

Manual for Masonic Trials



for the
GRAND LODGE, A.F. & A.M., OF VIRGINIA
RICHMOND, VIRGINIA
by
MOST WORSHIPFUL EDMUND COHEN AND
THE GRAND MASTER'S COMMISSION ON MASONIC TRIALS

REVISED 2023

(This Manual supersedes the 2007 Handbook for Masonic Trials)

Manual for Masonic Trials

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I. INTRODUCTION

There is often nothing more stressful in the life of a Lodge than a Masonic trial. At best, it is a tragedy for a particular Brother and his friends. Sometimes factions will develop that can split the Lodge. Also, there is often great pressure on the Worshipful Master to take, or not take, certain steps.

It is important, therefore, for the Worshipful Master and the Lodge officers to be able to negotiate these treacherous grounds adroitly and diplomatically: first, to avoid stress and dissension in the Lodge; second, to keep the Lodge functioning efficiently even in these troubled times; and third, to ensure that at the end of the trial, there are as few permanent scars as possible.

The source of authority for a Masonic trial is **Section 4.00** of the Methodical Digest titled, “Masonic Offenses, Investigations, Charges, Trials, Etc.”

The goal of this Manual is to provide you with guidance on actions you need to take in order to deal with the tensions and pressures of a Masonic trial from beginning to end. Keep in mind that the period before the trial is as important as the trial itself. **Two initial points: First**, if there is a difference between the Manual and the Methodical Digest, **the Methodical Digest** is controlling. **Second**, you can get procedural help from the Grand Lodge Committee on Masonic Trials.

II. THE BASICS

Your understanding of Masonic trials begins with understanding four introductory questions.

A. The first question: Who can be brought up on charges?

The simple answer is: any Virginia Mason. In addition, charges can be brought against:

- A sojourning Mason, while in Virginia;
- An Entered Apprentice or a Fellowcraft;
- And in unusual circumstances, a Mason who has been demitted or suspended.

B. The second question is: What is a Masonic offense?

The answer is very broad. It includes:

- A violation of law.
- A violation of Masonic law.
- A violation of Masonic obligations.

Here is how it is framed in **Section 4.01** of the Methodical Digest:

“Masons owing allegiance to the Grand Lodge, A.F. & A.M, of Virginia, and sojourning Masons while in the Commonwealth of Virginia, must obey the civil law, support the establishment of government, keep inviolable the mysteries of the Order, preserve and obey the laws and resolutions of the Grand Lodge of Virginia, observe the Ancient Landmarks of Masonry and discharge their duties and obligations to their families, to each other and to mankind in general.”

“In addition to the requirements related to Masonic conduct outlined in the Section, and the Decisions related to this Section, and elsewhere in the Methodical Digest, including those offenses and charges set forth in Chapter I, Section III and Chapter II, Section IV of The Constitution of Masonry, a Masonic Offense shall be construed to include: slander or defamation of character by one Mason against another; behavior or actions by one Mason resulting in physical or substantial emotional harm to another Mason; and oral, verbal, written or electronic communication by any Mason which brings dishonor to the Fraternity or any of its members or creates disharmony or discord in the Fraternity or among its members. Willful failure to comply with any of these requirements shall constitute a Masonic offense and subject the offender to Masonic trial, and, if found guilty, to discipline.”

C. The third question is: **Who May Prefer charges?**

A three-part answer:

- First, **any member** of a Lodge may prefer charges for Masonic offenses.
- Second, **any officer** of a Lodge **knowing** of a Masonic offense committed by a **member of his Lodge must** prefer charges.
- Third, **every Mason** (a Virginia Mason or Sojourner) **must** notify the Grand Master of any information concerning a **felony**

conviction of a Lodge member or sojourner by any State or Federal Court.

D. The fourth question is: Where should charges be brought?

The answer is found in **Section 4.02**, which says “any officer or member of a Lodge may make written accusation for ... offenses committed within the jurisdiction of the Lodge but after one Lodge prefers charges, no other Lodge shall prefer charges for the same offense. With respect to a sojourning Mason who commits an offense in Virginia, the Lodge in which the charges should be brought would be the Lodge closest to where the offense occurred. With respect to a Virginia Mason, the charges should be brought in the Lodge where the Mason is a member.”

When we say “prefer charges,” we mean “make an accusation.” The charges are formulated by the Grand Lodge Committee on Security after their investigation.

E. Suspension Pending a Trial. (Section 4.02(a))

The Grand Master may become aware of acts by a Mason that may in his belief constitute a Masonic offense as outlined in **Section 4.01** which present a clear and present danger to the continued operation of a Lodge or Lodges. Therefore, in addition to the expulsion of felons, as outlined in **Section 4.01(a)**, the Grand Master may, in his sole discretion, suspend any member from the rights and benefits of Freemasonry until such time as a trial commission may be impaneled no more than 180 days from the

date of such suspension to make a final determination in the manner. Should circumstances warrant, prior to the conclusion of the Masonic Trial, the Grand Master or any successor, may remove the suspension and restore the man to membership.

F. If the matter concerns the **conviction of a felony**, it is sent directly to the Grand Master who, on receiving sufficient evidence of the same, will afford the Brother forty days to show cause why he should not be expelled. There is no need for an accusation, investigative team, or any other Lodge action. **(Section 4.01(a))**

THE PROCESS

The process itself can be divided into three parts: the pre-trial stage, the trial itself, and the post-trial, appeal stage.

III. THE PRE-TRIAL STAGE

Step 1 – The Accusation. (Section 4.04)

It all begins with a Mason, in good standing, making written accusations and giving them to the Worshipful Master.

Enclosed with the accusations are the circumstances or acts upon which the accusations are based, beginning with the time and place. It is your basic who-what-when-where-why and how of the accusations and the specifics of them.

If, in the rare case, the matter is not proper to be written — for example, it relates to the unwritten work (ritual) — the accusation can be reported orally to the Worshipful Master of the Lodge having jurisdiction.

Step 2 – The Worshipful Master. (Section 4.05)

Upon receipt of the accusation the Worshipful Master takes the following actions.

If appropriate, the Worshipful Master shall appoint a committee to endeavor to effect a reconciliation of the Brothers at variance, and if successful, they shall obtain from the accuser written withdrawal of the accusation and present the same with their report to the Worshipful Master who shall then consider the matter closed.

If Reconciliation Cannot be Effected. (Section 4.05)

The Worshipful Master shall refer the accusation to the Chairman of the Grand Lodge Committee on Security who will appoint a team from members of the Committee to investigate the accusations.

Step 3 – The Investigative Team.

The investigative team will determine whether a Masonic offense occurred and report its findings in writing to the Worshipful Master. If it is determined that no offense occurred, the Worshipful Master will consider the matter closed.

Upon report that a Masonic offense occurred, the investigative team will return appropriately worded charges and specifications to the Worshipful Master.

The Worshipful Master shall present the charges to the Lodge at the first stated communication held after delivery to him; the charges shall be entered into the minutes of that communication and shall not be withdrawn except at a stated communication of the Lodge by unanimous ballot.

A Brother Under Charges Cannot Act as Worshipful Master or Officer. (Section 4.06)

Step 4 – Charges to be Transmitted to the Grand Master. (Section 4.07)

The Secretary of the Lodge shall within **(10) days** after the charges were entered in the minutes **(1)** transmit under Lodge seal to the District Deputy Grand Master (**DDGM**) of the district in which the Lodge is located the charges and specifications as prepared by the Committee on Security, and **(2)** Notify the accused **in writing** and any other Lodge which has jurisdiction that charges have been prepared.

The **DDGM** shall within **(10) days** after receiving the charges and specifications, develop a synopsis of the case, add his own knowledge, if any, of the circumstances causing the charges to be made, state whether he has personal interest in the case or is related to the accused or accuser, and forward all material to the Grand Master, along with his recommendation on whether a Masonic trial should be held.

If the Grand Master determines there is inadequate basis for a Masonic trial, he will instruct the **DDGM** to inform the Secretary of the Lodge

involved of his decision. **The Secretary** shall reflect the Grand Master's determination **on the margin of the minutes where the charges were entered**. No further action shall be taken by the accused or accuser. If the Grand Master deems a trial to be warranted, he will return the case materials, charges and other materials to the **DDGM** and direct him to from a trial commission.

Waiver of Trial. (Section 4.07(a))

A Brother may plead guilty to a Masonic offense, agree to waive trial, and accept the penalty imposed by the Grand Master. **Such request must be made in writing and presented to the Grand Master, through the DDGM, with his recommendation.** The Grand Master may, at his discretion, honor the request and impose a penalty or order the DDGM to proceed with a Masonic trial.

IV. THE TRIAL STAGE

Step 1 – Trial Commission to be formed to Conduct a Masonic Trial. (Section 4.08)

If the Grand Master deems a trial is warranted, he returns the case materials, charges and other materials to the **DDGM** for the district in question or such other district in which he determines the charges are to be filed.

Step 2 – Selection of the Trial Commission Chairman. (Section 4.08)

The Grand Master will send copies of the case materials, charges and other materials to the **Grand**

Lodge Committee on Masonic Trials and direct them to appoint a chairman for the upcoming trial.

Step 3 – DDGM Forms Trial Commission. (Section 4.08)

The Grand Master then directs the **DDGM** for the district in question to form the **Trial Commission, consisting of four (4) members, who shall be Past Worshipful Masters, Past District Deputy Grand Masters, or Past Grand Masters** from any district within the Commonwealth of Virginia, who will serve with the **Chairman** as a five-member Trial Commission. **Three members present including the Chairman shall constitute a quorum.** No one shall be appointed to the Commission who is a member of the Lodge in which the charges originated, or a relative of any interested party.

Step 4 – Authority of Trial Commission Chairman to Summon Witnesses, Set Time, Date and Location. (Section 4.08)

The **Trial Commission Chairman shall have the authority to summon all witnesses and shall set the date and time for the hearings. All hearings will take place in the conference room of the office of the Grand Lodge of Virginia in Richmond or such other location as the Grand Master may designate.**

Step 5 – Right to Representation at Trial. (Section 4.08)

The Lodge and accused **may** each designate a Master Mason in good standing to represent them at

the trial but **without expense to the Grand Lodge**. The **accused** and designated **Lodge** representative shall be served with a notice of the time and place of the trial at least ten (10) days beforehand, and such notice shall be served as a summons is served.

Step 6 - Summons, How Signed and Sealed and How and by Whom Served. (Sections 4.09 and 4.10)

A summons must be **signed by the Secretary, with the seal of the Lodge attached**, and must set out a reason therefore. A summons by a **Trial Commission signed by the Chairman thereof, shall have the same authority and effect.**

A summons shall be served by the Tiler or by a **Mason designated by the Trial Commission Chairman** by delivering a **copy** to the accused in person, or if he cannot be found, by leaving a **copy** at his last known address with some adult member of his family. A summons should be returned **ten (10) days before the trial date** with an endorsement of time and manner of service, or a statement of the reason for failure to serve.

A summons issued by the Trial Commission Chairman to a witness and mailed to the last known address by registered mail, with return receipt, shall be equivalent to personal service. Electronic notice to a witness, acknowledged by the receipt, shall constitute valid service.

Step 7 – The Commission to be Admonished. (Section 4.11)

The Trial Commission, before entering into a trial, shall be admonished by the **DDGM** or by the **Grand Master** to conduct the trial to the end that Masonic justice prevail.

Step 8 – Who is to be Admitted and Testify. (Section 4.12)

All trials shall be tiled and attended by such persons as the Commission may determine.

No Master Mason shall be sworn. All other witnesses shall be sworn by the Trial Commission Chairman; or they may affirm. All witnesses shall be examined separately and apart, unless the Commission should otherwise order.

Step 9 – Upon Confession of Guilt. (Section 4.13)

Should the accused be present and enter a guilty plea or a confession of guilt, the prosecution has the right to present evidence on the issue of punishment.

The confession shall be made a matter of record and the Commission shall immediately determine by majority vote the measure of punishment. **All persons not members of the Commission are excluded when the question of punishment is considered.**

Step 10 - The Commission to Report. (Section 4.14)

After all evidence is given, and **both parties have been afforded a reasonable opportunity to argue their cases**, the Commission shall retire and

consult among themselves and pronounce judgment as a **majority** of those present deem proper.

Step 11 – Trial Commission Findings. (Section 4.14)

The Commission's Chairman Shall within **fifteen (15) days** communicate its findings in writing to the Lodge where charges originated, to the accused and accuser and send an information copy to the Lodge's **DDGM as well as to the DDGM** in whose district the charges were tried, if the Grand Master has designated a particular district. At the same time, he shall forward to the Grand Secretary's office all trial records, papers, and evidence (reduced to writing, if proper to be written) concerning the case for permanent retention.

V. THE POST TRIAL AND APPEAL STAGE

Step 1 - How an Appeal May be Taken. (Section 4.15)

After the Lodge receives a report from the Trial Commission, it shall notify the accused and accuser, **and said judgment shall be recorded in the Lodge record at the expiration of sixty (60) days after said report is made in the Lodge**, provided no appeal has been taken, and said judgment shall be enforced unless the accused or accuser, as hereinafter provided, appeal to the Grand Master.

Notice of appeal shall be given to the Lodge in writing by the accused or accuser **within sixty (60) days** after the communication of findings by the Commission's Chairman, and such notice shall be

entered in the minute book at the meeting when the same is received.

The notice of appeal and the judgment of the Trial Commission shall be forwarded through the **DDGM** to the Grand Master. The Grand Secretary shall also be notified, and he shall forward a certified copy of all trial records and papers concerning the case, including the evidence reduced to writing, to the Grand Master who is authorized and empowered to make a final decision.

If the Grand Master refers the appeal to the Committee on Appeals, action by the Committee shall be final when its report is made to and approved by the Grand Lodge.

The Grand Secretary shall promptly notify the Lodge and the accused of the action of the Grand Master, and the Secretary of the Lodge shall enter upon the Lodge minutes the notification of the Grand Secretary.

Such necessary expenses incident to the trial as may be approved by the Grand Master on the recommendation of the DDGM shall be paid out of the funds of the Grand Lodge.

Step 2 - When Trial May be Reopened. (Section 4.16)

In any case where the accused shows to the DDGM or Grand Master within **sixty (60) days** after learning of his conviction that he did not receive such summons, or proper notice thereof, in time to be present at trial, or was too ill to be present, such trial may be reopened and retried.

Step 3 - Suspension for Refusal to Receive a Reprimand. (Section 4.17)

The penalty of reprimand shall be administered by the Worshipful Master of the Lodge in which charges originated, or by some Brother designated by him for that purpose.

If the accused, after being duly summoned, fails to present himself to receive the reprimand or make satisfactory excuse for his non-attendance, **he shall be then and there suspended and reported as such to the Grand Lodge.**

Step 4 - Status of the Accused Pending Appeal. (Section 4.18)

The status of the accused, pending an appeal, shall be that of a Master Mason under charges. He shall be reported as a member, but **he shall not have the right to attend or visit any Lodge pending an appeal from suspension or expulsion.** When a member is suspended or expelled and such judgment is reversed upon appeal, such reversal shall have the effect of restoring the accused's rights.

Step 5 - Record of "Not Guilty." (Section 4.19)

When it has been finally determined that a Brother is "Not Guilty" of the charge, **a record of the fact shall be made by the Secretary of the Lodge on the margin of the minute book where the record of the accusation was entered.**

If the accuser notes no appeal, the "Not Guilty" verdict shall be considered final, and the accused shall not be subjected to further trial or review by any Mason or Masonic body.

VI. PENALTIES

A. Reprimand; How Administered. (Section 4.20)

The penalty of reprimand shall be administered in open Lodge at a stated communication.

B. Suspension For Un-Masonic Conduct Must be for Indefinite Time. (Section 4.21)

C. Effect of Suspensions and Expulsions For Un-Masonic Conduct. (Section 4.22)

All suspensions and expulsions involve absolute exclusion from all rights and benefits of Masonry throughout the world.

D. Suspensions and Expulsions For Un-Masonic Conduct Must be Immediately Communicated to the Grand Secretary. (Section 4.23)

VII. Reinstatement

A. To What Lodge Application for Reinstatement Should be Made. (Section 4.24)

The Lodge in which the punishment was first imposed, so long as it continues to be a working Lodge. In cases where the penalty was imposed by the Grand Master, the Grand Master shall determine and notify the respective Lodge(s) which Lodge shall have jurisdiction to entertain the application for reinstatement.

B. Application for Reinstatement; When, How and After What Time Made; When and How Frequently Application Can be Renewed. (Section 4.25)

All applications for reinstatement **must be made at a stated communication of the Lodge**. A Mason suspended or expelled for **un-Masonic conduct shall make a written application for reinstatement; a Mason suspended for un-Masonic conduct cannot apply** for reinstatement until after the expiration of **six (6) months** from the date of his suspension, and cannot apply again until the expiration of **six (6) months**.

A Mason expelled for un-Masonic conduct shall not apply for reinstatement until the expiration of **twelve (12) months** from the date of his expulsion, and **cannot apply again** until the expiration of **twelve (12) months**.

C. Individuals expelled for conviction of a felony shall not be eligible for reelection for membership in any Lodge so long as the conviction shall remain in effect. If the expelled Mason receives an absolute pardon or is granted a Writ of Actual Innocence by the Supreme Court of Virginia with his civil rights restored, he shall be eligible to petition for reelection.

D. Proceedings Upon Such Application; Application to be Read and Noted on Record, to Lie Over, and Notice to be given. (Section 4.26)

The Worshipful Master shall direct such application to be read audibly and noted upon the record and shall order notice to be given to all the members of the Lodge that the application has been presented and laid over for consideration.

E. When Such Application May Be Considered; Every Member to Vote Unless Excused by Unanimous Vote. (Section 4.27)

At any stated communication thereafter, of which the members shall be duly notified, the application may be considered and every member present, unless excused by unanimous consent of the Lodge, shall be required to vote.

F. Unanimous Vote Necessary to Reinstate Expelled or Suspended Mason. (Section 4.28 and Section 4.29)

If the applicant petitions for restoration to membership and reinstatement, the Worshipful Master may order a single ballot thereon. A unanimous ballot is required.

G. A Mason Suspended or Expelled by a Trial Commission May Present Application for Reinstatement to DDGM. (Section 4.30)

H. To What Lodge DDGM May Refer Such Application, and its Jurisdiction in the Premises. (Section 4.31)

The DDGM shall refer the application to the Lodge of which the applicant was a member when he was suspended or expelled, or if the Lodge be suspended or extinct, to some working Lodge, which shall have full jurisdiction.

I. If Application is Rejected, Applicant May Appeal to the Grand Lodge. (Section 4.32)

If the application for reinstatement to the rights and benefits of Masonry be rejected, the applicant

shall have the right of appeal through the DDGM to the Grand Lodge.

VIII. APPENDIX

Sample Record Of Trial

The record of trial should be bound at the top and should have a cover giving the name of the prosecuting Lodge, the name of the accused, and the date of the trial. It is prepared in triplicate, including the transcript of testimony in the event an appeal is filed. If no appeal is filed, the record should be forwarded to the Grand Secretary. Tapes may be used in lieu of a written transcript.

The record must contain the following items:

- A — Cover Sheet
- B — Copy of Accusation
- C — Copy of Charges
- D — Notice of Charges Prepared
- E — Copy of Letter Appointing Commission
- F — Copy of District Deputy Grand Master's Admonition to Commission
- G — Copy of Transcript of Evidence (or Tapes)
- H — Copy of Verdict of Commission
- I — Copy of Notice of Verdict by Secretary to Accused
- J — Notice of Appeal
- K — Reprimand

The following pages offer a guide to a record of trial, assembled in proper order. (Parenthetical entries should be omitted.)

A. COVER SHEET



**MASONIC TRIAL
IN THE CASE OF**

_____ Lodge No. _____
Located at _____, Virginia.

VS.

member of _____,
Lodge No. _____
Located at _____, Virginia.

Heard in the Boardroom of the
Grand Lodge of Virginia, A.F & A.M.
[date], _____
Commencing at _____ a.m.

B. ACCUSATION

Month/Day/Year

Worshipful Master

_____ Lodge No. _____
 Some Town, Virginia

Dear Worshipful Sir:

I accuse Brother A. B. of having unlawful carnal communication with my wife, [name], on the night of [Month/Day/Year], at the XYZ Motel Some Town, Virginia. The incident was witnessed by Brother C. D., 1234 View Avenue, Some Town, Virginia, a police officer called to the premises by the manager. I wish charges to be preferred against Brother A. B.

Sincerely and fraternally,

E. F.

_____ Lodge No. _____
 3421 View Avenue
 Some Town, Virginia [zip code]

C. CHARGES and SPECIFICATIONS

(NOTE: When an accusation has been processed in a Lodge and reconciliation cannot be effected, the Worshipful Master refers it to the Grand Lodge Committee on Security. If after appropriate investigation that Committee finds an offense has occurred, it will return appropriately worded charges and specifications to the Worshipful Master. A sample of what they might return is set forth below.)

Month, Day, Year

TO THE WORSHIPFUL MASTER, WARDENS,
AND BRETHREN OF

_____ Lodge No. _____ A.F. & A.M.

Brother A. B., a member of
_____ Lodge No. _____, A.F. & A.M.,
Some Town, Virginia, is hereby charged with the
following Masonic offense:

CHARGE: VIOLATION OF SECTION 4.01,
METHODICAL DIGEST OF THE GRAND
LODGE OF VIRGINIA.

SPECIFICATION: In that Brother A. B., a member
of _____ Lodge No. _____, Some Town,
Virginia, did at the XYZ Motel, Some Town,
Virginia, on or about Month, Day, Year, have
unlawful carnal communication with Mrs. [Name] the
wife of E. F., a Master Mason, knowing her to be
such.

/s/ Charles Smith, PDDGM, Chairman
Grand Lodge Committee on Security

D. NOTICE OF CHARGES PREPARED

(NOTE: Per Section 4.07, within 10 days of charges being presented in the Lodge, the Secretary shall "... notify in writing the accused and any other Lodge which has jurisdiction, that charges have been prepared." There may not be another Lodge to notify, but the form below should suffice.)

To: Bro. A. B.

And

_____ Lodge No. ____, A.F. & A.M.

Take notice that charges against Bro. A. B. of a Masonic offense have been presented in _____ Lodge No. ____, A.F. & A.M. on (date). A copy of said charges and specifications, if applicable is attached hereto.

/s/ [NAME]

Secretary, _____ Lodge No. ____, A.F. & A.M.
 _____ (date).

**E. LETTER OF APPOINTMENT
OF COMMISSIONERS**

Month, Day, Year

TO THE BRETHREN NAMED HEREIN:

Pursuant to the authority vested in me by Section 4.08 of the Methodical Digest of the Grand Lodge of Virginia, A.F. & A.M., you are hereby appointed as Members of a Trial Commission for the trial of Brother A. B., a member of _____ Lodge No. _____, located at _____, Virginia, on charges of un-Masonic conduct. This trial will be conducted as soon as practicable, and the Trial Chairman will notify you of the date and time of its initial session.

MEMBERS

Worshipful Brother O. P., _____ Lodge No. ____

Worshipful Brother Q. R., _____ Lodge No. ____

Worshipful Brother S. T., _____ Lodge No. ____

Worshipful Brother U. V., _____ Lodge No. ____

Prior to meeting, you should study the provisions of the Methodical Digest and the Manual for Masonic Trials.

Sincerely and fraternally,

[Your Name]

District Deputy Grand Master

_____ Masonic District

F. DISTRICT DEPUTY GRAND MASTER'S ADMONITION TO COMMISSION

Month, Day, Year

My Brethren, you are about to commence one of the most serious duties that a Mason is ever called on to perform—that of judging a Brother Mason. Before you begin this serious and solemn duty, I must admonish and charge you with certain matters.

First, this trial must be conducted in accordance with the laws of the Grand Lodge of Virginia, and you must not permit any legal procedure that is not in accord with those laws. Your Chairman is vested with the authority of a judge, and he will rule and govern the procedure of the trial and the taking of evidence to the end that justice may prevail. Masonic witnesses for the accused must be summoned by the Commission upon the request of the accused or his representative.

Second, it is not necessary to swear any Master Mason who shall give evidence in this case, but every profane must be sworn by the Trial Commission Chairman as prescribed by the Methodical Digest. Neither the Lodge nor the accused may be represented by anyone who is not a Master Mason, affiliated with a regular Lodge.

Third, the accuser and the accused, together with their representatives, have a right to be present during the period in which the Commission is hearing evidence in the case. During closed sessions and deliberations, everyone will be excluded while the Commission reaches its verdict.

Fourth, the Commission will cause a verbatim record to be made of the evidence presented and arguments made before it, or so much thereof which may properly be recorded, have the same transcribed and forward the transcript, together with three copies of the Commission's findings and sentence, to the District Deputy Grand Master. If the verdict is not guilty, or if there is to be no appeal, the evidence still must be transcribed, and three copies must likewise be furnished.

Fifth, I admonish and charge each of you to remember that every question has two sides and that your duty to the Fraternity will be fully discharged only when you have reached a verdict that contains a full measure of justice to the Institution of Freemasonry in general, to the Lodge that brought the charges, and to the accused. You have the specific duty to conduct this trial to the end that Masonic justice will prevail.

When you have reached your verdict, communicate it in the manner and form indicated in the Methodical Digest and this admonition.

[Your Name]
District Deputy Grand Master
_____Masonic District

G. TRANSCRIPT OF EVIDENCE

Brother C. D., a member of _____
Lodge No. _____, was called as a witness and
testified as follows:

Q. Your name and Lodge?

A.

Q. Are you married to Marie D.?

A. Yes.

Q. Etc.

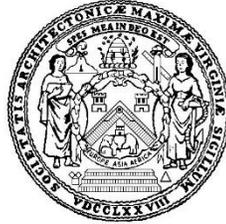
Ms. E. F. was called as a witness, was sworn by
the Trial Chairman, and testified as follows:

Q. Your name and address?

A.

*(The transcript continues until all the evidence for
both sides has been recorded in verbatim form.)*

H. VERDICT OF COMMISSION



Month, Day, Year

We, the Trial Commission appointed to hear the case of _____ Lodge No. _____ versus Brother A. B., find the accused guilty as charged and fix his punishment as (reprimand) expulsion (suspension) from the Fraternity.

/s/ _____
Chairman

/s/ _____
Member

/s/ _____
Member

/s/ _____
Member

/s/ _____
Member

**I. NOTICE OF VERDICT BY LODGE
TO ACCUSED AND ACCUSER**

Month, Day, Year

Brother A. B.
123 Elm Street
Some Town, Virginia [zip code]

Brother E.F.
3421 View Avenue
Some Town, Virginia [zip code]

Dear Brother A B:

This is to notify you officially that on [Month, Day, Year], the Trial Commission in the matter of _____ Lodge No. _____ has notified this Lodge that Bro. A. B. was found guilty of un-Masonic conduct and sentenced to expulsion from the Fraternity.

If there is no appeal of that finding it becomes final sixty days after that report to the Lodge.

Sincerely and fraternally,

Lodge No. _____

By: /s/ [name]

Secretary

**J. NOTICE OF APPEAL FROM
ACCUSED OR ACCUSER**

Brother A. B.
123 Elm Street
Some Town, Virginia
Month, Day, Year

Secretary

_____ Lodge No. _____
Some Town, Virginia [zip code]

Dear Worshipful Sir:

I wish to appeal the verdict of the Trial Commission on Month, Day, Year. This appeal is being filed within the sixty-day period, after said Judgement was recorded in the Lodge record.

Sincerely and fraternally,
/s/ A. B.

K. REPRIMAND

Brother A. B. you have violated your Master Mason's most solemn obligation. You have been found guilty of this very serious offense by a Trial Commission. All Master Masons are expected and required to abide by their obligation. No power on earth has the authority to free a Master Mason from his obligation.

WHEREAS, you have apologized for the conduct in question, and

WHEREAS, you have given your solemn word this type of conduct will not occur again, and

WHEREAS, our obligation requires us to whisper good counsel in a Brother's ear, admonish him of his error and aid a reformation,

NOW, THEREFORE, you are accordingly reprimanded and I, _____, Worshipful Master, do hereby order this reprimand to be made a part of the minutes and that you be seriously admonished that any further such violation could result in your suspension from the rights and benefits of, and membership in, any Masonic Lodge.

/s/ [name]
Worshipful Master

NOTES

