

Atlantis
v.
Sal Tamontes



A mock trial case file based on the fable of the Grasshopper and the Ant by Jean de La Fontaine

Case Summary

The Crown of Antlantis has charged the grasshopper with theft of food after the mess hall staff noticed the food storage was lower than calculations would have predicted for the given time of year. The grasshopper is being charged with Theft under Antlantis Revised Code Statute 2913.02.

Witnesses

Prosecution
Ari Ameise
Queen Formiga
Officer Myra

Defense
Sal Tamontes
Guy Mi
Aby Ha

Statutes

Antlantis Revised Code 2913.02: Theft

(A) No insect, with purpose to deprive the owner of property or services, shall knowingly obtain or exert control over either the property or services in any of the following ways:

- (1) Without the consent of the owner or insect authorized to give consent;
- (2) By deception;
- (3) By threat;
- (4) By intimidation.

(B)(1) Whoever violates this section is guilty of theft.

(2) Except as otherwise provided in this division, a violation of this section is misdemeanor theft, a misdemeanor of the first degree. If the value of the property or services stolen is one hundred morsels or more and is less than seven hundred morsels, a violation of this section is theft, a felony of the fifth degree.

Arguments

Prosecution

The ants will attempt to prove beyond a reasonable doubt that the grasshopper knowingly took food from the colony with a value that exceeded 100 morsels. Their witnesses will allege that the grasshopper did not have any food to sustain them for the winter, that they were aware of the food storage possessed by the colony, that they made prior threats against the colony, and that they took food from the colony to survive.

Defense

The grasshopper will allege that the colony has not met their burden of proof, that the food storage calculations were likely based on faulty mathematics, and that there are alternative suspects for the missing food.

Facts of the Case

Once upon a time, in a bustling meadow, lived a diligent and hardworking ant. The ant toiled day and night, gathering food and preparing for the upcoming winter. Every day, it would carry heavy loads of grains and seeds back to its anthill, ensuring there would be enough to sustain the colony during the cold months ahead.

Right next to the anthill, there lived a carefree and jovial grasshopper. The grasshopper loved to sing and play, spending its days hopping from one blade of grass to another, oblivious to the impending winter and the necessity of preparing for it.

As the summer days passed, the ant continued its relentless work, while the grasshopper reveled in the warmth of the sun, singing merrily. The ant warned the grasshopper, "Winter is coming, dear friend. You should start gathering food and making preparations."

The grasshopper dismissed the ant's advice with a laugh, replying, "Why worry about winter? The sun is shining, and there is plenty of food all around. Let us enjoy the present and worry about the future when it arrives."

However, as autumn arrived, the once-lush meadow began to wither, and the abundance of food began to dwindle. The grasshopper, now hungry and cold, approached the ant in desperation. "Dear ant, I am sorry for my foolishness. Will you please share some of your provisions with me? I am starving and freezing."

The ant looked at the grasshopper with a mix of pity and disappointment. "You had the whole summer to gather food, just as I did. You chose to play and ignore the importance of preparation. Now, I cannot help you."

The grasshopper stared back at the ant, contorting his mandibles into a menacing sneer. "You will live to regret denying my pleas for help! Karma finds a way!"

And so, the grasshopper, realizing the gravity of its mistake, was left to face the harsh winter alone, shivering in hunger and regret.

A few weeks passed, and the days grew colder and the nights grew longer. All the while, the ant found that the colony's store of food was dwindling faster than their rationing would have suggested it should. Beginning to suspect foul play was afoot, they left the warmth of their anthill to pay a visit to their neighbor the grasshopper.

There was not a trace of food to be found anywhere in the grasshopper's home. Despite this fact, the grasshopper was plump as could be, making the ant even more suspicious.

The ant returned to the anthill and went before the Queen with their suspicions. After a lengthy investigation by the Queen's guard, they decided to charge the grasshopper with theft.

Ari Ameise
Witness for the Prosecution

1 My name is Ari Ameise. I am an inhabitant of Atlantis. Ever since I was a pupa I have been a
2 worker for Queen Formiga, primarily responsible for gathering and monitoring the food supplies. Now
3 that I'm almost two years-old, I've seen about as much of the world as an ant ever will, and it has taught
4 me a lot about what insects can be trusted and which insects to avoid. From the beginning, I knew that
5 Sal Tamontes was just a bad egg!

6 All summer long, my fellow ants and I worked hard, gathering food and making calculations for
7 the winter ahead. I was a lot younger then, but I learned from the experience of older ants and, now that
8 I'm an elder myself, I am grateful that they shared their knowledge with me! The older ants showed me
9 how to calculate the amount of food the colony would consume each day, how to adjust that calculation
10 based on how many eggs the queen wanted to lay, and how to count up what we had gathered to
11 determine how long it would last. Sometimes we leave food whole instead of precutting it into morsels,
12 but every ant knows that a seed and piece are two morsels each so the math isn't that hard to work out.

13 We talked with the queen and the guards about how much brood was anticipated for the
14 months ahead, and built surplus food stores to get us through the winter and the early spring when food
15 was scarce. Based on our careful math, we should have had enough food to last well beyond my lifetime!

16 While we toiled, we noticed that the grasshopper, Sal Tamontes, was busy singing and dancing
17 instead of cutting and storing! We warned Sal multiple times that winter was coming. But they ignored
18 our advice and kept on singing all summer long.

19 When the food in the meadow started to run scarce, Sal came knocking at our door to see if we
20 would give them food for the winter. But even with our surplus, we couldn't risk giving any morsels away.
21 We prepare for the worst and hope for the best, so every last morsel was critical to our survival. When I
22 told Sal "no," they got really angry and made a nasty face. They said I'd regret my decision not to help
23 them, and something about karma finding a way.

24 A few weeks later, when I was checking our stores and calculating how much we had left, I
25 noticed that the morsels were dwindling faster than they should have given our consumption and brood
26 size.

27 When I noticed this, I went to go check on my chief suspect: Sal! Given how little food they had
28 gathered, I expected to find Sal looking like nothing more than chiton, but they were surprisingly plump!
29 I knew they must be getting food from somewhere and I believed they were stealing it from us.

30 I reported my suspicions to Queen Formiga, and an investigation was launched.

Queen Formiga
Witness for the Prosecution

1 My name is Queen Formiga. I am the sovereign of Atlantis, where I have ruled for the past 17
2 years. I have lived through many winters and have never had a class of workers fall short in their
3 calculations. The fact that my colony is facing a food shortage is not only unprecedented, but is an
4 ongoing threat to our survival. It is essential that we bring Sal Tamontes to justice for the crimes they
5 have committed against our colony!

6 When Ari Ameise came to me with their suspicions, I knew we had to act. I immediately sent my
7 guards to investigate and gave them full royal authority to question any ant in the colony, pursue any
8 lines of investigation, and to take appropriate action when the culprit was found.

9 For a colony to function properly, every ant needs to know their job and perform it with
10 expertise. From the moment they hatch, every larva is prepared for the role they will serve in the colony.
11 We make these choices very carefully to ensure the continued existence of the colony. The food workers
12 are all carefully selected and only the strongest and smartest pupae get to serve this important role for
13 our colony. Their calculations have seen this colony through generations of queens without any
14 problems.

15 When the food shortage was brought to my attention, I conducted a full audit of our food stores.
16 I personally watched every morsel counted and compared it to the tally that our workers compiled at the
17 end of the harvest season. This tally is created every year and has never been wrong before. Based on
18 the tally and the current stores, 235 morsels are currently missing from the colony pantry.

19 It would be foolish to say there is *no* other explanation for the missing food apart from theft, but
20 as the oldest and wisest any in the entire colony I can say that it is the most likely. The simplest
21 explanation tends to be the most likely and the simplest explanation is staring us in the face! The
22 defendant stole our food and imperiled the future of this colony.

Officer Myra
Witness for the Prosecution

1
2 My name is Officer Myra. I am an inhabitant of Atlantis and a senior member of the Queen's
3 Guard. At the age of three, I am currently the oldest and most experienced officer in the Queen's Guard.
4 They trust me more than any of the other guard, and assign to me the most important and most difficult
5 investigations.

6 When the food shortage was reported, I was dispatched to begin the investigation. I've handled
7 over twenty investigations in my time as a member of the guard, and this one was pretty open and shut!

8 When I visited the pantry to begin my preliminary investigation, I did a full sweep of the pantry
9 and its perimeter. My inspection unveiled a large opening, approximately 10ants in diameter, at the rear
10 of the pantry with open access to the outside.

11 This opening points toward the morning sun, in an unobstructed straight line to the residence of
12 Sal Tamontes, the defendant in this case. When I followed that path, I noticed several morsels
13 interspersed along the trail. I found 4 morsels in all, the last of which was 100ants distance from the den
14 of defendant Tamontes.

15 After obtaining a warrant for a search from Queen Formiga, I assembled a team of sniffing
16 aphids. The aphids alerted at several locations along the path and inside the residence of Defendant Sal
17 Tamontes. I concluded based on the evidence that the defendant had been stealing food for the past few
18 weeks and consuming it in their residence.

Sal Tamontes
Witness for the Defense

1 My name is Sal Tamontes. I have been a resident of The Meadow since I was born 8 months ago.
2 I'm not usually one to brag, but among my 74 brothers and sisters I was gifted with the most beautiful
3 singing legs in our entire brood! I spent the summer and autumn serenading the meadow and everyone
4 was grateful.

5 Just like my ancestors before me, I played my songs throughout the harvest season for the other
6 inhabitants of the field. My kind typically don't live into the winter, so preparing for some kind of
7 hibernation would be pretty foolish! I suppose singing legs weren't my only gift, because I have also
8 outlived every one of my siblings and am experiencing this thing called winter for the first time (spoiler
9 alert, I'm not a fan!). The last time it was this cold I was only a nymph nestled up in the ground!

10 All summer long the ants kept telling me I'd regret not preparing food but they should have
11 known that my kind don't do such nonsense. We grasshoppers may not be around for a long time but we
12 always make sure to "carpe" every "diem!" I don't know how many days I've got left in this meadow, but
13 I sure don't want to spend my final hours locked up in some cell in the ant colony! And especially not for
14 something I didn't do. They're accusing me of stealing their food but this is ridiculous.

15 For one thing, we don't even eat the same things! I tend to prefer the more tender shoots of
16 plants and leaves. These ants seem to prefer all kinds of things that I wouldn't call edible! Earlier in the
17 season they *were* harvesting and storing some things I would eat, but no doubt those have long rotted
18 by now. You can't keep just cut leaves from rotting and getting stale so I asked them for some clippings
19 when they were fresh. When they said no, I moved on. Although it has been tough these past few weeks,
20 I've gotten by ok. As long as the ground isn't covered by this horrible snow I can access plants to eat
21 (clovers are particularly tasty), and since I spend most of my time in my den I don't burn many calories.

22 The ants are convinced that I took their food simply because my den happens to be in a straight
23 line away from their colony, but the same is true of thousands of other inhabitants of the meadow.
24 Proximity to a crime scene is hardly evidence of guilt! Maybe if the officer investigating would have gone
25 a bit further past my den they would have noticed the large squirrel nest in the tree where that awful
26 bluebird lived this summer. No doubt the squirrel would have enjoyed the fruits of the ants' labor!

27 As for me making threats against the ants, I may have gotten a bit sharp tongued with Ari Ameise
28 at some point in the past, but telling them that karma has a way of working things out is true! I believe
29 that karma gave me a longer life as a reward for how beautiful my song is. Perhaps karma has caught up
30 with the ants.

Guy Mi
Witness for the Defense

1 My name is Guy Mi. I am a resident of Atlantis and a subject of the tyrant Queen Formiga.
2 Although I'm young, I have already seen enough of what goes on in Queen Formiga's colony to tell you
3 that they are hardly the leader that their ancestors were rumored to have been. Our colony has been
4 around for generations, and under Queen Formiga's rule it may not last much longer!

5 My role within the colony is "brood tender." This means that I care for and nurture the young to
6 ensure the next generation of the colony is healthy and strong. When the queen lays eggs, we take them
7 and tend to them, dividing them into the assigned pods, and rearing them all the way to adulthood. This
8 is even harder than it might sound because the way that we treat each egg, larva, and pupa determines
9 what kind of ant it will become.

10 This job is made even harder by the sloppy egg laying habits of our current queen. It seems that
11 their count is always off, so each day we are reminding them to lay more or fewer. I am risking my thorax
12 to admit this, but I'm not the only one dissatisfied with the Queen's poor leadership. I've heard a lot of
13 grumbling from some of the other brood tenders that it might be time for new leadership.

14 A regime change isn't easy, but it's not unprecedented either. We brood tenders simply make
15 sure that we give extra nourishment to some of the brood to start producing princesses. A more vigilant
16 queen would notice this right away, but it wouldn't shock me in the slightest if some brood tenders have
17 been rearing princesses in secret to challenge our young queen.

18 If there is food missing from the pantry, this seems even more likely, since princess eggs and
19 larva need a lot more food to develop. The calculations that the food workers make assume we all live in
20 harmony. But throw in a few princess eggs here and there and the counts will all be off.

Aby Ha
Witness for the Defense

1 My name is Aby Ha. I have been a resident of The Meadow for the last 80 days. I'm a resident of
2 the bee colony that is situated about a 30 second flight from Antlantis.

3 As a worker bee, I'm responsible for maintaining the food stores of our hive and ensuring none
4 of us is taking more than our share. My hive spent the summer storing up a rich supply of honey and it
5 has to last us until the flowering begins. Although I won't live to see that day, I will do my part to ensure
6 my hive makes it to the buttercups in the spring!

7 We bees are the best at storage and planning, and I learned from the top experts in my hive. My
8 queen has raised such successful brood that we have split and spawned four other hives just in this one
9 meadow alone.

10 I have taken a look at the audit conducted by Antlantis at the order of Queen Formiga, and it
11 pains me to say that their numbers are quite inaccurate. Mathematical errors abound, and several
12 portions are simply incomprehensible.

13 The standard of measurement they employ is "morsel." However, in two places the audit records
14 quantities as "seed," and "piece." No guide is given for how this would break down into a morsel. If I
15 assume that it is a one-to-one ratio, then their math is off by about 24 days. If "pieces" and "seeds" are
16 themselves different measurement quantities that are not the same size, then the math becomes even
17 more incomprehensible.

18 This audit is barely enough to help the colony make it through the winter, let alone precise
19 enough to determine an exact amount that is "missing" from the pantry. With this kind of sloppy
20 accounting, it's a miracle that the colony has survived as long as it has!



Colonia Antlantia VIVAT REGINA FORMIGA

Summer Harvest

Sun Pantry
1,700,000 morsels
100,000 Seeds

Moon Pantry
50,000 pieces
400,000 morsels

Consumption Estimate

Meager Rations: 1/16 morsel per colonist per day
Regular rations: 1/8 morsel per colonist per day

Population Plans

Their royal majesty, Queen Formiga, intends to maintain a colony of 100,000 colonists through the fullness of winter.

Food Storage Estimates

I, *Ari Amuse*, certify that the colony has stored enough food to maintain the colony for 204 days of regular rations.