

# 8 Lies TV Tells You About Family Law Court Cases

THE  
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DIVORCE AND FAMILY LAW





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## 8 Lies TV Tells You About Family Law Court Cases

Most people have a lot of experience with court cases. The problem is that experience is not from ever being inside of a courtroom - it comes from watching Law and Order, Suits, The People's Court, or Judge Judy. Maybe they've even seen A Few Good Men. Their expectation for court cases - and maybe even lawyers in general - is entirely based on this.

Most people actually are only in a courtroom once or twice in their life. It is normally for a family law case - meaning something related to your family, like getting a divorce, determining child custody, or legally adopting your step-child. This experience can be shocking, since the real thing is so fundamentally different from what is like when seen on TV.

At The Grey Legal Group, we believe in setting expectations correctly. You should

be thoroughly prepared for what is actually about to happen, and not waiting to cut to commercial break. Here are our **8 lies that TV has told you about family law court cases** - and the truth behind them:

## **1. It takes about an hour.**

This is one of the most damaging lies when it comes to correctly setting expectations. Some people believe that the entire process of getting a divorce - talking to a lawyer, serving the papers, going to court can be done in about a week. They think the actual court case will take about an hour. The truth is that divorce cases can take years to be finalized, and court cases can take days.

Of course, there are ways to make it go quicker, especially when everyone is on board to get it done as fast as possible. Even in the best of cases, know that you will be in the courtroom for far longer than

an hour, and you will not get your divorce finalized within the week of deciding to get one.

## **2. No one talks to the other side.**

Some people are shocked to learn that their lawyer is frequently in communication with their ex's lawyer. The truth of the matter is that there is no way to get a divorce finished without talking to the other side. There are ways to do it where you won't have to talk much if at all to your ex - but even with that, you will spend time in the same room as them, your lawyer will be communicating with their lawyer, and you will frequently hear what they have to say through second-hand communication. Try to go in focusing on more succinct and clear communication, rather than entirely eliminating it.

## **3. You can do it by yourself.**

This is the most dangerous lie that television and film perpetuate. While it is technically legal to represent yourself in a court case, it should not be done. These cases are so compound and complex that they are difficult for young lawyers with degrees to keep track of, least of all someone who just read a bunch of articles online and decided to wing it. We have seen people not only lose their cases but make the consequences so much worse on themselves by deciding to do it on your own. You want the best outcome for your family, so make sure you ask for the best help.

#### **4. You can write a letter to the Judge nicely asking them to let you win.**

All these sorts of clever tricks that end up saving the day in fictional court cases are not based in reality. People come in with all sorts of ideas about the Judge, like being able to explain their case to them

directly outside of the courtroom in order to sway them - or maybe just sending them cupcakes. People also will come in with the idea that their Judge is operating on their own bias and will make a judgement based primarily on their own motive.

Real Judges are people who have been working with the law for decades. They are not easily swayed, and they have seen hundreds of court cases similar to yours before. They are in court to do their job, and to do it as well as humanly possible. They are primarily concerned with upholding the law to everyone's benefit, not satisfying any deep-held grudges of their own.

## **5. You can text, as long as it is underneath the table.**

You don't want to be seen texting during a court case. You shouldn't be sending messages to your ex or live tweeting the

proceedings. There are breaks built in where you can handle any emergency communication, but don't spend your time on your phone. Similarly, we don't recommend posting on social media about your divorce at all until it is finalized - and especially not about anything happening in an actual court case. Remember that anything you post can be used as evidence against you in the court case or be used by others to judge your character - even if your account is set to private.

## **6. Only the lawyer works for the law firm.**

Law firms are grand operations, most of which have more than one lawyer and lots of staff members who aren't lawyers. It takes a village to finish your case, so don't be shocked to see other members of your firm helping you out throughout the process. Your lawyer isn't alone in their office working day and night to get



everything done on their own. They are a part of a hard-working, well-functioning team.

## **7. It's the only way to get a divorce.**

Of course, going to court is not a mandatory part of the divorce process. Some divorces are uncontested, some use mediation, and some settle everything before court is even on the table. The decision is up to you and your ex, but know that there are many options to discuss beyond merely appealing a Judge to get a bigger share of whatever it is you want. Consider starting your process by talking to your lawyer about the options available to you and the different ways they can affect your case.

## **8. Someone is going to get dragged out of the courtroom screaming.**

Most court cases in fictional stories come

at the climax of the action, which means that something really dramatic will happen. Most of the time, someone will get dragged out of the courtroom screaming, or another character will burst open the doors with crucial information at the exact right moment, or a lawyer will catch a witness in a little white lie that ends up unraveling the whole thing.

If that's your expectation going in, prepare to be sorely disappointed. Most court cases run exactly according to plan, and are very similar to other cases all over the country. Don't count on anything saving or changing your case at the last minute. The work you put into determines what you get out - not a dramatic crescendo.

While we're at it, here's a bonus tip: it isn't necessarily going to be pouring rain and storming the day you file for divorce, and it might not be sunny and beautiful when you walk out of the courtroom victorious

at the end of the process. Don't take it personally.

For help with your real life family law court case, don't trust the TV. Trust The Grey Legal Group, who know that the law is not always black and white. Contact us to get help from professionals who have been in a real courtroom before. We will work to make sure your case is properly cared for and your expectations are based in reality. Take the first step towards independence by giving us a call at (951) 441-2738 today!



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