

Parked against the Flow

In the following text there are a number of gaps. Read the text and write ONE word in each gap. The word you write must make sense in the text and be grammatically correct.

It started with a parking ticket. It could have ended with a parking ticket, and at most a \$42 fine. But as my wife said at the time: “Why should we pay this?”

She had parked very neatly, considering it was a big American van, and quite _____₁ from the minicar she was used to driving in London. Then she had _____₂ 25 cents in the meter for an hour’s _____₃. So why, 45 minutes _____₄, was the ticket fluttering under the wipers?

The issuing officer had ticked a box: “Parking against the flow.” An American acquaintance explained _____₅ us that in the United States it is against the law to park facing on-coming traffic. “God _____₆ why,” said our friend. “Of course, you can always appeal. But you won’t get off.”

Our first instinct _____₇ to pay it. But the ticket came on a bad day when we were short of _____₈, so we ticked the “not guilty” box and called the appeal number listed.

The day for our court appearance was _____₉ for the following Thursday. We were advised to be there at 10 am. “We’ll get to you as _____₁₀ as we can.”

A week to mount our defence. I have to say that my wife _____₁₁ an impressive legal mind. Our case seemed rock-solid. In the street where she had parked her van _____₁₂ was no indication about parking with the flow. Not _____₁₃ the booklet of New Jersey traffic regulations given to us



by the local library _____ anything at all about it. “Yeah, but
_____ knows that,” said our American expert. “You’ll get done.”

Thursday morning dawned, bright and cold. My wife had _____
entirely in black. “You’re gonna go down for twenty years, lady,” I cracked,
_____ the umpteenth time that week. Her smile was as wintry
_____ the weather.

We drove to the court-house and _____, this time *with* the flow.
The court-house at Montclair was satisfactory in almost every way, from the Stars
and _____ fluttering from the balcony to the two gigantic armed
New Jersey police officers in black uniforms who searched us for bombs.

Upstairs, the rest of the local low life was gathering. The day’s cases
_____ listed on the wall: *Failing to clear the snow. Leaving rubbish
in an alleyway.* We had brought our four-year-old daughter along, _____
school had suddenly been cancelled that day. She was solemnly checked
_____ weapons and bombs.

The courtroom could have been taken straight out _____ Perry
Mason or L.A. Law, with a long bench for the judge and that little box at the side
where the witness breaks down and _____ that he has lied.

“All rise.” Judge Booker swept into court, a distinguished black man in
_____ early fifties, trailing authority like a cloak. Malefactors were
dealt _____ in an impressive manner. “If you speak out of turn one



more _____ ,” the owner of the litter-strewn alleyway was warned,
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“it’s gonna cost you \$500.”

What was it “gonna” cost the lady with the parking ticket? We did not have to
_____ too long to find out. The clerk called my wife’s _____,
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and she took her place at the bench. We had rehearsed a little speech, but the public
prosecutor got in first. “This lady is from England, _____ Honor, and
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she didn’t understand our parking rules.”

Judge Booker paused. “Case dismissed. And welcome to Montclair.”