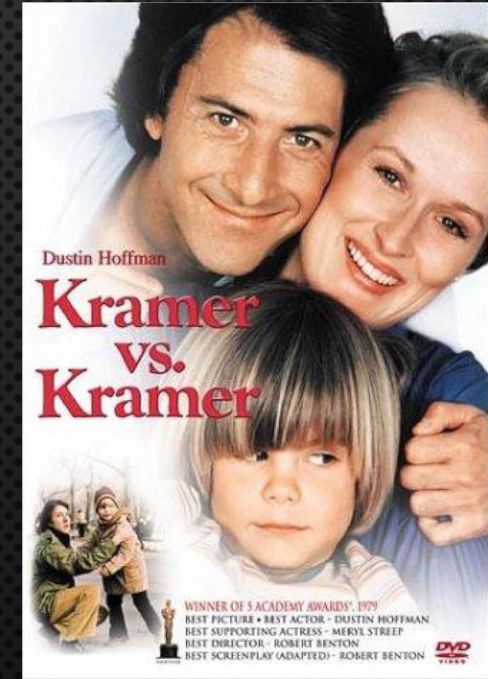
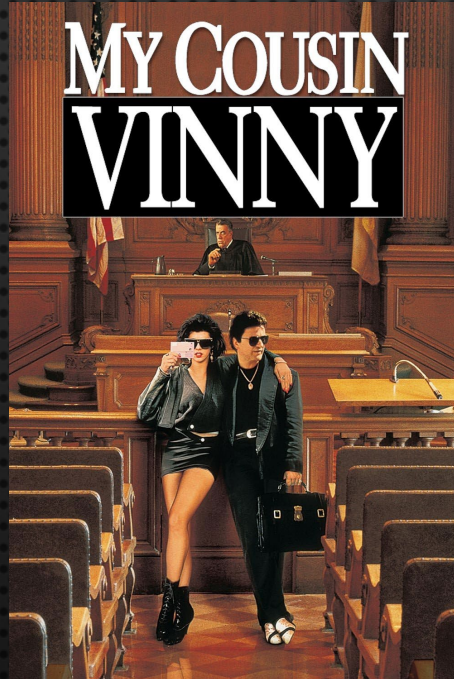


STAUNTON JUVENILE & DOMESTIC RELATIONS DISTRICT COURT

CLERK – COLIN CLARK

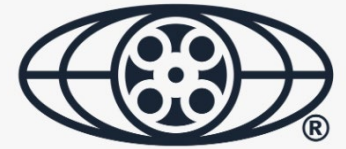
REAL COURT VS. REEL COURT



RAISE YOUR HAND IF YOU'VE SEEN AT LEAST ONE OF THESE MOVIES.

NA

NOT AN ATTORNEY



**CLERKS AND DEPUTY CLERKS ARE NOT
LAWYERS AND CANNOT GIVE LEGAL ADVICE.**

JUVENILE & DOMESTIC RELATIONS (J&DR) COURT

- SERVES **STAUNTON CITY**.
 - AUGUSTA COUNTY AND WAYNESBORO HAVE THEIR OWN J&DR COURTS.
- HANDLES FAMILY, YOUTH, AND HOUSEHOLD CASES.
- FOCUS: **SAFETY, STABILITY, AND ACCOUNTABILITY**, NOT PUNISHMENT.



CITIZEN TAKEAWAY: THIS COURT SOLVES PROBLEMS THROUGH COLLABORATION, NOT CONFRONTATION

WE'RE MOVING!



THE J&DR COURT HAS PREVIOUSLY OPERATED FROM THE DISTRICT COURT BUILDING AT 6 E. JOHNSON STREET.



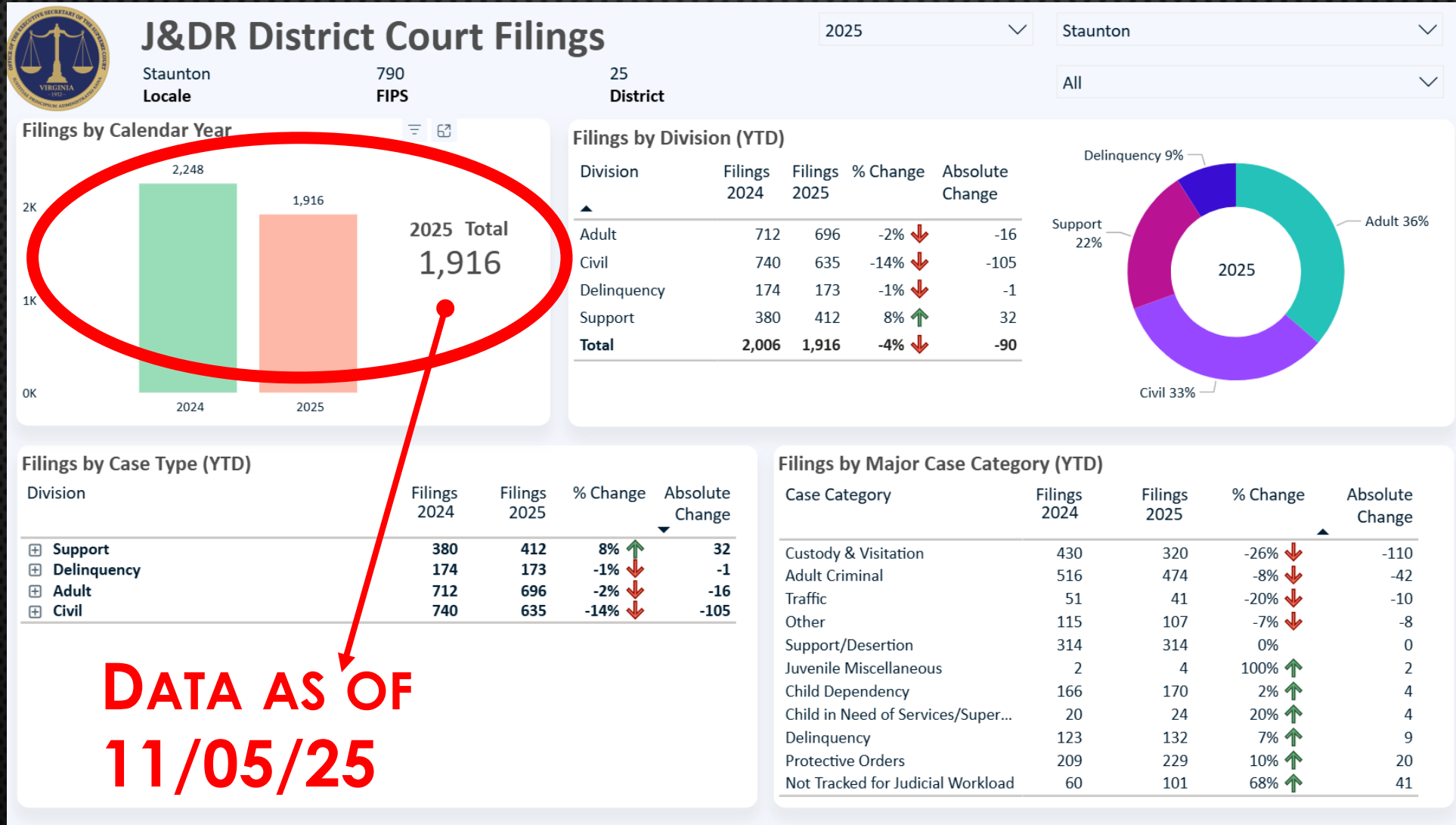
BEGINNING **12/15/25**, THE NEW STAUNTON J&DR COURTHOUSE AT **2020 WEST BEVERLEY STREET.**

SPECIAL THANKS

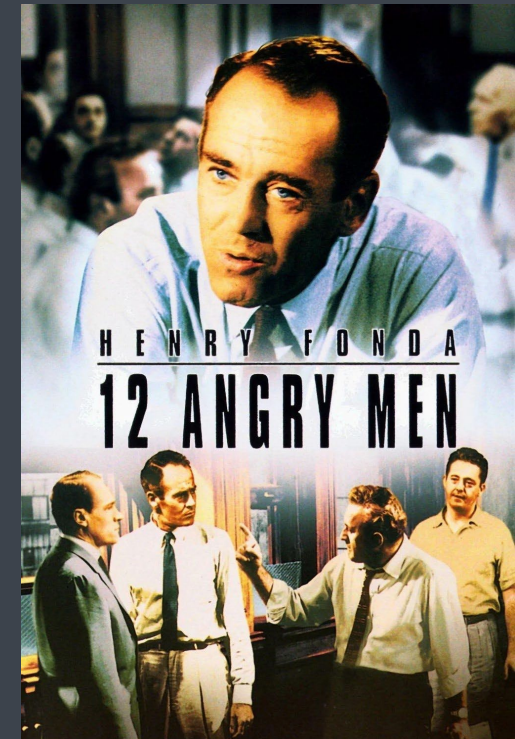
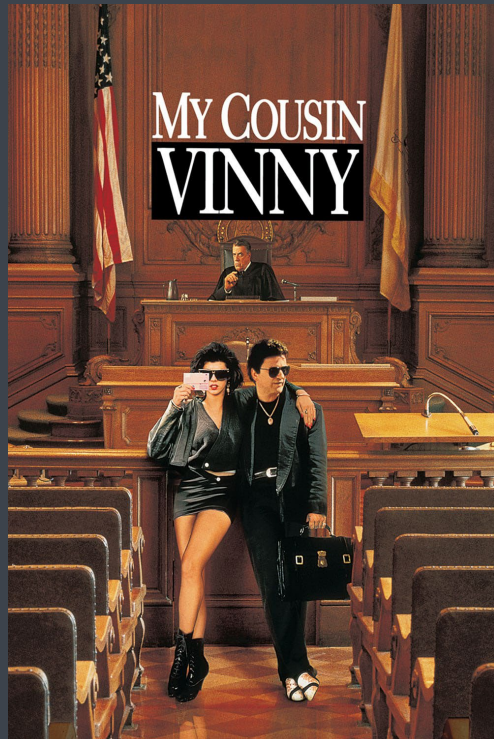
TO THE CITY, THE SHERIFF'S DEPT., & ALL THOSE THAT HELPED MAKE THIS NEW BUILDING HAPPEN.

CITIZEN TAKEAWAY: SAME JUDGES, SAME STAFF, BETTER FACILITY FOR CITIZENS AND FAMILIES.

BUSINESS BUSINESS, NUMBERS NUMBERS



CITIZEN TAKEAWAY: IF YOU ARE INTERESTED IN THIS TYPE OF DATA, IT IS PUBLICLY AVAILABLE ON OUR WEBSITE AT [VACOURTS.GOV](https://vacourts.gov)



COURT ROLES AND STRUCTURE

MY COUSIN VINNY: WHO'S IN THE ROOM

- **JUDGE:** LEADS THE HEARING AND MAKES THE DECISION.
- **CLERK OR DEPUTY CLERK:** FILES CASES, KEEPS RECORDS, ISSUES SUMMONS.
- **SHERIFF OR DEPUTY SHERIFF:** COURT SECURITY AND SERVES AS BAILIFF.
- **DEFENSE COUNSEL/PUBLIC DEFENDER:** REPRESENTS THE ACCUSED.
- **COMMONWEALTH'S ATTORNEY:** REPRESENTS THE COMMONWEALTH IN CRIMINAL CASES.
 - ON TV OFTEN CALLED THE DISTRICT ATTORNEY.
- **APPOINTED COUNSEL:** PROVIDED TO PARENTS IN ABUSE/NEGLECT CASES.
- **DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES (DSS):** FILES CHILD SAFETY AND FOSTER CARE PETITIONS.
- **COURT SERVICES UNIT:** HANDLES PETITION FILING (BOTH CIVIL AND DELINQUENCY) AND JUVENILE PROBATION.
- **GUARDIAN AD LITEM (GAL):** ATTORNEY APPOINTED BY THE JUDGE FOR THE CHILD'S BEST INTERESTS.



MY COUSIN VINNY: WHO'S IN THE ROOM

JUDGE

CLERK

BAILIFF

SHERIFF

COMMONWEALTH
ATTORNEY

DEFENSE
COUNCIL

DEFENDANT



A FEW GOOD MEN: A FEW GOOD TIPS

- **DECORUM:
DON'T BE JACK NICHOLSON**
 - BE ON TIME
 - NO INTERRUPTIONS
 - LEAVE PHONES &
SMARTWATCHES IN YOUR CAR
 - DRESS APPROPRIATELY
 - REFER TO THE JUDGE AS "YOUR
HONOR."



CITIZEN TAKEAWAY: ALL VIRGINIA COURTROOMS FOLLOW THE SAME RULES. RESPECT THE PROCESS AND YOU'LL BE HEARD.

A FEW GOOD MEN: A FEW MORE GOOD TIPS

- **PROCEDURE:** PROPER FILING AND SERVICE REQUIRED; WITNESSES MAY BE SEQUESTERED.
- **EVIDENCE:** DOCUMENTS AND PHOTOS MUST BE PRESENTED IN OPEN COURT.
- **OBJECTIONS:** LAWYERS STATE THEM BRIEFLY; JUDGES RULE WITHOUT DRAMA.
- **CONFIDENTIALITY:** J&DR HEARINGS ARE CLOSED TO PROTECT THE INTERESTS OF MINORS.
- **NO “EX PARTE” CONTACT:** NO PRIVATE COMMUNICATION WITH THE JUDGE OUTSIDE THE HEARING.



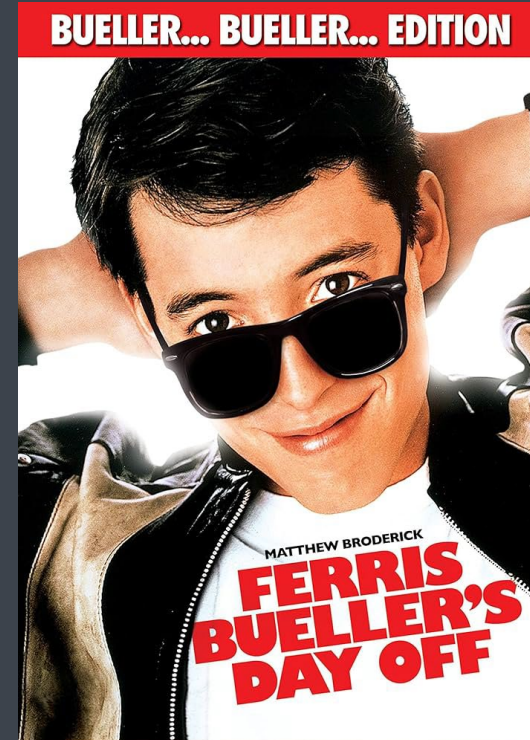
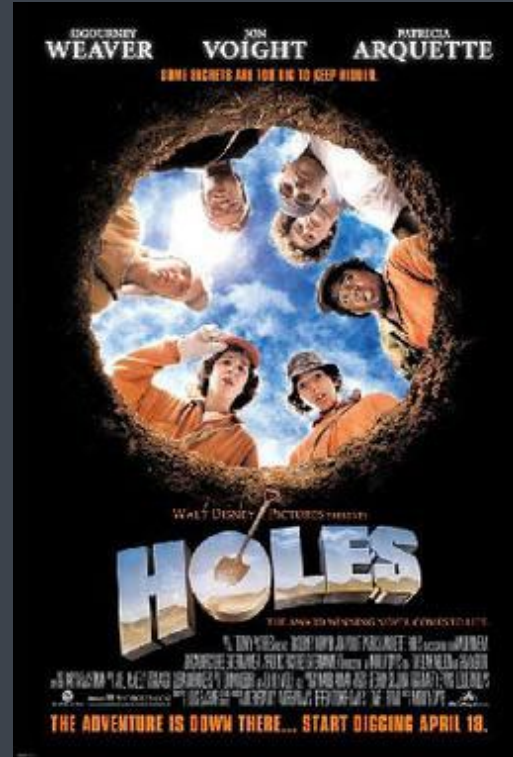
CITIZEN TAKEAWAY: ALL VIRGINIA COURTROOMS FOLLOW THE SAME RULES. RESPECT THE PROCESS AND YOU’LL BE HEARD.

12 ANGRY MEN: JUDGES, NOT JURIES

- **NO JURY TRIALS** IN J&DR
- IF YOU COME TO COURT FOR **CUSTODY OR SUPPORT**, YOU'LL SPEAK DIRECTLY TO A JUDGE.
- **APPEALS** ARE HEARD BY THE CIRCUIT COURT FOR A NEW HEARING.
- CITIZENS MAY ATTEND ONLY IF THEY ARE DIRECTLY INVOLVED.



CITIZEN TAKEAWAY: J&DR COURT IS QUIETER AND FASTER THAN WHAT YOU SEE IN MOVIES, BUT EVERY VOICE STILL GETS HEARD.



JUVENILE CASES CHINS & DELINQUENCY

FERRIS BUELLER'S DAY OFF: CHINS CASES

- FERRIS BUELLER HAD A GREAT DAY OFF BUT WOULD BE AT J&DR ON MONDAY.
- CHINS MEANS **CHILD IN NEED OF SUPERVISION** OR **CHILD IN NEED OF SERVICES**.
- THESE ARE CIVIL, NOT CRIMINAL, CASES.
- THEY CAN BEGIN WHEN:
 - A STUDENT HAS REPEATED UNEXCUSED ABSENCES AND SCHOOL INTERVENTIONS HAVE NOT BEEN EFFECTIVE.
 - A PARENT OR COMMUNITY MEMBER FILES A PETITION.
- THE COURT WORKS WITH PARENTS & SCHOOL OFFICIALS TO RETURN THE JUVENILE TO AN EDUCATION PATH.



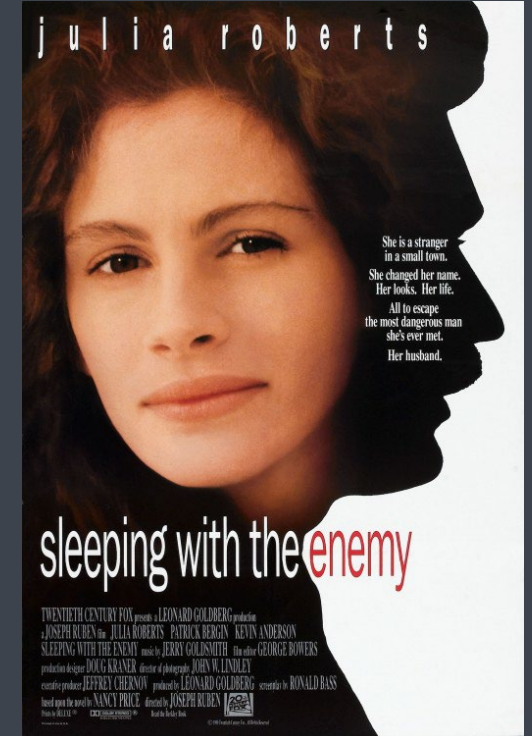
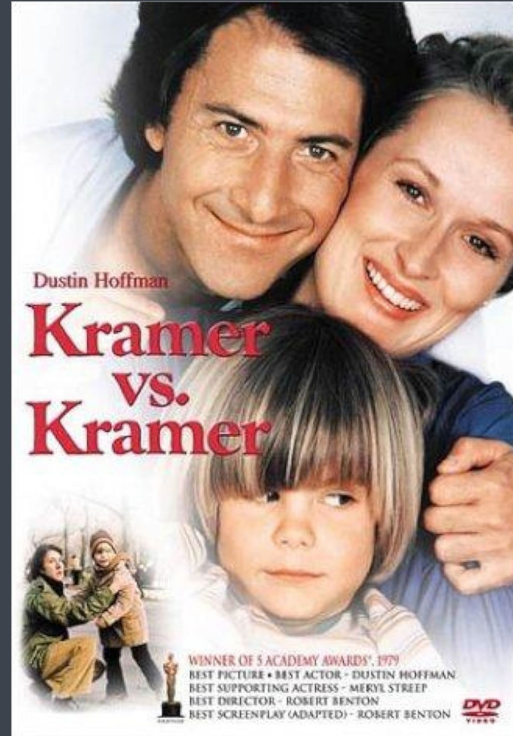
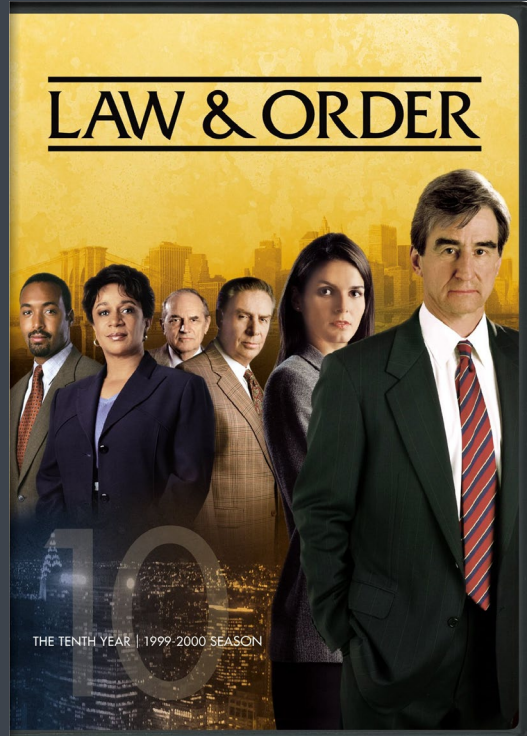
CITIZEN TAKEAWAY: CHINS CASES ARE ABOUT SUPPORT AND ACCOUNTABILITY — KEEPING KIDS CONNECTED TO EDUCATION.

HOLES: WHAT JUVENILE DELINQUENCY REALLY LOOKS LIKE

- JUVENILE DELINQUENCY REFERS TO **A YOUNG PERSON WHO HAS COMMITTED AN ACT THAT WOULD BE A CRIME FOR AN ADULT.**
- THE FOCUS IN J&DR COURT IS ON **REHABILITATION AND STRUCTURE.**
- MOST HEARINGS ARE **PRIVATE** AND INCLUDE FAMILY PARTICIPATION.
- JUDGES CAN ORDER (DEPENDING ON SEVERITY):
 - **COMMUNITY SERVICE OR RESTITUTION**
 - **COUNSELING OR EDUCATION PLANS**
 - **PROBATION THROUGH THE COURT SERVICES UNIT**
 - **TIME IN A JUVENILE DETENTION CENTER (NOT JAIL)**
- ONLY THE MOST SERIOUS CASES ARE TRANSFERRED TO CIRCUIT COURT FOR PROSECUTION AS ADULTS.



CITIZEN TAKEAWAY: JUVENILE CASES AIM TO HOLD JUVENILES ACCOUNTABLE AND PROVIDE TOOLS FOR CHANGE.



ADULT & FAMILY CASES

CRIMES, CUSTODY, VISITATION, FOSTER CARE, & PROTECTIVE ORDERS

LAW & ORDER: ADULT & FAMILY CRIMES

- IF **A CRIME INVOLVES A CHILD, FAMILY, OR HOUSEHOLD MEMBER**, IT IS TYPICALLY HEARD IN J&DR COURT
- EVEN THOUGH IT IS CALLED JUVENILE AND DOMESTIC RELATIONS COURT, MANY **ADULT CASES ARE HEARD HERE TOO.**
- SOME ADULT CRIMINAL CASES IN J&DR INCLUDE:
 - **DOMESTIC ASSAULT** BETWEEN FAMILY OR HOUSEHOLD MEMBERS
 - **SEXUAL BATTERY OR ABUSE** WHERE THE VICTIM IS A CHILD OR FAMILY MEMBER
 - **CONTRIBUTING TO THE DELINQUENCY OF A MINOR**
- CONVICTIONS CAN RESULT IN PROBATION, COUNSELING, OR JAIL.
- VICTIMS OFTEN WORK WITH LOCAL ADVOCATES SUCH AS THE NEW DIRECTIONS CENTER IN STAUNTON FOR SUPPORT.



CITIZEN TAKEAWAY: J&DR COURT HANDLES BOTH YOUTH AND ADULT CASES.

KRAMER VS. KRAMER: CUSTODY DECISIONS

- J&DR **COURT DECIDES CUSTODY BASED ON THE BEST INTERESTS OF THE CHILD** (VIRGINIA CODE § 20-124.3).
 - **MOTHERS DO NOT ALWAYS GET CUSTODY.**
- JUDGES WEIGH SEVERAL FACTORS, INCLUDING:
 - **EMOTIONAL BONDS AND STABILITY**
 - **PARENTAL COOPERATION AND COMMUNICATION**
 - **EACH PARENT'S ABILITY TO MEET THE CHILD'S NEEDS**
 - **THE CHILD'S AGE, SAFETY, AND HOME ENVIRONMENT**
- EVIDENCE MAY INCLUDE:
 - **SCHOOL RECORDS**
 - **TESTIMONY**
 - **GUARDIAN AD LITEM REPORTS**
- CUSTODY ORDERS CAN BE TEMPORARY AND REVIEWED LATER AS FAMILIES STABILIZE AND CHANGE.



CITIZEN TAKEAWAY: CUSTODY & VISITATION LAW IS GENDER NEUTRAL; JUDGES FOLLOW THE CHILD'S BEST INTERESTS.

THE SANTA CLAUSE: CHANGING CUSTODY & VISITATION

- LAURA TOSSES THE CUSTODY PAPERS INTO THE FIREPLACE AND WELCOMES SCOTT TO COME AND SEE CHARLIE ANY TIME THAT HE WANTS.
 - (IT DOESN'T WORK THAT WAY)
- CUSTODY AND VISITATION ORDERS CAN BE CHANGED THROUGH THE COURT WHEN CIRCUMSTANCES SHIFT.
- EITHER PARENT MAY MOTION FOR A REVIEW.
- **REASONS CUSTODY/VISITATION MIGHT CHANGE:**
 - A NEW JOB OR SCHEDULE
 - RELOCATION OR NEW SCHOOL NEEDS
 - COMPLETION OF TREATMENT OR COUNSELING
- **IT IS UP TO A JUDGE WHAT COUNTS AS A MATERIAL CHANGE.**



CITIZEN TAKEAWAY: ORDERS HAVE TO BE CHANGED WITH THE COURT; THEY CAN CHANGE JUST LIKE FAMILIES DO.

INSTANT FAMILY: FOSTER CARE AND DSS CASES

- THIS MOVIE FOLLOWS A FOSTER CARE AND ADOPTION CASE IN CALIFORNIA, NOT VIRGINIA.
- DSS BRINGS CASES TO THE J&DR COURT **WHEN A CHILD'S SAFETY IS AT RISK.**
- THE PROCESS FOCUSES ON STABILITY & PERMANENCY.
 - **GOAL 1: REUNIFICATION** — PARENTS COMPLETE SERVICES AND SHOW PROGRESS.
 - **GOAL 2: PERMANENCY** — IF REUNIFICATION FAILS, THE COURT MAY PURSUE ADOPTION OR GUARDIANSHIP.
- J&DR JUDGES REVIEW DSS PROGRESS REPORTS ON A REGULAR BASIS.
- ADOPTION PROCEEDINGS TAKE PLACE IN THE CIRCUIT COURT.



CITIZEN TAKEAWAY: THE COURT WORKS WITH PARENTS AND DSS TO PROVIDE A SAFE & PERMANENT HOME.

SLEEPING WITH THE ENEMY: PROTECTIVE ORDERS

- LAURA BURNEY, WHO IS TRAPPED IN A CONTROLLING AND ABUSIVE MARRIAGE, FAKES HER OWN DEATH DURING A STORM AT SEA.
 - (PLEASE DON'T DO THIS)
- VIRGINIA USES **PROTECTIVE ORDERS**, NOT RESTRAINING ORDERS.
- APPLIES TO FAMILY OR HOUSEHOLD MEMBERS ONLY IN THE J&DR COURT.
- **THREE TYPES OF PROTECTIVE ORDERS:**
 - **EMERGENCY PROTECTIVE ORDER** — LASTS ABOUT 3 DAYS
 - **PRELIMINARY PROTECTIVE ORDER** — LASTS ABOUT 15 DAYS
 - **FINAL PROTECTIVE ORDER** — LASTS UP TO 2 YEARS
- ORDERS CAN INCLUDE **PROPERTY, NO-CONTACT, AND FIREARM SURRENDER PROVISIONS.**
- FILED THROUGH A MAGISTRATE OR INTAKE OFFICER.
- IF A PROTECTIVE ORDER IS VIOLATED, **YOU CAN PURSUE CRIMINAL CHARGES**, AND THE PROTECTIVE ORDER CAN BE EXTENDED.



CITIZEN TAKEAWAY: THE PROCESS IS LOCAL, CONFIDENTIAL, AND FOCUSED ON SAFETY.

MYTH BUSTERS: WHAT PEOPLE GET WRONG ABOUT J&DR COURT

Myth	Reality
Every case has a jury.	J&DR hearings are judge-only.
Court is public.	Hearings are closed.
Mothers always get custody.	Custody law is gender-neutral; judges follow the child's best interests.
One hearing settles everything.	Most cases require review and follow-up.
"Restraining orders" exist in Virginia.	The correct term is Protective Order.
Custody and support are the same case.	Separate petitions, separate rulings.
Judges decide cases by emotion.	Decisions must follow law and evidence.
Missing child support means automatic jail.	Judges emphasize compliance before contempt.

CITIZEN TAKEAWAY: WHAT YOU'VE SEEN ON SCREEN MAKES GREAT DRAMA, BUT J&DR COURTS RUN ON STRUCTURE, FAIRNESS, AND LAW.



QUESTIONS?