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ATTORNEYS AT LAW

COURTROOM HIGHLIGHTS: PIGS & SLANDER

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Know a lawyer so good that he or she could win both sides of a single case? Abraham Lincoln was such a lawyer and Adkins vs Hines was such a case.

Adkins vs Hines involved 2 issues: slander and the stealing of pigs. Mr. Hines accused Mr. Adkins of stealing 5 sows and 5 hogs. Lincoln represented Hines while Stephen Douglas, Lincoln's eventual opponent in the 1860 presidential election, represented Adkins. Hines had been heard to slander Adkins, so Lincoln took a bold course in his argument, admitting, YES, Hines had accused Adkins of stealing pigs. But this was not slander, because Adkins was a pig thief! Douglas argued that it was impossible for Adkins to have stolen the pigs as he was visiting friends 20 miles away the day the pigs were stolen. But Douglas' argument was dismissed and Lincoln prevailed.

Due to Lincoln's persuasive argument, Adkins was then arrested and tried for being a pig thief. Adkins couldn't afford a lawyer so the court appointed one - ironically, Abraham Lincoln! During his defense, Lincoln used the same witness that Douglas had found, and proved that Adkins was indeed out of town the day of the alleged theft and could not possibly have stolen the pigs. Adkins was acquitted, making Lincoln the winner of both sides of a single case. Strange, but true.