Justice for Dr. Perkins:

“Justice for Dr. Perkins!” The courtroom shriveled at my passionate bellow. “My client has done nothing wrong. He happened to be in the wrong place at the wrong time. If anything, it’s Hargrove’s fault for drinking the poison!” I had just made a bold move: blaming the victim as the perpetrator.

The gallery broke out into hushed whispers and the state prosecutor pounced up with his fist in the air. “Damn you for defending such a monster!”

“Order! Order!” The judge’s gavel came down in hard blows and again draped a silence over the room. He then turned to me. “Let the defense finish its argument.”

I stared back into the harsh eyes of Judge Winthorpe and he stared back even deeper into mine. He was stolidly logical and profoundly circuitous in nature but I knew I could win him over. Judge Winthorpe had presided over the Burkson trials from which I studied what arguments worked and what didn’t. By my judgements, I would have to be extremely logical and forthcoming on this one. I knew this was going to be a tough battle when I picked the Perkins v. Hargrove case up. But hell, I wanted to make a name for myself. And if I could win this, I could achieve the impossible.

“Ladies and gentlemen, let me remind you of the scenario before we start. As the case presents itself we find that Dr. Perkins had poisoned a glass of water and left it out to sit at a local park on a hot day. Later in the day, Mr. Hargrove wandered up to the innocent glass and drank it, killing him instantly. Dr. Perkins openly admitted that it was he who poisoned and put the glass where it was and several witnesses corroborated.”

“I do not argue these facts, but I do argue intent and fault. To say that Dr. Perkins *intended* to cause harm or kill by placing a poisoned glass of water at a community table is utter blasphemy. What Dr. Perkins solely *intended* to do was to place a poisoned glass of water at a community table. Nothing less, nothing more.” I could see Judge Winthorpe’s mouth crease around the edges and I knew I had hooked him. Like any good man and judge he was willing to think innately and never assume. It was time to reel him in.

“As to fault, is it fair to say that Dr. Perkins murdered Mr. Hargrove? Well, when you note that he was casually reading a newspaper fifteen feet away at the time of Mr. Hargrove’s death, absolutely not! The fact of the matter is that Mr. Hargrove and the poison itself had just as much responsibility as Dr. Perkins. If Mr. Hargrove had never drunk the water, he never would’ve died. Think of it like this, who’s to blame for the deaths in a hurricane? The butterfly’s wings on the other side of the ocean?” Judge Winthorpe’s smile was even larger now and I suspected he was even enjoying this. The gallery was cautious, but they would come around. My soul was fired up and my mind set ablaze. I almost had them!

“I concede that Dr. Perkins is at fault for *presenting* a dangerous situation but he is not at fault for murder! If anything it’s a suicide! My good sir, I’m sure you’ve heard that ignorance of the law excuses no one?” I looked now to Judge Winthorpe who proceeded to nod. “Well, who’s to say it doesn’t apply to *moral* law? That is, Mr. Hargrove’s individual negligence. Perhaps the situation could’ve been avoided if he had brought a testing solution with him? Or avoided an unguarded glass of public water from who knows where?”

My hands were sweating and my nerves were jittering. “My case in point is this: you can convict Dr. Perkins on the basis of presenting a dangerous scenario without intent, but that’s all he did. He personally never murdered Mr. Hargrove, in fact, it was Mr. Hargrove himself!”

I took a seat. I had argued all I could argue. I had convinced all I could convince. Now, as I watched Judge WInthorpe stroke his chin and shift his eyes between my client and the state prosecutor I knew the decision would be up to him. Had I done enough? Had I done it well? I knew from the beginning I would have to take an unconventional approach in the defense, but *this* unconventional? In the beginning I saw no way out, Dr. Perkins was as guilty as they got! But after studying the unorthodox works of Professor Grimshaw and Peter Burkson, I felt my mind begin to shift. I thought of things…differently. I only hoped that Judge Winthorpe would too.

Suddenly, Judge WInthorpe’s gavel hit down hard and the silence fell for the final time. “After thorough review, both in and out of the courtroom, I find that there will be justice for Dr. Perkins!”