



Skit #1: Order and Security

Roles:

Friend #1
Friend #2
Robber
Officer

Summary:

Two friends are attacked by a robber on the street. After searching for half an hour, they finally find a police officer. The police officer doesn't know how to help them. Even when the officer catches the robber, there is no jail where the officer can keep the robber, and the officer does not have the skills to figure out what is going on. The officer suggests the injured friend seek justice through a local council instead of in the court system.

Skit:

FRIEND #1: You always want to go to the mall. Let's go see a movie this time.

FRIEND #2: But the movie will get out after dark, and it's too dangerous to be on the street after dark.

FRIEND #1: It's always dangerous on the street! I mean, even right now we could—Hey!

[Robber comes up.]

ROBBER: Give me all your money!

FRIEND #1: I don't have any money!

ROBBER: The watch! Give me the watch! [robber gets into a fight with Friend #1, and Friend #1 is badly injured]

FRIEND #1: Okay, okay! Take the watch. [Friend #1 removes his watch]

[Robber takes watch and runs away.]

FRIEND #2: Help! Police!

FRIEND #1: There aren't any police around here.

FRIEND #2: Let's try to find one. Can you walk?

FRIEND #1: I think so. [they walk]

FRIEND #1: We've been looking for half an hour, and there's no—

FRIEND #2: There! Help! Police!

[Officer comes over]

FRIEND #2: Officer! Help! Someone robbed and beat up my friend.

OFFICER: Do you know where he is?

FRIEND #1: No. He ran away.

OFFICER: Hm. Don't know what I can do, then.

FRIEND #2: Find him!

OFFICER: In this city? I wouldn't know where to start. And even if I found him, what would I do with him? We don't have anywhere to put him. The jail has been shut down for years.

FRIEND #2: You can't do anything?

FRIEND #1: Hey! There he is!

[Officer runs after Robber and catches him by the arm.]

OFFICER: This is the guy?

FRIEND #1: Yes! See? He has my watch!

OFFICER: [to robber] Is this your watch?

ROBBER: Yes. My mother gave it to me.

FRIEND #1: That's a lie!

OFFICER: Look. There's no way for me to know who's telling the truth. [lets robber go]

FRIEND #2: You're just going to let him go? He needs to be punished!

FRIEND #1: And he has my watch!

OFFICER: Take it up with the local council. They can figure out what to do.

FRIEND #1: I don't want to go to the council. I want to go to court.

OFFICER: The council is better for this kind of thing.

FRIEND #1: So you're not going to do anything?

OFFICER: [shrugs] Nothing I can do. You'll have to solve it yourself, or talk to the council.



Skit #2: Legitimacy

Roles:

Builder
Friend #1
Friend #2
Friend #3

Summary:

One person is building a house while a friend sits and reads the newspaper. When another friend arrives and questions whether the roof looks legal, the builder laughs at the laws that are in place. The laws were borrowed from a different country and do not make sense in this country. But the lawmakers don't care what the citizens need and aren't interested in listening. A third friend arrives, who is breaking the law with his smelly car. But the law is stupid and impossible to follow, so why try?

Skit:

FRIEND #2: What are you building?

BUILDER: A house! What does it look like?

FRIEND #2: Looks like it's about to fall down, if you ask me. Isn't it against the law to build the roof like that?

BUILDER: Yeah, but the law requires tiles. Who's ever seen tiles around here?

FRIEND #1: [reading paper] We were just talking about this new building code they passed. What a joke!

FRIEND #2: You mean they took a break from lunch long enough to pass a law?

FRIEND #1: Ha ha! Guess so. Doesn't have anything to do with us, though. It's all about building fancy hotels and skyscrapers.

BUILDER: They make a law about fancy places, but they won't change the law that says I'm supposed to use tiles for my roof. You can't even get tiles in this country!

FRIEND #2: That's what you get when you borrow a bunch of laws from some country halfway around the world. They must have plenty of tiles there.

BUILDER: [grumbling] Good thing there's no money to pay any inspectors.

FRIEND #2: One of these days, we ought to vote those people out of office. When are they going to listen to us about the laws *we* need?

BUILDER: Ha! Never, that's when. They don't want input from people like us.

FRIEND #3: [drives up in a car] Hey, guys! How's it going?

FRIEND #1: Great. Nice set of wheels! Awful lot of smoke coming out of that tailpipe, though.

FRIEND #3: I know! Can you believe they said I have to pass an emissions test?

BUILDER: With that thing? Good luck!

FRIEND #3: I know. Even if I wanted a new car, who's ever seen one for sale in this country?

FRIEND #1: Not me. We don't even have any car makers here.

FRIEND #3: I can't even get new parts. But the law still says all the cars have to pass emissions. It's stupid.

FRIEND #2: You going to do it?

FRIEND #3: Heck, no. Why should I?

FRIEND #2: Because it's the law?

FRIEND #3: Ha ha! Good one! See you around, guys. [speeds off]



Skit #3: Checks and Balances

Roles:

President
Legislator #1
Legislator #2
Legislator #3

Summary:

The President's friend wants a new law that will help his business make more money. The President asks the legislature to pass the law. He assures the legislators that Bob Smith will reward them for their cooperation. Nobody is worried that the law won't hold up because the court system is too disorganized. Even if someone does take the law to court, the President or the legislators can just bribe the judges.

Skit:

PRESIDENT: Hi, guys. Listen—Bob Smith came to see me. His coal business isn't making enough money, and he wants us to let up on the safety rules. It costs a lot to keep those mines safe. I told him we could pass a law doing away with some of those mine safety rules.

LEGISLATOR #1: Maybe we could, but what's in it for us?

PRESIDENT: Don't worry. He said he would be sure to take care of you.

LEGISLATOR #2: Sounds good to me. What do you want the law to say?

LEGISLATOR #3: Wait a minute—can we do that?

LEGISLATOR #1: Who's going to stop us?

LEGISLATOR #3: The judicial branch. Somebody might challenge the law in court.

LEGISLATOR #2: Let them try! The court is so disorganized, it loses track of half the cases.

LEGISLATOR #1: Yeah. Most of them never even go to trial. And we hardly have any judges. We may as well not have any judicial branch at all.

PRESIDENT: Which makes things a lot easier for us. But don't worry. If someone does challenge the law in court, we'll just do the judge a little favor, if you know what I mean.

LEGISLATOR #3 [to the President]: Yeah, I know what you mean. But I've got a letter here from a guy who says he voted for me. He works in the coal mines and he says a lot of people are getting hurt. He says we need more safety rules, not less.

LEGISLATOR #2: How much money is he going to give us for passing more safety laws?

LEGISLATOR #3: Aw, come on. Aren't some things more important than money?

PRESIDENT: Look here. You'd better get on board with this or you might not be representing anybody. Bob Smith can do a lot for us. Besides, he's a family friend.

LEGISLATOR #3: [Looks at the letter, then at the President] You think he'll let me use his yacht for a couple weeks? My kids could use a vacation.

LEGISLATOR #1: Sounds like we're going to get this law passed without any problems.

PRESIDENT: Don't you worry. You'll be sunbathing on the waves before you know it. Send me the bill as soon as it's passed, and I'll sign it right away.



Skit #4: Equal Application of the Law

Roles:

Judge
Thief
Officer
Town Mayor

Summary:

After sentencing a thief to five years of hard labor for stealing potatoes at the market, the judge finds the town mayor waiting in his office. The mayor had a problem at the market, too. He lost his temper with a vendor because of the vendor's high prices. The mayor broke things in the vendor's shop and broke the vendor's arm. Because of the mayor's position, the judge agrees to overlook the offense.

Skit:

JUDGE: I find you guilty of stealing two sacks of potatoes from the market. I sentence you to five years of hard labor and a \$1,000 fine.

THIEF: But Your Honor, I don't have any money!

JUDGE: Then you should not have broken the law. Case closed! I'm going to take a break.

THIEF: Wait! This isn't fair!

OFFICER: Settle down. Let's go.

THIEF: It was only potatoes! My kids didn't have enough to eat!

OFFICER: Be quiet, or I'll have to gag you!

[in the judge's chambers]

JUDGE: Hey there! This is a surprise. Good to see you.

TOWN MAYOR: Listen. I've got a small problem.

JUDGE: Oh?

TOWN MAYOR: I had an issue with this vendor at the market. You know how it is. These guys and their prices—they try to get away with murder these days! I might have let my temper get a little out of hand.

JUDGE: How out of hand?

TOWN MAYOR: I might have broken a few things. Including his arm.

[judge sighs]

TOWN MAYOR: Look. I've known you for a long time. Since before you got this job, if you understand my meaning.

JUDGE: I understand very well. But you don't need to pull that with me. You're the mayor—I'll take care of things.

TOWN MAYOR: That's what I figured, but I wanted to talk to you in person.

JUDGE: Doesn't sound to me like there was any problem at the market at all. [laughs] Those vendors should learn how to treat a customer right.

TOWN MAYOR: [laughing] I am the mayor, after all!



Skit #5: Procedural Fairness

Roles:

Jail Guard
Prisoner #1
Prisoner #2
Prisoner #3

Summary:

Three prisoners end up sharing the same cell. One prisoner has been in prison for two years without being told why and without ever seeing a judge. Another prisoner is taken to court after spending only a short time in jail. There is no clear reason why that prisoner gets to go to court when the other one did not. A third prisoner has been jailed for not being able to pay the court fee. The court fee is decided by the judge on a case-by-case basis.

Skit:

[Jail Guard throws Prisoner #2 into the jail cell, where Prisoner #1 is already living.]

PRISONER #1 [to the jailer]: Hey! Hey, have you found out anything yet?

JAIL GUARD: Not my job to find out things. I just make sure people don't escape.

PRISONER #1: Come on—you said you'd try to find out why I'm in jail.

JAIL GUARD: Probably because you did something wrong.

PRISONER #1: But I didn't do anything! Come on—Can't you find someone who can tell me why I'm here?

JAIL GUARD: Shut up and eat your dinner.

[Jail Guard leaves]

PRISONER #1: I've been in here for two years and I still can't get them to tell me what's going on. I've never seen a courtroom—nothing.

PRISONER #2: Seriously? You mean I could be in here for years without seeing a judge?

PRISONER #1: Maybe. But then, I've seen people get out after a few weeks. Who knows why.

PRISONER #2: Probably because they've got money. That leaves me out—I got caught stealing a loaf of bread.

[Door opens]

JAIL GUARD: You guys have got company.
[Guard throws another prisoner in the cell.]

PRISONER #3: It's not fair! You can't put me in here!

JAIL GUARD: Tell it to someone who cares. [shuts the door]

PRISONER #3: This is awful. How am I ever going to get out of here?

PRISONER #1: Ha. Maybe you won't.

PRISONER #2: What happened to you?

PRISONER #3: They took me to the judge, but he set the fee for my case really high. Five hundred dollars! I couldn't afford it.

PRISONER #1: What crime did you commit?

PRISONER #3: I didn't commit a crime. I owe my neighbor money, and she sued me. The judge said since I couldn't pay my neighbor and I couldn't pay the court fee, I had to come here.

PRISONER #2: That is so unfair!

PRISONER #3: And get this: The guy before me only had to pay \$75 for his case. I don't know how the judge decides what the fee is going to be.

[Door opens]

JAIL GUARD [to Prisoner #2]: Hey, you—yes, you. Come on.

PRISONER #2: Where are you taking me?

JAIL GUARD: They said the judge is ready to hear your case.

PRISONER #2 [pointing at Prisoner #1]: What about him? He's been in here longer than me.

JAIL GUARD: I don't know anything about him. Are you coming or not?

PRISONER #2: Good luck, you two...



Skit #6: Access to Justice

Roles:

Tamara (woman with a problem)
Robert (Tamara's male friend)
Angela (Tamara's female neighbor)
Court Clerk
Man (Files a case in court)

Summary:

Tamara wants to take a man to court for refusing to stop farming her land, but the local court is almost always closed. The nearest court is in the capital city, but Tamara can't afford to travel that far. When the local court opens for a day, Tamara thinks she'll be able to file her case. But women are not treated the same as men, and as a woman, Tamara did not get enough schooling to be able to read the forms. Without access to justice, Tamara has no way to enforce her rights.

Skit:

TAMARA: I don't know what to do! I've told him a hundred times he can't farm that land. It's my land, but he won't leave.

ROBERT: I can think of a few ways you could get him to leave.

TAMARA: I'm sure you could. But I don't need to go to prison. [sighs] Maybe the court will open soon.

ROBERT: Ha! It's been closed for six months. If you want to take him to court, you'll have to travel to the capital city.

TAMARA: I can't afford to travel five hundred miles to the city. They've got to get a judge out here soon. They can't just leave the court closed forever.

ROBERT: That would take money. Besides, you would never win. You're a woman.

TAMARA: Yeah, you're probably right.

ANGELA: Hi, guys! Guess what? I was just in town and the court is open. Can you believe it?

TAMARA: Really? Maybe if I go there right now I can file a case.

ROBERT: [sarcastically] Good luck.

ANGELA: I'll go with you. Let's go.

[Tamara and Angela go to the courthouse]
[at the clerk window]

TAMARA: Excuse me. Excuse me!
[clerk ignores her]

TAMARA: Excuse me! I want to file a case.

CLERK: Fill out this form.

TAMARA: Can you help me fill this out? I don't understand it.

CLERK: Nope. You've got to do it on your own.

MAN: Excuse me. I'd like to file a case.

CLERK: You need to get out of the way, ma'am. Fill out this form, sir.

MAN: Okay. [takes form and fills it out]

TAMARA [to Angela]: I can't read this.

ANGELA: I had two years of school. Let me try. [looks at form] I can read some of it, but I don't really understand what it's about. I don't know anything about how the courts work.

TAMARA [to clerk]: Isn't there any other way I can see the judge?

CLERK: Nope. Sorry.

TAMARA [to Angela]: Let's just go. I'll have to find some other way to get that man off my land.