



# UCLA MOCK TRIAL

## 2021-2022 Tryout Packet



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### General Information

Hello! We are so glad that you are interested in joining the most successful collegiate mock trial program of the last 15 years! This year, tryouts will be taking place in-person **Friday, October 1<sup>st</sup>** through **Sunday, October 3<sup>rd</sup>**. Each tryout is about fifteen minutes long. You will perform in front of our student board as well as a few of our attorney coaches. We will ask you a few questions about yourself and then you'll show us your stuff!

### Preparing for the Tryout

- ❑ To let us know you want to audition, go to our website at [bruinsmocktrial.com](http://bruinsmocktrial.com), and under the "2021 Tryouts" tab (Tryout Information > 2021 Tryouts), fill out the [Application Form](#). It will ask you about your availability during certain time slots. We will get back to you with your assigned audition slot. The application will also contain a few questions to help us get to know you a bit better before you try out.
- ❑ After that, start preparing the four audition components: (1) **Opening**, (2) **Debate**, (3) **Witness Monologue**, and (4) **Cross-Examination**. More on these below! (**Note: If you are auditioning as an attorney, you must do all four. If you are just auditioning as a witness, you only need to for the witness monologue and cross. However, we ask that you present two different witnesses**)
- ❑ Practice, practice, practice! We want to see what you're made of, so we recommend running your material a few times and trying to memorize it so we can see you at your best.

### Tryout Tips

- ❑ **Dress the part.** If you want to be an attorney, you should try to wear business or business casual. If you are auditioning as a witness, we'd love to see you show up in costume.
  - ❑ **Presentation matters.** Even if you forget what you want to say, show us that you are confident and can convey emotions and arguments in a believable way.
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☒ **Be creative.** We want to see what you can come up with, so when it comes to preparing the case, feel free to think outside of the facts to come up with new arguments or interesting characters.

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## 1. OPENING STATEMENT

*Only for those auditioning as attorneys*

Write and deliver a 1-2 minute opening statement for either the defense or the prosecution in the case below. The purpose of this opening statement is to tell a compelling story about how the evidence will show the defendant should be found guilty (if you are prosecution) or not guilty (if you are defense) of the crime.

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## 2. MOCK DEBATE

*Only for those auditioning as attorneys*

Select one group of questions and prepare to argue the three debate topics in that group. You will be asked to debate ONE topic during your tryout, but will not be able to choose your topic (only Group 1 or Group 2). You will debate for two to three minutes and should expect to be interrupted during your argument with questions and counterarguments.

<b>Debate Questions Group #1</b>	<b>Debate Questions Group #2</b>
<b>1. Should self-driving cars be illegal?</b>	<b>1. Should we be able to genetically modify children before birth?</b>
<b>2. Should zoos be banned?</b>	<b>2. Should religion be taught in public schools?</b>
<b>3. Should out-of-state tuition be decreased?</b>	<b>3. Should all citizens be given a universal basic income?</b>

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### 3. WITNESS MONOLOGUE

For anyone auditioning as a witness or attorney

Prepare either one (attorney) or two monologues (witness only) of no more than 2 minutes based on the four witnesses provided below. The monologue(s) should explain your witness' background and involvement in the case. You are permitted (and encouraged!) to create details that aren't included in the fact pattern or witness statements below. Your main goals are to be creative, credible, and entertaining!

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### 4. WITNESS CROSS-EXAMINATION

For anyone auditioning as a witness or attorney

Using the witness(es) you chose for the monologue, you will also be asked to respond to questions on cross-examination. During cross-examination, the opposing party will try to bring out information that may undermine your witness' purpose. You will be judged on your ability to (A) respond to tough questions, (B) stay in character (including accents), and (C) remain credible.

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## FACT PATTERN: State v. Sutcliffe

Chuggie's Bar was a popular Midlands establishment that drew in many patrons. In 2019, **Dakota Sutcliffe** purchased the bar with plans to renovate the bar. She took out a loan of \$1 million; however, the changes took longer than expected. It concluded on January 5, 2020, which meant the bar missed out on the lucrative New Year's Eve. To make matters worse, on March 15, 2020, the state issued a stay-at-home order, forcing the bar to shut down. The bar struggled to turn a profit, leaving **Sutcliffe** unable to make interest payments on the massive loan.

**Sutcliffe** visited Harlowe's Hardware on July 17, 2020, where she purchased six cans of Skinny's Paint Thinner in all cash. That week, she also emailed Jake from State Farm, asking him if Chuggie's Bar was still insured. He assured her the \$1.5 million insurance policy was still active.

On August 1, 2020, **Singh** saw someone that looked like **Sutcliffe** leaving the bar just before midnight. Roughly 20 minutes later, Chuggie's Bar caught fire. **Singh** called 911, and first responders arrived at 12:22 am. **Alex Silva**, a firefighter, entered the building with Jaylen Williams to contain the fire. While they were inside, the fire became unstable, causing a portion of the building to collapse, trapping Williams inside.

The fire was extinguished by 1:45 am. Emergency personnel entered the building and recovered William's body, pronouncing him dead at the scene. During the ensuing investigation, **Silva** found irregular burn patterns on a wall in the kitchen, behind the oven and stove, indicating the presence of a liquid fire accelerant. An analysis of the area found the presence of paint thinner; canisters of Skinny's Paint Thinner were found amongst the debris at Chuggie's Bar.

**Sutcliffe** was arrested and charged with aggravated arson. She pled not guilty, claiming she had nothing to do with the fire. **Sutcliffe** said she went to the Midlands Marina after closing up Chuggie's Bar. **Maddox Vaughn** says **Vaughn** saw her at the Midlands Marina at 11:34 pm.

**Mel Jelani** was hired to share **Jelani's** opinion about the reputability of **Singh** and **Vaughn's** eyewitness testimony.

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# WITNESS STATEMENTS

<b>Kiran Singh (prosecution witness)</b>	<b>Alex Silva (prosecution witness)</b>
<p>I know Sutcliffe started that fire. She was acting weird all night! It started around 8 pm on August 31: I saw Sutcliffe moving canisters of paint thinner out of the bar and into her truck. The way she was handling them and the noise they made, it was pretty obvious they were empty. I had my own work to do at Harlowe's that night, so I didn't pay much mind.</p> <p>I saw her again later that night right before midnight. I think she was looking at a wall or something. I'm sure it was her though. We even made eye contact for a second! But, to be fair, I only caught a glance of her that night, it was really dark, and she was pretty far away.</p> <p>If you didn't know, I have a criminal record, and it's all Sutcliffe's fault. I tried to use a fake ID at Chuggie's once, and instead of taking it like she did with everyone else, she called the cops! It's like she had it out for me or something. But that's also how I know that I saw Sutcliffe that night; we have way too much history for me to mistake her for anyone else.</p>	<p>I love Midlands. In fact, I currently work at the Department of Parks and Recreation with Leslie Knope. She pretty much runs the DPR by herself, so I use my free time to volunteer at the Midlands Fire Department. I used to work there with Jaylen...that is until he died in that fire.</p> <p>I was with him that night at Chuggie's. We were the "two-in" firefighters: whenever a firefighter goes into a building, they must do so with a partner. Jaylen and I went inside and saw the fire was focused in the kitchen. Jaylen never made it out. When it happened, I'm pretty sure I heard Dakota say "No. This can't be happening. It was never supposed to be like this. It's all planned out."</p> <p>I went back in after containing the fire. We recovered Jaylen's body. But there was still work to do, and I knew he would want me to finish it. I went back to look at the fire in the kitchen and realized that was where it started. The burn marks made it look like a liquid fire accelerant was used, something our K-9, Bobby, confirmed.</p>
<b>Mel Jelani (defense witness)</b>	<b>Maddox Vaughn (defense witness)</b>
<p>I am the Forensic Psychologist who reviewed Kiran Singh and Maddox Vaughn's statements to determine if their identifications and recollections were reliable or not. To determine if their accounts are reliable, I looked at if their visual stimuli were reliable and if there was anything that could affect how they perceived the stimuli. Then, I looked for signs of their memory being corrupted.</p> <p>Kiran Singh saw Dakota Sutcliffe just before midnight. Singh mentions it was dark and Sutcliffe was far away. There is a risk that Singh's expectations filled in the blanks due to the lack of stimuli.</p> <p>Maddox Vaughn identified Dakota Sutcliffe at 11:34 pm, contradicting Kiran Singh's account. Vaughn mentions Vaughn had at least two alcoholic beverages immediately prior to seeing Sutcliffe. There is a high likelihood that Vaughn's memory and perception that night may have been impacted to the point where the event may not have encoded fully or accurately.</p>	<p>I have always had a bit of difficulty making friends; it got worse after I began working nights at the Jaywood Building. But, I never had trouble making friends at Chuggie's; the staff are so nice, and they really made me feel like I'm a part of the family. This was especially true about Dakota. In fact, she even let me hang around when they were closed during the pandemic.</p> <p>I was at the bar the night before it went up in smoke, up until about 9 pm. Then I went home to get some work clothes and walk my dog, Bentley. He's a rescue. I took my usual path along the Midlands Marina. The Marina is a one-hour drive away from Chuggie's. It's well-lit and a pretty safe place to be, even at night. That's where I saw Dakota! I saw her at 11:34 pm.</p> <p>I was drinking a little bit that night. I had three drinks at Chuggie's, and about three more when I got home. I also had a flask during the walk. But I know my limits, and I was basically sober. I know I saw Dakota at the Marina.</p>