitutes a breach of contract. It does

not matter if the failure was purposeful or inadvertent.”

- <https://njcourts.gov>.

“In contract law, ‘fault’ refers to a party’s failure to fulfill their obligations or duties as outlined in a contract, which can lead to a breach of contract claim.”

- <https://www.vaia.com/>

**Premises Liability/Contract Fault:**

“If you find that the plaintiff and one or more individuals or entities were [negligent/at fault] and proximately caused the [accident/injury], then you must compare the [negligent conduct/fault] of those individuals or entities in terms of percentages. You will attribute to each of them that percentage that you find describes or measures their [negligent contribution/fault] in proximately causing the [accident/injury]. The percentages must add up to 100%. You should not allocate any percentage to any individual or entity who you have found was not both [negligent/at fault] and a proximate cause of the [accident/injury].”

- <https://www.njcourts.gov/>

The background is a light blue sky filled with various stars in red, white, and dark blue. On the right side, there are several balloons in red, white, and blue. The title is written in a large, bold, black font.

# The Case of the Extreme Blue Fire Chicken Sandwich: King v. Chicken Heaven

## ***School***

**Thomas Jefferson Elementary**

Turnersville

Grade 5

Honorable Mention

## ***Teacher***

Chris Janeczko

## FACTS

On Saturday, April 15, 2023, at 1:20 p.m., a YouTuber named Spi C. King, who is a 24-year-old man, went to a restaurant called Chicken Heaven in Toms River, NJ. The restaurant has been around for two years and is very popular with 4.9 stars on Yelp and 10,852 reviews. King's YouTube name is "Food Went Worldwide" and he has 7,000,000 followers. King's videos are about all the crazy foods he tries.

Spi C. King didn't usually eat very spicy foods, but he wanted more subscribers to his channel. He felt that this would help him because he thought that people would like to see him eat the extreme spicy food. At the restaurant King ordered an Extreme Blue Fire Chicken Sandwich, which is a big chicken sandwich that is so spicy you need to sign a waiver. King didn't sign the waiver because he isn't able to sign his name due to a learning disability called dysgraphia. The worker had him attempt to sign the waiver, but he still couldn't do it. He did read the waiver, and it stated that the chicken sandwich contained 2,500,000 Scoville units (which measure spiciness). The waiver also stated, "If you have any stomach problems, we recommend that you do not eat this sandwich."

King decided to eat the sandwich since he had no stomach problems that he was aware of. When King went to sit down to eat the sandwich, there were about 50 people in the restaurant watching him eat it and 100,000 people watching it on the live stream that his cameraman, Cameron Mann, was filming. He was nervous before he ate the sandwich. King ate the sandwich, and it was super spicy, so he started to drink a glass of milk. He was also surprised that his stomach wasn't hurting because it was such a spicy sandwich. When he got home from his half-hour long car ride, his stomach and intestines started burning. He went to the hospital and was there for three weeks.

At the hospital, the doctor told King he had

a stomach problem called gastroesophageal reflux disease. Later, when tests were done on the chicken, it was found out that it contained 2,550,000 Scoville units, 50,000 more than was stated in the waiver. And since he was hospitalized, he was not able to post on YouTube. During that time, he would have made \$10,000 on average. He is suing Chicken Heaven for \$10,000.

## ISSUE

Is Chicken Heaven liable for Spi C. King's injuries?

## WITNESSES

### *For the Plaintiff*

Spi C. King

Dr. Gimme DaSpice

### *For the Defense*

Owen Ar

Mr. Makesauce

## WITNESS STATEMENTS

### *Testimony of Spi C. King*

I was searching online for new restaurants to make interesting content when I stumbled upon a very intriguing restaurant. Its name was Chicken Heaven, and it had a 4.9-star review on Yelp, so I set it on my calendar to go there on Saturday, April 15. When I got to the restaurant and ordered the Extreme Blue Fire Chicken Sandwich, the owner said, "You're going to have to sign a waiver first." I couldn't sign the waiver because of my dysgraphia, but I did read it. It said the chicken contained 2,500,000 Scoville units, but since I am pretty good with moderately hot foods, I figured it would be okay if I ate this. I started eating the very hot chicken sandwich at around 1:20 p.m. and finished eating 10 minutes later. I had to drink a glass of milk to get rid of the spice but other than that I felt fine. I ended the stream soon after and went home.

At about 2 p.m. I got home, and I felt a rumble in my stomach but didn't think much of it. Shortly after, my stomach

started hurting and it felt like it was burning! I quickly called 911 but couldn't talk well, so I just let out a faint "help." The next thing I knew, I was in a hospital. When I asked what happened, I was told I was found unconscious on the floor due to the pain and burning.

### ***Testimony of Dr. Gimme DaSpice***

My name is Dr. Gimme DaSpice and I have a doctorate in food science and I'm an expert on Scoville units, which is the unit used to measure heat in foods. My family made spicy foods and sauces when I was growing up, so that's how I got interested in spices. While investigating the hot sauce used in the Extreme Blue Fire Chicken Sandwich, I asked the owner if the sauce on the sandwich used the old way of Scoville measurement. He said it did. I know that the old-fashioned way of testing Scoville units is based on how many times they have to dilute the spice until five taste testers taste it and determine when it is no longer spicy at all. So the testing of Scoville units is just based on their opinion. Today, more advanced techniques like high-performance liquid chromatography can be used to precisely measure spice levels. More modern types of measuring Scoville units are more accurate, so when they told me they used the older method, I immediately made the conclusion that maybe the Scoville unit measurement was wrong. I used the more modern technique and found the total Scoville units in the sauce to be 50,000 units higher.

### ***Testimony of Owen Ar***

I've owned the restaurant Chicken Heaven for two years, and we just came out with the new Extreme Blue Fire Chicken Sandwich a week before King's visit. It was a Saturday afternoon, and the restaurant was not that busy until Spi C. King came in. He said he was on a livestream and asked me if he could tell people the location of the restaurant. Since it wasn't busy and rent was due soon, of course I said, "Yeah sure!" I thought that the livestream would bring in new people.

I seated him and asked him what he wanted, and he said, "The spiciest thing you have, please." That was the Blue Fire Chicken Sandwich. I told him, "To assure we're not liable for any damages, you have to sign a waiver." He told me he was unable to sign a waiver due to a disability. I told him that he could at least read the waiver, which he did. I asked him, "Do you understand and accept these conditions of the sandwich?" And he said, "Yes." A few of the warnings stated, "If you have any conditions that you know of or if you are pregnant, DON'T EAT THIS." Another one said, "If you are sensitive to spicy foods and have stomach problems after eating spicy foods, we recommend that you do not eat it." Next, I asked him, "Do you want it drizzled, dipped or covered?" "Drizzled" is less of our signature blue fire sauce, while "dipped" is a medium portion and "covered" is well covered in the sauce. He told me, "To maximize the challenge, covered."

I went out to see his reaction, and I started watching him eat the sandwich. He said he was fine after he ate the sandwich and left the restaurant with no problem.

### ***Testimony of Mr. Makesauce***

My name is Mr. Makesauce and I created the hot sauce that is used on the Extreme Blue Fire Chicken Sandwich, which is Ghostface Gusto X. I know from making sauce that there are 2,500,000 Scoville units, and the sauce costs over \$100 for a bottle because of its rare ingredients and the process that takes nearly four hours to make each batch. Also, the peppers are only grown in Florida and take a year to grow. Then it is aged three weeks, to make it more flavorful. I know that my sauce contains 2,500,000 Scoville units because I had it tested using the traditional method. I have never had any problem with this way of testing the hot sauce. And considering King's stomach disease, I don't understand why he would think it was a good idea to eat something that spicy.

## INSTRUCTIONS

The plaintiff must prove by a preponderance of the evidence that Chicken Heaven is liable for Spi C. King's injuries.

## SUB-ISSUES

1. Should the hot sauce have been tested in the modern way to ensure accurate levels of Scoville units?
2. Should Spi C. King have known that he had a stomach disease before eating the sandwich?
3. Does the waiver that Spi C. King read remove the restaurant's liability?

## CONCEPTS

1. Negligence
2. Damages
3. Credibility of witnesses

## LAW

Negligence is the failure to take the right care in doing something. To be negligent is to be the cause of an injury to another person or failing to act as a responsible and caring person should.

New Jersey has a comparative negligence law (N.J.S.A. 2A:15-5.1-3). This means that if the jury finds the defendant is 60% or more at fault, then the plaintiff gets all that they are asking for, but if the defendant is found 50-59% at fault then the plaintiff will get that percentage of what they are asking for. And if the defendant is found less than 50% at fault then the plaintiff will get nothing.

## SOURCES

<https://reinartzlaw.com/new-jersey-comparative-negligence-law/>

<https://www.nist.gov/how-do-you-measure-it/health-and-nutrition/how-do-you-measure-heat-pepper>

The background is a light blue gradient decorated with various stars in red, white, and dark blue. On the right side, there are several balloons in red, white, and dark blue, some with gold ribbons. The overall theme is patriotic and celebratory.

# Fire Insurance Fiasco: Porol de Mann v. Good Insurance

## ***School***

**Ramapo Ridge Middle**

Mahwah

Grade 6

First Place

## ***Teacher***

Kelly De Bello

## ***Students***

Arnav Bhilawade

Michael Alexander  
Buchanan-Konetchy

John Charles-Fein

Stanley Chen

Jackson Dyer

Nishka Gandhi

Ander Greene

Aaron Hung

Aarav Mehta

Mariia Nosulchyk

Christian Ohansian

Prisha Orpe

Shuddhatman Sharad

Virat Singh

Colin Tarzian

Audrey Tremblay

## FACTS

Porol de Mann, who lives in Noe Valley, CA, has been a loyal paying customer of Good Insurance for over 40 years. Recently, in a wildfire in California, his house was burned, like many others. Good Insurance had found out about the vast wildfire in CA, and temporarily canceled the fire insurance package, claiming to be updating it. Using this method, Good Insurance avoided paying billions in insurance claims, throughout the affected areas. They had mailed a letter to Porol a couple of days prior to the fire. The fire had started growing exponentially, resulting in the temporary change in insurance. But there was a delay in the postal service, leaving Porol's mail burnt in the fire, so he and his family were not aware of the change.

Porol had lived in the house for decades. He bought the land when it was affordable, and it is now worth millions. Because of the fire, he lost his home, and almost everything in it, including his computer with important files for work, and a priceless painting that had been in the family for generations. Good Insurance argues that Mr. Mann is at fault for failing to bring along his work documents and other belongings when he evacuated. Furthermore, Good Insurance claims their policy states clearly that the company has the right to cancel insurance packages temporarily.

Porol is now suing Good Insurance for the cost of rebuilding his house, temporary housing until then, and replacing his important belongings. He states that Good Insurance should not suspend insurance to shirk their duties, and he would never trust Good Insurance again.

## ISSUE

1. Should Porol de Mann have checked the revisions in the policy?
2. Should Good Insurance be allowed to temporarily reject client coverage while

changing company policy?

## WITNESSES

### *For the Plaintiff*

Cole Burnham  
Sue de Mann

### *For the Defense*

Pyroex Pert  
Jeff Altman

## WITNESS STATEMENTS

### *Testimony of Cole Burnham*

My name is Cole Burnham, and I have been friends and neighbors with Porol de Mann for more than 45 years. Porol and I have been using Good Insurance for 30 years. At first, the fire wasn't supposed to spread to our area, but we both saw on the news that it was going to scorch near us. We both took our families and drove off trying to escape the blaze. After the fire, when we asked Good Insurance for our compensation, they denied our claims. The company said that they gave us a letter, although the letter did not reach many residents in our area. I have lost everything including my savings, my job, and much more. I am also struggling to keep my family fed and out of poverty. I cannot afford to send my daughter to school, and we do not have any of our basic needs.

### *Testimony of Sue de Mann*

My name is Sue de Mann. My husband Porol de Mann and I have been loyal customers of Good Insurance for 30 years. Recently there have been many fires in CA. We have always felt safe and protected because of our insurance, and we had no doubts that they will always put the homeowners' needs first, especially in an emergency.

I was alerted of the fact that there had been a postal delay and was not worried since I wasn't expecting any important mail. Besides, I had more urgent concerns on my mind, like how to protect my family and whether I would be able to continue to work.

Since the fire spread to our neighborhood, we decided to evacuate. When we turned to Good Insurance for help, they turned us down and claimed to have updated their policy. Good Insurance claimed that they alerted us of the change through a letter. Now we have lost our home and many of our most valuable possessions. Thirty years of insurance payments, all for a moment like this. And when we turn to them to support us, there is no help. Now all of that money has been wasted, and we are left without a home, like many others.

### ***Testimony of Pyroex Pert***

My name is Pyroex Pert, and I have a PhD in fire science and master's degrees in forensic science and criminal justice. I also have a certification from the National Association of Fire Investigators (NAFI). I've been employed by Good Insurance for over five years as an insurance fraud investigator specializing in fire. I am called upon to determine if individuals' houses burned down naturally, purposefully and/or accidentally.

Insurance fraud spiked by over 25 percent last year, so I have been extra vigilant to examine whether the houses were lit on fire intentionally. When Good Insurance heard of the soon-to-come California wildfires, we had to revise our clauses on fire insurance to deter people from faking or staging their houses and belongings burning for insurance money, which is why we were revising the clause and temporarily repealed it so people could not take advantage of the company's coverage policies. Then, we mailed all of our customers letters, notifying them of the policy change. Now, Good Insurance will be stretched thin with lawsuits following this case. Unfortunately, my expert colleagues and I will be stretched paper-thin to try and validate all of these claims.

### ***Testimony of Jeff Altman***

My name is Jeff Altman, and I have been employed by Good Insurance for 25 years.

The first year of my employment I was recognized by the California Times as "Top Insurance Agent in the Southwest Region." During our partnership, we changed the terms of service numerous times to deter customers from insurance fraud. Customers rated our service highly, and I believe insurance fraud was very rare. However, last year, we noticed a major uptick in cases of insurance fraud. As a result, Good Insurance had to change their terms of service to remain profitable and pay our workers.

During natural disasters, many cases of fraud were encountered with those trying to increase the damage for more money to claim. Good Insurance had enough. During this wildfire they predicted there would be millions of their clients affected and changed their fire coverage, so no fraud would take place. During this time, I had been changing the terms of service. Good Insurance asked me to send letters through to their clients. It would be disastrous for Good Insurance to pay such exorbitant amounts in damages because of these relentless wildfires.

## **INSTRUCTIONS**

The plaintiff, Porol de Mann, must show by a preponderance of the evidence that Good Insurance and its policymakers are liable for the damages to Porol de Mann's house.

## **SUB-ISSUES**

1. Is Sue de Mann a reliable witness, as she may be biased to the plaintiff's side, since the outcome may affect her?
2. Is insurance agent Jeff Altman a reliable witness, as he may want his company to pay out little to no money?
3. Was the insurance company aware that the fires would block or delay postal services?

## **CONCEPTS**

1. Liability for property damage
2. Cancellation

3. Insurance fraud
4. Fire prevention
5. Natural disasters

## **LAW**

California State Law:

2051.5 (a)

Under an open policy that requires payment of the replacement cost for a loss, the measure of indemnity is the amount that it would cost the insured to repair, rebuild, or replace the thing lost or injured.

2061. (a)

In the event of a covered loss relating to a state of emergency, as defined in Section 8558 of the Government Code, the following special provisions shall apply under a residential property insurance policy:

- (1) If an insured has made a claim for additional living expenses related to a total loss, an insurer shall, upon request by an insured, render an advance payment of no less than four months of living expenses.

2062.

In the event of a state of emergency, as defined in Section 8558 of the Government Code, an insurer shall offer a 60-day grace period for payment of premiums for residential property insurance policies covering a property located within the affected area defined in the state of emergency for a period of 60 days after the emergency.

# The Case of the Not So Balanced Beam: Linguine v. Rising Stars Gym

## ***School***

**Brigantine Community**

Brigantine

Grade 6

Second Place

## ***Teacher***

Laura Mittleman

## ***Students***

Devon Bourgoïn

Ava Casamento

Noah Hartz

Owen Kennedy

Milania Milev

Robert Repici

Grace Shotland

Lahna Smith

Vida Smith

Kylie Wagenheim

## Facts

On Sunday, December 10, 2023, 14-year-old Lucy Linguine went to a gymnastics competition at the Rising Stars Gym. Lucy has been training at Rising Stars Gym for the past 10 years. She was very familiar with the gym, the coaches, and the equipment. Lucy was a very experienced gymnast. She was a bit nervous about this competition as she slipped while walking her dog last week. The meet was extremely competitive before Lucy went on to perform her routine. A high score from Lucy's routine would seal her team's victory in the competition.

To make the competition more intense, Jen Jones, the daughter of Lucy Linguine's coach, was competing on the other team, Action Gym. Tabatha Jones is both Lucy Linguine's coach and Jen Jones' mother. Jen Jones and Lucy Linguine were the two top-ranked gymnasts in the state. This meet would solidify whether Lucy or Jen would advance to the state competition.

While doing her beam routine, Lucy went to land her back handspring stepout when suddenly the beam wobbled. Lucy fell on the floor and was shouting in pain. Medics quickly picked Lucy up and placed her on a stretcher. Later, after being treated at the hospital, Lucy found out that her leg was broken and Jen Jones would advance to the state finals.

Lucy's mom, Amanda Linguine, was in the stands and witnessed the beam wobbling and Lucy's injury. Amanda reported the last person seen near the beam immediately after Jen Jones' high-scoring routine and directly before Lucy's routine was Tabatha Jones. Due to this tragic injury, Lucy Linguine could not compete in the all-state gymnastics competition.

Amanda Linguine is now suing Rising Stars Gym for not having a stable beam. Larry Lambert, the owner of the Rising Stars Gym, and head coach Tabatha Jones, stated the

gym got the beam from BBI Gym Equipment, a certified gymnastics equipment company. Beams are inspected upon the setup of every competition. Both Larry and Tabatha stated that the December 8, 2023 competition inspection was satisfactory. Amanda Linguine alleges that the gym was negligent in their care for the balance beam.

## ISSUE

Did Rising Stars Gym exercise a reasonable degree of care over the handling of the balance beam?

## WITNESSES

### *For the Plaintiff*

Lucy Linguine  
Amanda Linguine

### *For the Defense*

Larry Lambert  
Tabatha Jones

## WITNESS STATEMENTS

### *Testimony of Lucy Linguine*

My name is Lucy Linguine and I'm 14 years old. On December 10, 2023, I was at a gymnastics competition at Rising Stars Gym. I've been training at Rising Stars Gym for 10 years, so it feels like home to me. Our team was about to advance to the all-state gymnastics competition on December 10, 2023. Jen Jones, my coach's daughter, is on the other team: Action Gymnastics. Jen was my only competition for state champion. Prior to my routine, Jen scored really high on her performance. In order for my team to win, I knew I would have to get a better score than her.

Right before my routine, I saw my coach, Tabatha Jones, touching the beam that I was about to perform on. She walked over and handed me a block of chalk before I began my routine. When I did my mount on the beam, I immediately felt like something was unsteady. While I was landing my back handspring stepout, the beam wobbled

underneath me. I fell from the high beam. I heard something snap, and I screamed in pain. Medics quickly rushed in, placed me on a stretcher, and pushed me out the door into the ambulance. When I was leaving, I saw Jen and her team giggling quietly.

Later in the hospital, the doctors told me that I had broken my leg and could not compete in the all-state gymnastics competition. That competition could have helped me land a spot on a national team or even the junior Olympic team. I am extremely disappointed. I know the beam was faulty, therefore, Rising Stars Gym should be held liable for my medical and emotional damages.

### ***Testimony of Amanda Linguine***

My name is Amanda Linguine, and I am the mother of Lucy Linguine. On December 10, 2023, I was watching my daughter perform at the competition at Rising Stars Gym. My daughter has been performing there for 10 years. Lucy is an experienced and talented gymnast. Over the years, her coaches and many judges have told me she has an excellent chance to become an Olympian.

It was an intense competition that day. Jen Jones, the daughter of Lucy's coach, is on the other team. Jen is one of the best gymnasts in the state. Jen and Lucy were competing for a chance to advance to the state championship. Jen scored really well on her routine. Her mom Tabatha went over to congratulate her after her score. This is when I noticed Tabatha touching the beam. I was concerned, but I figured Tabatha must have a good reason to be touching the beam as a coach.

Finally, it was Lucy's turn to perform. Her back handspring stepout started off amazing. The judges were so impressed, but suddenly the beam wobbled and my daughter fell to the ground and screamed in pain. I panicked when I saw the medics rush onto the mat. I immediately ran down the bleachers and onto the mat. The medics

put Lucy on a stretcher and carried her to the ambulance. I rushed to my car, and I followed the ambulance to the hospital.

After Lucy was admitted, the doctor told me that she had suffered a broken leg. I was so sad for Lucy as I knew her road to the state championship would be over. I know the beam was faulty and that was what led to Lucy's injury. Rising Stars Gym needs to be held liable for my daughter's physical and emotional damages. That beam ruined her dream of being a state champion.

### ***Testimony of Tabatha Jones***

I am Tabatha Jones. I am the head coach and employee of Rising Stars Gym. I have worked at this gym for the past 26 years and have coached many talented gymnasts. Coaching gymnastics is my passion. I have coached Lucy Linguine for 10 years. Lucy is an incredibly talented gymnast with potential to become an Olympian.

Lucy has always had a special spot in my heart because she motivates my daughter Jen to become better. Jen and Lucy are the same age and have been competing against one another since they were four. My daughter Jen competes for Action Gym. There is a rule within our league that prevents parents from coaching their children. Therefore, Jen must compete for another team.

On December 10, 2023, Lucy and Jen were both competing for a spot in the all-state championship. My team and I were so excited to earn this opportunity. We had been training all summer and fall for the best chance to qualify for states. Jen performed first and got a high score from the judges. Therefore, in order for us to win, I knew we would need to stay focused. After timed warmups, I asked the beam judges for a block of chalk. The judges said I could take a block from the bars. I walked over to the beam and quickly put some chalk on it and gave the remainder of the chalk to Lucy so she could start her routine. The beam seemed sturdy

and secure when I was touching it.

When I went to hand Lucy the chalk, she seemed to be really nervous, which is not normal. Beam is her best event. However, Lucy slipped while walking her dog the week before the competition. I think she was rattled from her slip. When Lucy went to land her back handspring stepout, she fell from the beam. Lucy immediately screamed in pain and the medics rushed out onto the mat. Lucy was rushed to the hospital where we later found out she had broken her leg from the fall.

Amanda Linguine wants Rising Stars Gym to be held liable for Lucy's injury, claiming our beam was faulty, but that isn't so. Our beam was inspected on December 8, 2023, by BBI Gym Equipment judges, who deemed our beam sturdy and sound. I believe Lucy's fall while walking her dog the week before played a role in her fall at the competition.

### ***Testimony of Larry Lambert***

My name is Larry Lambert, and I am the owner of Rising Stars Gym. I have owned Rising Stars Gym for 45 years. Lucy Linguine has been going to our gym for 10 years. She is an excellent gymnast. Lucy is one of the best competitors in the history of our gym. Lucy's injury was devastating to all of us at Rising Stars. We would have loved for one of our own to make it to the state championship.

I was there for the entire competition on the weekend of December 9 and 10, 2023. Witnessing Lucy's fall was heartbreaking. I noticed she was wobbling more during this routine than she usually would on the beam. Our equipment is checked and inspected prior to the start of every competition. Our beam was inspected by two BBI judges on December 8, 2023. Both judges stated the beam was as sturdy as could be and it passed inspection. It is a shame Lucy is blaming her injuries on the gym that has helped her grow as a gymnast.

Tabatha Jones, Lucy's coach and my employee, shared with me that Lucy had a slip the week before the competition. Additionally, I noticed from the bleachers that Lucy seemed extremely nervous before her routine. Nothing normally rattles Lucy, even a high score from the opposing team doesn't typically cause her concern. I believe Lucy wasn't feeling one hundred percent after slipping while walking her dog the week before the competition and this led to her fall from the beam. Rising Stars Gym provided a sturdy beam as certified by state officials; therefore, we are not liable for Lucy's damages. We wish her a speedy recovery.

## **INSTRUCTIONS**

The plaintiff must present a convincing case against the defendant and prove by a preponderance of the evidence that Rising Stars Gym is at fault for the unsteady beam that caused Lucy Linguine's injury.

## **SUB-ISSUES**

1. Did the beam's stability have anything to do with Lucy's fall?
2. Did Lucy's fall from walking her dog impact her stability during her routine?
3. Is there witness bias given Amanda Linguine is Lucy's mother?
4. Did Tabatha Jones alter the beam in some way so that her daughter would advance to the state finals?
5. Did the beam falter from too much use after the inspection?
6. How old was the beam? Did it have any stability issues prior to this?
7. Was there enough chalk on the beam?

## **CONCEPTS**

1. Eyewitness credibility
2. Direct evidence vs. circumstantial evidence
3. Burden of proof: preponderance of the evidence

## **LAW**

Under common law in the State of New Jersey if a person fails to act in a way a reasonable person would have acted, and that failure resulted in foreseeable harm, then the person may be held liable for negligence.

The background is a light blue sky filled with various stars in red, white, and dark blue. On the right side, there are several balloons in red, white, and blue. The text is positioned on the left side of the page.

# The Titanic Crash

## ***School***

**Reading Fleming Intermediate**

Flemington

Grade 6

Honorable Mention

## ***Teacher***

Daniel DeCanio

## ***Students***

Brody Burgoyne

Lucas Levin

Ethan Reed

Logan Rourke

## FACTS

On the 12th of September 2022 at approximately 11:21 a.m., a millionaire by the name of Richie Bucks had been expecting a \$2 million-dollar historical artifact from the hull of the Titanic. He lived with his wife and son in a very affluent area in Rumson, New Jersey. On the day of delivery, Dan the Delivery Man was pulling into the driveway in a cargo van with an orange stripe running down the side. It was a very damp and foggy day. Richie's son, Dante, had left a basketball outside in the driveway. As he ran out to retrieve the basketball, the delivery man swerved away from him. Seeing as it was very foggy and damp outside, he wasn't able to see Dante as quickly. While doing this, the Titanic hull shattered. Richie Bucks was extremely enraged at this and sued Delivery Man Dan. However, Delivery Man Dan said he only swerved to keep Dante safe so he would not get any type of injury.

## ISSUE

Was Delivery Man Dan responsible for breaking the artifact?

## WITNESSES

### ***For the Plaintiff***

Richie Bucks  
Dante Bucks

### ***For the Defense***

Dan the Delivery Man  
Roger Aaron

## WITNESS STATEMENTS

### ***Testimony of Richie Bucks***

My name is Richie Bucks and on September 12, 2022, I was expecting a historical artifact from the famous Titanic costing a couple of millions. As the delivery man was pulling in, my son Dante ran out to grab his ball. The driver swerved around him instead of stopping and shattered the \$2 million-dollar piece. The delivery man should not have had to swerve, though he could have just stepped

on the brakes, stopping the vehicle perfectly fine. Plus, he wasn't paying attention to where he was going and if he was, then he would have noticed Dante before he got onto my driveway, and he would have seen the ball he was trying to get as well. The delivery man endangered my child and broke a \$2 million-dollar one-of-one piece that is irreplaceable.

### ***Testimony of Dante Bucks***

My name is Dante Bucks, son of Richie Bucks. I was outside playing basketball when I saw the delivery driver pulling into the driveway. My ball was in the way, so I went to grab it, making sure he did not drive into it. As I went to get it, the driver swerved away from me. I was in no danger, but if he had just stopped, I would have been fine.

### ***Testimony of Delivery Man Dan***

My name is Delivery Man Dan and on September 12, 2022, I was in charge of delivering a historical piece of the hull of the Titanic to a man named Richie Bucks. As I was pulling into the driveway, a boy ran out onto the driveway, running towards what seemed to be a basketball in my way. In quick thinking, I swerved and heard a loud crash from the cargo bed behind. After I swerved, I got out of the van and checked the back, and as I suspected, the artifact was shattered. The man, Richie Bucks, ran out of the house and began to yell at me for destroying this one-of-one artifact. I did not see another way to avoid this incident. I explained that I was forced to swerve to avoid injuring his son, but he did not care, threatening to sue me.

### ***Testimony of Roger Aaron***

On September 12, 2022, I was outside reading my book. It was a foggy and damp day, but I love the outdoors. At about 11:21 a.m., I heard a loud crash ring out at my neighbor Richie Bucks' house. I looked up to see his son Dante run out for a basketball that had been in the path of the delivery driver, Dan. The driver had absolutely no choice but to swerve out of the way, resulting in damage

to a piece of the Titanic in his truck. It was not his fault. This was the only way to avoid the incident.

## **INSTRUCTIONS**

The plaintiff must prove by a preponderance of the evidence that it was the Delivery Man Dan's fault that the piece was shattered.

## **SUB-ISSUES**

1. Was it Dante's fault for chasing after the ball?
2. Was it Richie's fault for letting Dante go outside?
3. Why didn't the delivery man just step on the brake, as opposed to swerving?
4. Could Delivery Man Dan have done something to stop this issue from occurring?

## **CONCEPTS**

1. Burden of proof
2. Negligence
3. Property damage

## **LAW**

Property damage is the damage or destruction of real or tangible personal property caused by negligence, willful destruction, or an act of nature.

Negligence is a failure to use reasonable care, resulting in damage or injury to another.

The background is a light blue gradient. It is decorated with numerous stars in red, white, and dark blue, some of which are outlined. On the right side, there are several balloons in red, white, and dark blue, some of which are partially visible. The overall theme is patriotic and celebratory.

# Scarred by a Stingray

## ***School***

**Reading Fleming Intermediate**

Flemington

Grade 6

Honorable Mention

## ***Teacher***

Daniel DeCanio

## ***Students***

Lilliana Segal

Vivian Sulligan

Cecilia Yanez

## FACTS

On July 28, 2023, a travel group went to Huntington Beach in California, to go swimming around 10:30 a.m. The travel group counselor Henry Wilson led the kids in the travel group to a spot on the sand to set up. On the way to the spot on the beach, there was a small sign with faded red paint. Henry Wilson wasn't able to read the sign. The rest of the kids in the travel group didn't pay much attention to the sign, as they wouldn't have been able to read it anyway either. After the travel group got set up, Henry Wilson permitted all the kids to go swimming if they wanted to. Eventually, everybody was in the water, but two girls were deeper than the others.

As it was nearing lunchtime, Henry Wilson called for the part of the travel group that was still in the water to come back to shore. But the two girls, Amelia Brown and Luciana Diaz, did not want the fun to end, so they decided to race back to shore. After all, they were on the swim team back home. On the way back to shore, Amelia Brown was in the lead when she felt a sharp pain in her left foot and screamed out. Amelia Brown had been stung by a stingray.

As Amelia Brown struggled to stay afloat, Luciana Diaz caught up with Amelia Brown to help her stay afloat while the lifeguard Gabriel Murphy came to help. Henry Wilson was waiting at the shore ready to help, while a girl named Brooke Smith called 9-1-1. Gabriel Murphy came back with Amelia Brown and made sure she was breathing fine. Everyone was surrounding Amelia Brown, ensuring she was okay. 9-1-1 arrived about 10 minutes after being called, but Amelia Brown's left foot was already red and swollen.

Four days later, when Amelia was back home safe, Mr. and Mrs. Brown found out that Henry Wilson had signed a contract ensuring the children's well-being. Mrs. and Mr. Brown are now suing Henry Wilson for improper care of their child.

## ISSUE

Is Henry Wilson liable for injuries to Amelia Brown at Huntington Beach?

## WITNESSES

### *For the Plaintiff*

Amelia Brown  
Luciana Diaz

### *For the Defense*

Henry Wilson  
Gabriel Murphy

## WITNESS STATEMENTS

### *Testimony of Amelia Brown*

My name is Amelia Brown, I am 14 years old, and I live at 87 Pine Oak Circle in Manhattan, NY. I just graduated from 8th grade at East Side Middle School. I was signed up to go to summer camp, but it got canceled! So, my parents signed me up for a travel group, and we came here to Huntington Beach. The best part was my best friend, Luciana Diaz, from my swim team, came too!

When we arrived at the beach, all the way to California, we were so excited that we ran right past a small, faded sign. We stopped to read it, but nobody could read the small, faded words. Me and Luci got permission to go swim from Henry Wilson, our counselor. We grabbed our snorkel gear and swam out to the coral reefs. As it was nearing lunchtime, Henry called us back to shore. We did not want the fun to end, so we decided to race back. As we were racing, Luciana started to fall behind, so I slowed down. When she started to catch up, I felt a sharp pain in my left foot. I screamed out in pain, and Luciana raced even faster toward me. She called out for help, and someone helped me back toward shore. I don't remember much else, but I now know that I was stung by stingray. From now on, I will be much more cautious near the ocean.

### ***Testimony of Luciana Diaz***

My name is Luciana Diaz, I'm 14, and I live on Kingston Ave, about five minutes from my bestie, Amelia Brown. Amelia and I were supposed to go to a summer camp, but it was canceled. So, our parents signed us up for a travel group that was going to Huntington Beach. We were so excited, but it turned out to be the opposite of what we were expecting.

I will never forget the day my best friend got stung by a stingray. It all started on July 28, 2023. Our travel group leader Henry Wilson was walking up to a spot on the beach to set up. Me, Amelia, and the rest of the travel group were so excited, so we all ran to set up. We did pass a small sign with faded red paint, but nobody was able to read it. Besides, Henry Wilson should have read the sign. Anyway, when we got to our spot on the beach, Amelia and I got permission from Henry Wilson to go swimming. So, we went into the water and about an hour later Henry Wilson called us back for lunch. Amelia and I didn't want the fun to end, so we decided to race back to shore. After all, we were both on the swim team even though Amelia was on the team for longer. There was no surprise Amelia was in the lead.

As we were getting closer to shore, Amelia let out an ear-piercing scream that got everyone's attention. I began to swim towards my best friend faster than I had ever swum before. As I helped Amelia stay afloat, the lifeguard Gabriel Murphy came to help bring Amelia back to shore. Once Amelia was back to shore, I saw a small red mark on her left foot that was beginning to swell. Gabriel Murphy checked to see if Amelia was okay and made the conclusion that she was stung by a stingray. About 10 minutes later an ambulance arrived and Amelia was loaded onto the ambulance. From now on, I will be more cautious about my friends' well-being.

### ***Testimony of Henry Wilson***

My name is Henry Wilson, and I am 27 years old. I just finished college, and I needed a

way to get money. That's when I found the job as the travel group leader that was going to Huntington Beach. I was worried about going to the beach for two reasons, one was that I couldn't wear my glasses so I could only read big fonts, and the other was that I couldn't swim. It was too late to switch my job, though, because the trip was only a week away, on July 28. I guess I should have checked more of the details before I signed up for the job. It has just been a little stressful lately looking for ways to make money.

When July 28 came, I was on the beach looking for a spot to set up. While I led the group, I saw a faded red blur on a small white sign. This was exactly what I was worried about but just ahead there was a perfect spot with no other people around. People in the travel group were running to the spot so they could set up and get in the water as soon as possible. I permitted them to go swimming because if the beach was open, it should have been safe.

After about an hour of all the kids swimming, I decided to call them back for lunch. Everyone was back on the shore except for two girls swimming fast towards the shore. Suddenly the girl in the front, Amelia Brown, let out one of the loudest screams I have ever heard. I wanted to help but if I had gone to help her, I would have drowned, and we would have both died. So, I ran to the closest person I could find that wasn't a kid, which was a guy and a girl. Once I asked them for help, the girl called 9-1-1 and the guy jumped into action, bringing Amelia back to shore. He was able to help her onto the ambulance, then the travel group started to leave the beach. Just as we were walking out of the beach, I saw a sign I was able to read because the font was big and bold. It read "Beware of stingrays." I'm not sure why it wasn't there before. But it should have been.

### ***Testimony of Gabriel Murphy***

My name is Gabe Murphy, I'm 23 and I started lifeguard duty last year. On July 28,

2023, I had a free day, so I went out to get ice cream with my friend, Brooke Smith. My boss then urgently called me to go help the construction people find a sign and fix it. I did not have time to drop Brooke off, so I brought her with me. When we got there, we saw the construction people and went to help them. All of a sudden, I heard a blood-curdling scream. I ran out to the sand and saw a girl struggling to stay afloat. A man ran to me and said, "Help, I don't know how to swim! Go help her!" I swam out and brought her back to shore, while Brooke called 9-1-1. I saw a small shadow in the water and knew at once she had been stung by a stingray. I helped her into the ambulance, and me and Brooke went back to our day, never going to forget the past events.

also occur when there is a failure to act as a "reasonable person."

**Liability:** To be held legally responsible or obligated to the children on the trip.

## INSTRUCTIONS

The plaintiff must prove by a preponderance of the evidence that Henry Wilson was negligent.

## SUB-ISSUES

1. Did Henry Wilson carry out the responsibility of his job?
2. Should Henry Wilson have known before he went on the trip how to swim?
3. Should the beach have been closed if the sign was not fixed?
4. Should Amelia Brown and Luciana Diaz be held accountable for not paying attention to their surroundings?
5. Should there have been multiple supervisors in the group?

## CONCEPTS

1. Burden of proof
2. Negligence
3. Liability

## LAW

**Negligence:** When an act is committed that falls below what would be expected if the person is using ordinary care. Negligence can



## NEW JERSEY STATE BAR FOUNDATION

One Constitution Square  
New Brunswick, NJ 08901-1520  
732-249-5000  
[njsbf.org](http://njsbf.org)

Check out our website  
Like us on Facebook  
Follow us on Instagram

 @NJStateBarFdn

 @NJStateBarFdn