



#### A PERSONAL NOT-SO-PERSONAL EXPERIENCE WITH JUSTICE

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A friend of mine and her family had a brush with the law several years ago.

Her father and her husband were once named respondents in a court case where they were accused of assaulting a man and his wife. This friend's brother-in-law was also accused of physically inflicting injuries on the couple. What was funny about the case that the couple brought to court was that it was only instigated because the couple didn't like what my friend and her family were doing to the dirt road in front of their house during the summer: they were simply hosing the dirt road down to prevent dust from getting into the house (they had an asthmatic kid in the house) and also to lessen the heat that the summer days brought. The plaintiff (the couple) decided to make a big deal out of the whole thing and confronted my friend's family, and when my friend's family wouldn't back down, the couple erupted in anger and hit my friend's dad, who was only trying to pacify them.

I am not telling this story in a biased point of view. I was there when the argument turned heated and the man and his wife started hitting everyone in my friend's family who was merely trying to separate my friend and the woman. Then in court, the man and woman falsely testified to being manhandled by my friend's dad, husband and brother-in-law. The man even concocted a cockamamie story of his right knuckle getting broken by my friend's dad while they were having the altercation.

For one thing, my friend's dad was already old and weak and had a frail body. For another, if my friend's husband and brother-in-law had indeed mauled the man, he would have definitely sustained a lot more than just a few broken bones in his right hand. And then there was the matter of the witness they presented, who wasn't even in the vicinity when the incident happened.

I volunteered to testify in my friend's favor. The case dragged on for more than two years, but eventually the judge promulgated justice in my friend's family's favor. His decision for doing so was based on the evidence clearly laid out in my friend's lawyer's arguments, plus the fact that the case just stemmed from an old grudge that the man had harbored against my friend's family. The man had even threatened to lob a grenade into my friend's family backyard in his anger, and the court found this mitigating to conclude that the man had a hidden agenda in instigating the case.

I was glad that despite the length of time that elapsed between instigation and case resolution (what a waste, really!), my friend's family was victorious. Yes, justice still exists. It does for those brave enough to seek for it.

#### QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION:

1. Would you testify in court for a friend? Why or why not?
2. What do you think was the agenda of the couple in the story for bringing the case to court?
3. Was the judge right in dismissing the case? Justify your answer.
4. How should a judge promulgate justice? Is it easy to have such a job?
5. How far would you go to obtain justice? Be specific, if necessary.