



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...