

TEEN COURT
"PILOT"

Written by

Ben M. Waller

"Middle and high school student volunteers will litigate actual cases with defendants by participating in the roles of a juror, defense attorneys and prosecution attorneys.

There is no formal application process or required training sessions."

- FAQ Page, Thirteenth Judicial Circuit Court of Florida.

COLD OPEN

EXT. FLORIDA HIGHWAY - EARLY MORNING

A massive SUV barrels down a misty highway.

DAD (O.S.)
I ain't payin' fifty bucks to park!

INT. SUV - CONTINUOUS

Family vacation. Tensions are high.

DAD
Damn mouse ears cost twice that!

MOM
Hun ya ain't gotta yell--

DAD
Tell that to Bryley and Jaxson back
there! Not even listenin'!

Two KIDS pretend to look at phones to hide their tears.

ON THE ROAD

A traffic message board passes in the window. It flashes--
PARKING AHEAD--TEN DOLLARS

DAD (CONT'D)
(off sign)
SEE! Dad's right again!

BRYLEY
(quietly)
Can I just have one nice birthday?

DAD
HWHAT? HWHAT WAS THAT?!

A SIGN PASSES BY--**ZOMBIES AHEAD-DO NOT STOP**

MOM
(uncomfortable laugh)
Little weird.

Another sign--**THIS IS REAL. ZOMBIES.**

Jaxson's sniffles turn to sobs.

DAD
No cryin', I need to focus.

One more sign--**GET OUT NOASFWN324NVDAA**

DAD (CONT'D)
Zombie ate the goddamn sign writer!

Dad yanks a MASSIVE pistol from under his seat. Mom dutifully hands him a magazine.

DAD (CONT'D)
This is real. Signs don't lie.

MOM
Turn around! We'll go to Swamptown.

Dad looks at his kids in the rearview. *They're his world.*

DAD
No braindead husk is gonna chomp my family. Ahhhhh!

Dad SCREAMS and SLAMS THE GAS while he RIPS the e-brake. The SUV SLIDES across the freeway into the opposite lane.

Dad GUNS IT in the opposite direction.

EXT. FLORIDA HIGHWAY - CONTINUOUS

VICKY ALEXANDER emerges - 17, second-generation Korean and first-generation hellraiser. She waves at the departing SUV.

VICKY
It worked! Fucking Florida.

She hefts bolt cutters and walks to the next sign. Pops open the lock and types in a message.

WOOP WOOP. A cop puts his spotlight on Vicky.

VICKY (CONT'D)
Shit.

END OF COLD OPEN

ACT ONE

INT. COURTROOM - DAY

Vicky sits in a courtroom - linoleum floors, vinyl walls, plastic chairs. Easy to hose down.

JUDGE

Victoria Alexander, approach.

Vicky stands in front of the JUDGE - 56, big mustache and a bad mood.

JUDGE (CONT'D)

This is your first offense, so you have opted to appear in Teen Court.

She studies the others - a couple TOUGHS, a few NERDS...a guy that looks like a teacher? This is Teen Court. Except--

VICKY

Don't I get a lawyer? I don't want to say anything that can be used against me in, uh, here.

The Judge motions and the teacher-looking guy stands. Vicky recognizes him from school. It's MR. BRADSHAW - 52, balding, still teaches despite what it's done to him.

Mr. Bradshaw taps a kid. SAM - 13, acne and hand-me-downs - rushes to the front. His suit is two-sizes-too-big.

SAM

I'm here, your honor.

VICKY

(to Judge)

This is a freshman from my school. I've seen this kid get bullied.

JUDGE

Ms. Alexander. This is TEEN court--

SAM

Your honor, may I?

JUDGE

(nicer)

Go ahead, Samuel.

SAM

In Florida, we allow teens, such as myself, to lawyer on behalf of juvenile first-time offenders. No training required!

What the fuck?

SAM (CONT'D)

(whispers)

Don't worry, I have watched a lot of Good Wife.

VICKY

(to herself)

Fucking Florida.

JUDGE

Let's begin. Defense, opening statement?

Sam addresses the jury box—also FULL of teens.

SAM (O.S.)

My client is a good woman! Has a driver's license, babysits maybe--

Vicky puts her head in her hands.

NERD PROSECUTOR (PRE-LAP)

And what did you witness that night, in your own words?

ON THE WITNESS STAND

OFFICER JONES – 25, shitty haircut and even shittier punisher tattoo – leans too close to the mic.

OFFICER JONES

(deadly serious)

I observed the defendant manipulating the traffic board to display messages of apocalyptic intent.

A NERD PROSECUTOR – 13, seventy-percent orthodontia – questions him.

NERD PROSECUTOR

(looking at jury)

And how could you tell it was apocalyptic?

OFFICER JONES

It wasn't the apocalypse as laid out in scripture. But it involved zombies, so I could infer based on my training.

SAM (PRE-LAP)

Vicky, what do you like to do with your free time?

LATER

VICKY

What does that have to do with...?

Vicky's on the witness stand. Sam's cobbling a case together.

SAM

You're somebody with goals and friends, and maybe, even IF you did this--it was just a one-off.

VICKY

Yeah. Can I give you questions to ask? I don't want to go to jail.

SLAM. An ATTORNEY bursts through the door.

ATTORNEY

Sorry I'm late your honor, I run my kid's youth group and--

He spots the entire court full of teens.

ATTORNEY (CONT'D)

Oh hell no. Wrong courtroom.

He bolts.

VICKY

Wait! I need a lawyer!

SAM

(clears throat)

If you were to ask yourself a question, what would you ask?

LATER

The whole courtroom stands. JUROR #1 - 16, theater kid vibes - leads the jury back into the room.

The Judge is asleep. Someone taps him.

JUDGE
 (waking up)
 Have you reached a verdict?

JUROR #1
 We have your honor.
 (holds up paper)
 Guilty.

The crowd GASPS.

JUDGE
 You're supposed to hand me the--
 nevermind.
 (turns to Vicky)
 You have been found guilty. Two
 options. One--time in juvenile
 detention. Twenty days for this
 crime. Or you can continue the
 great tradition of law we've
 established and join Teen Court
 yourself.

Vicky looks at Sam. He waves. *Oh great.*

JUDGE (CONT'D)
 Ms. Alexander, we're picking
 between incarceration and an after-
 school activity.

VICKY
 Teen Court, your honor.

EXT. VICKY'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Vicky's house is a faux Mediterranean monstrosity. She sits on her bike outside and watches her PARENTS and other DRUNK ADULTS party inside.

INT. VICKY'S HOUSE - FOYER

Vicky attempts to sneak by the revelry in the kitchen. Her MOM spots her.

MOM
 Honey! Where were you? Come say hi!

VICKY
 Out with friends--I wish but I got
 homework!

INT. VICKY'S ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Vicky closes and locks the door behind her. Puts her backpack down. Climbs into bed. Puts in earplugs to block the party.

INT. MATH CLASS - THE NEXT MORNING

Lots of schools in Florida are designed the same as prisons. This is one of those schools.

Vicky sits amongst jaded TEENS, listening to MR. AGNES - 30s, peaked in high school so he never left.

MR. AGNES

Who did their homework? Show of hands.

No one raises their hand. Mr. Agnes picks BAILEY - 16, frail.

MR. AGNES (CONT'D)

Bailey. Another week, another zero?

BAILEY

I, I had to--

VICKY

Maybe if you gave us interesting homework we'd do it.

MR. AGNES

Am I supposed to coddle you to do your job?

VICKY

No. You need us to coddle you to do yours? We'll finish our homework if it's affecting you.

Mr. Agnes thinks on it, then changes the subject.

MR. AGNES

Today we're doing proofs.

INT. SCHOOL - LOCKERS

Vicky catches up to Bailey in the hallway.

VICKY

Mr. Agnes is such a jerk, huh?

BAILEY

I don't need you to stick up for
me, you're not my mom.

Bailey brushes past her. Other girls snicker at Vicky.

SAM (O.S.)

Hey!

Sam rushes up to her side.

SAM (CONT'D)

Glad you'll be joining us. Want to
get lunch together?

Vicky walks on.

SAM (CONT'D)

Oh, too cool to hang because of
some lame high school caste syste--

VICKY

No I'm not going to talk to you
because you're a shitty attorney!

SAM

You're LEGALLY MANDATED to be in
Teen Court, and since I'm part of
it, you're basically LEGALLY
MANDATED to be my friend. See you
in sixth period, counselor.

END OF ACT ONE

ACT TWO

INT. MR. BRADSHAW'S CLASSROOM - SIXTH PERIOD

Vicky pokes her head in the door. It's quiet.

Mr. Bradshaw, Sam, and a few other freshmen wait at desks.

MR. BRADSHAW

Victoria! Welcome. Welcome to our little crime-fighting team--or crime-defending. Depends on the trial. Are you ready to change the world?

VICKY

I just have five weeks of this sentence, so y'all can change the world and I'll cheer you on.

MR. BRADSHAW

I think you'll find the siren call of the scales of justice hard to ignore.

VICKY

Can we do an orientation? Is there a test or anything?

MR. BRADSHAW

The bar exam is a little above our skill level.

VICKY

But, these are real trials, with real laws, and real punishments?

MR. BRADSHAW

Were you expecting us to engage in a different type of adjudication? Fear not, my budding barrister--if you are worried about preparedness--there isn't a test in the world that could educate you like this.

He holds out a sheet of paper. Vicky takes it.

VICKY

This is a list of TV shows about lawyers.

MR. BRADSHAW
Better than any JD program!

She brusquely folds up the list and stuffs it in a pocket.

VICKY
(off their reactions)
Am I supposed to watch them now?

MR. BRADSHAW
Oh no, the TV is for PBS.

SAM
(helpful)
Plus you'd never finish the list
before tonight.

VICKY
I'm a lawyer... tonight?

MR. BRADSHAW
Excelsior! We selected a 'starter
case' for you. Should be a breeze.

Mr. Bradshaw hands her another slip of paper.

VICKY
Like, my case? How about I just be
the bailiff. Or the keyboard lady?

MR. BRADSHAW
Nonsense and frivolity. That list
in your pocket has DOZENS of
examples of attorneys just. like.
you. stepping up and winning their
first case in a triumph.

Vicky shakes her head. She checks the paper.

VICKY
(a lie)
I'll go get started. At the
courthouse.

Vicky leaves.

SAM
She's not going to show up.

MR. BRADSHAW
I think with a little patience--and
police presence--she will be
present.

EXT. VICKY'S HOUSE - DUSK

Vicky rides her bike up the driveway. A police cruiser follows right behind her. As soon as she steps off the bike--

WOOP WOOP

Vicky SHOUTS at the cruiser--

VICKY

What??

POLICE CRUISER (V.O.)

(over intercom)

Ma'am, this is your school resource officer, Officer Douglas. You are legally obliged to appear at Teen Court.

VICKY

I just came home to get something!

POLICE CRUISER (V.O.)

(over intercom)

You are violating the terms of your sentence and attempting truancy.

Vicky tosses her bike down, stubbornly.

VICKY

And what if I am?

EXT. COUNTY COURTHOUSE - DUSK

The Hillsborough County Courthouse is built to withstand hurricanes, not look pretty.

OFFICER DOUGLAS - 30s, tribal tats on both biceps - helps a handcuffed Vicky from his cruiser.

INT. COURTHOUSE FOYER - CONTINUOUS

Officer Douglas and Vicky walk past a SECURITY GUARD.

VICKY

Just heading to Teen Court! I'm a lawyer.

SECURITY GUARD

Good for you, honey.

INT. COURTROOM - MOMENTS LATER

The same courtroom where Vicky was sentenced. Officer Douglas guides Vicky onto the bench next to Mr. Bradshaw and the other freshmen.

MR. BRADSHAW

It's ok, officer. I have her.

The officer unlocks Vicky's handcuffs. She immediately crosses her arms.

VICKY

I was going to show up.

MR. BRADSHAW

And here you are.

The door opens and everyone turns.

MR. BRADSHAW (CONT'D)

Oh great.

In walks the GREATEST TEAM OF TEEN ATTORNEYS ever assembled. And one hell of a FACULTY ADVISOR.

VICKY

Is that--

SAM

The best teen law firm in Florida.

The kids wear matching suits. The Advisor wears a fedora and trench coat. He carries a briefcase.

MR. BRADSHAW

All children of prominent local attorneys.

SAM

(in awe)

Every one of those kid's parents has a billboard.

One especially sharp-dressed teen winks at Vicky. She smiles, then frowns.

JUDGE (O.S.)

Ok, we're all here. Let's start.

Oh shit, it's the SAME Judge that sentenced Vicky.

MR. BRADSHAW

Yes, your honor.

EVIL ADVISOR

Yes, your eminence.

JUDGE

Tonight's case is Gerald Lake.
Attorneys approach.

Vicky moves to approach the bench. Mr. Bradshaw places a hand on her shoulder.

MR. BRADSHAW

You passed on your opportunity
tonight. Sam will go in your stead.
Find an empty seat in the jury box.

Vicky grumbles and makes her way to the jury box. She passes DYLAN - 17, currently peaking in high school - the attorney who winked at her. She wants to kick his ass.

JUDGE

Ms. Alexander, if you miss another
Teen Court you will be remanded to
juvenile detention.
(to Sam and Dylan)
Attorneys, let's begin.

Vicky stares daggers from her position as Juror #12.

DYLAN (PRE-LAP)

(to the jury)
Gerald Lake stole several rare palm
trees from his neighbor and sold
them for baseball cards.

LATER

Opening statements. The jury LOVES Dylan. Except Vicky.

DYLAN (CONT'D)

I'm just a simple country teen
prosecutor, but here in the big
city, facts are still facts.

He heads back to his seat and Sam stands.

SAM

Gerald Lake is innocent and I will
prove that through a thorough
examination of the facts.

VICKY

(to herself)
Is he serious? That's it?

LATER

GERALD - 15, permanent frown - sits on the witness stand.

DYLAN
Gerald, can I call you Jerry?

GERALD
Hell no.

DYLAN
Did you take those plants?

GERALD
You think I'm going to tell you
shit?

DYLAN
(to jury)
Fiery tonight, huh?

Dylan flashes his smile. The jury laughs. Except Vicky.

LATER

SAM
There's no way you took those
plants, huh?

GERALD
That is a stupid ass question.

LATER

JUDGE
Jury, you have heard both sides.
Please spend the next few minutes
deliberating.

The jury leaves. Vicky scowls at Dylan.

INT. JURY DELIBERATIONS ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Vicky sits around a table with a bunch of THEATER KIDS

JUROR #5
I'll get the convo going, but that
Gerald guy is totes guilty.

VICKY
Says who?

JUROR #7
Were you listening to Dylan? I
think he made it pretty clear.

VICKY

No. He didn't. He just seemed charming.

JUROR #1

No I'm pretty sure he had a great argument too.

VICKY

Wait. You all are going to determine a kid's life based on this rich asshole's smile?

JUROR #1

And his arguments...

VICKY

No way. I am never going along with this. There is no way that Gerald is going to be--

INT. COURTROOM - MOMENTS LATER

JUROR #1

Guilty, your honor.

Vicky stomps off the jury box and out of the courtroom.

EXT. COURTHOUSE FOYER - MOMENTS LATER

Vicky sits on the bench outside the courtroom. Sam joins her.

SAM

Thanks for sticking up for me in there.

VICKY

I wasn't sticking up for you, poor fuckin' Gerald is now going to jail because what? Because the jury thought Dylan is cute? Is that how this is run?

SAM

Most of the time, yeah. Dylan's firm has a perfect record.

VICKY

Why hasn't anyone done anything?

SAM

We've tried.

VICKY
Not hard enough.

EXT. FLORIDA STREET - NIGHT

Insects and sawgrass. Faded orange streetlights. An empty backroad in the middle of nowhere.

A figure walks along the road and a HUGE SHAPE through the darkness. They carry a gallon milk jug with them.

Headlights approach. The figure HIDES in the grass. The headlights pass. The figure takes a cautious step back onto the street. The headlights appear again, joined by red and blue lights above.

LATER

BUCK LEE - 18, built like a mountain but brain like a peanut - leans up against a cop car, in handcuffs. The cop studies his gallon of milk.

BUCK
Son of a biscuit.

INT. VICKY'S HOUSE - LATER THAT NIGHT

Vicky walks towards her room. The house is quiet.

MOM (O.S.)
Are you ok?

VICKY
(turns to face her)
Yeah. Fine. Why?

MOM
Thought I saw a cop in the yard earlier? I had a few, though, so maybe not.

VICKY
No. I think I'd remember a cop.

MOM
Just...don't embarrass us. Ok?

VICKY
Wouldn't dream.

INT. MR. BRADSHAW'S CLASSROOM - THE NEXT DAY

Vicky walks into Mr. Bradshaw's class in a suit.

MR. BRADSHAW

Such clothes befitting an attorney
of your stature! Ready for your
next case?

VICKY

Don't talk about my clothes. Let's
go kick some ass.

END OF ACT TWO

ACT THREE

EXT. COURTHOUSE - NIGHT

Vicky rolls up to the courthouse on her bike—in her suit.
She jumps off the bike and it slots perfectly into the rack.

INT. COURTHOUSE FOYER - MOMENTS LATER

Vicky rushes past the same Security Guard as before--she's still painting her nails.

VICKY
(rushing past)
Teen court business!

SECURITY GUARD
You ain't arrested this time,
congrats hun!

INT. COURTHOUSE HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

Vicky spots Buck Lee sitting on a bench, tears streaming down his face.

VICKY
Are you Buck?

Buck stands and wipes away his tears but more fall out.

BUCK
Yes ma'am.

VICKY
I'm your attorney for Teen Court,
come with me.

Vicky guides Buck into

A VENDING MACHINE ROOM

She kicks the door shut behind them.

BUCK
(sobbing)
I swear I ain't done nothin'! I
can't have this on my record. I'm
gonna be a cop!

VICKY
Hey it's ok. I got you.

BUCK
(in between heaves)
Really? How long you been a lawyer?

VICKY
A day. But I'm certified and everything. Had a ceremony.

BUCK
I hafta be a cop. I can't qualify for a CDL--I'm colorblind!

VICKY
Tell me what happened. Don't leave anything out.

BUCK
I was walkin' and the cops stopped me. They said I was stealin'.
(can't bring himself to say it)
Stealin' Jenkem.

VICKY
Why? What's Jenkem?

Buck shakes his head and squints his eyes.

VICKY (CONT'D)
It can't be that bad.

BUCK
It is. It is *vile*.

VICKY
I'm your attorney. You have to tell me if you want me to help.

Buck inhales.

BUCK
It's poo poo, ma'am. And pee pee.

VICKY
Ok--

BUCK
I ain't finished. You put the poo poo and the pee pee in a container and let it sit a while.

VICKY

What, why--

BUCK

You open the container and breathe in the gas. It gives a drug high.

VICKY

(afraid of the answer)

Buck. Is this a thing you do?

BUCK

No! S'against my covenant with God.

VICKY

Ok. Why'd the cop say you did this?

BUCK

I was walking down the street near the sewage plant. Mindin' my own. Wasn't comin' from nothin'.

He's lying.

VICKY

And you didn't break into the sewage plant?

BUCK

No! I just told him I had.

Vicky rubs her eye. This is already too complicated.

A BAILIFF knocks and pokes their head in the room.

BAILIFF

Trial's starting. Y'all two can't hog the refreshments like this.

INT. COURTROOM - LATER

Dylan finishes up his opening statement in front of a swooning jury.

DYLAN

And what makes this worse, Buck Lee was found carrying a jug of...well I don't want to say in polite company but let's just call it Jenkem.

The jury GASPS.

DYLAN (CONT'D)
(winks)
I'll see you back soon.

Dylan sits down.

JUDGE
Ms. Alexander.

Vicky stands in front of the jury.

VICKY
This is my first time with you all.
I'm a little nervous, to be honest.
My client is alleged to have broken
into a sewage treatment plant.
That's false. And if there was
anyone else out there besides a
cop, you'd know it was false--

DYLAN
Objection. Argument.

JUDGE
Sustained. Ms. Alexander, watch
what you say.

VICKY
And Buck also doesn't do Jenkem, as
the officer alleged he had on his
person. How would the officer even
know?

DYLAN
Objection, your honor, argument.

JUDGE
Sustained. Attorneys, come with me.

INT. COURTROOM CAFETERIA - MOMENTS LATER

A dingy courthouse cafeteria. Two stars on yelp.

Vicky, Dylan, and the Judge sit at one of the empty tables.

JUDGE
The county does not supply me with
chambers, so here we are.

VICKY
Am I going to keep getting
interrupted the whole time?

JUDGE

Unfortunately for you Ms. Alexander, Mr. Copeland here is well-versed in legal theory. I brought you both back to remind you of what's at stake—Buck Lee's future. Not either of your reputations.

DYLAN

Your honor, I'm two wins away from volunteer of the year—I'm not going to take it easy.

The Judge shakes his head and pulls a container from his bag. Puts it in the microwave.

JUDGE

I look forward to a productive trial and learning experience for everyone.

VICKY

Your honor, what am I supposed to do if he just uses all his bullshit law knowledge on me?

JUDGE

Learn some yourself.

Vicky tosses her arms down and huffs. Dylan laughs and covers it with a cough.

JUDGE (CONT'D)

I'm going to eat my birthday noodles, then we can go back.

The Judge shovels a forkful of pasta in his mouth.

INT. COURTROOM - LATER

Vicky questions Buck.

VICKY

Buck, mind telling us what was going on that evening?

BUCK

Well I wasn't breaking into the sewage treatment plant.

VICKY

And do you want to give the jury something to replace that in their minds?

DYLAN

Objection, leading.

JUDGE

Sustained.

VICKY

Well, what do you want? He didn't do it!

The Judge slams his gavel.

JUDGE

It's not that simple, Ms. Alexander. Stick to the facts.

VICKY

That is a fact!

JUDGE

I'm going to go ahead and end your questioning for now to give you a chance to cool off.

Vicky stomps off to her seat.

Dylan stands. Brushes the front of his polo.

DYLAN

(to Buck)

Drugs are bad, right?

BUCK

Course.

DYLAN

You eat organic?

BUCK

Yes sir, my body's a temple.

DYLAN

Anything organic is ok to put in or around your body?

BUCK

It's right in the name, ain't it?

DYLAN
Jenkem is organic.

Sam taps Vicky. She looks at him angry, then realizes--

VICKY
Objection!

The court looks at her.

VICKY (CONT'D)
Uhh, correlation not causation?

The Judge smiles.

JUDGE
That is not a sound legal theory,
but a good effort. Overruled.

Vicky sits, pleased with herself.

LATER

Vicky questions Buck again.

VICKY
Round two, you ready?

DYLAN
Objection. Relevance.

JUDGE
Sustained.

VICKY
Can I please get a sentence out?

JUDGE
Ms. Alexander...

VICKY
This is bullshit, this fuckin' dork
has rich parents and can antagonize
people cause he probably has daddy
buy him an attorney tutor--

The Judge SMASHES his gavel.

JUDGE
That's enough. I apologize Buck Lee
but your attorney doesn't have the
patience to make it through the
evening.

(MORE)

JUDGE (CONT'D)

I'm going to ask that we take a recess until tomorrow to let cooler heads prevail.

DYLAN

What?! But my record--

JUDGE

Doesn't matter when someone could go to prison.

Dylan closes up his binder in a huff and storms out of the courtroom.

Mr. Bradshaw approaches Vicky.

MR. BRADSHAW

Well, it's not the most graceful end to the evening but it gives us time to prepare for tomorrow.

Vicky avoids eye contact with Buck and leaves the court.

EXT. VICKY'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Vicky rides her bike up her driveway. Her parents' car is parked at an angle—the left turn signal is on and the door is open. She turns off the turn signal, locks the doors, and SLAMS the door shut.

She goes inside.

EXT. PALMA CEIA TRAILER PARK - THE NEXT DAY

Faded plastic flamingoes. Empty cans and bottles. The Palma Ceia trailer park is a shitty place, even for trailer parks.

Vicky rides her bike through a broken gate.

EXT. TRAILER - MOMENTS LATER

Vicky knocks on the door of a trailer. Buck appears in the screen.

BUCK

You came to yell some more?

VICKY

I came to apologize.

BUCK

I ain't gonna accept that easy.

VICKY

I want to make it right. I want to put this behind us. But I need you to tell me the truth. What are you hiding?

Buck sighs, steps outside. Motions for Vicky to pull up a chair. They sit in rickety loungers.

BUCK

I lied about what I was doin' that night, to everybody.

VICKY

Holy shit Buck were you actually huffing piss gas?

BUCK

No.

(deep breath)

I play outlaw country. I was walkin' home from practice.

VICKY

Ok. And?

BUCK

That don't frighten you?

VICKY

Why would it?

Buck looks around and whispers--

BUCK

"Outlaw". Means against the law.

VICKY

Buck, it's legal to play music. Testify to that fact.

BUCK

I ain't puttin' it in the permanent record. Church choir wouldn't have me no more. And Ma's poor heart would give out if she knew my musical proclivities.

VICKY

Buck, this can be over.

BUCK

I ain't doing it. You're a lawyer,
use your magic words and make it
work.

Buck heads back into his trailer.

EXT. RICH SCHOOL - DAY

Vicky rides her bike onto the campus of a school that has parking spots labeled for EVERY STUDENT. It's that type of place.

EXT. RICH SCHOOL - COURTYARD

Dylan sits and jokes with a few friends.

VICKY (O.S.)

Hey! Dipshit!

Dylan shushes his friends and turns to face Vicky. He's not afraid of her.

VICKY (CONT'D)

Why do you have to be so tough on
the poor kid?

DYLAN

You mean why do I have to be so
tough on you?

VICKY

The guy was at music practice and
got picked up by an overzealous
cop. The 'jenkem' is just chocolate
milk.

DYLAN

Get him to testify to that
fact...if you can get a word out.

Dylan's cronies LAUGH. He high fives one of them.

VICKY

Buck is a good person, and you're
going to put him in juvie because
you want to...what? Impress your
dad?

DYLAN

Unlike you, I have a path in
life—Teen Court, Teen Court
District Attorney, law school, real
attorney, real District Attorney,
then...Governor.

VICKY

We're sixteen.

DYLAN

And you're shortsighted. I'm
playing the long game. If I have to
trample a few Bucks to get there,
sounds like they could use a better
lawyer.

Vicky scrunches her mouth in annoyance.

VICKY

See you tonight, fuckboy.

Vicky walks off.

EXT. RICH SCHOOL - DRIVEWAY - MOMENTS LATER

Vicky bikes out of the school but stops short. A TRAFFIC
MESSAGE BOARD sits at the exit. It flashes—**DON'T FORGET YOUR
HOMEWORK.**

Vicky takes a furtive glance to check her surroundings and
then pops open the lock on the board.

INT. COURTHOUSE HALLWAY - NIGHT

Vicky discusses the trial with Mr. Bradshaw and Sam, they're
waiting for it to start.

VICKY

Buck is just a musician and he
doesn't want to be outcast from his
society for it.

MR. BRADSHAW

And he will not testify to that?

VICKY

I don't think he's going to do much
of anything to help--

BAILIFF

Excuse me. Time to go. And if
opposing counsel ain't here, might
be an early night.

Mr. Bradshaw looks around.

MR. BRADSHAW

That is strange, where's the
Berkeley High firm?

VICKY

(on her way into the room)
Probably chickened out.

INT. COURTROOM

Vicky, Sam and Mr. Bradshaw watch the clock. The Judge checks
a watch and lifts his gavel. Buck puts his hands in a prayer.

The door BURSTS OPEN. A HIGH-POWERED ATTORNEY – 50s, pays to
have his shoes shined – walks in with Dylan close behind.

HIGH-POWERED ATTORNEY

Who is in charge here??

The Judge straightens out. Is he scared of this guy?

JUDGE

Counselor. What are you doing in
our neck of the woods?

HIGH-POWERED ATTORNEY

I am here because someone
vandalized the signs surrounding my
son's school, preventing us from
leaving, and nearly causing us to
miss this trial! Dylan has a
perfect record THREATENED by this
traffic hoodlum!

Vicky stifles a laugh.

JUDGE

So, what...what do you want to do?

HIGH-POWERED ATTORNEY

Press charges! To the fullest
extent of the law!

JUDGE
 Sounds like vandalism.
 (waves to the Bailiff)
 Can you arrest Ms. Alexander?

VICKY
 What?! You don't know it was me?!

The Judge, Mr. Bradshaw, Sam, Dylan, and the Attorney make a face.

BAILIFF
 Let's go. We'll take you home. Let your parents know.

VICKY
 My parents already know! Or at least my dad does...
 (to Mr. Bradshaw)
 Right?! Dad??

Mr. Bradshaw opens his eyes wide, then settles into the lie.

MR. BRADSHAW
 And I am just so gosh darn disappointed in your behavior. Let's go young miss.

VICKY
 You should have just made me keyboard lady.

Mr. Bradshaw and Vicky leave.

JUDGE
 Sounds like we're going to push one more night.

HIGH-POWERED ATTORNEY
 At least. I need to--Dylan needs to prepare for the case.

EXT. VICKY'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Mr. Bradshaw's shitty car pulls up in front of Vicky's house.

IN HIS CAR

MR. BRADSHAW
 Wow, this is quite the domicile.

VICKY

Yeah, sorry about your teacher house.

MR. BRADSHAW

No it's alright, I chose a noble profession and my house reflects that.

VICKY

(moving to leave)

I'm going to head out now. Thanks for having my back.

MR. BRADSHAW

I'll join you!

VICKY

What?

MR. BRADSHAW

I think it's time your parents learn about your after-school activity.

VICKY

Why do you have to be such a committed teacher?

INT. VICKY'S HOUSE - FOYER - MOMENTS LATER

Vicky's Mom opens the door to Mr. Bradshaw and Vicky.

MOM

Oh honey, you don't have to rebel this way.

VICKY

What? No, mom. Jesus.

MOM

It's what I did.

VICKY

This is my teacher! Mr. Bradshaw.

MR. BRADSHAW

Hello, Mrs. Alexander. You have a very intelligent daughter.

MOM

So she thinks.

MR. BRADSHAW
So she knows. Mind if I talk to you
about her for a moment?

MOM
Free country. Want a wine?

MR. BRADSHAW
I'm good.

INT. VICKY'S HOUSE - DINING ROOM

MR. BRADSHAW
Your daughter is a coal.

Vicky, Mr. Bradshaw, and Mom sit around the dining table.

MOM
(drunk)
Yeah..yeah I see it.

MR. BRADSHAW
And I'm going to help her shape
into a diamond. You've provided the
pressure, and I am here to ensure
she grows.

MOM
Thanks?

MR. BRADSHAW
She was arrested a few weeks ago,
and has been assisting me as an
attorney.

Oh shit.

VICKY
Mom it's not as serious as it--

MOM
You did WHAT? Who knows??

MR. BRADSHAW
Most anyone who attends the
Hillsborough County Courthouse.

MOM
Jesus that's the Wilsons, the
Taylors. Are you serious? Vicky
this will ruin us!

VICKY

What? That I'm a lawyer in Teen Court? That I can help people?

MOM

That you're running around playing pretend when our high-powered friends who are good at their job can see you! And embarrass us! How long is this?

MR. BRADSHAW

Her sentence is for another six weeks--

MOM

I'm going to reach out to Judge Holden tomorrow and I'm going to have this sentenced removed from your record. You don't need to be doing this shit. No offense.

Mr. Bradshaw shrugs.

VICKY

Mom, no! I don't need you fixing this for me. I've got this.

MOM

You clearly don't--shit!

As she reaches for her phone, she spills the wine glass, all over Mr. Bradshaw.

MOM (CONT'D)

Sorry, let me grab you a towel.

MR. BRADSHAW

It's alright, my pants are water resistant.

VICKY

Mom! You're the embarrassing one.

MOM

Go to your room. And you. Go home. Go Mr. Holland's Opus somewhere else.

MR. BRADSHAW

I'm a history teacher--

MOM

Leave!

INT. VICKY'S ROOM - LATER

Vicky hears her parents partying and plugs her ears.

EXT. VICKY'S HOUSE - MORNING

Vicky preps her bike to leave for school.

MOM (O.S.)
I spoke with Judge Holden.

Vicky turns to face her mom.

MOM (CONT'D)
He'll fix your case, find a
technicality, get it expunged. Just
find something normal to do. Where
our friends can't see you.

Vicky leaves on her bike.

INT. MR BRADSHAW'S CLASSROOM - DAY

Vicky enters Mr. Bradshaw's.

MR. BRADSHAW
I heard from the Judge, your
sentence has been expunged. I
release you from Teen Court.

VICKY
I did some research.

MR. BRADSHAW
And what conclusion did you reach?

VICKY
Teen Court is a volunteer position.
And I volunteer to be here.

MR. BRADSHAW
Excellent choice.

INT. COURTROOM - NIGHT

Vicky questions Buck.

VICKY
Buck, what are your grades?

BUCK
(proud)
All A's.

VICKY
And you do extracurriculars?

BUCK
Church choir, and other things.

VICKY
Have you ever broken into anything
before?

BUCK
No, miss.

VICKY
No further questions.

LATER

Dylan wraps up his closing statement.

DYLAN
And that's why I think I've shown
you, opposing counsel is out of
control because their client is out
of control.

He bows.

Vicky steps up.

VICKY
Man. I feel like I've been a real
journey with y'all.

A few of the jury snap their fingers.

VICKY (CONT'D)
But you've heard it tonight. From
the man himself. Buck is just a kid
trying to keep up his grades and
stay out of trouble. And you've got
people like my opposing counsel--
telling the rest of us how to live
our lives. Using us as pawns in
their path to success. I bet Dylan
wouldn't know Buck's name unless he
had written in front of him. He
just sees another rung to step on
on his path to Harvard Law.

(MORE)

VICKY (CONT'D)

And that last thing we need is
another rich, white lawyer.

The jury EXPLODES in applause. The Judge BANGS his gavel.

JUDGE

Look. This case has already
stretched three nights, other kids
need to learn. Let's move to
deliberations--

JUROR #1

(theater kid energy)

No need, Judge. We already know.
Not. Guilty!

The rest of the JURORS stand and cheer. Dylan tosses his note
pad and storms out of the courtroom. Buck leans forward and
wipes his eyes.

The freshmen rush Vicky and give her a huge hug and jump up
and down. Mr. Bradshaw claps them on the back.

EXT. COURTHOUSE - NIGHT

Vicky unlocks her bike.

JUDGE (O.S.)

Competent job tonight.

VICKY

Oh thanks! Your honor.

JUDGE

It was nice to see you stick it to
that little asshole, Dylan. I face
his Dad in adult court, or 'court'
as we call it.

VICKY

Maybe me and Dylan will be the next
'you and his dad'!

JUDGE

Just get the basics down.

He walks off. Vicky smiles.

INT. VICKY'S HOUSE - HALLWAY - NIGHT

Vicky's Mom stumbles through the hall. The whole room seems to turn orange every few seconds. She squints against the light. Walks to the window. Peeks out the blinds.

A traffic board sits--

IN THE YARD.

Dragged there by some unseen force. It flashes over and over:
VICKY IS A GOOD DAUGHTER AND YOU'RE A DRUNK.

IN THE HALLWAY

Mom gets angry.

MOM

Vicky!!!

INT. VICKY'S ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Vicky locks her door and puts in noise-cancelling headphones. The noise of her mother downstairs is drowned out by an episode of The Good Wife on her laptop.

She pulls out a notepad and starts to take notes.

THE END