

Hello!

The following are a few links which may be helpful in preparing for your audition. You are not required to view these but if you do not have a background in mock trial these will serve as a good start. If you have any questions feel free to reach out to us at [hlsmocktrial@gmail.com](mailto:hlsmocktrial@gmail.com)

How to Public Speak Effectively

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bXWBmvQrgiE>

Open Statement Guidance

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bSuN\\_fkFcLY](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bSuN_fkFcLY)

Opening Statement Examples

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CkjV2HifW38&list=LLcqfF8lPi8s0PYGc29AzZqg&index=38&t=3s>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7rGygbziMcg&list=LLcqfF8lPi8s0PYGc29AzZqg&index=34&t=0s>

## ***Demo Opening HLS Mock Trial Tryouts 2020 (Defense)***

### **[Hook]**

Blinded by the need to blame.

May 11, 2018. It's dark outside, about 9 in the evening. A woman named Ms. Florrick is walking into a theater with her family. 2 hours later, she emerges from a movie and goes to use the restroom. She walks into the restroom and is killed.

### **[Case-in-Chief]**

You'll hear the facts of the case are this: No one saw the murder. No one saw the murderer. There are no witnesses. The murder weapon is a common household object that could have been in the possession of any person: a common kitchen knife. No one is sure what happened.

With no witnesses and no leads, with no way to narrow down the suspect to *someone*, you'll hear the prosecution decided the suspect could be *anyone* and landed on the first person to cross their path. You'll hear the prosecution ignored this person's alibi and ignored witnesses who swore to this alibi. You'll hear the prosecution was so desperate for someone, *anyone*, to answer for the crime that was committed, that they became blinded by their need to blame.

Members of the jury, this is Mr. Canning. You'll hear that at the time of Ms. Florrick's murder, Mr. Canning was sitting in a different building, in a theater across the street, watching a different movie. Mr. Canning wasn't anywhere near that restroom, and what's more, Mr. Canning can prove it. You'll hear Mr. Canning has a movie ticket proving his location, and an eyewitness who can testify that Mr. Canning was not anywhere near Ms. Florrick during the murder.

### **[Closing]**

What happened to Ms. Florrick is terrible, no one here is denying that. But what happened after, has compounded one senseless tragedy with another. The prosecution rushed to blame someone, *anyone* for what happened to Ms. Florrick. And in this need to blame they became blind to the facts and the evidence. Today, we hope that you will consider this case more carefully. Which is why, at the end of today's trial, we will ask that you find Mr. Canning *not* guilty. Thank you.

### **Notes**

- Please note that the opening statement we're asking you to deliver, and the one above, is abridged from what a typical mock opening would be. Normally, opening statements are 5 minutes long and include information about the law of the case. Don't worry about that for your audition.
- The labels (e.g., "Hook" "Case-in-chief" "Closing") are only included to help you understand the structure of an opening so you can write one on your own if you choose. Please don't say these labels out loud when performing your opening.
- Finally, genders are not assigned in the character list, so feel free to pick the gender of each of the characters. Do not feel that your genders need to match the ones picked in this example.

**[Hook]** – A hook is a short, catchy introduction to the case. Imagine writing the opening to a great novel. What is a sentence or two that would immediately engross the jurors in the story of this case?

**[Case-in-chief]** – The case-in-chief is the meat of your opening. You want to give the jury an overview of what they're about to hear and highlight things they should pay attention to.

To write this, go through the statement of facts and the witness statements and pull out pieces of information that would help persuade a jury that your client is guilty/not guilty. You may also want to discuss bad pieces of information that you anticipate the other side will bring up and explain why the jury should not be persuaded by this information (Maybe the witness is biased or doesn't have enough information to be credible. E.g., "You will hear that Mr. Smith found a shotgun at the crime scene similar to the one Ms. Anderson owned, but you will also hear that Ms. Anderson's DNA was not on that gun.").

Once you've gotten your pieces of information together, the best way to write this section is as though you're telling a story to someone who's never heard the case before. KISS (keep it simple, speaker.) You only have a few minutes total to explain an hours-long case, so think of this as a big-picture roadmap for the jury. You want to follow a chronological timeline and highlight specific pieces of information that the jury should listen for. In an opening statement, it is common to preference sentences with "The evidence will show..." or "You will hear..." to avoid being too argumentative.

**[Closing]** – The closing is a sentence or two summarizing your case-in-chief. AKA - "tell the jurors what you just told them". In your last sentence, you should make a plea for what you want the jurors to do at the end of the case. E.g., "That's why, at the end of today's case, my co-council Ms. Bach will come before you and ask you to find Ms. Anderson *not* guilty." "At the end of today's case, we're confident you'll agree, the Defendant *is* guilty."