

# Democracy on Trial

(The Verdict)

by Chris Deggs: Science-Art Author



This treatise in dialogue was first enacted as a play at the Science-Art Research Centre of Australia as part of a 2002 Australia Day celebration at Murwillumbah and Byron Bay NSW to introduce a new vision of a benign sustainable Global Democracy. The author received a Decree of Excellence for outstanding contributions to the betterment of the global human condition.

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# Preface

This book was written as a result of the Science-Art Festival in Murwillumbah in the year 2000 in which Democracy was one of six chosen topics of the “Symbols of our Age” seminar. The base upon which society stands shows that Democracy, for it to be real and effective, must rest upon the principles of physics and natural laws, providing for true justice, direction, and balance.

Democracy is greatly misunderstood in the world today and is largely accepted as little more than our right to vote. The democratic process amounts too much more than this as is explained in this book. The reader is taken into the hearts and minds of great humanitarians of history who help us look at Democracy from the standpoint of philosophy, statesmanship, and science. As you follow the progress of the democratic system from its Grecian antiquity to its modern day applications, the huge significance of this trial will become apparent to you. The democratic process, as a way of governance, is a time-honoured way of bringing about equality and fairness in the human community. It is about much more than citizens having the right to vote for the representative of their choice at political elections.

Although this practice is part of a democratic process it is certainly not Democracy as it was intended to be. It was intended to be government of the people, by the people, for the people, not the parody that could be termed ‘demockery’ that we have as our political system today. This book is about how to view Democracy and bring the practice of it into our daily lives for the betterment of all. It will show you how the democratic system has developed as witnesses such as Plato and Aristotle are brought forward to explain their roles in developing Democracy in ancient Greece. Famous scientists give testimony concerning the importance of Creative Physics in helping to bring about Global Democracy for the survival of humanity.

Democracy on Trial is an attempt to show how our democratic systems have developed, in a lively and interesting courthouse drama format. It is both educational and entertaining and forms the basis for an interesting play. The author hopes you will find this book useful as it gives an insight into humanity’s political and spiritual future in which the needs of the world’s people must outweigh the greed of the few.

## **Dedication**

The author wishes to thank Irene Brown, Professor Robert Pope and Robert Todonai for all their help and assistance in developing the Science-Art Festival 2000 and in particular Robert Pope for his assistance in providing some of the Science-Art background for this script. Furthermore, the writer thanks Barend De Klerk, proprietor of Dali's Coffee Lounge in Murwillumbah for providing the stimulating setting for creative thinking and great coffee all of which helped bring this work to fruition.

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# Forward

Adrian Wiztek knew it was pointless to try and explain what he was doing, but he needed assistance to set the thing up and the helpers kept asking annoying questions. It wasn't that his assistants were dumb. On the contrary, they were all experts in their fields of science and technology but none of them had encountered the likes of Adrian Wiztek. The project was very hush, hush, with few people knowing about it. Adrian heard the door to the courtroom open and looked up to see the judge approaching.

Judge Wright looked at the scrawny man with a scraggly red beard. Could this man be the genius he was purported to be. "How is it progressing?" he asked for the umpteenth time, not knowing what 'it' was or what 'progressing', in its case, actually meant. The 'thing' they were constructing, in his courtroom, was way beyond his comprehension. He had enough trouble trying to work out his smart phone. He added, "The case starts tomorrow, so it has to be ready by 10 am." Saying that gave him some sense of authority and the illusion of control.

Adrian sighed, "You can't rush these things. Looks like we'll be here all night, but we'll have it up and running by morning."

"Good,good," The portly man with an almost bald pate, acknowledged. Then he asked, "Is this really going to work?"

Adrian raised his eyes heavenward. "If it doesn't you won't have any witnesses."

"And we will be able to question them?"

"There would hardly be any point otherwise." Adrian stated, testily. "He added, "Now we do have to get on with it, if we are to make your deadline."

# Chapter 1

## Session 1 in which Thales, Pythagoras, Anaxagoras and Democritus, give testimony

The hearing is in session with the honourable Judge Wright presiding. The Judge, in all his judicial finery, adjusted his robes as he took his seat. Looking out at those assembled in the courtroom, he made his opening remarks. "Ladies and gentlemen, This case is somewhat unusual to say the least. It is quite singular in the history of the British judiciary. It is being conducted as more of a tribunal than a court case. Therefore, there will be no jury and no members of the public present - only members of the media. I will deliver my verdict based purely on the facts placed before me. First, let me say that the aim of this hearing is for the court to hear the arguments concerning the merits and demerits of Democracy. We will therefore begin with no further ado with the opening remarks of the council for the prosecution.

Sidney Ranger got to his feet. Addressing the bench he began to put forward his case. "First, let me make it perfectly clear that I am not against Democracy. On the contrary I am an ardent supporter of Democracy. However, I feel we have been sadly let down by the models we have today. The defence will tell you, and I believe rightfully so, lets give credit where credit is due, but let us also take Democracy to task in the areas it has fallen far short of its desired goal. I believe, your Honour, that we have to call a spade a spade, because humanity deserves the best form of Democracy it can muster. Now, the only way we are going to achieve this lofty goal is to pick the bones out of the philosophers' 'ideal state' in order to see its weaknesses, so that we can improve this world for everybody. I do not believe that patting the likes of Plato and Aristotle on the back will achieve this. We have to be honest your Honour, even if it means being a little harsh and destroying a few sacred cows in the process.

Sidney looked squarely at the Defence team. "Your Honour, I would like to finish by asking a question. If we would like to see a more equitable democratic system in the world what is wrong with criticising the past to improve the future? This, I believe, is the important task for the prosecution in this case. Thank you. That is all I have to say at present, your Honour."

Peering over his glasses at the defence team, Judge Wright said, "The Defence council will now make its opening remarks."

Marcus Dee stopped conferring with his team, and stood up to address the court. "Thank you your Honour. Now, during this trial we are going to take a long hard look at this thing we call Democracy, right from its enlightened beginnings, through its chequered history, to how we understand it today. Throughout these proceedings the prosecution will belittle the courageous efforts and personal sacrifices many great philosophers and statesmen have made, often to their own disadvantage, to help bring about a fair and equitable system of government to the people. Now, it is important to remind yourselves that such democratic measures had never been taken before and that changes from Autocracy to Democracy in Athens and other city-states, masterminded by such luminaries as Plato and Aristotle, took great courage and fortitude. The prosecution will point out that these great champions of equality never got it completely right and this is quite true. Even so, I ask you this. Have we got it right today? I don't think so. The main point here is not how perfect their Athenian model was but rather that these great individuals, the true heroes of antiquity, searched in the darkness for glimpses of light. The very light that has shown us the way to direct our world on a meaningful and sustainable democratic path.

For this reason your Honour we must give credit where it is due and find Democracy itself innocent of any wrongdoing. We must set Democracy free to spread its enlightenment around the globe to touch the hearts and souls of all humanity. This sums up the opening remarks of the defence."

Having listened to the opening remarks of both sides, Judge Wright said, "This is an extraordinary case for many reasons, one of which is that we are using space-time technology in order for many of the witnesses to appear before this court. The word 'appear' is, in this case, is used in its literal sense. Although I do not profess to be an expert on the matter I am apprised that we will be able to see, hear and question many of those who are giving testimony, by way of a 'time machine' - that strange contraption over there near the witness box," he said, pointing in the direction of the hi-tech device with a seat in the middle. He silently prayed it was going to work as, he peered out at the media gallery. "That said, let us now proceed with the case at hand."

Selina Tarrent, the Clerk of the court, spoke up. "Call the first witness, Anaxagoras to the witness stand."

Adrain Wiztek took a deep breath, tapped out a sequence on his keyboard and waited. At first nothing happened. Then lights started flashing and the sound of a generator could be heard by those close by. Shortly afterward, the shape of a man began to manifest in the seat in the device. Soon, there appeared in the witness box a man of noble bearing. With a full beard as curly as his Grey hair.

Sidney, trying desperately to keep his composure, approached the witness who, by then, seemed as substantial as anybody else in the courtroom. "Are you Thales of Miletus?"

"Yes, your Honour."

"Were you not an early philosopher, mathematician and astronomer?"

"All of those things, your Honour."

Sidney said, "This case isn't about those attributes. It's about Democracy. So, Thales, what did you do to help develop Democracy?"

"Democracy was, to my mind was most inefficient and unreliable form of governance."

"Really!" Sidney said, hamming it up a little. "Is that why you were in favour of a benign tyranny, rather than democracy?"

"Yes, your Honour. Only intelligent men could run the government. Equal opportunity, as proposed by Democracy can only lead to a state being ruled by the lowest common denominator."

"I see," Sidney responded, "So you were not in support of equality of the citizens in your society."

"Such a concept is a nonsense. How is equality possible when men were naturally better than women, and that Greeks were better than barbarians."

"Thank you Thales. That's all the questions I have for this witness, your Honour."

"Very well. "Does the Defence have any questions for this witness?"

Marcus Dee rose to his feet. "A few, your Honour." He turned to the witness. "Thales, were you not considered one of the so-called Seven Sages of Greece?"

"Indeed, your Honour."

"And were you not regarded as being the first philosopher in the Western tradition and founder of the Milesian School?"

"Yes, your Honour."

"Now, as founder of the Milesian School of natural philosophy, did you not try to define water as being the substance from which all material objects are composed?"

"Most certainly, your Honour."

Marcus looked at his witness. "Did you not go to Egypt and study with the priests?"

"Yes, your Honour."

"What did you learn there?"

"I learned about various mathematical innovations, knowledge I took back to Greece."

"Did you learn about philosophy linking 'sacred geometry' to the Egyptian culture?"

"They had a religion called Maat, linked to their sacred geometry."

"And what was the philosophy of this Maat religion, Thales?"

Sydney got up, "This has nothing to do with Democracy, your Honour."

"I tend to agree," Judge Wright said, "

Marcus turned to the judge. "I have a valid point to make here, your Honour."

"Then make it quickly."

"As your Honour pleases," Marcus said. Turning to Thales, he continued, "Please answer the question."

"The philosophy of Maat was one of justice and order in the cosmos."

"And what did you make of this system of governance?"

"I was very impressed. I conveyed this to Anaxamander's student, Pythagoras, when I returned to Greece."

"I see, Thales. Now, I am a little confused here because you told this court that you believe 'benign tyranny' to be the best form of governance, yet the Maat system, which you admired, seems more in line with the ideals of Democracy."

Thales responded, "If Democracy was based on the sacred geometrical principles of natural law and order, and not on mob rule, I think it could be preferable to benign tyranny, your Honour."

"Thank you Thales. No more questions, your Honour."

Anaxagoras of Clazomenae, a Greek city of Ionian Asia Minor?"

"Yes Your Honour,"

"Were you a Greek philosopher of the 5<sup>th</sup> century B C E? And were you not the first of the Presocratic philosophers to live in Athens?"

"Yes to both questions, Your Honour."

"Very well. So what role did you play in developing the political system called Democracy?"

He propounded a physical theory of "everything-in-everything," and claimed that *nous* (intellect or mind) was the motive cause of the cosmos. he could have been mistaken for a Santa look-a-like, but without the ho, ho, ho. His stern look, which was emphasized even more graphically by his down turned moustache, dismissed any semblance of jolliness in his expression.

Addressing the witness, who's finely spun robes outdid even those of the presiding judge, Sidney began, "State your name and standing to this court please."

He was the first to give a correct explanation of eclipses, and was both famous and notorious for his scientific theories, including the claims that the sun is a mass of red-hot metal, that the moon is earthy, and that the stars are fiery stones. Anaxagoras maintained that the original state of the cosmos was a mixture of all its ingredients (the basic realities of his system). The ingredients are thoroughly mixed, so that no individual ingredient as such is evident, but the mixture is not entirely uniform or homogeneous. Although every ingredient is ubiquitous, some ingredients are present in higher concentrations than others, and these proportions may also vary from place to place (even if they do not do so in the original state of the cosmos). The mixture is unlimited in extent, and at some point in time it is set into motion by the action of *nous* (intellect). The mixture begins to rotate around some small point within it, and as the whirling motion proceeds and expands through the mass, the ingredients in the mixture are shifted and separated out (in terms of relative density) and remixed with each other, ultimately producing the cosmos of apparently separate material masses and material objects, with differential properties, that we perceive.

"In an authoritative voice, the ancient leader answered, "My name is Solon. I was a poet-statesman in ancient Athens."

"Solon, would you say all citizens had equal standing in your democratic society?"

"I would say so your Honor," he answered, addressing the court through the Bench in the traditional way.

"Now, I believe you set up four new property owning classes according to crop yields. Is that not so?"

“Yes your Honor. It was crucial that we produced our own food so cultivators who, were the most efficient, got the most land.”

Smiling, Sidney responded, “So Solon, among the equal citizens in your democratic society some were more equal than others. Now tell the court, if you will, how your people were voted into positions of power.”

“Positions of power in public offices were decided by the casting of lots.”

Judge Wright, not sure what the term meant, commented, “The casting of lots?”

Sidney explained, “Yes your Honor. What Solon is talking about is an electoral system that was based on votes by the people, much like our democratic system now. Now Solon, in your system though, there were four property-owning classes I believe.”

Marcus got up for the first time, “Your Honor, the prosecution is laboring on a point already established.”

The Judge nodded, “ Yes, I agree. Mr. Ranger, please move on.”

“As your Honor pleases. The point I am making here, if my learned friend will allow it without interrupting, is that although there were four property owning classes Solon, actual power only lay with three of them. Is that not so?”

“Yes, but even the Thetes, the lowest class, were admitted to both the judicial tribunals and the Assembly, so everyone had a chance to have their say as all classes were represented.”

“But in reality it is not true, is it Solon. What about those who had no say over their lives?”

“I’m not sure what you are driving at. We looked after everybody under our system of government your Honor. Even foreigners were granted civil rights under our laws.”

“Oh yes Solon. However, what about slaves and women? Were they also empowered by your ruling?” Sidney asked, cynicism showing in his voice.

“Oh, slaves and women! Well, they could not possibly be involved in the shaping of Athenian society. They were uneducated and were therefore ignorant in the ways of shaping city-state affairs. Their role was to support the men so that they could carry out their policies for the common good of society.”

“So, in ancient Athens, under your leadership, we find Solon, that your Democratic system meant only equality for some, but not others.”

“Yes, but...”

Turning to the judge, Sidney said, “That's all the questions I have for this witness your Honor. “

Judge Wright asked, “Mr. Dee, do you have any questions for this witness?”

Smiling, the defence council answered, “Just a few your Honor.” Then, facing Solon, he asked, “Solon, what did you do to advance democracy in Athens?”

“As the Archon, that is the chief magistrate at the time, I wrote new laws guaranteeing the freedom of Athenian citizens.”

“I see, and did you not put such sentiments in your poetry?”

“Ah yes! Poetry, food for the soul. Yes your Honor. “As an example I wrote laws alike for base and noble, fitting straight judgment to each.”

“Yes, and did you not bring about social reforms such as Seisachtheia.”

Puzzled, the judge asked, “Seisachtheia! What does that mean?”

“Your Honor Seisachtheia means shaking off burdens. This meant there would be no slavery due to debt.”

Grinning, Marcus responded, “If only that were the case today your Honor. Oh what a world we would be living in.” Then, following a short pause, he said, “That's all the questions I have for this witness your Honor.”

Selina Tarrent stood up, saying, “Call the next witness, Cleisthenes to the stand.”

A warrior, wearing bronze helmet and breastplate appeared in the witness box. He stood tall and erect as he faced the court. He was approached by Sidney, who asked, “Cleisthenes, what position did you hold in Athenian society?”

“I was an aristocrat your Honor - a ruler from the nobility.”

“I see. Cleisthenes. Now, would you claim that with your administrative system - the Deme, the Tryttees and the Phylah - you achieved perfect Democracy in Athens?”

“What do those three words mean?” the judge asked.

“Deme means units of citizenry that in turn combined into 30 groups called Tryttees. These formed into ten new tribes called Phylah. Each tribe consisted of 50 men, all of whom were equal under my laws.”

Sidney, becoming irritated, asked again, “So, would you say you achieved perfect Democracy in Athens?”

“Well your Honor I would not say it was a perfect system but...”

“That’s because your system of government was actually a very imperfect system of Democracy, was it not?”

“What do you mean?”

“What I mean is, we know that Athenians hated the idea of rule by monarchy. To them the state mattered, not so much the status of the king. However, Isn't it equally true that your people disliked Oligarchy almost as much as they hated kingship?”

“Yes, they disliked ruling by the few. However, all the people, through their tribal representation, had the opportunity to have their views aired. You see, our model for rule was for the benefit of all,

and not just for those who ruled.”

“That may well have been the intention Cleisthenes. Nevertheless, it did not work that way did it? It is well understood that in any group situation members with the most energy and motivation rise to the fore, take on more responsibilities and therefore more of a leadership role in society. Isn't this what happened to your Deme?”

“Unfortunately yes, in some situations. Even so, your Honor, remember, we were experimenting in power sharing in a way never conceived before. We developed institutions according to the needs of the state.”

“Yes Cleisthenes, I believe you referred to this as Democratic Imperialism.”

“Yes your Honor, that is so.”

“However, your idea of democratic Imperialism wasn't liked by all Athenians, was it? As a matter of fact some people, including Cleon, didn't think it would work very well at all.”

“Yes, but it was through Cleon's shortsightedness and ferocity that Athens lost its Empire,” Cleisthenes retorted, indignantly.

“That may well have been so but it still does not alter that just because people can govern themselves, they would necessarily do it effectively.”

“There was some support for such a view your Honor. However, I believe that people who can arrange their lives effectively, with a belief in the common requirements of all citizens -- because we all have the same basic needs -- can rule benevolently.

“Great sentiments I'm sure. However, in reality didn't Cleon have a valid point in his view that benevolent ruler ship will lead to too much leniency and generosity, which in turn will lead to weak government?”

“Although such a view has some validity I believe that your modern attempts at Democracy show very clearly that heavy-handed government will only succeed for short periods of time. Your Honor there is always a problem in finding the correct balance in figuring out guidelines for an effective democratic system.”

“Very well Cleisthenes. That being the case, were you able to find this delicate balance in your law making?”

“Regretfully, no your Honor.”

“Thank you Cleisthenes. No more questions for this witness, your Honor.”

“Mr. Dee would the defense like to cross examine now?” the judge asked.

Rising to his feet, Marcus replied, “Yes your Honor. Now Cleisthenes, was Athens a peaceful place to live in?”

“No, I would not say so your Honor. It was not a stable society as there were always new challenges for power taking place.”

“Precisely. In fact, I believe, Cleisthenes, that you yourself enlisted the help of the people to take power from Isagoras, your rival.”

“Yes, your Honor. His recalcitrant policies held Athens back so I had to elicit the support of the demos to help bring about new and much-needed reforms.”

Interrupting proceedings, the judge commented, “The term demos, I presume, means the people?”

Marcus replied, “Yes, it is indeed so. You are well informed your Honor.” Then turning to the witness, he said, “Now, you mentioned that all your people were, and I quote, Equal under your laws. Now, can you tell the court what you actually mean by the term “equal under the law”?”

“Equality in my society, your Honor, meant that each council member had equal rights in being heard, regardless of their rank or position in the tribe.

“So this was your idea of Democracy.”

“Yes, your Honor.”

“Thank you Cleisthenes. I have no further questions to put to this witness, your Honor.”

Selina was on her feet again. She called out, “Calling the next witness, Aristophanes to the stand.”

Aristophanes, appeared, his simple tunic held in place over his right shoulder by a bronze clasp. With a visage much the same as that of Solon, he stood erect, waiting to be questioned.

Approaching him, Sidney began, “Aristophanes, what was your role in Athens?”

“I was what was known as a burlesque writer your Honor.”

“A burlesque writer. That sound’s intriguing. Please explain what that is, to this court.”

“I portrayed my work in a satirical manner in much the same way you lampoon key figures of your age, to show up their shortcomings in a humorous way.”

“I see. Now Aristophanes, what function do you suppose this burlesque writing served in your society?”

“A crucial one your Honor.”

“A crucial one! In what way Aristophanes?”

“It was, what you may refer to as vicarious Democracy, your Honor. By that I mean it allowed those who agreed with my sentiments to release their anger in a positive and harmless way.”

“I see. However, not everybody agreed with you did they? For example, the Sophists attacked your methods did they not?”

Rolling his eyes upward, Aristophanes sighed, “Oh, those pseuds.”

“Yes, Aristophanes, I believe you referred to them as pseuds in your parody, that you called “Clouds,” didn't you?”

“Yes, your Honor.”

“What did you say now?” Sidney asked, scanning his notes. Finding his place, he continued, “Ah yes! You said they had bare feet and pale faces and maintained that heaven was shaped like a bread oven placed all around us as if we were coal.”

“I said that, yes.”

Smirking, Sidney said, “Now, Aristophanes, I cannot speak for anyone else here, but I can't make any sense whatsoever out of this statement. Therefore, perhaps you, being the author, can elucidate on it for us.”

“No, your Honor I cannot make any sense of it either.”

“Really, Aristophanes,” Sidney responded, wide eyed. “Well if you, the author, cannot explain it, how on earth do you expect anyone else to know what you were referring to in this strange quote?”

“I did not expect anyone to understand it because it does not make any sense. Your Honor.”

“It doesn't make any sense to the writer?” the judge responded, puzzled.

Aristophanes continued, “This is the very point I am putting across here. The Sophists never made any sense at all. They just gushed forth with any old intellectual drivel that had no useful outcome.”

Sidney stated, “That's an interesting observation Aristophanes. Therefore, please explain your reasoning for such a bold statement.”

“Your Honor the Sophists took pleasure in creating pointless puzzles and debated on them for hour after tedious hour to no real purpose. That is, except to elicit fees from those citizens who were stupid enough to listen to them.”

Getting to his feet, Marcus interrupted, “Objection your Honor. This is a total waste of the court's time. This witness has said nothing to further the cause of Democracy.”

“Judge Wright peered over his spectacles, saying, “Objection sustained. I was about to interrupt the testimony myself. Mr. Ranger, please get to the point, if indeed there is one.”

Sidney answered, “Thank you for your enlightened input your Honor.” Then, turning to the witness, he asked, “Now, Aristophanes, so what, apart from your satire, did you offer to help develop Athens' democratic society?”

“Democracy! What makes you believe I was in support of Democracy? The only way our city-states could be effectively governed for the good of the people was by strong, academically educated autocrats, or at least an experienced Aristocracy.”

Almost floored by the unexpected answer, Sidney, attempting to resurrect his credibility in the eyes of the court, said, “But surely such a dictatorial government, such as the one you supported, could not have occurred in a state where love of liberty was held in such a high regard. Surely, Aristophanes, the Athenians, who were, by all accounts, intelligent people, wouldn't have allowed such a retrograde step to stand in the path of their democratic ideals.”

Aristophanes responded, "Your Honor, the Athenians were only intelligent to a point. They failed to achieve security, which was their chief political objective. Indeed it was this lack of security that killed off old Socrates and kept women and slaves in degrading subjugation."

Realizing he was arguing with his own witness, before any objections could be raised, Sidney said, "Thank you Aristophanes. No further questions."

Judge Wright asked, "Mr. Dee, do you have any questions for this witness?"

"No your Honor. I believe we have wasted enough time on this already."

"I must say I tend to agree. Please stick to the subject of Democracy Mr. Ranger."

Following a moment of uncomfortable silence, Selina asked, "Should I call the next witness now, your Honor?"

Looking at the clock, he answered, "We will hear the testimony of the next witness after lunch. The court will go into recess for one hour."

Selina announced, "Be upstanding for Justice Wright."

As they sat down to lunch, Sydney Ranger QC, berating his junior, asked, "Did you not bother to find out about Aristophanes' political leanings?"

In her defence, Mary answered, "It wasn't that clear. By the time Aristophanes began to write his comedies, democracy had already begun to sour for the Athenians. The people were increasingly demoralized by the ongoing conflicts of the Peloponnesian War and the loss of their greatest hero, Pericles, had been taken from them and replaced by unscrupulous politicians such as Cleon and Hyperbolus."

"You could have at least made a note to the effect,"

"I thought You might have picked it up in his comedies."

"In his comedies! I don't have time to read his works. That's what I employ you for."

"Yes Mr. Ranger. I will make sure you are well appraised of all the points in future."

After all relevant parties had filtered back into the courtroom, Judge Wright entered, his red robes swirling around him. Once seated and having pondered his notes, he said, "let us proceed."

Selina responded, "Calling Socrates to the witness box."

Socrates' broad nose and long pointed beard gave him the look of an indigenous Australian, albeit a little paler. Attired in a simple homespun tunic, a twinkle in his eye showed him to have a sense of humor.

Sidney Ranger began his questions. "Socrates, will you please explain to this court your standing in Athenian society."

"Yes your Honor. I was a moral philosopher."

"A moral philosopher. What do you mean by that term?"

“I was instrumental in assisting my fellow Athenians to achieve virtue and wisdom in their lives.”

Feigning surprise, Sidney responded, “Really Socrates! How is it then that you were condemned to death for the corruption of Athenian youth?”

“That was not the case your Honor.”

“Perhaps you would be kind enough to tell this tribunal what the case was then.”

“Certainly your Honor. I was executed for helping Athenian youth live in virtue.”

“Then, how is it that you were charged with corrupting Athenian youth?”

“You will have to ask my accusers that. Who knows how their minds work?”

Marcus Dee jumped up. Objection your Honor. What has this got to do with Democracy?”

“Sustained. I was wondering that myself. Please get to the point Mr. Ranger.”

“Certainly, your Honor. Turning to his witness, Sidney continued, Now Socrates, you claim that you were executed when truthfully, I believe you took your own life. Is this not the case?”

“Yes your Honor, but it was because the court voted in favor of the death sentence and imprisoned me that I committed suicide.”

“Which you did by taking poison, I believe.”

“Yes your Honor. A friend handed me a cup of hemlock, which I drank.”

Justice Wright intervened. “Mr. Ranger this is all very fascinating but what has it got to do with Democracy?”

“If the court will indulge me, your Honor that will be revealed.”

“And when is this revelation to take place?” Judge Wright asked.

“Your Honor we need to know about these virtues Socrates claims were his undoing.”

“Then please get on with it,” the judge sighed.

“Certainly, your Honor.” Turning back to his witness Sidney continued. “Now getting back to your death sentence Socrates. You must have committed a terrible crime to attract such a fate.”

“Yes, it is so your Honor. If, by terrible crime, you are referring to my quest for greater wisdom and morality in Athenian society.”

“Well now Socrates, for one who talks of wisdom, was it not your unwise remarks during your trial that angered the court so much they sentenced you to death?”

“Your Honor, I do not propose to be perfect and in hindsight, I may well have misjudged some of my remarks to the court.”

“Yes. Is it not true Socrates that those in judgment of you may well have let you off with a fine or even exile, instead of the death sentence, until you boldly suggested your sentence should be a pension for life for helping Athenians find virtue and wisdom?”

“Yes, that is correct.”

“Did you not think such an inflammatory remark would be your undoing?”

“Not at the time, your Honor.”

“Now, coming to your virtues and wisdoms, Socrates.”

“Your Honor, a virtue is a wisdom.”

“A moot point. Now, what do you actually mean by virtue?”

“I am not sure that such a thing can be defined.”

Sidney, realizing Socrates was playing with him, said, “Okay, what virtues did you teach the Athenian youth?”

“First we have to consider whether or not virtue is a kind of knowledge.”

“What do you mean?”

“If there is anything good that is not knowledge, then it is possible that virtue is not a kind of knowledge. Conversely, if there is nothing good that knowledge does not encompass, then virtue is a kind of knowledge.”

Sidney, becoming exasperated, said, “Thank you Socrates. That is all for this witness your Honor.”

The judge’s brow was also knotted in perplexity. Taking a deep breath he asked, “Do you have anything to ask this witness Mr. Dee?”

Marcus, with growing sympathy for the judges in Socrates’ court case, answered, “Yes your Honor. Just a few questions.” Then, facing the witness, he said, “You have told this court that you were a moral philosopher. Is that not so?”

“Yes I was. As I have said I was instrumental in aiding my fellow Athenians to achieve virtue and wisdom in their lives.”

“Were these virtues and wisdoms the hallmark of Democracy, Socrates?”

“If Democracy means living a pure and decent life, then yes.”

“A pure and decent life Socrates?”

“That’s what I said.”

“It was ironic then, was it not, that you were condemned to death for the corruption of Athenian youth!”

“Your Honor, I was framed. I vehemently denied all those preposterous charges laid against me.”

“Charges such as?”

“Certain Athenian officials said I encouraged Athenian youth to stop worshipping the “proper” gods.

“Who were these ‘Proper Gods’ you speak of?”

“They were the gods of Hesiod, the fantasist who fueled the superstitious ravings of the gullible and poorly informed.”

“Well Socrates was this not so?”

“Your Honor, although I cannot stand superstitions and fear, I did no such thing. What those pompous asses were really against was my chosen lifestyle, in which I stated that I would rather go barefoot in rags than seek honors and riches for my good works.”

“So, was this the reason they accused you of the alleged crimes?”

“Well, not exactly your Honor.”

Marcus’ eyed widened. “What do you mean - not exactly?”

“Everything was going quite well for me until that unfortunate remark by the Delphic Oracle that said no man was wiser than I.”

“I would have considered such an indictment to be flattering. Therefore, how was that remark unfortunate for you?”

“I was not looking for flattery your Honor. I was flabbergasted by such a declaration. It was unfortunate for me because it put me in an invidious position. After all, we are talking the sacred Oracle about here. Owing to the Oracle's declaration, I found myself caught in a difficult situation. If I denied the Oracle's great wisdom, I committed sacrilege, and if I accepted this holy directive as truth, I would run afoul of the political assembly.”

“Yes, a difficult decision indeed. Therefore, what did you do?”

“Your Honor, what else could I do but seek council from the wisest heads in government.”

“And what happened then?”

“Regretfully I found them not to be as wise as they pretended to be. Actually, I would go as far as to say they were quite ignorant and offered me no help at all, which, I suppose, really proved the Oracle to be correct.

“Therefore, did the Assembly accept the Oracle's declaration?”

“It wasn't quite that simple your Honor. You see, although I was willing to acknowledge my ignorance, the politicians, thus humiliated by the Oracle, nursed their grievances and waited for the opportunity to take revenge against me.”

“And this is why you say you were executed?”

“Yes, your Honor,”

“Thank you Socrates. No further questions.”

Selina stood up, saying, “Your Honor I have just been informed that the next witness cannot be here until tomorrow.”

Addressing the court, Judge Wright said, “Very well. This seems like a good time to adjourn for the day. Court will now rise and sit again at 10 am tomorrow.”

### **Session 2 in which Plato, Thucydides and Aristotle give testimony**

The court is back in session

Seeing the justice enter the courtroom, Selina Tarrent announces, “This court is back in session, with the Honorable Judge Wright presiding.”

Judge Wright took his seat on the bench and perused his bundle. He then addressed the court. “We have a lot to get through today so let us please stay focused on the reason why we are here.”

Selina stood up, saying, “Calling the next witness, Plato, to the stand.”

Plato appeared in the dock, attired in a red, off the shoulder, robe and a head band over his curly hair. His brow seem to be perpetually furrowed, as though he carried the world’s concerns upon his shoulders.

Sidney Ranger approached him, saying, “Plato you are a philosopher. Is that not so?”

“Yes your Honor.”

“What do you mean by the term philosopher?”

“I would say a person who offers views or theories on profound questions in ethics, metaphysics, logic, and other related fields.”

“So, what you are saying is that philosophy of itself is a useless occupation.”

“I most certainly am not saying that, your Honor. Without philosophical enquiry human thinking would not have advanced at all, Plato responded indignantly.”

Smiling, Sidney continued, “Yes Plato, I understand all that. However, without the people acting on your system of beliefs, such a mental enquiry would be useless, would it not?”

“It could be argued that way your Honor, but I fail to see what relevance this has to my talking about Democracy.”

Judge Wright concurred, saying, “Yes Plato, I am wondering the same thing. Where exactly is the prosecution going with this line of enquiry Mr. Ranger?”

Sidney answered "I am coming to my point your Honor."

"I am sure we are all glad to hear it, council. Therefore, I hope we are not going to be kept in suspense any longer."

"Not much longer, your Honor." Turning back to the philosopher, Sidney said, "Now, whatever grand ideas you and your school had, regarding the ideal democratic model, they were of no use unless adopted by the people. Is that not so?"

"You may very well think so. However, it is, I believe, incumbent upon the wise to enlighten the masses."

"I see. Therefore, Plato please answer this. What use would Sophists be, pondering on, say, the relationship between the human soul, the state, and the universe as a whole for the populace at large?"

"Firstly, your Honor, my Academus School was not for Sophists. Our philosophical arguments always had a pertinent point to them. How can you achieve Democracy unless you believe in unity and understand that all things are connected? How can you believe in unity unless you realize that the soul, the state or nation and the universe are really one and the same thing?"

Sidney's eyes widened in fake surprise. He repeated, "One and the same thing Plato. Surely, you cannot expect this court to accept so bold a statement without qualification."

For the first time that day, Marcus Dee rose to his feet, saying, "Objection your Honor. Plato is here to give us all the benefit of his wisdom of his democratic model, not to get drawn into semantics on the oneness of life."

Defending his stance, Sidney answered, "Your Honor, the witness has stated to this court that we cannot have a true Democracy without the oneness the defense refers to. I am simply asking the witness to verify his statement."

Judge Wright responded, "Objection overruled, but keep it short and to the point Mr. Ranger."

"Yes your Honor," Sidney answered. Then addressing Plato, he said, "Now Plato, will you answer the question?"

"Certainly, if you people will stop arguing and give me a chance. We all have sensual perceptions, thinking patterns, emotional links, and individual experiences, all of which make us who we are, as well as everything we do, think or feel, and common experiences that link us all together. Therefore, we are what we experience and being so, are the same as the source of that experience. Thus our lives, souls, domiciles and universe are all connected and are therefore, in the purest sense, all parts of the wholeness."

"What has this got to do with your democratic model, Plato?"

"The important thing, your Honor, is that we know this, for only then can we unite as one people with one cause to follow for the betterment of all citizens. Furthermore, your Honor, I believe that a just state can only occur when philosophers, who comprehend the laws and ways of the universe, become the leaders of the people. "

"So, in your so-called Democracy the state would be run by philosophers?"

“Yes, your Honor.”

“What makes you think philosophers are the best educated ones to lead the people?”

“Your Honor, what makes you think that in your so-called democratic system today the best citizens are chosen to lead you? I am amazed that your national leaders can take up such a high office with little experience or no formal training. As a matter of fact, it seems to me that most of your elected leaders are so inept at their job, they have to employ teams of advisors to tell them what to do.”

“Yes, well if Democracy was perfect we would not be here doing this now.” To regain control of the situation Sidney had to put his witness on the back foot. So he asked, “Now, is it not true that you believe in Communism?”

“That depends, your Honor, on how you interpret the word “Communism”. If by Communism, you mean that the whole community owns everything in the community, not private individuals, then yes, I accept your statement.”

“So Plato, you supported control by the state over the people. Is that not so?”

Showing irritation, Plato responded, “I thought I had already made this abundantly clear your Honor. I supported the leadership of the state provided the people voted for the legislation that comprised the state.”

“I see. Now you say that you believe all members of the state should be allowed to develop themselves to the highest degree. Is that not so?”

“Yes, that is so.”

“Yet I believe, in your ideal state, you would abolish all private wealth and property.”

“Absolutely your Honor. It would be impossible to have a fair and equitable society if some people had more power, through wealth and property, than others.”

“If that is the case Plato, what would be the incentive for these good fair-minded folks of 'your' Athens to want to better themselves?”

“Their incentive was based in their belief that by bettering themselves, they benefited the community as a whole. In Athens, your Honor, each person saw himself or herself as being the whole community.”

“So, the good of one was the good of all.”

“Yes, and very eloquently put.”

Not to be swayed by flattery, Sidney continued, “Honorable sentiments I must say, but in reality it could never work, could it Plato?”

“Alas, it is difficult to overcome the basic human nature of selfishness. Theoretically, it worked and worked well, but until true unity and oneness had been achieved, it could not work as a practical proposition.”

“So, was that oneness and unity ever achieved Plato?”

“Sadly no, your Honor.”

“Now Plato, I believe you also wanted to abolish the family. Is that correct?”

“In my ideal state the community is the greater family. The new concept of your modern nuclear family is abhorrent to me, because it separates the people instead of forming greater social cohesion. Whereas, in my idea of communal living, each person works and plays within the group as a whole.”

“So, you believe in communes?”

“Your Honor, I believe that community living has many merits in a truly democratic system. Firstly, community members are drawn to those of kind, to harmonize with them. Secondly, community living employs a more effective use of resources than those used by individual families. Thirdly, community living brings about greater unity, understanding, and common purpose within the group as a whole.”

“Yes I see, Plato. Therefore, here we have the idea of the perfect community where each person slots neatly into the whole picture like a piece of jigsaw.”

“Yes, a noble and worthwhile goal I believe your Honor.”

“Even if it means introducing Eugenics?”

“Yes your Honor. What is wrong with having a fine healthy race of people?”

“Well Adolph Hitler certainly embraced eugenics didn't he? Therefore, what you wanted Plato, was to develop a master race of people superior to all others around them.”

Marcus Dee jumped up, saying, “Objection your Honor. The prosecution is badgering the witness by putting forward a very narrow view of eugenics.”

Sidney countered, “Narrow view indeed! Does my honorable friend not realize that eugenics actually means using genetic sciences to create the only accepted strain? In this sense your Honor, what this witness attempted in ancient Greece was no different to what the Nazi's did in the 20th century.”

After a quick look at the relevant point in his bundle, Judge Wright said, “Very well Mr. Ranger. Objection overruled.”

Marcus protested, “Objection overruled your Honor?”

“Yes Mr. Dee. Now can we please get on.”

Re-engaging with his witness, Sidney continued, “So Plato, you believed in using eugenics to establish your superior race. Yes or no?”

“In that sense, yes. However...”

“A simple yes will suffice. Consequently, this meant that under your ideal democratic system, all

people would have to measure up to a certain genetic ideal. Is that not so?"

"Your Honor, I had no idea of your genetics in my time. I simply wanted a race of people, healthy in mind, body, and spirit. The new concept of a super race never entered my mind, and we certainly did not consider ourselves as being superior to other tribes and races."

Not being able to argue on that point, Sidney moved to the next one. He asked, "Now Plato, did you not also propose to educate each citizen for his or her place in your society?"

"Indeed I did your Honor. I believe that all citizens should do the best they can for their state, for then they are also being honorable to themselves. I see that in your democratic system, you provide welfare for those unable to find or do a job. Although I understand the reasons for such a practice in your modern societies, I believe that such an accepted custom weakens the individual's morale as well as that of the state. Unless you find ways for all your citizens to feel and be useful, as part of the joint endeavor of your society, Democracy in the true sense cannot exist."

"Now let me see if I have got this right Plato. You say that to achieve your ideal republic everybody must do their best to better themselves yet get no personal rewards from their efforts."

"That is so, yes."

"Yet you also say that there are to be no family units, yet you see the ideal state to be one big happy family."

"Yes, I do."

"You further say that nobody should own private property; that all real estate is to be owned by the state."

"Again correct."

"Furthermore, you advocate eugenics to train all citizens for their particular place in your society, while, at the same time, you proclaim that Democracy and the rights of each citizen are the main priorities in your ideal state."

"Yes, again."

"Plato, it seems to me that you that, on the one hand, you intend to keep the citizens in tight harness, while brainwashing them and on the other hand you wish to encourage in improving their lot in your society. Now, I ask you, how can you have it both ways?"

"Your Honor, there has to be a balance in all things. A society that advocates disciplined austerity, such as Sparta, will eventually result in personal and cultural diminishment. Similarly, one that allows unlimited free thought and action can only lead to anarchy. We sought to find a balance between these two extreme styles of government. This, I believe, is the only way to achieve true Democracy your Honor."

"So Plato, you advocated government by both the carrot and the stick?"

"You could put it that way, yes."

“Thank you Plato. No more questions for this witness your Honor.”

“Judge Wright asked, “Does the defense have any questions for this witness Mr. Dee?”

Rising to his feet, Marcus answered, “Yes your Honor.” Turning to face the ancient philosopher, he asked, “Plato, would you say you were one of the privileged elite in your society?”

“Yes, I consider it fair to say that. I was a philosopher and wealthy aristocrat who enjoyed traveling a lot.”

“It seems you had a pretty good life then?”

“I got my just deserves your Honor.”

“yes, I sure you did. Now Plato, what can you tell us about the development of Democracy in Athens?”

“Although I came from Athens, I saw myself more as a Grecian. Perhaps, owing to my many years of travel, I developed a much broader view than that of a city-state citizen. But, to answer your question, Athenian governors did not really invent anything in the democratic sphere.”

“Really?” Marcus asked, surprise showing in his eyes. “What do you mean by saying the Athenians didn't invent a democratic system when history tells us Greece was the cradle of Democracy?”

“It is true that we invented the name ‘Democracy’ but the concept, that we built on, came from earlier civilizations, including Egypt and Babylonia.”

“So the Athenians built their model of democracy on an already existing foundation?”

“That's true your Honor. In reality, we simply inherited an already existing methodology and allowed it to develop.”

“Very well. Now in what ways did your mentors progress Democracy in ancient Greece?”

“The great Anaxagoras taught us that the Atom has two inherent qualities – it's mechanical nature and the nous.”

“Judge Wright perked up. He asked, “What is this nous you speak of Plato?”

“Your Honor, it can be described as a whirling force that brings things into creation.”

Sidney Ranger stood up, saying, “I object your Honor. What has this got to do with Democracy?”

Marcus responded curtly. “If the honorable counsel we give me chance we are coming to that.”

“Very well, but don't labor the issue Mr. Dee.” Judge Wright admonished.

“Turning to Plato, Marcus asked, “Please tell us how understanding the properties of the atom explains the working s of Democracy?”

“Because, in a balanced Democracy, we need both, the mechanical structure and the nous to generate new and useful ideas.”

“So, you encouraged your citizens to use their nous, and think for themselves?”

“Of course, your Honor. Owing to our quick minds and vivid national temperament we allowed our ideas free rein. However, your Honor, although our political institutions went through many changes we were careful not let our society lose its original character.”

“Which was?”

“Providing security for Athenian citizens whilst allowing them freedoms, providing of course these did not conflict with the greater need of the state.”

“I see Plato. As a result, what improvements were made to liberate your people from autocratic rule?”

“First of all, your Honor, they were not my people. The whole point of these improvements was to graciously help the citizens of Athens become their own people. It was at this stage in democratic development that the government took to discussions about which form of leadership allowed the people to live for the ‘Good Life’.”

“Why was this emphasis on your “Good Life” given the main priority in your democratic policy?”

“We believed that everybody in Athens had the right to achieve what he or she could for himself or herself as long as their desires were also good for the state. It seems to me that some of your modern-day Democracies do not hold the same view.”

“How is that Plato?”

“It appears to me that many governments today do not inspire their people to educational and academic achievement. Indeed, your Honor, many of the less well off have to pay heavily to better themselves, instead of being financially supported by the taxation system.”

“An interesting perspective on our modern society Plato. Now, you have stated that you saw yourself more as a Grecian than an Athenian citizen. Is that why you believed in the Republican ideal?”

“I believed in the Republican ideal because such an achievement would have united all the warring factions in Greece into a strong, cohesive whole. But, alas, small-minded politicians kept holding the process back, in much the same way, as they seem to do so in your governments today.”

“Plato, surely you are mistaken? After all, any decisions pertaining to changes to a national constitution, such as that of a Republic, are subordinate to the people's vote in any democratically held referendum.”

“Yes your Honor, but referendums can be worded in such a way to get the result the government wants. This is not true Democracy.”

“Yes, I take your point. So tell us. Why didn't the Athenian establishment support your republican plans?”

“To have a Republic in ancient Greece would have meant settling many differences with opposing tribes, many of whom had long hated each other. There were those legislators who liked my ideas but felt they would have been impossible to implement, and there were those who were so caught

up in their petty squabbles they couldn't see past their noses.”

“So Plato, you were in fact advocating reconciliation among the various warring tribes, were you not?”

‘Reconciliation, your Honor, was, I believe, absolutely crucial if Greece was going to survive as a substantive power in the Mediterranean area. Reconciliation is not an easy thing to achieve, as you well know from the problems mighty colonial invaders have with apologizing and providing just recompense to those indigenous groups they usurped.’

“Yes I see. That does hit very close to home. Therefore, you say that most Athenian legislators ignored or were opposed to your republican views.”

“Oh no your Honor! There was abundant talk about my ideas in Athens. Now, if the Athenian lawmakers had adopted and ran with my ideas the people would have been credited as the great political innovators they supposedly were. However, instead they just talked about their “Ideal State” while putting up with one that was far from being ideal.”

“How did that rejection make you feel?”

“It was very frustrating your Honor. Once I realized that to get the Athenians to listen was akin to putting brains into statues, I left Athens and carried on with my travels instead.”

“So you gave up on your citizens?”

“No your Honor. They rejected me.”

“Nevertheless, you did return to Athens, did you not?”

“Yes your Honor, after many years of foreign travel I returned to Athens and opened up a school dedicated to Academus, the mythical hero.”

“And what did you teach at your school, Plato?”

“I taught my philosophical views your Honor. I was in discourse with my students on such topics as the theory of knowledge, the getting of wisdom, right and wrong, whether Democracy or Autocracy has more merits, etc.”

“Well, as this case is about the merits of Democracy will you please give your views on this subject?”

“First, let me say that I believe your modern age plays around with the idea of Democracy. It uses fine words about it but when it comes to putting it into practice, the reality of the situation reveals a great number of flaws.”

“What are these flaws you allude to Plato?”

“The main point of Democracy, in my view, is that of everybody having equal opportunities. For this to be realized, all citizens would have to be endowed with the necessary tools: physically, mentally, emotionally and spiritually, for them to be able to bring forth their best human qualities. This ideal is sadly lacking in your modern day society. It seems to me that your society's idea of Democracy goes only as far as giving every law-abiding citizen, of a certain age, the right to vote

for the politician of their choice. Although this is admirable to some extent, in that it is certainly the fairest of your unequal political systems, it really only amounts to the ignorant voting for the arrogant.”

“Aren't you being a little too harsh on us Plato?”

“Not at all your Honor. I believe the only way that the democratic voting system can be fair for all is if each elector has the same power and intelligence with which to make their choice. In addition, elected officers need to take their seats as servants of their constituents; not for their own aggrandizement. Until this takes place, modern society is not dealing in true Democracy.”

“Thank you for enlightening us with your view of events Plato. Now, as a result, what ideas do you suggest can help us achieve your ideal democratic model?”

“I believe, your Honor, that the first principle of an effective, workable and united Democracy is for all citizens to have the same overall priorities and goals. Of course, there must be free choice and citizens should be encouraged to think for themselves. However, to avoid anarchy, precedence must be given to the agreed-to aims and intentions of the citizenry as a whole. In order for such a state to become a reality, all participants must be prepared to forgo their personal likes and dislikes and work for the common good. First, you have to decide what you want, by consensus, and decide what you are all prepared to do to achieve your aims.”

“Thank you Plato. Therefore, how do we go about putting your words into action?”

“What you have to do is love the idea of a true Democracy more than you love even yourself. In a true Democracy, your Honor, the success, the joy, the sadness, the failure, the love, the hate, of one are the same emotions for all. Think about that, and then decide if you are big enough and humble enough to take Democracy on for real.”

“A lofty project indeed. Thank you Plato. No more questions.”

Judge Wright spoke up. “Thank you Plato for your enlightening thoughts. I now believe we are making some headway with this case. Now, as both counsels are finished with Plato, I believe this is a good time for a recess. The court will rise and will reconvene in one hour.”

After lunch and with the court officers assembled, Selina Tarrent announced, “The court is back in session with Judge Wright presiding. All rise please.”

Surveying the court, Judge Wright said, “Before we start this afternoon I will make a comment on this morning’s proceedings. It seemed that grandstanding and point scoring against witnesses took precedence over gathering the facts. I will not tolerate any more behavior of this kind. Having said that, we have a lot to get through this afternoon, so bring forth the next witness.

Selina said, “ Calling Thucydides to the stand.”

Thucydides instantly appeared. His customary beard and wavy hair made him almost a clone of the previous witnesses. He stood tall and proud as Sidney approached him.

Sidney began, “Thucydides, you have been summoned to this tribunal to give testimony as an expert witness. Please tell the court your field of study.”

“I was a Greek historian your Honor.”

“Very well, now can you tell the court about political structures in ancient Sparta?”

Marcus was quickly on his feet, saying, “Objection your Honor. The Spartan society had nothing to do with Democracy.”

Sidney countered, “Your Honor, that is not so. Thucydides is here to point out the democratic aspects of the Spartan political system so that we can draw some comparisons with that of Athenian society.”

The judge responded, “Very well Mr. Ranger. Objection overruled but with a proviso that if the court considers the testimony to be irrelevant, I will stop it abruptly.”

“As your Honor pleases.” Turning to face Thucydides, Sidney asked, “Thucydides, can you