

Polly guilty  
conscience to make a  
point. polly



**ASSIGN  
BUSTER**

Polly Baker, a fictional character created by Benjamin Franklin, states the tragic double standards women face in the world by respectfully arguing from her perspective, as a specifically targeted victim. Polly Baker first attempts to commiserate her audience and establish credibility via ethos and pathos, stating " I am a poor unhappy woman." Polly opens the speech as such to later emphasize the cruelty she has undergone due to the court's unfair punishments. Polly Baker is perhaps the most reliable source for such a situation due to her constant court appearances. She recalls on her four previous visits to court in which she states she can no longer manage to feed her children while paying fines for lawyers and " sins". She does this slyly in hopes of softening the audience's hearts, it is a common tactic to mention children for sympathy in order to shift a point of view under such circumstances. Polly Baker is clearly attempting to leave the audience with a guilty conscience to make a point.

Polly Baker soon stops speaking of children and begins to argue the true reason she is in court, she boldly demands answers to her injustices. She states that what she does she does for God and the King, that she is summoning more royal subjects for him. Turning the tables on the court and making them question their own beliefs and loyalty. In doing so, I believe Mrs. Baker plants a seed of inquiries into the minds of those present. Polly Baker and the people of the court are cognizant of the conceiving of a child. It takes two beings, yet only one stands in the court to face the punishment and no one but Mrs. Baker says anything about it. The audience begs the question; Why?! But we are given no answer. I feel the people of the court

are weak for consecrating themselves by comparing their sins to that of Mrs. Baker's.

Polly Baker is not the woman she appears to be, she is cunning, witty and she knows her way around the court. Polly Baker has placed hints of religion strategically throughout her speech for she has adroitly crafted it to her audience. " God has been pleased to add his divine skill and admirable workmanship in the formation of their bodies," it is in God's plan that people bear children and Polly confirms she is doing just that, yet she is extradited from the church, shamed, and dragged to court? Mrs. Baker should be celebrated should she not? Her practices in premarital sex are not to be seen as a one way argument anymore, for Polly Baker presents to the court proof of their cruel double standard. Her first love wed her for her innocence, took it, impregnated her then left her abandoned and humiliated. But her former lover never reflected back on the event again. Instead, he thrived in life and climbed the social ladder, becoming Magistrate of the country. He faced no obstacles nor was he interrogated for his part in the crime, but Polly Baker returns to court on several occasions? She forces the judges to face facts they dare not face on their own, she does not allow courtroom courtesy to stop her from sarcastic remarks and extravagant hyperboles, in fact by using these she pushes the judges right off their high horses and brings them to eye level. If her former lover became Magistrate of the country whilst carrying this dark " sin" with him than surely some state judges could carry far more sins. Polly Baker unremorsefully calls out these men of power, because she feels they do not yet realize their foolishness. She points out that they have considered this a crime against God and she admits it so, but

refutes their disciplinary decisions " If mine, then, is a religious Offense, leave it, Gentlemen, to religious Punishment."

Polly Baker's argument is exceptionally valid and should leave the audience baffled by her boldness. Mrs. Baker's intent is easily spotted and served freshly to her intimidators. She presents valid arguments and makes successful attempts in both ethos and pathos. Her use of hyperboles, rhetorical questions and humor are meant to reminisce in the audience's mind long after the delivery of her great discourse. Benjamin Franklin captured the atrocious hardships of women flawlessly, his use of diction and syntax leaves the audience rendering that Polly Baker is a non-fictional character, rather than one of his aliases.