



VOLUME I  
----- FIELD MANUAL  
EDITION 2026  
----- CLASSIFIED:  
FOR ADVOCATES

▶ A FIELD MANUAL FOR LOCAL POWER

# The Local Advocacy Playbook

## A STREET FIGHTER'S CREED

*How a small team — three or four committed people — can change the lives of one hundred thousand of their neighbors.*

DEVELOPED BY TRAVIS SPENCER & MITCH VEXLER

### ▶ READER WARNING

Don't pay any advocacy group that is raising money non-stop — they won't deliver what you want or need. *Your own advocacy will teach you what you are capable of.*

18

BATTLE-TESTED  
RULES

10

DOCUMENTED  
WINS

3

STATES. 50  
FAR.

COMPILED FROM THE FIELD  
ERWIN · GODLEY · CONROE ·  
MARCO ISLAND  
MULTIPLE MUNICIPAL &  
REAL ESTATE LAWSUITS

## ▶ NAVIGATION

# *What you will learn.*

A method for fighting and winning at the local level — drawn from real campaigns in Tennessee, Texas, and elsewhere. Read it in order. Then use it.

<b>I</b>	<b>THE MINDSET</b>	<b>04</b>
	<i>Why local power is more accountable than it pretends to be</i>	
<b>II</b>	<b>THE EIGHTEEN RULES</b>	<b>05</b>
	<i>A complete system, organized into five operational groups</i>	
<b>III</b>	<b>THE PLAYBOOK IN ACTION</b>	<b>12</b>
	<i>Six case studies. Real fights. Documented outcomes.</i>	
<b>IV</b>	<b>YOUR FIRST NINETY DAYS</b>	<b>16</b>
	<i>A staged plan for advocates beginning their first campaign</i>	
<b>V</b>	<b>MISTAKES THAT WILL SINK YOU</b>	<b>17</b>
	<i>Six failure modes — and how to avoid each</i>	
<b>VI</b>	<b>THE CLOSING WORD</b>	<b>18</b>
	<i>A call to the next advocate</i>	

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## ▶ A LETTER TO THE READER

# *If you are reading this, you have been chosen.*

**T**his document exists for one reason: to teach you how to fight — and win — at the local level. It is not theory. Every rule in this playbook has been tested in real fights, in real towns, against real officials. Every accomplishment listed here came from following these rules. Some of us have been assaulted, slandered, and threatened for doing this work. We kept going. You can too.

If you are reading this, you are someone who could become an effective local advocate. That means you are willing to show up, willing to learn, and willing to be uncomfortable. The rest is technique — and technique can be taught.

*Three or four committed people, using the methods in this playbook, can change the lives of one hundred thousand of their neighbors. We have done it. We will show you how.*

## ▶ THE OPERATING PRINCIPLE



The methods in this manual work because the corruption they confront is not just local — it is national. The same patterns of fraud, the same official tactics, the same hiding-in-plain-sight repeat in town after town. **What works in Erwin works in Conroe works in Marco Island.** We are not fighting one fight in one town. We are fighting one pattern, in a thousand towns.

Read the rules. Study the case studies. Then go to council with a camera in your hand.

## ▶ PART ONE

# *The* Mindset.

Before any rule, before any tactic, you must understand the foundation. These three principles are the bedrock. Everything else in this manual rests on top of them.

## ▶ PRINCIPLE 01

*Local government is where corruption hides — because nobody is watching.*

City councils, school boards, appraisal districts, county commissioners. These bodies decide your taxes, your kids' education, your property, your safety. Reporters do not cover them. Most citizens do not attend. Officials act as if no one is paying attention because, historically, no one has been. **That is your opening.**

## ▶ PRINCIPLE 02

*You are not outnumbered. Citizens just need to wake up.*

Officials count on citizen apathy, not on real majorities. The people who oppose corruption outnumber those who profit from it — they simply do not know they are allies yet. Officials are accountable to the public by law, by procedure, and by elections. The system has levers. **This playbook is a map to the levers — and a manual for waking up the room.**

## ▶ PRINCIPLE 03

*The work is hard, slow, and thankless — until it isn't.*

You will spend months filing requests, attending meetings, and being ignored. Then, one day, the dam breaks. An arrest happens. A bond fails. An election sweeps. **The years compound. Stay in the fight.**

# Documentation & Evidence



*The foundation of everything else. Without documentation, you have a story. With documentation, you have a case.*

## 01

▶ THE  
CAMERA

### ALWAYS, ALWAYS, ALWAYS USE A CAMERA.

A camera transforms you from one citizen into a reporter with an audience of ten thousand. A camera changes how officials behave the moment it appears. A camera turns a private abuse into a public record. **Never enter a meeting, never confront an official, never attend a rally without a camera running.**

## 08

▶ THE  
RECORDING

### RECORD EVERY SINGLE CONVERSATION WITH AN OFFICIAL.

What they say in private is what they will deny in public. The recording removes the deniability. **Know the recording laws in your state and follow them.**

## 12

▶ THE  
SCREENSHOT

### TAKE SCREENSHOTS OF EVERYTHING — ESPECIALLY POLITICIANS ACTING CRAZY ON FACEBOOK.

Posts get deleted. Comments get walked back. Your screenshot is permanent. **Build a folder of receipts and keep it organized by name and date.**

## 13

▶ THE CLIP

### CLIP CITY COUNCIL AND BOARD MEETINGS — THEN POST THEM.

A two-minute clip with a sharp caption — *tyranny in plain view, citizen uprising begins* — will reach more people than the meeting itself. **The footage is public; your job is to make it visible.**

# Communication & Messaging



*How you say it matters as much as what you say. The wrong tone with the right facts loses every time.*

## 02

▶ THE TONE

### BE ROBUST WITH OFFICIALS, BUT GENTLE WITH THE PUBLIC.

This rule separates effective advocates from angry citizens. Officials chose public office; they signed up for hard questions. The public did not. **Confront power; persuade neighbors. If you cannot tell the difference between the two, you will fail.**

## 06

▶ THE STORY

### PICK THE RIGHT STORY TO TELL — BEFORE THE FIGHT.

Every fight has many true stories. Choose the one that the most people will care about, that is easiest to understand, and that is hardest to spin. **Write it down before you start.**

## 14

▶ THE ROLE

### KNOW YOUR ROLE ON THE TEAM. FIGHT WITH FACTS — BUT ALSO WITH PASSION.

Some advocates are researchers. Some are speakers. Some are organizers. Some are the calm voice; some are the fire. **A team needs all of these. Know which one you are.**

## 18

▶ THE ARTILLERY

### USE INFOGRAPHICS AND AI TOOLS TO ENHANCE YOUR MESSAGE.

A clean visual will be shared a hundred times for every wall of text that is shared once. Tools like Claude can compress a fifty-page audit into a one-page graphic. **Use them.**

# Digital Strategy



*The internet is the modern town square. Use it deliberately.*

## 03

▶ THE GROUPS

### USE LOCAL FACEBOOK GROUPS — BUT USE THEM WITH DISCIPLINE.

Local groups are where your fight will live or die. **Maximum one post per day.** Always message the admin or moderator before posting about a fight. Spamming gets you banned, and a ban silences you in the place you most need to be heard.

## 09

▶ THE BILLBOARD

### POST ON CITY PAGES AND OFFICIAL PAGES — BECAUSE THEY CANNOT LEGALLY DELETE WHAT YOU POST.

Public officials and government pages cannot remove citizen comments based on viewpoint. **This is settled constitutional law.** Their wall is your billboard. Use it.

*The internet does not care about your courage. It cares about your discipline. One careful post, in the right group, at the right time, can move a thousand voters. One careless post can get you banned from the room.*

▶ THE DIGITAL DOCTRINE



*Two rules. Both essential. The first protects your reach. The second guarantees your voice reaches the people who govern you.*

# Legal & Investigative Leverage



*The heavy artillery. Most citizens never use these tools. You will.*

## 05

▶ MATH +  
LAW

### USE MATH TO REBUT CRITICISM — AND THE CONSTITUTION TO BACK IT UP.

Numbers cannot be argued with. The constitution cannot be ignored. **When opponents call you emotional, hand them a spreadsheet. When they call you wrong, hand them the law.**

## 07

▶ THE OPEN  
RECORD

### FILE OPEN RECORDS REQUESTS. THE MOMENT THEY ARE LATE — ESCALATE TO THE AG.

Open records laws have deadlines. Officials routinely miss them. The moment a deadline is missed, escalate to the state Attorney General's office. **This single move has unlocked more truth than any other tactic in this playbook.**

## 11

▶ THE  
FLANK

### FIND THE CRIME — AND REPORT IT TO EVERY AGENCY, ESPECIALLY OUTSIDE LOCAL JURISDICTION.

Local agencies protect their own. State and federal agencies do not. Report to the state AG, the state police, the FBI field office, the inspector general, the Texas Rangers — **everyone with jurisdiction. Let the local actors explain themselves to outside investigators.**

## 04

▶ THE EGO

### FOLLOW THE EGO TO THE CRIME.

Corruption is rarely subtle. Powerful local officials leave a trail because they believe they are untouchable. Their public statements, their social media, their business filings, their family connections — **follow the vanity. The ego will lead you to the evidence.**

# Team. Persistence. Planning.



*The lone wolf burns out. The team wins. This is the multiplier that turns three or four people into a force.*

## 10

▶ THE  
MULTIPLIER

### GROW A TEAM. LEAN ON EACH OTHER. THREE OR FOUR PEOPLE CAN CHANGE ONE HUNDRED THOUSAND LIVES.

**This is the most important rule in this entire document.** You cannot do this alone, and you should not try. Find your three. Support them. Let them support you. The team is the engine.

## 15

▶ THE  
PRESENCE

### DO NOT STOP GOING TO COUNCIL AND BOARD MEETINGS. EVER.

Presence is power. The official who looks up and sees you in the third row every single time will eventually crack. **Persistence is the ingredient most citizens lack.**

## 16

▶ THE  
NETWORK

### FIND OTHER LOCAL ADVOCATES.

Other people are already fighting in other towns. Find them. Learn from them. Share your tactics. **The network is the multiplier behind the multiplier.**

## 17

▶ THE PLAN

### PLAN BEFORE THE ATTACK: WHO, WHAT, WHERE, WIN.

Decide who is being held accountable, what the specific ask is, where the action will happen, and what victory looks like. **If you cannot answer all four — you are not ready to act.**

▶ AT A GLANCE

# All eighteen, at a glance.

Print this page. Tape it inside your binder. These are the rules. The rest of this manual exists to help you internalize them.

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A · DOCUMENTATION

- 01 Always use a camera.

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- 08 Record every conversation.

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- 12 Screenshot everything.

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- 13 Clip the meetings.

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C · DIGITAL STRATEGY

- 03 Local groups, with discipline.

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- 09 Post on official pages.

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E · TEAM, PERSISTENCE, PLANNING

- 10 Three or four can change 100K.

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- 16 Find other advocates.

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B · COMMUNICATION

- 02 Robust with officials, gentle with public.

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- 06 Pick the right story first.

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- 14 Know your role.

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- 18 Use infographics & AI.

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D · LEGAL LEVERAGE

- 05 Math + Constitution.

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- 07 Open records → AG.

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- 11 Report outside jurisdiction.

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- 04 Follow the ego.

- 15 Never stop attending meetings.

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- 17 Plan: who, what, where, win.

## ▶ FOR THE WALL

# *By the* numbers.

The eighteen rules in their original order. Print this page. Tape it next to your desk.

**01** ALWAYS, ALWAYS, ALWAYS USE A CAMERA.

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**03** LOCAL FACEBOOK GROUPS — WITH DISCIPLINE.

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**05** MATH TO REBUT. CONSTITUTION TO BACK IT UP.

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**07** OPEN RECORDS — ESCALATE TO THE AG WHEN LATE.

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**09** POST ON OFFICIAL PAGES — THEY CANNOT DELETE IT.

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**11** REPORT THE CRIME — ESPECIALLY OUTSIDE LOCAL JURISDICTION.

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**13** CLIP THE MEETINGS. POST THEM.

---

**15** NEVER STOP ATTENDING MEETINGS. EVER.

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**17** PLAN FIRST: WHO, WHAT, WHERE, WIN.

**02** ROBUST WITH OFFICIALS. GENTLE WITH THE PUBLIC.

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**04** FOLLOW THE EGO TO THE CRIME.

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**06** PICK THE RIGHT STORY BEFORE THE FIGHT.

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**08** RECORD EVERY CONVERSATION WITH AN OFFICIAL.

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**10** THREE OR FOUR CAN CHANGE ONE HUNDRED THOUSAND LIVES.

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**12** SCREENSHOT EVERYTHING — POLITICIANS ESPECIALLY.

---

**14** KNOW YOUR ROLE. FIGHT WITH FACTS AND PASSION.

---

**16** FIND OTHER LOCAL ADVOCATES.

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**18** USE INFOGRAPHICS AND AI TO ENHANCE YOUR MESSAGE.

▶ PART THREE

# The playbook in action.

The rules above are not abstract. Here is what they have produced — in six real fights, across three states, against opposition that included police, school boards, an appraisal district, and sitting city governments.

## 01 ▶ ERWIN, TENNESSEE *From slander to arrests.*

36.1428°N  
82.4196°W

During Hurricane Helene, our team was attacked and slandered by local law enforcement. Most citizens, in that position, would have backed down. Instead, we filed criminal complaints with the Tennessee Bureau of Investigation for official misconduct. We documented everything — Rules **1, 8, 12**. We escalated outside local jurisdiction — Rule **11**. We did not stop.

This year, three Erwin police officers were arrested for misconduct.

▶ THE LESSON

*When local power slanders you, do not argue with it locally. Take the file to the agency that has authority over the local actors.*

**3**  
POLICE  
OFFICERS  
ARRESTED

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**TBI**  
INVESTIGATION  
TRIGGERED

# 02 ▶ GODLEY, TEXAS *Waking up a town.*

32.4501°N  
97.5275°W

Godley is a small, deeply set-in-its-ways Texas town. Conventional wisdom said it could not be moved. We chose the right story — Rule 6 — that the school district's bond proposal was not what residents had been told it was. We built a disciplined Facebook presence in the local groups — Rule 3. We brought math — Rule 5. We brought receipts — Rule 12.

The bonds were defeated. In the same fight, our work helped uncover what we believe to be a criminal organization operating in town — and led to **six arrests in Godley.**

▶ THE LESSON

*No town is too "indoctrinated" to wake up. The right story, told with discipline, will reach the people who were never going to read a long article — but will read a clear graphic in a local group.*

**\$250M**  
ISD BOND  
DEFEATED

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**6**  
ARRESTS  
IN GODLEY

# 03 ▶ MONTGOMERY CENTRAL APPRAISAL DISTRICT *Fraud, assault, and a lawsuit.*

MCAD  
TEXAS

At the Montgomery Central Appraisal District, we identified what we believe to be software fraud affecting property valuations. The Appraisal Review Board chairman responded by physically assaulting one of us — an incident now the subject of an active lawsuit.

We did not retreat. The fight continued. MCAD is now on alert for software fraud, and citizens are saving thousands of dollars on their property tax bills as a result.

▶ THE LESSON

*When an official escalates to physical violence, it means you are over the target. Document, file, sue, and keep going. Rules 1, 7, and 8 carried this fight.*

**\$1K+**  
SAVED PER  
CITIZEN

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**SUIT**  
ACTIVE VS.  
ARB CHAIR

▶ CONROE, TEXAS

# 04 Taking the whole government back.

30.3119°N  
95.4561°W

In Conroe we ran the playbook end to end. We held rallies. We brought the town together — Rule 2, robust with officials, gentle with the public. We built a team — Rule 10. We trained advocates — Rule 16. We never missed a meeting — Rule 15.

In the most recent municipal election, every single seat we contested was won. The people of Conroe now have complete control of their local government.

▶ THE LESSON

*When the rules are followed long enough and consistently enough, electoral sweeps become possible — even in cities long considered locked.*

**100%**  
OF CONTESTED SEATS WON

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**OURS**  
CITY GOVERNMENT RETURNED

▶ MARCO ISLAND, FLORIDA

# 05 Stopping a bad ordinance overnight.

25.9412°N  
81.7184°W

The Marco Island City Council was poised to pass what we believed to be an unconstitutional ordinance. Conventional wisdom on the island said it was a done deal — the votes were locked, the public asleep. We applied Rule 13: we clipped the council meetings and posted them on social media. The clips reached residents the meetings never could.

Ordinary citizens — Mom and Pop, the people who normally do not show up — stepped up. They came to council. They spoke. They stopped it. Last night, Marco Island withdrew the ordinance.

▶ THE LESSON

*Footage is the cheapest way to wake a town up. When residents see what happens in their council chambers, Mom and Pop become an unstoppable force. Rule 13 is a primary weapon.*

**WITHDRAWN**  
UN-CONSTITUTIONAL ORDINANCE

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**MOM & POP**  
CARRIED THE DAY

# 06 ▶ THE STATE-LEVEL CASCADE *How local work becomes a wave.*

TEXAS  
OAG

Across these fights, our work has contributed to the uncovering of what we estimate to be \$5.1 trillion in fraud, and the Texas Attorney General has opened an investigation spanning approximately one thousand cities. We have trained several other advocates — they are now running their own fights, in their own towns.

This is what compounding looks like. A fight in one town becomes evidence in the next. A trained advocate becomes a multiplier. A multiplier becomes a movement.

And the reason it scales is the same reason this manual was written: **the corruption is patterned, not local.** The same fraud, the same tactics, the same playbook of obstruction repeats from town to town. When you defeat it once, you have learned to defeat it everywhere.

▶ THE LESSON

*Local work compounds. Three or four people change one hundred thousand lives — and then a million. The math is uncomfortable for the entrenched, and it is on our side.*



*What works in Erwin works in Conroe works in Marco Island. We are not fighting one fight in one town. We are fighting one pattern, in a thousand towns.*

▶ THE THESIS

## ▶ PART FOUR

# *Your first ninety days.*

If you are new, here is how to begin. Do not skip phases. Do not run before you can walk. The work you do in days 1–60 is what makes the work you do in days 61–90 effective.

▶ DAYS 1–30

## *Observe and Document.*

1

Attend every council, school board, and agency meeting in your area. Bring a camera. Take notes. Identify the officials who matter — the corrupt, the allies, the undecided. Read the past two years of meeting minutes. Find the local Facebook groups. Message the admins. Introduce yourself.

▶ DAYS 31–60

## *File and Connect.*

2

File your first open records requests. Pick something small and specific. Track the deadlines. Find one or two other people in town who care. Have coffee with them. Begin building the team. Start posting clips of meetings — calmly, factually — in the local groups.

▶ DAYS 61–90

## *Pick Your First Fight.*

3

Choose one issue. Apply Rule 17: who, what, where, win. Build the case with documents (Rule 12), math (Rule 5), and footage (Rule 1). Plan your first public action. Coordinate with your team. Execute.

***You will lose your first fight. That is expected. The second is where you start winning.***

▶ THE PROMISE

## ▶ PART FIVE

# *Mistakes* *that will sink you.*

Six failure modes. Each one has ended advocacy careers. Read them. Memorize them. Watch for them in yourself and in the people you train.

**✗ GOING ALONE.**

Burnout is guaranteed. The fight is too long, the wins too rare, the abuse too constant for one person to absorb.

**FIND YOUR TEAM BEFORE YOU START SWINGING.**

**✗ CRUELTY TO THE PUBLIC.**

The neighbors you alienate today are the votes you needed tomorrow.

**ROBUST WITH OFFICIALS.  
GENTLE WITH THE PUBLIC.  
ALWAYS.**

**✗ SKIPPING DOCUMENTATION.**

A claim without a screenshot is a rumor. A rumor will not survive contact with hostile officials.

**DOCUMENT OR DON'T BOTHER.**

**✗ SPAMMING THE GROUPS.**

One careless post can get you banned from the most important room in town.

**ONE POST PER DAY. MESSAGE THE ADMIN. DISCIPLINE ABOVE ALL.**

**✗ QUITTING AFTER A LOSS.**

Every loss is reconnaissance. Every loss teaches you something the winners did not have to learn.

**QUIT AND NEVER SEE YOUR FIRST WIN.**

**✗ ACTING BEFORE PLANNING.**

Improvisation looks like courage and feels like power, but it produces noise instead of outcomes.

**WHO, WHAT, WHERE, WIN.  
ALWAYS.**

# *This is not a guarantee. It is a **method.***

The method works because it is grounded in two truths: that local power is more accountable than it pretends to be, and that small disciplined teams beat large disorganized ones every time.

You will be slandered. You may be assaulted. You will be told you are crazy, that you are wasting your time, that nothing will ever change.

**We were told all of this.** Then the arrests happened. Then the bonds failed. Then the elections were swept. Then the Attorney General opened the investigation.

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*Three or four people.  
One hundred thousand lives.  
That is the math.*

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*Welcome to the fight.*