

California Mock Trial

Case Brief People v. Gold

People v. Gold is the trial of Logan Gold, assistant campaign manager to their spouse, Harper Dorais (pronounced dō · RAY), who is a candidate for city council in the rural mountain town of Emerald Bend, California. Gold is also the sole hotel owner in town. Gold is charged with the kidnapping of Taylor Alexander, a rival candidate to Dorais in the city council election.

A debate between the candidates was scheduled for Saturday, November 11, 2023, at noon, just three days before the election. When the debate was supposed to begin, however, Taylor Alexander did not show up. No one in Alexander's campaign team had received any message from Alexander. Dorais was present and on time, but Logan Gold arrived late. Later that afternoon, Deputy Riley Kim of the Emerald Bend Sheriff's Department received a phone call from Alexander claiming Alexander had been kidnapped and held against their will in a shed at Alexander's own rental property.

The prosecution alleges that Logan Gold abducted Alexander on the morning of November 11 in front of Alexander's primary residence, put a hood over Alexander's head, and drove Alexander to the rental property. There, Gold tied Alexander to a chair and under threat of violence, made Alexander drink a liquid that made Alexander unconscious. Alexander did not awaken until the afternoon, after the scheduled debate, which was crucial to the election. Alexander supported a measure to allow short-term rentals in Emerald Bend, which Gold opposed, giving Gold a motive to undermine Alexander's campaign. Journalist Ali Sandoval can testify to Gold's financial troubles and to Gold's animosity toward Alexander. Dorais did, in fact, win the election.

The defense argues that Logan Gold has an alibi. Gold was driving around Emerald Bend, including around its more sparsely populated lake area, placing Dorais campaign flyers in resident's mailboxes. Gold also chatted with podcaster C.J. Costly while distributing flyers around the lake. Gold was without a cell phone or GPS tracking when Gold's car broke down on a remote fire road, delaying Gold for at least two hours, ultimately arriving late to the debate. Costly will corroborate the alibi, as well establish that Alexander may have faked the kidnapping in order to call into question Dorais's and Gold's reputations.

The testimonies of the county forensic investigator and the defense forensic expert will reveal different opinions about evidence of ligature marks on Alexander's wrists, the effect of the drug Alexander was allegedly forced to drink, as well as a tire track at Alexander's rental property that allegedly matched that of Gold's car.

The pretrial hearing centers on a defense motion to exclude a potentially incriminating statement made by Logan Gold while in police custody. The defense will argue that Gold made the statement involuntarily and as the result of interrogation that occurred in violation of Alexander's Fifth Amendment rights against self-incrimination. The prosecution will argue that the statement made in Deputy Kim's presence was neither involuntary nor the result of interrogation.