

# **THERE'S NO JUSTICE – JUST COURT COSTS**

**By Lawrence B. Fox**

**THERE'S NO JUSTICE – JUST COURT COSTS ©**

**A Comedic Stage Play In Two Acts**

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# **THERE'S NO JUSTICE – JUST COURT COSTS ©**

A Comedic Stage Play In Two Acts

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Index of the scenes contained in this manuscript:

1. The Dog License.....	page 1
2. The Plot Thickens.....	page 13
3. The Political Contribution .....	page 24
4. My First Trial.....	page 34
5. Parish Visitation.....	page 56

End of Act I – Intermission

6. The Art Of Dance .....	page 66
7. Falling In Love .....	page 88
8. Golden Dragon.....	page 97
9. It's An Emergency .....	page 114
10. The Angel .....	page 126

End of Act II

April 1, 2014

## A SHORT SYNOPSIS OF THE COMEDIC MANUSCRIPT TITLED

### *THERE'S NO JUSTICE – JUST COURT COSTS*

Old Attorney Fox is about to begin his semi-retirement from the private practice of law. He will join a firm of younger lawyers who will take over the day-to-day representation of his clients. As he begins the process of culling over 40 years of files to determine what should be discarded, he chances upon his “memorabilia box,” his eclectic collection of odd trinkets and reminders of trials in which he had engaged. One by one, he unearths mementos significant only to himself, as he harks back to prior litigation and client contacts from a bygone era.

Fox produces the discolored dog tag that once hung from the neck of Spot, the mongrel. Was it possible Fox's clients qualified for the “senior citizen” license fee discount of \$3.00, since Spot was approaching 65 in “dog years?” Next to be brought to light is the Last Will and Testament of Henry and Mildred Sopworth. They bought a cemetery plot on “special” since their bodies would, for economy sake, be buried one on top of the other, similar to a bunk bed. If she landed on the bottom first, Mildred wondered if she could include a provision that she be resurrected and replanted on top. The third artifact is a bank draft with a bullet hole in the middle. The politician who asked for that political donation may have experienced some trouble cashing the check.

A scratched amber beer bottle catches Fox's attention. It was the primary exhibit at Fox's very first jury trial – a trial in which the judge gave Fox ten minutes to prepare. Should Fox believe his new client? Did the defendant drink those 15 beers before or after the car accident? Next is a small black Bible, given to Fox by a priest who had a theory as to whether cats indeed go directly to heaven. And that purple garter belt? It belonged to a pole dancer at the “Pink Alligator,” the gentlemen's club that Fox represented when special zoning relief was required. And so it goes - one relic after another, each bringing to memory a special moment in time. Was it all worth it? The struggles in court? The stress of litigation? Fox gets to answer that question, when he is visited by a special unexpected emissary.

## CAST LIST

### *THERE'S NO JUSTICE – JUST COURT COSTS* APRIL 1, 2014 MANUSCRIPT

There are ten scenes requiring a total of twelve actors. OLD FOX and YOUNG FOX appear in each scene. All of the other actors play multiple roles, sometimes requiring costume changes in mid-scene.

#### SCENE ONE: *The Dog License* (Eleven Actors, including Old and Young Fox)

OLD FOX: A 70-year-old male attorney with a conservative appearance, including grey hair, bifocals, and a three-piece suit adorned with a gold watch chain.

OLD WOMAN: Frustrated and confused senior citizen.

SOCIETY WOMAN: A member of high society, fashionably dressed. She speaks with a haughtiness of manner.

BUSINESSMAN: A serious young male who appears dressed in a coat and tie. He appears to be upset.

MALE CRIMINAL: A down-on-his-luck criminal dressed in prison clothes who is not very intelligent.

YOUNG BLONDE: A well-endowed scatter-brained young blonde, who speaks with “valley girl” mannerisms.

MABEL: The elderly courthouse switchboard operator. She is efficient, but set in her ways. She appears to be working under some stress.

YOUNG FOX: A 25-year-old attorney fresh out of law school.

HERMAN: A 65-year-old visitor to the courthouse. He is wearing clothing that neither fits nor matches, as if he dressed in the dark. He wears a ski cap with protruding ear flaps. He is poor and confused.

MOM: Herman’s 95-year-old mother. She is deaf, walks with the assistance of a walker device. She is wearing a \$5 dress and bedroom slippers.

LORI: An effervescent helpful 24-year-old courthouse employee.

SCENE TWO: *The Plot Thickens*  
(Old Fox, Young Fox, and Four Other Actors.)

(Old Fox and Young Fox appear in this and all other scenes. Four Other Actors appear.)

MILDRED: An emotional 70-year-old client who wishes to have a last will and testament drafted.

HENRY: Mildred's unfeeling, humorless, and cheap husband.

BERNARD: A pleasant 40-year-old client who wishes to have a last will and testament drafted.

MARY: Bernard's pleasant wife.

SCENE THREE: *The Political Contribution*  
(Old Fox, Young Fox, and Four Other Actors)

FLEISHMAN: An insincere and glib fast-talking political fundraiser.

GILSAP: Fox's certified public accountant.

SKIDMORE: A police captain at a local police department.

FILIPONI: Another obnoxious fast-talking political fundraiser.

SCENE FOUR: *My First Trial*  
(Old Fox, Young Fox and Five Other Actors. It is preferable that a non-speaking jury panel also be present.)

JUDGE PALMER: An older experienced judge, regal and self-assured, possessing a hidden sense of humor.

TIPSTAFF: (Either male or female) A uniformed courthouse staff member serving the judge.

HUMMEL: A male criminal defendant accused of drunk driving.

RITTER: (Either male or female) A know-it-all humorless young assistant district attorney.

TROOPER: A self-assured state policeman and witness for the prosecution.

SCENE FIVE: *Parish Visitation*  
(Old Fox, Young Fox and Three Other Actors)

TERESA: Young Fox's wife.

MONSIGNOR: A 60-year-old humorless Catholic priest.

PRIEST: A young Catholic priest, a new graduate of the seminary.

SCENE SIX: *The Art Of Dance*

( Old Fox, Young Fox, and Fourteen Other Acting Parts. However, Bouncer, Joe, and Bill have minor parts in the first part of the scene, and will exit the stage to appear later at the zoning hearing as the Chairman, Older Man, and as otherwise needed.)

MONICA: An exotic dancer who wishes to purchase a men's after hours club.

FERNANDO: Monica's husband. He looks like a pimp.

ANGEL: Fox's heavenly guardian angel, complete with wings and halo.

DEVIL: A sinister figure, dressed in red with a pointy tail. He seeks to tempt Fox.

BOUNCER: A large man who keeps order at the after hours club.

JOE: A patron of the after hours club.

BILL: A patron of the after hours club.

AMOS: The owner of the after hours club.

POLICEWOMAN: An exotic dancer at the after hours club.

CHAIRMAN: The head of the local zoning hearing board.

FIRST OLD LADY: A spectator at the zoning hearing.

SECOND OLD LADY: A spectator at the zoning hearing.

OLDER MAN: A spectator at the zoning hearing.



SCENE SEVEN: *Falling In Love*  
(Old Fox, Young Fox and Five Other Actors.)

MUNCY: A criminal held in prison who is represented by Young Fox.

TOMMY: A young file clerk employed at the courthouse.

LORETTA: A young file clerk employed at the courthouse.

CLERK: The courtroom clerk who swears in the witnesses.

JUDGE: The judge presiding at Muncy's trial.

SCENE EIGHT: *Golden Dragon*

(Old Fox, Young Fox and Twelve Other Acting Parts played by cast members appearing in multiple roles.)

BURT: A township supervisor. He speaks with a Pennsylvania Dutch accent.

EMMA: A township supervisor who works with Burt.

CHINESE WOMAN: An overworked waitress at a Chinese restaurant. She speaks with a thick accent.

LUCY: A secretary at a shopping mall office.

GUMM: A detective in New York City.

WAITRESS: A waitress in a restaurant in Phillipsburg, New Jersey. She speaks with a New Jersey accent.

SECRETARY: Fox's law office secretary.

LARGER MAN: A Chinese bodyguard employed by Binney Wang.

WANG: A small but notorious Chinese Mobster.

ANGEL: The same guardian angel as seen in scene six above.

DEVIL: The same devil as seen in scene six above.

RECEPTIONIST: Gumm's receptionist in New York City.



SCENE NINE: *It's An Emergency*  
(Old Fox, Young Fox and Eight Other Actors)

SWITCHER: A prison guard in the prison execution room.

ROMANOFF: A prisoner about to be executed.

JILL: One of Fox's three secretaries.

DR. WOMBAT: A medical doctor is Fox's client. (A nurse assistant in the operating room appears, but does not have a speaking part.)

CHRISTINE: One of Fox's three secretaries.

LAURA: One of Fox's three secretaries.

HILDA: An ambulance attendant. She speaks with a thick German accent.

ARCHIE: An ambulance attendant who takes orders from Hilda.

SCENE TEN: *The Angel*

( Old Fox and The Angel appear in this scene.)

## SUGGESTED ROLE DISTRIBUTION

Cast of Thirteen (7 males, 6 females)

### FIRST ACTOR (Male)

Old Fox    Scenes 1 through 9

### SECOND ACTOR (Female)

Old Woman            Scene 1  
Mildred                Scene 2  
Secretary              Scene 8  
Receptionist           Scene 8

### THIRD ACTOR (Male)

Businessman           Scene 1  
Fleishman              Scene 3  
Trooper                Scene 4  
Joe                      Scene 6  
Tommy                  Scene 7  
Burt                     Scene 8  
Switcher                Scene 9

### FOURTH ACTOR (Female)

Society Woman        Scene 1  
Mary                    Scene 2  
Policewoman           Scene 6  
Chinese Woman        Scene 8  
Nurse                  Scene 9

### FIFTH ACTOR (Male)

Male Criminal         Scene 1  
Bernard                Scene 2  
Filiponi                Scene 3  
Hummel                Scene 4  
Priest                  Scene 5  
Fernando               Scene 6  
Muncy                  Scene 7  
Wang                    Scene 8  
Romanoff               Scene 9

### SIXTH ACTOR (Female)

Young Blond            Scene 1  
Tipstaff                Scene 4  
Angel                    Scene 6  
Second Old Lady       Scene 6  
Clerk                    Scene 7  
Angel                    Scene 8  
Jill                      Scene 9  
Angel                    Scene 10

### SEVENTH ACTOR (Male)

Young Fox    Scenes 1 through 9

### EIGHTH ACTOR (Female)

Mabel                    Scene 1  
First Old Lady          Scene 6  
Lucy                      Scene 8  
Christine                Scene 9

### NINTH ACTOR (Male)

Herman                 Scene 1  
Henry                    Scene 2  
Skidmore                Scene 3  
Judge Palmer            Scene 4  
Monsignor               Scene 5  
Devil                    Scene 6  
Bill                      Scene 6  
Judge                    Scene 7  
Devil                    Scene 8  
Dr. Wombat              Scene 9

### TENTH ACTOR (Female) \*

Mom                     Scene 1  
Emma                    Scene 8  
Hilda                    Scene 9

### ELEVENTH ACTOR (Male)

Bouncer                Scene 6  
Chairman                Scene 6  
Gumm                    Scene 8  
Archie                    Scene 9

### TWELFTH ACTOR (Female)

Lori                      Scene 1  
Bitter                    Scene 4  
Teresa                    Scene 5  
Monica                  Scene 6  
Loretta                  Scene 7  
Waitress                Scene 8  
Laura                    Scene 9

### THIRTEENTH ACTOR (Male)

Amos                    Scene 6  
Older Man               Scene 6  
Larger Man              Scene 8

THERE'S NO JUSTICE – JUST COURT COSTS  
A COMEDIC STAGE PLAY

**INTRODUCTION**

The scenes take place at the local courthouse, the law office of main character Attorney Lawrence Fox, at the local prison, or at other offices that require minimal scenery changes. Attorney Fox is played by two separate actors, since Attorney Fox will appear at various times as either a young lawyer, or an old lawyer.

Old Attorney Fox also serves as the narrator who explains to the audience what is about to transpire during each scene. He projects a conservative appearance, with grey hair, bifocals, and a three-piece suit adorned with a gold watch chain.

SCENE I

The Dog License

(Old Fox is rummaging about in a large cardboard box that sits on his office desk. Many other office file boxes lay strewn about on the floor. He looks up, sees the audience, and stops to address them:)

OLD FOX:

**“Oh! ... I thought I was alone. Don’t get me wrong – it’s always nice to have company.**

(Old Fox pauses as he surveys the theater-goers.) **Come on in!** (He motions.) **Well, as you can see, the big moment has finally arrived — the long-awaited “moving day” I was telling you about. Yeah, that’s right ... I’m about to enter a new phase of my career. After 45 years practicing law in this town, a group of younger lawyers just two blocks away have invited me to join their firm. (Pause.) I’ll be able to take a little time off (Pause.) They’ll be able to**

**give my clients the service they've come to expect. A win-win. Only thing is ... I have to relocate."**

(Old Fox looks at all the boxes scattered about on the floor as he shakes his head.)

**"Who would have thought I could have accumulated so much junk over the years."**

(Old Fox picks up a book from the floor and reads the title aloud:)

**"*The 1992 Amended IRS Code*. I guess I won't be needing this, or any of this other sh ... (he looks about) ... stuff. On the other hand, this particular box (Old Fox points to the only box on his desk) ... now that's another matter. This ... this is *aaalll* the good stuff. Sure ... worthless to anyone else, but hidden away here are the priceless remnants of the most bizarre experiences and unexpected moments of my legal career."** (Old Fox begins to ponder out loud.) **"All the wacko clients and all their crazy questions. Every time I thought there just couldn't be another nut-job out there, my phone would ring."**

(Old Fox walks to center stage. Several separate individuals begin to appear alternately from stage left and stage right to address Old Fox. First the spotlight focuses upon an older woman standing at stage left. She is wearing an outlandish hat and a polka dot dress. She inquires in a serious tone:)

OLD WOMAN:

**"I just don't get it. The sign said, *Fine For Parking*, so I parked there."**

(Old Fox tries to respond, but the spotlight quickly moves to a woman at stage right. She is a member of high society and is dressed fashionably with black fishnet hat lace covering the upper half of her face. She waves a 12 inch cigarette holder in her hand. She speaks in a high society accent as she inspects her manicure:)

SOCIETY WOMAN:

**“Listen, Counselor, here’s what I want in my Last Will. I bought three Quiet Valley cemetery plots all in a row. When I die, I want the gravediggers to dig a hole big enough to back in my classic 64 E-type Jaguar into the plots and point that classic car right toward heaven with me in the front seat, my hands grasping the wheel, ready for the big trip.**

**(Backpedals) I don’t necessarily need to be embalmed, but make sure they change the oil and clean the windshield prior to take-off. It could be a long trip.”**

(Old Fox tries to respond, but the spotlight quickly moves to stage right where a serious young businessman appears dressed in a coat and tie. He is upset:)

BUSINESSMAN:

**“I had a vasectomy. My wife had her tubes tied. Now she’s pregnant. Can we sue the doctors and make them pay for everything the kid needs until he graduates from high school? Does that include piano lessons? (Thoughtful pause.) What if he wants to go to college?”**

(Old Fox tries to respond, but the spotlight quickly moves to stage left. A clueless little old lady appears to be confused:)

OLD WOMAN:

**“Mr. Fox ... Uh ... my Wilbur may be missin’. I ain’t seen ‘im in six weeks. Really, I wish he’d get his lazy carcass back here. He’s gotta do somethin’... The stench out in his tool shed keeps gettin’ worse. Anyway, can I keep cashin’ his social security checks?”**

(Old Fox tries to respond, but the spotlight quickly moves to stage right. An agitated older man addresses Old Fox:)

BUSINESSMAN:

**“Can you do me a favor and add a short paragraph to my mother-in-law’s Will saying the old battle axe wants a really cheap funeral?”**

(Old Fox tries to respond, but the spotlight quickly moves to stage left. Society Woman is holding a phone to her ear as she addresses Old Fox:)

SOCIETY WOMAN:

**“Lawyer Larry? Why are you answering your phone at six in the morning? I certainly don’t want to talk to you now. I’m busy. I just wanted to leave a message to have you call me later.”**

(Old Fox tries to respond, but the spotlight quickly moves to stage right as the Old Woman again approaches and addresses Old Fox:)

OLD WOMAN:

**“If I spend all my money now, can those damn nursing home people get any of it after I’m dead? ... By the way, I hope you don’t plan to charge me just for talking to you.”**

(Old Fox tries to respond, but the spotlight quickly moves to stage left. Old Fox turns and stares with a bewildered expression at the audience. A male criminal appears to address Old Fox with a know-it-all attitude as he talks emphatically with one hand.)

MALE CRIMINAL:

**“So, I piss in this cup, right? Now my jerk parole officer writes a report sayin’ I’m positive for heroin. Look, Counselor, what if I can prove I only snort coke?”**

(Old Fox tries to respond, but the spotlight quickly shifts to stage right. A well-endowed young blonde who “talks with her hands” addresses Old Fox. As she speaks, every phrase ends sounding like a question from a “Valley Girl” of the ‘80’s.)

YOUNG BLONDE:

**“In my Will, if I like ... want my pancreas to be donated to ... I don’t know ... like the Salvation Army ... and nobody wants it, will they ... like ... freeze it?”**

(The spotlight follows Old Fox as he returns to the table and digs about in the box. He removes an old dog tag dangling from an inexpensive chain. He laughs out loud as he studies the makeshift pendant.)

OLD FOX:

**“Spot’s old dog tag. It’s been 40 years if it’s been a day. (He looks up at the audience.) Did I ever tell you this story? No? Well, sit down for a moment, take off your jacket, and prop your feet up on one of those boxes over there.”**

(One spotlight remains focused upon Old Fox and his office. A second spotlight focuses upon a Courthouse lobby where Mabel, the Courthouse telephone operator, sits at the information desk as she answers incoming calls through her headset. She is elderly, attempts to be courteous with callers, but is obviously working under some stress. Young Lawyer Fox enters the lobby, and approaches Mabel who waves hello as she simultaneously listens to another incoming call. Old Fox points at Young Fox with a mixture of nostalgia and pride. Old Fox continues his narrative.)

**“That’s me! In my twenties! Fresh out of law school, and ready to take on the judicial system. I had all but forgotten that I once looked so young, so trusting, so naïve.”**

MABEL:

(Her switchboard begins to ring.) **“Courthouse ... May I help you? Yes ... That hearing will be held in Courtroom Number 1 ... on the second floor ... because Courtroom Number 2 is on the first floor ... Well, as you may recall, Courtroom Number 3 is in the basement ... because Courtroom Number 4 has always been on the third floor ... ”** (She exhales.)



**“Courtroom Number 5? That’s on the fourth floor ... you’re quite welcome, Sir.”**

YOUNG FOX:

**“Another citizen with a question?”**

MABEL:

**“Not exactly just any other citizen, Attorney Fox. That was Judge VanDyke. Sometimes he misplaces the directions to his courtroom. But I just don’t get it. People act as if we move the courtrooms around each week from floor to floor.”** (The switchboard rings so Mabel answers another call.) **“Courthouse ... That hearing will be in Courtroom Number 3 ... in the basement ... Because Courtroom Number 4 is on the third floor. You’re welcome.”**

OLD FOX:

(He seeks to share a secret with the audience. **“There once was movement in our Bar Association to renumber the courtrooms to coincide with the floor upon which each is situated.”** (Pause) **“In that way, it was hoped that some of the judges would be able to locate their courtrooms without assistance.”** (Pause) **“But Mabel voted against it – and she has tenure.”**

(The spotlight returns to the information booth. A man, Herman, about 65 years old, and his aged mother, Philomena, a 95-year-old woman who uses a hospital walker device for assistance, slowly approach the information desk from stage right. The pair appear to be exhausted as if they have engaged in a long and arduous journey. Herman is wearing an oversized winter cap with ear flaps covering his ears. Herman leans his mother’s frail body on the information desk counter. She takes on the appearance of a human “Leaning Tower of Pisa.” Herman addresses the all-knowing Mabel as Young Fox looks on.)

HERMAN:

**“Will you help us?”**

MABEL:

**“Of course.”**

HERMAN:

**“Me and my Mom here – we’ve already been to City Hall and them folks sent us to the SPCA and then they sent us here. I need a dog license for Mom’s dog, Spot. Is this the right place? We’ve been driving around for almost two hours.”**

MABEL:

**“You’ve come to the right place.”**

HERMAN:

(Exhausted and relieved.) **“Thank goodness.”**

MABEL:

**“You want the Prothonotary’s Office upstairs.”**

HERMAN:

**“The what?”**

MABEL:

**“Just take the steps over there (she points) to the second floor, then go past Courtroom Number One ...”**

HERMAN:

**“They put Courtroom One on the second floor?”**

MABEL:

(She ignores his question as she takes a deep breath to steady her nerves, then looks up with a

forced smile as she speaks in an irritated manner.) **“Yes. Then turn right.”**

YOUNG FOX:

**“I’m headed there myself. I’ll be glad to show you the way.”**

HERMAN:

**“Oh thank you, sir.”** (He turns to Mom who is still leaning on the counter. She is asleep).

**“Mom? This nice man will take us to the dog license place.”**

MOM:

(Startled) **“What?”**

HERMAN:

(Addresses Young Fox instead.) **“She don’t hear so good no more. For that matter, I’m getting a little deaf myself ... Runs in the family.”**

YOUNG FOX:

(In a loud voice) **“Not to worry. Just follow me.”** (The trio proceed to steps as the spotlight illuminates the Prothonotary’s Office. A simple wooden bench sits outside the door. Herman inches his frail mother forward and offers her a seat.)

HERMAN:

**“Mom, you sit here a spell.”**

MOM:

**“What?”** (She slowly lowers herself onto the bench.)

(Young Fox and Herman enter the Prothonotary’s Office. As this occurs, Old Fox appears at stage left and addresses the audience:)

OLD FOX:

**“Prothonotary” is the ancient term for the office where legal documents are kept. In old**

**English it means ‘File it here and we’ll lose it.’ (Pause) Rumor has it that the original *Minima Carta* was lost, so they drafted the *Magna Carta* to make it more difficult to misplace.”**

(Herman approaches the Prothonotary’s counter. Lori, a young effervescent 24-year-old courthouse employee appears on the other side of the counter and addresses Herman.)

LORI:

**“May I help you?”**

HERMAN:

(Exhausted) **“Yes ... please. See, Spot needs a dog license, and so – ”**

LORI:

(Interrupts) **“Very well.** (She reaches under the counter and produces an application and pencil.)

**You’re at the right place. All you need to do is fill out this short application and pay \$5.**

(Herman appears overwhelmed as he slowly pages through the 10-page document.) **Need some help with that?”**

HERMAN:

(Grateful sigh) **“Oh yes, please. I got a touch of arthritis in my hand, and I don’t hear so good.”**

LORI:

**“What’s the dog’s name again?”**

HERMAN:

**“Spot.”**

LORI:

(She begins to fill in the form) **“S-P-O-T?”**

HERMAN:

(Thinks for a moment as he spells the name to himself.) **“Right.”**

LORI:

**“The owner?”**

HERMAN:

**“My mother. Today’s her 95<sup>th</sup> birthday. I brought her along in case there were any questions for her.”**

LORI:

**“I’m glad you mentioned that. We have Senior Citizen dog licenses for those over the age of 65. Three dollars instead of the usual five.”**

HERMAN:

(Confused) **“But Spot ain’t 65 yet, unless of course you’re talkin’ dog years.”**

LORI:

(She rips up the first form and reaches for a second.) **“I was referring to *your mother*.”**

HERMAN:

**“What?”**

LORI:

(Loudly.) **“YOUR MOTHER, NOT THE DOG!”**

HERMAN:

**“OK.”**

LORI:

(Loudly.) **“Hair color?”**

HERMAN:

**“Gray.”**

LORI:

(Loudly.) **“Sex?”**

HERMAN:

**“Female.”**

LORI:

(She writes each answer. Loudly.) **“Eye color?”**

HERMAN:

**“Brown, but one eye has a cataract.”**

LORI:

(Loudly.) **“Neutered?”**

HERMAN:

**“I think so?”**

LORI:

(Loudly.) **“Date of operation?”**

HERMAN:

**“Hold on. I’ll find out. That’s why I brought her along.”** (Herman leaves the office and approaches Mom who is still sitting on the bench, her eyes closed.) **“Mom!”**

MOM:

(Startled) **“What?”**

HERMAN:

(Loudly and slowly) **“WHEN DID YOU HAVE YOUR HYSTERECTOMY?”**

MOM:

(Shrugs her shoulders.) **“Around 1945?”**

HERMAN:

(Returns to Lori at the counter) **“1945.”**

LORI:

**“Wow, Spot is no spring chicken!”**

HERMAN:

(Confused.) **“No, she’s a dog.”**

LORI:

(Loudly.) **“Breeding?”**

HERMAN:

**“Episcopalian.”**

LORI:

**“Really?”**

HERMAN:

**“Yeah. There’s more of them around than you might think.”**

(Herman hands Lori \$3, receives a dog tag, leaves the office, approaches his mother, and places the tag around her neck. They then shuffle off stage.)

End of Scene One. (At the end of each scene, the stage lights are dimmed, as courtroom related music, such as the theme from the television show *Perry Mason* is played. A single spotlight illuminates a statue or picture of the Goddess of Justice, blindfolded and holding the scales of justice in her hand.)



## SCENE II

### The Plot Thickens

#### OLD FOX:

(Old Fox rummages through his “memorabilia box” and produces a Last Will and Testament. He studies it momentarily and laughs out loud as he addresses the audience. He holds this legal document up toward the audience, shaking it a bit for emphasis.) **“The most unusual Last Will and Testament I ever drafted. Believe it or not, it contains a special provision for my client’s temporary resurrection after death. I still remember when Henry and Mildred Sopworth dropped by my office to discuss their testamentary wishes. I asked them the usual questions ... but ...”** (Old Fox points to Young Fox.)

(Spotlight on Young Fox who is wearing a three-piece suit as he sits at the conference table with agitated Henry and nervous Mildred. These clients, husband and wife, are in their seventies, and are conservatively and neatly dressed. Mildred clutches a large purse from which periodically she removes a tissue and pats her eyes and blows her nose.)

#### YOUNG FOX:

**“It’s nice to meet you folks. Did someone refer you here?”**

#### MILDRED:

(She begins to whimper and blows her nose.) **“Yes ... our next door neighbor, Agnes Beanstorfer. You wrote up her Will about a month ago. She said you were very attentive and thorough.”**

#### YOUNG FOX:

**“How very kind of her. Such a nice lady. How’s she doing?”**

HENRY:

(Unfeeling.) **"She dropped dead last week."**

(Mildred cries and reaches for another handkerchief. She blows her nose.)

YOUNG FOX:

(Astonished.) **"I am *so* sorry!"**

HENRY:

(In a matter-of-fact-tone.) **"Well, everybody said it was unexpected, but who are we kidding? She just had her Will wrote up. Any idiot knows once you see a lawyer for a Will, you're skating on thin ice. The minute we sign ... well ... we might as well call the undertaker.**

(Mildred cries out slightly and blows her nose. Henry looks at her with unfeeling eyes.)

**Quit your blubbering, why don't you. We all gotta croak sometime. (He looks at Fox.) Fifty years of crying. She cried at our wedding and when the damn dog died. She cries at them chick flicks. You'd think the well would be dry by now."**

MILDRED:

**"If we sign our Wills, we'll be gonners, too." (She whimpers as Young Fox tries to console her by patting her hand.)**

YOUNG FOX:

**"Mrs. Sopworth, discussion of this sensitive topic might be premature. Wouldn't you prefer to ... come back another time, perhaps 10 ... 15 years from now?"**

HENRY:

**"No can do. If we die without a Will, our idiot relatives will get everything. Her brother is a dipshit. My sister's crazy as a loon. (He raises both hands over his head and shakes them.) So it's now or never. You might as well start asking us the same questions that killed poor**

**Beanstorfer.”**

YOUNG FOX:

(He cautiously picks up his note pad and pencil as Mrs. Sopworth blows her nose.) **“So tell me ... is this the first marriage for both of you?”**

MILDRED:

**“Yes.”** (She blows her nose as Young Fox writes down answers to each question on a large pad of paper.)

YOUNG FOX:

**“Do you have any children?”**

HENRY:

(Emphatically) **“No.”**

MILDRED:

**“Well ... don’t forget Flowerbelle.”**

YOUNG FOX:

**“A daughter?”**

HENRY:

(Disgusted.) **“Her hair-ball regurgitating cat. Come to think of it, maybe that cat needs a Will of her own. Ya never know. Pussy heaven could be right around the corner.”**

MILDRED:

(Mildred shoots Henry an angry look, then addresses Young Fox.) **“Mr. Fox?”**

HENRY:

**“Good Lord, now what? We’re paying this guy by the hour!”**

MILDRED:

**“If both me and Henry die, can we write in there somewhere that Flowerbelle will be taken care of?”**

(The spotlight returns to Old Fox who is watching this conference room interview from stage left. Old Fox addresses the audience.)

OLD FOX:

**“The thought had crossed my mind that if poor Mildred predeceased loving Henry, Flowerbelle’s kibbles would be spiked with arsenic before sundown. But Mildred was so distraught that tender diplomacy was required here.”**

(The spotlight returns to the three participants in the conference room.)

YOUNG FOX:

**“Mrs. Sopworth, that’s a lovely idea. If you like, I can insert a trust provision into one or both of your Wills reflecting that at your passing, funds will be set aside to pay a guardian to care for Flowerbelle until her demise.”**

HENRY:

**“Oh for the love of God! The legal work on this damn shelter cat is gonna cost a hundred bucks if it costs a cent!”**

MILDRED:

(She ignores Henry. Relieved, she takes a deep breath.) **“Thank you, Mr. Fox. Write the trust ... do whatever it takes ... to care for Flowerbelle until her ... passing.”** (She begins to cry again. The spotlight returns to Old Fox who addresses the audience.)

OLD FOX:

**“At this point in the conference I was reminded of a friend who paid a small fortune to fly**

her five dollar cat from JFK to Miami where she was staying for the winter. When the cat arrives, the guy in charge discovers that the precious cargo is dead, so he gets an identical looking cat from the local shelter. They throw the dead cat's carcass in the dumpster. My friend shows up an hour later, takes a look in the crate and says, "That's not my cat. I shipped Fluffy here for his funeral. He was dead."

(The spotlight returns to the conference room.)

MILDRED:

"Attorney Fox, I have another question."

YOUNG FOX:

"Don't hesitate to ask."

HENRY:

(Disgusted, he turns to Young Fox as he throws his hands up in the air.) "Easy for you to say, Bub. You ain't payin' the bill."

MILDRED:

(She ignores Henry.) "It's about our burial plot. It's in consecrated ground at Holy Savior Cemetery on Center Street. We bought it right after we got married, so we'd ... (She looks at Henry and in a battle-worn moment of reflection, she exhales loudly as she pats his arm) ... always be together."

HENRY:

"It was on special."

YOUNG FOX:

"It? Did you say *it*?"

MILDRED:

**“Yes. There’s really just one plot, you might say.”**

HENRY:

**“Yeah. Like a bunk bed. One body gets buried on top of the other. It’s a ‘two-fer’!”**

MILDRED:

**“And that’s why I have a question.”**

(Spotlight returns to Old Fox who address the audience.)

OLD FOX:

**“In all likelihood, most women out there in the audience have already figured out what Mildred was about to ask me. On the other hand, most of the fellows are probably still as clueless as our dear Henry.”**

(The spotlight returns to the conference room.)

YOUNG FOX:

**“What is your question?”**

MILDRED:

**“If I die first, can I be dug up and put on top?”**

YOUNG FOX:

**“I don’t quite understand.”**

MILDRED:

**“See, the plot’s a ‘double-decker.’ Somebody’s got to be on the bottom. So if I die before Henry, when he finally dies, I’d like to be dug up and moved to the top.”** (She tosses the tissue aside unceremoniously and looks Young Fox in the eye.) **“Get it?”**

HENRY:

(Outraged.) **“What could it possibly matter who’s on top and who’s ... I mean, you’re dead! The important thing is that we got a hell of a deal on this hole in the dirt – in goddamn consecrated ground. What could it possibly matter who goes in first?”**

MILDRED:

(Assertive) **“It matters to me!”**

HENRY:

**“Why? Damn it. Why?”**

MILDRED:

(Serious and irritated as she leans into her husband’s face.) **“Because for this whole hell-on-earth marriage, you’ve been on the top, and I’ve been on the bottom. I’m not spending eternity that way.”**

(Lights extinguish on Henry and Mildred who leave the stage.)

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(Old Fox moves closer to the audience as he begins a new story.)

OLD FOX:

**“There are those clients who discuss their Last Wills and Testaments without breaking a sweat. Some seem to enjoy the experience. Bernard and Mary McKenna come to mind.”**

(Spotlight illuminates Old Fox’s law office conference room. Old Fox walks over and greets Bernard and Mary McKenna, a handsomely dressed couple in their early forties. They smile and shake hands.)

OLD FOX:

**“Is this the first marriage for both of you?”**



BERNARD:

**“And the last!”** (They both laugh.)

OLD FOX:

**“Mrs. McKenna, what is your formal legal name – the name that will appear on your Last Will and Testament?”**

MARY:

(Thoughtfully.) **“That’s a good question. See, I was born ‘Mary Grace O’Brien, but when I was baptized, I was given the Christian name Mary Ann, in honor of the saint, and that’s the name the nuns used throughout school. It sorta stuck. I’m Mary Ann, except on my birth certificate.”**

OLD FOX:

(Old Fox takes notes as he repeats out loud.) **“Mary Grace McKenna, also known as Mary Ann McKenna. How many children do you have, Mary?”**

MARY:

**“Eight.”**

OLD FOX:

(Astonished) **“Eight!”** (Old Fox turns to the audience and address it as if imitating comedian Groucho Marx.) **“I like my cigar, but I take it out of my mouth once in a while.”**

(Old Fox turns back to the McKennas.)

MARY:

**“Seven girls and one boy. My son was the last arrival just three years ago.”**

OLD FOX:

**“Eight kids! Are any adopted?”**

BERNARD:

**“Nope. All home grown.”**

OLD FOX:

**“Are you able to remember their names?”**

MARY:

**“Most of the time.”**

OLD FOX:

**“Starting with the oldest, please give me the names and ages.”** (He writes as she speaks.)

MARY:

**“Certainly. Mary...17; Teresa...15; Catherine...13; Ann...11; Maureen...9; Grace...7; Erin...5; and finally there’s Murry.”**

OLD FOX:

**“O.K ... What are the middle initials of each child’s name?”**

(Mary hesitates, so Bernard responds.)

BERNARD:

**“Now that’s an interesting question. See, that’s what we call the girls – Mary, Teresa, Catherine, Ann, Maureen, Grace, and Erin. However, with six of the girls, actually those *are* their middle names. Otherwise things would get confusing.”**

OLD FOX:

(Stops taking notes and looks up.) **“I’m not quite sure I follow you.”**

BERNARD:

**“See, we had a *Novena*.”**

OLD FOX:

**“You bought a new car?”**

MARY:

(She places her hand on Bernard’s hand.) **“Perhaps I should explain. We’ll be married twenty years this April. We entered into the sacrament of marriage, so that we might be blessed with children, but after two years, we still awaited our first gift from God. And that’s when Dr. Gross broke the terrible news. I was infertile and could never have babies. I wept for a month.”**

BERNARD:

(Places his other hand on top of her hand.) **“She didn’t stop crying.”**

MARY:

**“There was only one thing left to do: a Novena.”**

OLD FOX:

**“A what?”**

MARY:

**“I entered into private prayer for nine days. I directed my devotions to St. Jude, the Patron of Hopeless Causes, seeking his assistance. I prayed that he intercede on my behalf and that I receive the consolation and help of heaven in my hour of need, and that I be made fertile. In return, I promised that if I were ever blessed with a daughter, I would name her after the Virgin Mary.”**

BERNARD:

**“It worked. We started popping out daughters like Chicklets.”**

MARY:

**“I never forgot my sacred promise. I named each daughter ‘Mary,’ but gave each one a different middle name so we could tell them apart: Mary Jude; Mary Teresa; Mary Catherine; Mary Ann; Mary Maureen; Mary Grace; and Mary Erin.”**

OLD FOX:

**“All your kids are named Mary?”**

BERNARD:

**“Except for Murry, our son.”**

OLD FOX:

**“Is that legal?”**

BERNARD:

**“I dunno. You’re the lawyer.”**

End of Scene Two. (Spotlight focuses upon the Statue of Justice).

### SCENE III

#### The Political Contribution

(Old Fox rummages through his “memorabilia chest” and produces a folded bank check. He unfolds the check and displays it to the audience. There is a hole about the size of a penny in the center of it. Young Fox is seated in his office near center stage. Located at right stage is another separate uninhabited office setting that will be used during this scene by several different individuals. Old Fox addresses the audience:)

#### OLD FOX:

**“Some lawyers want to become a judge, because they’re unable to make a living as an attorney, and they yearn to receive a steady paycheck. Before a lawyer can seriously consider running for judge, he or she must form a committee and amass a significant war chest. Let’s face it – what little money he has of his own he certainly isn’t going to squander on some costly pipe dream. So all the other lawyers within a 25 mile radius get touched up for a donation. Nobody wants to contribute, but attorneys are pragmatic. If the other lawyer facing you in court gave to the cause, he might receive a slightly larger share of impartial justice.**

**“Every time some judge retires or drops dead, the whole process begins anew. Finding this check (Old Fox holds up the check for viewing by the audience) after all these years brings to mind a contribution I didn’t want to make.”**

(The spotlight focuses upon Young Fox seated in his law office. The phone rings. Young Fox stops writing to take the call.)

YOUNG FOX:

**“Hello?”**

(The first spotlight remains on Old Fox. The second spotlight remains on Young Fox. The third spotlight focuses upon the third office setting where fast-talking, glib, insincere Jack Fleishman is seated, his feet propped up on his desk. He waves an un-smoked cigar around in his free hand as he talks. He is dressed like an unsavory used car salesman. A picture of a car and a blonde girlfriend hangs behind him.)

FLEISHMAN:

(Using an overly friendly manner as he talks.) **“Attorney Fox? Is that you, pal?”**

YOUNG FOX:

(Caught off guard.) **“I beg your pardon? Who is this?”**

FLEISHMAN:

**“Jack ... Jack Fleishman!”**

YOUNG FOX:

**“Who!?”**

FLEISHMAN:

**“You remember! ... Jack ... over at the Ford dealership ... Jack Fleishman. We met last year during high school graduation ceremonies. My neighbor’s daughter and your aunt’s grandson were in the same class.”**

(Young Fox takes the phone away from his ear and looks at it in disbelief.)

(Enthusiastically.) **“Listen, Esquire, I’m calling with good news! Ferdie Fedorik has decided to toss his hat into the ring and enter the May primary as a candidate for judge of the Court of Common Pleas. I’m proud as punch to advise you that Ferdie has chosen *me* to be**

**his campaign chairman, and that we're counting on your unwavering financial support."**

(Spotlight returns momentarily to Old Fox standing at stage left. He addresses the audience.)

OLD FOX:

**"Ferdie Fedorik! Not that horse's ass on late night cable with the singing divorce rhyme:**

**'If your spouse is a creep,**

**I'll get rid of him cheap.**

**He'll be left in the street**

**With no shoes on his feet!'**

**Yeah ... I remember ... a gavel in one hand, the scales of justice swinging back and forth in the other, imploring his poor insomniac audience to take up their weapons and give him a call ... This guy invented the marketing mix: TV, radio, billboards, newspapers – even fridge magnets that double as coupons!"**

YOUNG FOX:

(Astonished.) **"Fedorik's running for judge?"**

FLEISHMAN:

**"And he needs your help. Can I tell him you're good for a small contribution? Say five hundred?"**

OLD FOX:

(Addresses the audience.) **"Five hundred what? ... Did he mean five hundred American after-tax dollars? Was he insane? I hadn't collected a fee in two weeks. I had to think fast. What if this clown Fleishman sensed some hesitation on my part and that ass Fedorik actually got elected? On the other hand, this telephone call signaled the beginning of the election season. How many other lawyers would be announcing their candidacy? Proper**



**allotment of my limited resources required careful thought.”**

**YOUNG FOX:**

**“Jack ... can I call you back? I’m in the middle of something right now.”**

**FLEISHMAN:**

**“You betcha. And thanks for being on our team, Counselor.”**

(Spotlight extinguished on Fleishman, who exits the stage. Spotlight focuses upon Old Fox.)

**OLD FOX:**

**“Three days later my CPA, Harriet Gilsap, met me at the office to complete my taxes prior to April 15th.”**

(Spotlight on Young Fox and CPA Gilsap seated at a conference table in Young Fox’s office.)

**GILSAP:**

**“I just noticed something rather unusual, Larry.”**

**YOUNG FOX:**

**“What’s that, Harriet?”**

**GILSAP:**

**“Your political contributions. At first I thought I might be mistaken, but I checked your records twice regarding the last 15 years. Are you aware that not a single candidate for judge to whom you gave a donation ever ascended to the bench?”**

**YOUNG FOX:**

**“Not one of those guys ever got elected?”**

**GILSAP:**

**“Not exactly. I said they never ascended to the bench.”**

YOUNG FOX:

**“I don’t follow.”**

GILSAP:

**“Over the last 15 years, there have been numerous primaries and five elections for judge. You wrote out 35 checks to 35 different candidates.”**

YOUNG FOX:

**“Thirty-five!?”** (Spoken as an astonished question.)

GILSAP:

**“As far as I can tell, a couple of the candidates actually were elected, but they never got to wear their ... judicial robes.”**

(Gilsap hands Young Fox a list of names which Young Fox studies while Old Fox addresses the audience from stage left.)

OLD FOX:

**“Gilsap was right! Of the four lawyers who actually got elected, one was disbarred within a few weeks, one committed suicide when he received word his client escrow account was about to be audited, one drove drunk into a bridge abutment and never fully recovered, and the last one simply dropped dead – all before their official swearing-in ceremonies had taken place.”**

(Young Fox addresses Gilsap incredulously.)

YOUNG FOX:

**“I must have backed at least one winner!”** (Scratching his head in surprise.)

GILSAP:

**“Nope. You have a perfect batting average of zero. Anyone who cashes your check gets**

**struck by lightning.”**

OLD FOX:

(Addresses the audience as the spotlight returns to him.) **“The next day, that Jack Fleishman caught up with me again.”**

(The spotlight focuses upon Young Fox sitting alone in his office, telephone in hand. Fleishman is sitting alone in his office, telephone in hand, his feet propped up on his desk, unlit cigar in hand.)

FLEISHMAN:

**“Well, ‘Larr,’ it’s been almost a week. Can Ferdie Fedorik count on you? Surely you won’t miss a lousy 500 bucks.”**

YOUNG FOX:

**“Mr. Fleishman, you may not want my money.”**

FLEISHMAN:

(He laughs.) **“Beg your pardon?”**

YOUNG FOX:

**“My checks are cursed. Every single time I’ve made a political contribution to a judicial race, the candidate has failed to take office. Several have dropped dead prematurely.”**

FLEISHMAN:

(He laughs louder.) **“That’s a great line, Counselor. No one has ever handed me that excuse before. But seriously, I’d like to stop by your office today for a check. Are you on our team or not?”**

(Spotlight returns to Old Fox)

OLD FOX:

(Dejected.) **“So, I walked over to United Central Bank and put another stinkin’ 500 bucks on my credit line. Then I left a check with my receptionist. An hour later, someone stopped by my office and picked it up. I figured that’d be the last I’d hear about that particular contribution. But the very next afternoon I received a call from the Snydersville Police Department.”**

(Spotlight returns to Young Fox, phone in hand, seated alone in his office. Second spotlight simultaneously illuminates the office at stage right which is outfitted as a police department office. Police Captain Skidmore, dressed in uniform, is seated with phone in hand.)

SKIDMORE:

**“Is this Attorney Fox?”**

YOUNG FOX:

(Tentatively) **“Yes.”**

SKIDMORE:

**“This is Captain Skidmore of the Snydersville Police Department.”**

YOUNG FOX:

**“Good afternoon, Captain.”**

SKIDMORE:

**“Attorney Fox, did you recently write a check to the ‘Committee to Elect Ferdie Fedorik’?”**

OLD FOX:

(Addresses audience.) **“My heart skipped a beat.”**

YOUNG FOX:

(Rambling.) **“Listen, Captain, I can explain. See, I transferred the money from my line of**

**credit to cover that check. Sometimes it takes a day or two for the check to clear. Don't worry ... I'll make good on the – ”**

SKIDMORE:

(Interrupts.) **“Attorney Fox?”**

YOUNG FOX:

(Sheepishly) **“... Yes?”**

SKIDMORE:

**“I have some unsettling news. Yesterday, Mr. Fedorik entered the Merchants Trust Savings & Loan here in Snydersville. We think he was about to cash your check, but before he could hand it to the teller, a masked gunman entered the bank lobby. The video tape shows that Fedorik made a sudden move to put your check back into his breast pocket. The robber shot him dead. The bullet went right through your check.”**

YOUNG FOX:

**“Oh my God!”**

SKIDMORE:

**“I just wanted you to know we're keeping what remains of your check as evidence. It will be returned to you after criminal proceedings are concluded.”**

YOUNG FOX:

(Stunned.) **“Thank you ... Captain.”** (Slowly hangs up the phone - Young Fox is in a daze. He mutters to himself.) **“Thirty-six out of 36!”**

(Spotlight returns to Old Fox, who addresses the audience.)

OLD FOX:

**“The primary election began to heat up. Four other lawyers ultimately announced for one**

**open judgeship position. Among the candidates was Archibald Groman. Archibald was a vicious, untrustworthy, self-centered egomaniac who brought no honor to the practice of law. His ascension to the bench would be a travesty.”**

(Spotlight returns to Young Fox sitting in his law office. His phone rings. He picks the phone up with great hesitation as he tries to disguise his voice with a Latin accent. He speaks softly.)

YOUNG FOX:

(Attempts to disguise his voice) **“Bueno?”**

(Second spotlight falls on the office at stage right. Seated in this office is fast-talking, insincere, glib Guido Filiponi.)

FILIPONI:

**“Hi there, Counselor. Guido Filiponi here.”**

YOUNG FOX:

**“Who?”**

FILIPONI:

**“Filiponi. Yeah. About a year ago we met at a dance recital in Boyertown. My cousin’s granddaughter did a ballet solo.”**

YOUNG FOX:

**“She did what? Where?”** (Fox moves the phone away and looks at it in disgust.)

FILIPONI:

**“Listen, I have received the rare honor of being named chairman of the *Archibald Groman For Judge* Committee. I was wondering if you might – ”**

YOUNG FOX:

(Interrupts.) **“Mr. Filiponi, may I make a contribution to the campaign?”**

FILIPONI:

(Surprised.) **“Why, how very kind!”**

YOUNG FOX:

**“Not at all. My receptionist will write out a check for you today.”**

FILIPONI:

**“I will advise our next judge of your unhesitating generosity.”**

(Both parties hang up as Filiponi rubs his greedy hands together in triumph. The spotlight returns to Old Fox who addresses the audience.)

OLD FOX:

**“I could afford to be generous. Ferdie Fedorik hadn’t cashed my check. I wrote out a new check to Archibald Groman and left it with my receptionist. It was only for 25 bucks, but with my track record, that would probably be more than enough for this newest candidate to get hit by a bus.”**

End of Scene Three. (Spotlight focuses upon the Statue of Justice).

#### SCENE IV

##### My First Trial

(Old Fox rummages about in his “memorabilia box” and produces a beer bottle. He smiles knowingly as he shakes his head and addresses the audience. At center stage is a Courtroom.)

##### OLD FOX:

**“This forgotten beer bottle isn’t worth five cents. But I wouldn’t part with it for ‘round trip tickets to see the *International Ladies Doubles Mud Wrestling Quarter Finals*. You see, this lump of glass was introduced as the original exhibit at my very first trial nearly 40 years ago. I was just a kid – greener than a ficus – fresh out of law school. One day I made the mistake of sneaking into Courtroom Number 1 because I was curious to see what real lawyers and judges looked like. That proved to be my undoing.”**

(At center stage the audience sees Young Fox peek through a door of Courtroom Number 1. In the Courtroom sits presiding Judge Palmer at his elevated bench. There are two tables facing the judge’s bench: the defense table where defendant Joe Hummel sits staring into space whistling to himself; and the prosecutor’s table where Assistant District Attorney, Michael Ritter, is reviewing a pile of files. Ritter is only slightly older than Young Fox. Also present is a tipstaff and stenographer, and 12 empty seats for a potential jury panel.

As Young Fox enters the Courtroom, he trips, sending his briefcase to the floor as well. This commotion catches Judge Palmer’s attention, and he motions for Young Fox to approach the elevated bench. Startled, Young Fox picks himself up and then points to himself in a “Who? Me?” manner. Judge Palmer nods his head and so Young Fox cautiously approaches the judge as requested.)



JUDGE PALMER:

**“Pardon me – but haven’t I seen you some place before?”**

YOUNG FOX:

(Visibly shaking.) **“Yes ... Your Honor. Yesterday you signed my petition for admission into the County Bar.”**

JUDGE PALMER:

(With authority.) **“Right you are! You’re our newest lawyer. Less than 24 hours in the bar and already standing upright in court. Well done young man!”**

YOUNG FOX:

(Scared to death.) **“It’s an honor to be here, Judge.”**

JUDGE PALMER:

**“I’m glad you see it that way, son, because you won’t be leaving for a while.”**

YOUNG FOX:

(Confused.) **“I won’t?”**

JUDGE PALMER:

(Judge Palmer points at clueless Joe Hummel who is still whistling staring at the ceiling.) **“Do you see that gentleman seated at the defense table?”**

YOUNG FOX:

**“Uh ... defense table?”**

JUDGE PALMER:

**“Yes. His name is Joe Hummel, and now he’s your client. Be ready for trial in 15 minutes.”**

YOUNG FOX:

**“I have a client? (Looking left and right.) There’s going to be a trial?”**

JUDGE PALMER:

**“Court is in recess for 10 minutes.”** (Judge Palmer stands to withdraw into his chambers.)

TIPSTAFF:

**“All rise!”**

(Everyone stands, except Joe Hummel, about 52 years old, who tries to stand, but for some reason fails. Hummel, unshaven, is wearing a stained bowling shirt that doesn't quite cover a sizeable pot belly, pants that are discolored with grease stains, and old sneakers.)

TIPSTAFF:

(The tipstaff hands Young Fox a file.) **“Here's your client's criminal file.”**

YOUNG FOX:

**“Criminal file? I'm representing a real-live *criminal*?”** (Hummel overhears this statement.)

HUMMEL:

**“I didn't do it.”** (Hummel sticks out a pudgy hand. Young Fox approaches and cautiously shakes it.)

YOUNG FOX:

**“Hi ... I'm Larry Fox.”**

HUMMEL:

**“Hey kid. Are you my mouth piece? They said they'd find me a lawyer, beings how I want a trial, 'cause I didn't do it.”**

YOUNG FOX:

**“Didn't do what?”**

HUMMEL:

**“Drunk drivin'. I'm innocent. I want you to make sure I get Justice. Ok? Cuz ... oh yeah**

**... I didn't do it."**

YOUNG FOX:

**"Mr. Hummel, there may be a trial in a few minutes. The first order of business on such short notice is for me to find a bathroom. Fast."**

HUMMEL:

**"Nuff said, friend. (Young Fox turns away. Hummel yells out to him:) Yo Counselor – Did you know that Napoleon wore a red shirt in battle so if he was wounded no one could tell?"**

YOUNG FOX:

**(Turns to him.) "I beg your pardon?"**

HUMMEL:

**"Yeah. Same reason most lawyers wear brown pants - Now go find that bathroom, Tiger."**

**(Young Fox exits the courtroom as the spotlight returns to Old Fox at stage left who addresses the audience:)**

OLD FOX:

**"This was the first time anyone had ever requested that I secure *Justice* for him. I began to realize as I searched for the men's room, that I had unwittingly become part of something even more important. Perhaps my briefcase was as empty as my appointment calendar, but my lack of clients provided me with the opportunity to focus all my attention on this significant case. Together, Hummel and I were about to begin a noble journey seeking Truth, Justice and the American Way.**

**(Young Fox rushes back into the courtroom, and momentarily poses like Superman, his hands on his hips, his jaw jutting forward. He opens his suit coat, as if he were exposing a large red letter "S" printed on his shirt.)**

**“I sensed Hummel’s indignation at having been wrongfully accused. I took him at his word, of course, since no client would ever (slight pause as he looks at the audience) dare tell his lawyer a fib.”**

(Young Fox returns to the defense table and sits next to Hummel. Young Fox begins to page through Hummel’s criminal file.)

YOUNG FOX:

**“Mr. Hummel, this police report says that your car left the roadway at a high rate of speed and struck a tree located over 100 yards from the shoulder of the highway ...”**

HUMMEL:

**“I can explain that ...”**

YOUNG FOX:

**“... And that when the police arrived you appeared to be highly intoxicated ...”**

HUMMEL:

**“I can explain that, too ...”**

YOUNG FOX:

**“... And that a chemical analysis of your blood-alcohol level proved to be twice the legal limit ...”**

HUMMEL:

**“That may have been, Counselor, but I ain’t guilty. I’d never drink and drive. Are you kidding? Somebody might get hurt! Don’t you want to hear my side of the story?”**

OLD FOX:

(He addresses the audience:) **“Hummel’s sincerity touched me as I looked into his blue eyes, the left iris of which appeared to be just a shade darker than the right.”**

YOUNG FOX:

(Apologetically with a sigh.) **“Of course I do.”**

HUMMEL:

**“Now that’s more like it! Ok, it was a Saturday night, and I had just finished buying a case of beer over at the Skidsville Plaza. I was driving home, cold sober, minding my own business, when all of a sudden this deer darts out, not 500 feet in front of me, and starts staring into my high beams. I got exactly one second to decide whether or not I’m gonna slaughter Bambi. I’m an animal lover as much as the next guy, so I swerved right, lost control, went down the embankment into the woods, and hit a tree. And damned if I wasn’t in my wife’s new Buick!”**

YOUNG FOX:

**“Were there any witnesses?”**

HUMMEL:

**“Just the deer, but he fled the scene. Well, so there I sit in them dark woods watchin’ steam rise from the busted radiator, thinkin’, how am I gonna tell Ruth? And then it hit me – it sure would be nice to have somethin’ to calm my nerves ‘til the cops show up ... ”**

YOUNG FOX:

**“The beer?”**

HUMMEL:

**“Right you are, Counselor. I figured, why not have a snort or two just to brace me? So, I looked behind me in the back seat and glory be, not a single bottle was broken! I pops one open, and boy it tasted good. So did the second.”**

YOUNG FOX:

**“How many beers exactly did it take to help you ... ‘relax’?”**

HUMMEL:

**“Twelve. Maybe 15? Who counts anyway? So yeah ... right ... there I am sitting behind the wheel, minding my own business, when this cop shows up, shines a light in my face, says I’m drunk, and arrests me. Imagine! Me?! *Now* do you understand why I want a trial? And Justice? But here’s the proof that I’m an innocent man – ”**

(Judge Palmer re-enters the Courtroom from a door located behind the elevated bench.)

TIPSTAFF:

**“All rise!”**

(Everyone stands. Hummel struggles unsuccessfully to stand. The judge takes his seat.)

TIPSTAFF:

**“Please be seated.”**

OLD FOX:

(Addresses the audience.) **“What you see here, by the way, is all that tipstuffs ever do: they announce when people should sit or stand, four ... maybe five times a day. I suppose this took some training, since only the tipstuffs ever seem to know precisely when a judge is about to make an appearance. And please bear in mind, for such dedicated service, tipstuffs receive accrued credit toward a county pension, full health benefits, two weeks’ paid vacation per year, use of a government issued vehicle, and best of all a brass badge that gets them in and out of the Courthouse without having a security wand shoved down their pants.”**

JUDGE PALMER:

**“Gentlemen, have you been able to dispose of this matter?”**

(A lawyer, Michael Ritter, rises from the prosecution table to address the judge. He is slightly older than Young Fox, and wears a three-piece suit. He projects a studious, almost serious demeanor. He’s experienced. He is the confident assistant district attorney assigned to prosecute the Hummel case.)

RITTER:

**“May we have the Court’s indulgence for a moment, Your Honor?”**

JUDGE PALMER:

**“Certainly.”**

(The judge folds his hands and stares in the direction of the unseen off-stage jury panel, while Ritter approaches Young Fox and Hummel. Ritter confidently extends a hand in Young Fox’s direction. They shake hands.)

RITTER:

**“I’m Assistant District Attorney Michael Ritter. Are you Hummel’s lawyer?”**

YOUNG FOX:

**“Evidently.”**

RITTER:

(Sarcastically and with an air of experience.) **“Congratulations. Now listen ... I’m feeling benevolent today. And, of course, the judge has his regularly scheduled golf game at his country club this afternoon. So, I’m going to offer your client a super duper Thursday morning deal that is good for exactly five minutes and five minutes only. If he hesitates, he goes to jail. Got it?”**

HUMMEL:

(Addresses Ritter forcefully.) **“Excuse me. Do you work on commission?”**

RITTER:

**“And I'll ignore that comment. (Ritter turns back to Young Fox as if Hummel doesn't exist.) Hummel here is going to plead guilty to operating a motor vehicle while intoxicated. In return, I agree to his probation, a \$100 fine on the drunk driving charge, a \$50 fine on the reckless driving charge, and a six-month suspension of his driving privileges. Best of all, everybody, including the jury panel, gets to go home, since this is the very last case on the criminal docket this week. I'll tell His Honor we've got a deal.”**

HUMMEL:

**“Not so fast, pal. What if I'm innocent?”**

RITTER:

**“Then you'd be the first person sitting in this courthouse who was. (They stare at each other in silence.) O.K. O.K. O.K., you drive a hard bargain. I'll tell you what. I'll drop the reckless driving charge and the \$50 fine. That's the best I can do. Now you guys are keeping the judge waiting. And that's just stupid.”**

HUMMEL:

(Points to Young Fox.) **“I need a moment alone with ‘Newbie’ here.”**

(Ritter returns to the prosecution table and methodically places all the papers into his file, and stuffs the file in his briefcase, confident he has reached a deal. Hummel turns to Young Fox.)

HUMMEL:

**“Would you plead guilty to something you didn't do?”**

(There is no time for Young Fox to respond.)



JUDGE PALMER:

**“Gentlemen, the hour is late. Please approach the bench.”** (Ritter and Young Fox come forward and stand before the judge.) **“Do we have a plea?”**

RITTER:

**“Yes, Your Honor.”**

YOUNG FOX:

**“I don’t believe so, Your Honor.”** (The judge and Ritter exchange incredulous glances.)

JUDGE PALMER:

**“Mr. Ritter, will you excuse us for a moment?”**

RITTER:

(Ritter turns away with knowing raised eyebrows.) **“Certainly, Your Honor.”** (Ritter returns to his seat and begins to unpack his briefcase. Young Fox stands alone before the judge who lowers his voice.)

JUDGE PALMER:

**“Mr. Fox, when I asked you to be ‘ready for trial’ a few minutes ago, that was just my little way of bringing some humor into an otherwise dull day. I didn’t expect you to take me seriously. If your client pleads, we can all go home, including Mr. Hummel. If you are misguided enough to test the limits of this judicial system, and you fail in that endeavor, Hummel will get six months in the slammer, and I’ll find some way to arrange that you are his cellmate. Am I making myself clear, Counselor?”**

YOUNG FOX:

(Naively.) **“Well, you see, Judge, my client is innocent, and he wants Justice.”**

TIPSTAFF:

(The tipstaff produces a handkerchief and feigns a sneeze as she gruffly snorts into the handkerchief:) **“Bullshit!”**

JUDGE PALMER:

(Forces an exhale.) **“If it’s Justice he wants, then tell him to live long enough to see his children have thankless brats of their own. You see, counselor, Lady Justice hopped the last tour bus to the casinos. She bagged jury duty to play the slots.”**

YOUNG FOX:

(Sheepishly.) **“May I have just a moment longer with my client, Your Honor?”**

JUDGE PALMER:

(Benevolently.) **“Take all the time you need.”**

(Young Fox returns to Hummel who is still seated at the defense table.)

HUMMEL:

**“Let me guess – the judge wants me to take the deal.”**

YOUNG FOX:

**“How did you know?”**

HUMMEL:

**“Do I look like an idiot? (Pause.) Never mind. Just tell me this: would you plead guilty if you was innocent?”**

YOUNG FOX:

(Ponders for a moment.) **“No, Mr. Hummel, I wouldn’t.”**

HUMMEL:

(Smiles with a sigh of relief.) **“Then I’ve got the right lawyer.”** (Hummel shakes Young Fox’s

shoulders.) **Time to pick a jury, don't you think?"**

(Young Fox returns to waiting Judge Palmer at the bench.)

YOUNG FOX:

(Hesitatingly.) **"May it please the Court, my client requests a jury trial."**

JUDGE PALMER:

(The judge displays a blank disbelieving stare.) **"I'm about to miss my 2:00 p.m. golf game for the first time in seven years. Do you have any idea what the pre-paid greens fee is at my club? By the way, how long do you think this trial will take?"**

YOUNG FOX:

**"I was hoping YOU might know, Judge. This is my first trial."**

JUDGE PALMER:

(Dejected.) **"Well, I suppose we better pick a jury."**

YOUNG FOX:

(Apologetic.) **"I am truly sorry for interfering with your golf plans, Your Honor. How can I make it up to you? (The judge perks up slightly and grins.) How? Just tell me."**

(The judge motions with his finger for Young Fox to draw closer. Fox rises on his tip toes.)

JUDGE PALMER:

(The judge points off-stage.) **"See that young lady seated in the first row of potential jurors. She's got the biggest set of – (The judge motions to his own chest, exasperated.) Oh, you know what I mean. Anyway, Ritter is already well aware of my appreciation of such ... uh ... natural wonders, and has enough common sense to make sure she's on the jury. Understood?"**

YOUNG FOX:

(Fox discreetly turns around, takes a look, and again faces the judge.) **“Yes, Your Honor.”**

(Young Fox returns to Hummel at the Defense table.)

OLD FOX:

(Addresses the audience:) **“Picking a jury wasn’t that difficult. Ritter and I positioned Ms. Hooters front and center, whereupon the judge’s prior agitation quickly subsided as he quietly stared in her direction. Any lingering thoughts about golf and tee times appeared, for the moment, to have been replaced by ... other interests. It was time to start the trial, so Ritter called Pennsylvania State Trooper Martin Johnson as his first witness.”**

(As he speaks, the Trooper makes his way to the witness stand, is sworn in by the stenographer, and adjusts his tie. Assistant District Attorney Ritter approaches and shuffles his papers.)

**“You know... all state troopers attend State Trooper School. That’s where they learn to square their jaws and to swagger. They are also taught that defendants who are arrested for drunk driving (Old Fox makes air quotes with his fingers) ‘walk with a staggered gait,’ ‘have slurred speech,’ ‘wear disheveled clothing,’ and ‘possess bloodshot eyes.’ The phraseology is always quite impressive and is very effective when heard from the witness stand.”**

(The tipstaff swears in the trooper as he places his left hand on the Bible and his right hand in the air. He then sits in the witness’s chair.)

TROOPER:

**“On the evening in question, I was called to the scene of a one-car accident. Upon my arrival, I noted a single white male sitting behind the wheel of a late model Buick that appeared to have been totaled. What was left of the front end of the car was wrapped**

**around the trunk of a large tree. The headlights beamed into the woods as steam rose from the radiator and silent engine. The driver did not appear to be injured. To the contrary, he seemed rather jovial and offered me a beer.”**

RITTER:

(Holds up a bottle.) **“Is this the bottle?”**

TROOPER:

**“Yes.”**

RITTER:

**“Your Honor, I offer this bottle as Prosecution Exhibit number one.”**

JUDGE PALMER:

**“Any objection. Mr. Fox?”**

YOUNG FOX:

(Stands and appears to be caught off guard.) **“Objection?”**

JUDGE PALMER:

(Motions for Young Fox to sit down.) **“Very well. It is admitted.”**

RITTER:

**“Please continue, Trooper.”**

TROOPER:

**“I asked the driver, who identified himself as Joseph Hummel, to exit the vehicle in preparation for a field sobriety test. But Hummel was unable to perform any simple maneuvers.”**

(Ritter continues with his direct examination.)

RITTER:

**“Did anything noteworthy occur as the defendant emerged from his car?”**

TROOPER:

**“Yes. Had I not caught him, he would have fallen on his face. It was then that I noticed that his shirt was moist with beer. His breath smelled as if he had been drinking. I found 15 empty beer bottles in the back seat.”**

(Hummel tugs at Young Fox’s sleeve as he loudly whispers.)

HUMMEL:

**“What he says is true. I never litter. It ain’t legal.”**

TROOPER:

**“I asked the defendant to touch his nose with his right third finger. He was unable to do so. His speech was slurred, and he had a staggered gait. His clothes were disheveled. I directed my flashlight into the defendant’s eyes. They were bloodshot from drinking.”**

(Judge Palmer snaps his attention from Ms. Hooters momentarily, and turns to Young Fox.)

JUDGE PALMER:

**“Mr. Fox?”**

YOUNG FOX:

(Stands up ram rod straight.) **“Yes, Your Honor?”**

JUDGE PALMER:

**“Don’t you want to object? Right now ... it’s really a perfect time for you to object.”**

YOUNG FOX:

**“It is?”**

JUDGE PALMER:

**“Trust me on this one, counselor. I won’t lead you astray.”**

YOUNG FOX:

(Tentatively.) **“I object?”**

JUDGE PALMER:

**“Why?”**

YOUNG FOX:

**“I’m not quite sure, Your Honor.”**

JUDGE PALMER:

**“Objection sustained! Whether the defendant’s eyes were bloodshot as a result of the imbibing of alcohol, or whether that condition arose for some other reason requires a medical determination beyond the field of expertise of this witness. The jury is instructed to disregard the trooper’s statement that drinking alone caused the defendant’s eyes to become bloodshot.”**

(Young Fox sits down in a heap, emotionally drained.)

HUMMEL:

**“That was fantastic, Counselor.”**

OLD FOX:

(Addresses the audience:) **“And it truly was. A surgeon always remembers his first appendectomy, a pilot his first solo flight. I would never forget my first objection, which was, indeed, sustained. It didn’t matter that the ruling came from a judge who was more interested in a set of knockers. The important thing was that I was batting a thousand.”**

(Hummel taps Young Fox on the shoulder.)

HUMMEL:

**“What that trooper just said about my eyes – it ain’t true. My eyes wasn’t bloodshot. I have proof. It’s what I’ve been trying’ at tell ya about all morning’, but – ”**

YOUNG FOX:

**(Whispering.) “Please, Mr. Hummel. Not now. I’m trying to concentrate on this important trial testimony.”**

RITTER:

**“Trooper, tell the jury what happened next.”**

TROOPER:

**“When I told the defendant his eyes were bloodshot, he responded that my eyes appeared to be slightly ‘glazed,’ and he asked if I had stopped at a Dunkin’ Donuts on my way to the scene.”**

RITTER:

**“Now, Trooper, you have testified about your observations of the defendant, the smell of alcohol, the defendant’s slurred speech, staggered gait, disheveled clothing, bloodshot eyes, and your field sobriety tests. Were you able to make a determination as to whether the defendant was inebriated to such a degree as to render him incapable of safely operating a motor vehicle?”**

**(Judge Palmer stops staring at Ms. Hooters again and turns to Young Fox.)**

JUDGE PALMER:

**“Mr. Fox?”**

**(Young Fox jumps to his feet and stands ram rod straight.)**



YOUNG FOX:

**“Yes, Your Honor?”**

JUDGE PALMER:

**“Aren't you going to object?”**

YOUNG FOX:

(With authority in his voice.) **“You bet. I object!”**

JUDGE PALMER:

**“On what grounds?”**

YOUNG FOX:

**“Grounds? Do I need grounds ... again?”**

JUDGE PALMER:

**“Overruled. I'll allow the question. The totality of the circumstances permits the witness to formulate an opinion.”**

(Young Fox slumps back into his chair, dejected.)

HUMMEL:

(Consoling.) **“Don't take it personal or nothin'. You're still battin' 500.”**

TROOPER:

(Emphatically.) **“In my professional opinion, the defendant was incapable of safe driving.”**

RITTER:

(Turns to Young Fox.) **“You may cross-examine.”**

(Young Fox sits at the defense table, wondering what to do.)

JUDGE PALMER:

**“Do you wish to inquire of this witness, Mr. Fox?”**

(Hummel tugs at Young Fox's sleeve and whispers.)

HUMMEL:

**“The cop is lying’. My eye wasn’t bloodshot!”**

YOUNG FOX:

(Whispers to client.) **“How would you know? It was dark and you were on your 15th beer!”**

HUMMEL:

(Whispers back to Young Fox as Hummel points.) **“Cause this here eye – the left one – is fake. It’s made of glass and don’t never get bloodshot! I bought the cheaper model that don’t come with them little hand-painted red veins.”**

(Young Fox stares into Hummel’s eyes, first the left, then the right, and repeats this exercise several times.)

JUDGE PALMER:

(Impatient) **“Do you have any questions for this witness?”**

YOUNG FOX:

(Stands up.) **“Yes, Your Honor.”** (Young Fox walks toward the trooper.) **“Tell me, Trooper, how did you determine that my client’s eyes were bloodshot? Wasn’t it dark at the accident scene?”**

TROOPER:

(Emphatic) **“I had a flashlight powered with six fresh batteries. I beamed it in his face.”**

YOUNG FOX:

**“And what did you see?”**

TROOPER:

**“Little red veins, lots of them, going in all directions, like what happens when you drink too**

**much.”**

YOUNG FOX:

**“Were there multiple red veins in the left eye?”**

TROOPER:

**“Yes.”**

YOUNG FOX:

**“Were there multiple red veins in the right eye?”**

TROOPER:

**“Yes.”**

RITTER:

(Whining and sarcastic as he rises from his seat.) **“Your Honor, this question has been asked and answered several times. The evidence is clear that the defendant’s eyes were indeed bloodshot.”**

JUDGE PALMER:

(Impatiently looks at his watch.) **“Agreed. Might we move on, Mr. Fox?”**

YOUNG FOX:

**“I’m done with this witness.”** (Young Fox returns to Hummel at the defense table.)

RITTER:

**“The prosecution rests.”**

JUDGE PALMER:

(Sarcastically drawn out.) **“Marvelous! Will we be putting on a defense today, Mr. Fox?”**

HUMMEL:

(Tugging at Young Fox’s sleeve, begging in a whisper.) **“Put me on the stand. I’ve been**

**waitin' four long months for Justice. I ain't waitin' no more."**

OLD FOX:

(Addresses the audience:) **"Up to this point in time, I had not seen my client walk. He had patiently remained seated at the defense table since the moment I had first been shanghaied into court."**

(Hummel struggles to stand, and laboriously makes his unsteady way to the witness box where he raises his hand and is sworn in by the tipstaff.)

**"Hummel struggled to stand. His balance was shaky at best. He made his unsteady way to the witness stand, where he labored to climb just a single step prior to being sworn in as a witness. I wanted to present my questions in a logical sequence, but Hummel seemed to be in a hurry, a trait the judge found endearing."**

HUMMEL:

(Hummel addresses the jury.) **"I don't got no 'staggered gait.' What I got is a wooden leg. It makes me walk funny, like I'm gonna fall on my face.**

(Hummel knocks on his left thigh with his fist. A hollow wooden sound echos throughout the courtroom.)

**And I wasn't disheveled. The night of the accident, I was wearin' my lucky bowling shirt, just like I am now. (Proudly smoothing his shirt.) Unwashed for five years and countin'. And my speech wasn't 'slurred.' On the night of the accident, my head hit the dashboard, and my false teeth shot out of my mouth from the impact. And my eyes wasn't bloodshot neither. Just the right one gets bloodshot."**

YOUNG FOX:

**"Why is that, Mr. Hummel?"**

HUMMEL:

**“Cause the left one is made of glass.”**

(Hummel hits himself on the back of his head, causing his left eye to pop out of its socket. He catches the eye in mid-air and displays it to the jury which gasps.)

OLD FOX:

(Addresses the audience.) **“I couldn’t tell what was unraveling more quickly – Hummel’s body or the prosecutor’s case. The jury ultimately returned in 15 minutes with an acquittal. His Honor would get to his golf game with time to spare. Hummel had found Justice. Ritter hadn’t convicted an innocent man. Ms. Hooters accepted a dinner invitation from the tipstaff, and I gained my first defense victory. The judge released the jury and asked me to approach the bench.”**

(Young Fox stands before Judge Palmer.)

JUDGE PALMER:

**“You did a good job today, son. If ever I need a lawyer to handle another case, I’ll certainly ... keep an eye out for you.”**

End of Scene Four. (Spotlight focuses upon the Statue of Justice.)

## SCENE V

### Parish Visitation

(Old Fox rummages through his “memorabilia box” and produces a small black book which he displays to the audience.)

#### OLD FOX:

**“As a lawyer, I am often involved in territorial disputes. Did someone trespass? Is a fence on the wrong property line? This is a copy of the New Testament. This particular volume is special because it was given to me by a priest who ultimately helped to clarify a jurisdictional dispute regarding who may enter the Kingdom of God. It’s an issue that is often on the minds of both non-Catholics such as myself, and Catholics such as my wife, Teresa. The question was raised during our annual parish visitation.”**

(The spotlight illuminates Young Fox’s home living room. Young Fox and his wife, Teresa, are present. Teresa is busy vacuuming the floor as Young Fox sits reading the newspaper.)

#### YOUNG FOX:

**“That was a lovely dinner, Teresa. Why don’t you sit down and relax.”**

#### TERESA:

**“No time. Tonight is parish visitation.”**

#### YOUNG FOX:

**“Parish what? Who’s visiting?”**

#### TERESA:

**“Monsignor. Move your feet.”** (She picks up Young Fox’s feet, vacuums, and lets his feet slam back down.) **“He’ll be here in 10 minutes. I want everything to look perfect.”**

YOUNG FOX:

(Startled) **“Monsignor! What Monsignor? You didn’t say anything about a Monsignor.”**

TERESA:

(With a “you should know this” tone.) **“I didn’t? Well, the visitation schedule is listed in the parish newsletter.”**

YOUNG FOX:

**“We get a parish newsletter?”**

(The doorbell rings.)

TERESA:

**“Open the door, dear. Monsignor must be a little early.”**

YOUNG FOX:

(Young Fox speaks as he walks to the door.) **“Why do they call it ‘parish visitation’ if we’re not visiting a parish?”**

TERESA:

**“Open the door, dear. You never want to keep a Monsignor waiting.”**

(Young Fox opens the door. A priest, perhaps 60 years of age, stands at the door, with Bible in hand.)

MONSIGNOR:

**“Good evening, my son.”**

YOUNG FOX:

**“Won’t you come in, uh ... Reverend ... Father ... Monsignor. (Uncomfortable pause here.)  
We’ve been expecting you!”**

MONSIGNOR:

**“Thank you.”** (He spots Teresa.) **“And how are you, Teresa, my dear?”**

TERESA:

**“Good evening, Monsignor Matthews. I’d like you to meet my husband Larry.”** (They shake hands.)

MONSIGNOR:

(Unemotional and bored) **“A pleasure. I don’t recall seeing you in church, Mr. Fox. I hope all is well in this blessed household.”**

YOUNG FOX:

**“You bet. Won’t you sit down, Monsignor, or do we kneel first?”** (He starts to bend one knee while speaking in a trailing off manner that’s ignored by both Monsignor and Teresa, so he stands up again.)

MONSIGNOR:

**“Thank you. Please, let’s sit.”** (Young Fox begins to sit, then stands back up until Monsignor first takes a seat.) **Now let’s see if my records are up to date.** (Monsignor produces a small note pad.) **You folks have children?”**

TERESA:

**“Not yet. Just two cats.”**

MONSIGNOR:

(Emotionless.) **“How nice. And Teresa, you are attending Mass on a weekly basis?”**

TERESA:

**“Yes. And sometimes Larry joins me.”**



MONSIGNOR:

(Emotionless.) **“How nice. I see, Teresa, that you came from our neighboring parish, Our Lady Help Of Christians.”**

TERESA:

**“Yes, I attended junior high school there.”**

MONSIGNOR:

**“How nice. Is there anything I might do for you at this time? Would you like your home blessed?”**

TERESA:

**“Yes, Monsignor.”**

(Monsignor stands, produces a small hand held wand with attached silver ball, and waves it toward the wall. It projects some holy water.)

MONSIGNOR:

**“Bless this house, Oh Lord, and all who dwell within it.”** (Monsignor turns back to Teresa.)

**“Is there anything else I might do for you before I go?”**

TERESA:

(Hesitates. She’s holding back, looking side to side. She purses her lips.) **“You’re too kind, Monsignor. It was good of you to stop in this evening.”**

MONSIGNOR:

**“You are quite welcome. Well, I must be off. I do have a few other visitations in the neighborhood tonight.”** (Monsignor turns toward the door.)

TERESA:

**“Monsignor, on second thought, there is ... one question, if you have just a moment.”**

MONSIGNOR:

**“Yes, my child.”**

TERESA:

**“When I die, will my two cats join me in heaven?”**

OLD FOX:

(Addresses the audience.) **“This question intrigued me, since I noted that my wife was not as concerned about *my* heavenly post mortem reunion with her as she was with that of her cats. Nonetheless, Monsignor was obviously a pro, and I was certain he had been asked this question dozens of times before. Surely he knew what this loyal church-going young woman desperately needed to hear. I waited for the learned Monsignor to come to the comfort of one of his flock.”**

MONSIGNOR:

(Hesitatingly.) **“My child ... Animals don’t possess souls, and therefore cannot enter the kingdom of heaven. In point of fact, the cat is not mentioned once in the entire Bible. Only ancient pagan Egyptians worshiped them.”**

TERESA:

(Dejected, Teresa speaks softly.) **“... Oh ... It’s just that I thought – ”**

MONSIGNOR:

(Abruptly interrupts) **“Any other questions?”**

TERESA:

**“... It’s just that I thought – ”**

MONSIGNOR:

(Interrupts) **“Then I wish you both a blessed evening.”**

(Monsignor shakes hands and leaves. Teresa shuts the door behind him, and turns to Young Fox.)

TERESA:

(Distressed.) **“It isn’t fair. Mr. Mittens and Sir Walter have the same right as any dumb human to go to heaven.”** (She starts to cry.)

YOUNG FOX:

**“Teresa, I assure you that your cats *will* go straight to heaven.”**

TERESA:

**“How the heck would you know about heaven? You’re not a priest. You’re a lawyer, for God’s sake!”** (Shakes her head in distress. For the rest of this paragraph, Teresa’s basically talking to herself.) **“The boys are probably already in bed. I’m going upstairs to comfort them. That church better send somebody else next year for parish visitation, if they know what’s good for them.** (Mumbling to herself now...) **Tell me my cats can’t go to heaven ... I’ll tell you what’s in that envelope next Sunday ...”** (She’s ranting to herself as the lights dim, and a single spotlight focuses upon Old Fox.)

OLD FOX:

(Addresses the audience:) **“And so it was that Monsignor Matthews never again graced our doorstep. A year raced by, and I had all but forgotten that unsettling evening.”**

(Spotlight returns to the living room, where Young Fox is sitting reading the newspaper. Teresa is vacuuming the floor.)

YOUNG FOX:

**“Teresa, that was a lovely dinner. Why don’t you sit down and relax?”**

TERESA:

**“No time. Tonight’s parish visitation.”**

YOUNG FOX:

**“Again? Why didn’t you tell me? Wasn’t the priest just here?”**

TERESA:

**“A year ago. And all visitation schedules are posted in the parish newsletter.”** (The doorbell rings.) **That must be Father Benedict now. Open the door, Dear. You don’t want to keep a priest waiting.”**

(Young Fox opens the door. A very young priest stands at the door with Bible in hand.)

OLD FOX:

(Addresses the audience.) **“This priest might have been 25 years old. There are many mysteries in Catholicism. Calling someone your same age ‘Father’ is one of them. If this priest referred to me as ‘my son,’ I’d choke.”**

PRIEST:

**“Good evening, my son.”** (Young Fox coughs.) **“Is this the Fox residence?”**

YOUNG FOX:

**“Yes. Please come in. I’m Larry Fox.”**

PRIEST:

**“Nice to make your acquaintance. I’m Father Benedict. (Teresa approaches.) And you must be Teresa.”**

TERESA:

**“Welcome, Father, and thank you for coming. (Young Fox begins to sit down.) Please sit down.”** (Young Fox stands up again, and waits for the priest to sit. Then he and Teresa sit

down.)

PRIEST:

**“Please forgive me. I recently graduated from the seminary, and was assigned to this parish just a week ago. I’m still learning names and faces. I’m originally from the coal regions up North.”**

YOUNG FOX:

**“No wonder I haven’t seen you in church.”**

PRIEST:

**“Well, that will soon change. I’ll certainly look forward to seeing you every Sunday, Mr. Fox. Now let’s confirm that my information is up-to-date. (The priest takes a small notebook out of his pocket and studies it.) You folks have children?”**

TERESA:

**“Not yet. Just two cats.”**

PRIEST:

**(Excited.) “You do? I have a cat of my own, Cleo. My *best* friend.”**

TERESA:

**(Excited.) “I never met a priest before who owned a cat!”**

PRIEST:

**“It’s not easy keeping one at the seminary. You know, Cleo wasn’t allowed to meow during silent devotions. (He waits for them to laugh.) Would you like me to bless your house?”**

TERESA:

**“Yes, Father.”**

(Father Benedict produces a small hand-held wand from his pocket, and sprinkles some water on a wall.)

PRIEST:

**“Bless this house, oh Lord, and all who dwell therein. (The priest turns back to them.) Now tell me, is there anything I might discuss with you tonight before I go?”**

YOUNG FOX:

**“How do you keep that device from leaking in your pocket?”**

TERESA:

(She makes a motion with her hands that suggests Young Fox should not ask any further questions.) **“As a matter of fact, Father, there is. When I die, will my two cats join me in heaven?”**

PRIEST:

(Without hesitation.) **“Of course, Teresa. And they will probably play with my cat, until we get there. Won’t that day be glorious?”**

TERESA:

(Breaths a sigh of relief and smiles.) **“Father, I wonder if you would like to come by sometime next week for a home cooked meal?”**

PRIEST:

**“That sounds wonderful. We can coordinate our schedules after church on Sunday, right Mr. Fox?”**

OLD FOX:

(Addresses the audience as the priest leaves.) **“Again I found it interesting that my eternal fate had not been discussed and was still up for grabs. That night Teresa slept soundly for**

**the first time in two years, a look of contentment on her docile face. The cats nesting in our bed grinned, as they purred. Unlike Monsignor Matthews, young Father Benedict possessed a wisdom far beyond his 25 years. He may have just arrived in town, but he already sensed the pressing spiritual needs of his faithful flock. As a result, he enjoyed a home cooked meal each month during his tenure in our little parish.**

**“Young Father Benedict was a practitioner of church law; I of worldly civil law. Yet despite the difference in our reference books, we both knew without hesitation there is sufficient room among the heaven-bound for a few extra cats.”**

**End of Scene Five. (Spotlight focuses upon the Statue of Justice.)**

## SCENE VI

### The Art of Dance

(Old Fox stands at stage left. Mid-stage is Young Fox's law office conference room. At stage right is a strip club bar. Later stage right transitions into a zoning hearing room. Old Fox rummages through his "memorabilia box" and pulls out a red garter belt and a thong that he displays to the audience.)

### OLD FOX:

**"I don't know what *Victoria's Secret* was or is, but as you're about to see after the intermission, I had a little secret rendezvous of my own and this bubble gum scented garter belt and these silk panties are the proof that I was there and survived a barrage of gyrating fannies and bouncing boobs – and lived to tell about it."**

END OF ACT I

INTERMISSION



## ACT II

(Spotlight focuses upon Young Fox's office conference room. Seated at the conference table are Young Fox, and Monica and Fernando Ramos. Monica and Fernando are both about 30 years old. Monica is attractive, and wears seductive clothing and excessive make-up. Fernando dresses like a pimp, with a leather jacket, pink shirt open at the collar and no tie. His greasy hair is slicked back over his head. He has a diamond pinky ring and a moustache. He is carrying an extra long fancy walking cane. They are both animated and excited, but serious.)

YOUNG FOX:

**"My secretary says you folks wish to purchase some real estate."**

MONICA:

(Animated.) **"Yes! The Pink Alligator is up for sale. We have to act fast before someone else grabs it."**

YOUNG FOX:

**"The Pink Alligator? What's the Pink Alligator?"**

FERNANDO:

(Leading.) **"It's a bar ...?"**

MONICA:

(Monica interrupts. Leading further.) **"... with dancers ...?"**

FERNANDO:

(Fernando interrupts. Still leading.) **"... girls dance on the bar."**

YOUNG FOX:

**"Girls? What girls?"**

MONICA:

**“The girls who slide down the pole.”**

YOUNG FOX:

**“Pole?”**

MONICA:

**“Yeah. Pole. You know – floor to ceiling. Woosh!”** (She makes a sliding movement with her hand.)

YOUNG FOX:

**“A strip club? You’re purchasing a – ?”**

MONICA:

(Monica interrupts. Affronted.) **“We prefer to call it a gentleman’s club. It’s all about self-expression. Similar to ballet, people pay to enjoy our style of ... interpretive dance.”**

YOUNG FOX:

(Chastised.) **“Oh. Yes. Of course. I didn’t mean to suggest otherwise.”**

MONICA:

**“We have an ... ‘enlightened’ clientele, and our form of artistic free speech *is* protected by the Constitution of this great country. Now are you going to help us purchase this bar, or are you one of those hypocrites who has to hop a plane to Vegas to get your rocks off?”**

(Spotlight returns to Old Fox as he addresses the audience.)

OLD FOX:

**“I’m a lawyer, so I’ve been accused of a lot of things – but never of being a Vegas sleazebag. To the contrary, I went to law school so that our precious freedoms would continue to be protected. Freedom of religion. Freedom of assembly. Freedom of speech.**

**And freedom to slide down a greased pole and dance naked on a beer-soaked mahogany bar. No siree. No one was going to call me a constitutional prude.”**

(Spotlight returns to Young Fox’s conference room.)

YOUNG FOX:

**“Ms. Ramos, if you want to purchase the Pink Alligator, you’ve retained the right lawyer. It’s not my job to pass judgment. My responsibility is to oversee the acquisition of this business, and I’m happy to do so.”**

FERNANDO:

(Relieved.) **“Good. What’s next?”**

YOUNG FOX:

**“You’ll need an agreement of sale that outlines the terms of acquisition. If you’re buying the real estate, business assets, liquor license, inventory, good will, and a covenant not to compete, those assets must be clearly defined, the financing and tax implications must be evaluated, as must the owner’s accounting records. Who is the owner?”**

MONICA:

**“Amos ... Amos Krazaluski. We’re good friends. I’ve danced there for years, and he says he’d rather sell the place to me than put the ‘Alligator’ on the open market with a realtor. It’s a gold mine. A real gold mine.”**

YOUNG FOX:

**“Why is he selling?”**

MONICA:

**“He’s been in the business almost 40 years, and he’s exhausted. He says he’s seen too much silicone – enough to caulk a leak in the Hoover Dam.”**

FERNANDO:

(Directly to Young Fox.) **“You can imagine the stress.”**

YOUNG FOX:

(He momentarily stares off into space. Then recovers.) **“Have you agreed upon a price and a date when you’ll take over the business?”**

FERNANDO:

**“Yes – as soon as possible.”**

YOUNG FOX:

**“Well, then, the only other big issue to resolve will be zoning approval and receipt of new city inspection permits.”**

MONICA:

**“I don’t understand. If the place has been operating for almost 40 years, why do we need zoning approval?”**

YOUNG FOX:

(He reaches for a zoning book, and thumbs through the pages to a specific ordinance.) **“Because any time title to an ‘adult-only’ enterprise is about to be transferred, the Zoning Hearing Board must give authorization by special exception approval. The Board has the right to review your proposed hours of operation, fire and safety exits, adequacy of on-lot parking, and compliance with city ordinances, just to mention a few issues.”**

FERNANDO:

**“You mean (small pause) the Zoning Board could stop us from operating, even though the bar has been in business for years?”**

YOUNG FOX:

**“It’s not the Zoning Board that may try to stop you. The Board is neutral and simply makes the final decision after hearing all the evidence. It’s the citizens who appear as objectors at time of the formal zoning hearing who may seek to preclude your business from receiving approval. We will need to prove that the Pink Alligator is not detrimental to the health, safety, and welfare of the community. We must prove that the nude ... uh ... artistry you envision, such as slithering down greased poles and dancing before admiring customers, is a lawfully protected form of free speech.”**

MONICA:

**“Well, a picture’s worth a thousand words, Counselor. Some of the girls could come to the hearing and dance in front of the Zoning Board.”** (She demonstrates by picking up Fernando’s cane and wrapping her leg around it as if it were a pole.)

YOUNG FOX:

(Mesmerized) **“Thoughtful of you ... Really ... But I don’t think a live demonstration will be necessary.”**

MONICA:

**“If you say so. By the way, how much will your services cost?”**

(Spotlight moves to Old Fox who addresses the audience:)

OLD FOX:

**“They never teach you the most important thing of all in law school: how to get paid without scaring the client away. Charge too much, and the customer walks out the door. Charge too little, and you’ll kick yourself black and blue. Any idiot can hang a shingle, call himself a lawyer, stand in front of a jury and tell a plausible story. But it’s the exceptional,**

truly talented attorney who can sense what the client can afford, and actually receives payment. Now take these two kids. They probably don't have a pair of nickels to rub together. She dances for a living, so she's scraping by on tips, and he'll be paying off Krazaluski for the next 20 years."

(The spotlight returns to Young Fox's conference room.)

YOUNG FOX:

(Tentatively.) "Can you afford ... Umm ... \$100 an hour ... At a maximum of 10 hours of work?"

MONICA:

(She laughs out loud.) **"ONE HUNDRED DOLLARS AN HOUR!"**

YOUNG FOX:

(Young Fox doesn't know if he has frightened her with the figure. Sheepishly.) **"You could pay ... in installments ... if that would help."**

MONICA:

(Still laughing.) **"Honey, you're in the wrong business! Maybe you shoulda gone to dance class instead of law school."** (She reaches into her bra and slaps a large wad of bills on Fox's desk.) **"Here's \$500 as an initial retainer. I'll drop off the rest after the weekend floorshow."** (Young Fox stares at the wad in stunned silence as he begins to examine it.)

YOUNG FOX:

(Incredulous.) **"Are these all one dollar bills?"**

MONICA:

(Matter-of-factly.) **"I can't recall the last time anyone threw a five at me, but the ones add up fast. And don't worry – it's all there. Some of the bills may be kinda stuck together,**

**though. Occupational hazard.** (Young Fox realizes a dollar bill is stuck to his hand as he tries to remove it.) **Now here's what you need to do: Krazaluski said he would like to meet with our lawyer to iron out all the details. How soon can you schedule a conference?"**

YOUNG FOX:

(Reaches for his calendar as he still tries to remove the stuck dollar bill from his hand.) **"As early as next week."**

FERNANDO:

**"Good."**

YOUNG FOX:

**"Back here at my office?"**

FERNANDO:

**"Uh ... not quite ... Krazaluski wants to meet you at the Pink Alligator. He thinks it's best if you see the operation first hand."**

YOUNG FOX:

(Caught off guard.) **"What? The Pink Alligator? Inside?"**

(Spotlight extinguished on Monica and Fernando. Spotlight illuminates Young Fox as an angel approaches from stage left. She is wearing a pure white dress with gossamer wings and a halo. Heavenly organ music plays in the background.)

ANGEL:

(She beckons.) **"Larry ... oh Larry ..."**

YOUNG FOX:

**"Ummm ... who ... me?"**

ANGEL:

(She draws out some of her words.) **“Laaaary ... sweet Laaaary ... Remember what your moth...er always told you ... about brushing your teeth after every meal ... and never going into nudy bars? Things happen in there that aren’t meant for your innocent eyes, Larry.”**

(Spotlight extinguished on the Angel. Spotlight illuminates a devil carrying a pitchfork and dressed in a red suit with pointy tail. He speaks in a rough voice similar to the announcer at a professional wrestling event.)

DEVIL:

**“Yo! Governor!”**

YOUNG FOX:

**“Who ... me? (Young Fox spins around.)**

DEVIL:

**“You see another ‘Gov’ around here? Listen, pal, this is your chance to see a little T and A while you’re on the clock!”**

YOUNG FOX:

**“T and A?”**

DEVIL:

(Sticks his tail in Young Fox’s ribs.) **“You’re an idiot. What guy wouldn’t give his right arm to dive into that sea of bubble gum scented thongs?”**

(Spotlight returns to Old Fox at stage left, who addresses the audience dead pan and with absolute resolve:)



OLD FOX:

**“It was my sworn duty to adequately represent my clients. If that obligation required that I visit a nudy bar, (slight pause) then so be it. Amos Krazaluski agreed to meet me at the Pink Alligator during the Thursday night (pause) Workin’ For the Weekend floor show. ‘We’re open 7 to 1 every night, except Sundays,’ he explained. I was glad to hear the dancers were given time off to worship.**

**“Amos sounded like a pretty informal guy over the phone. He told me to leave my dress coat and tie at home. Fair enough, so I grabbed my oversized Boston Red Sox baseball hat, the one that slid down over my eyebrows, and headed for the bar.” (Young Fox dons a nondescript dark olive gardening jacket with a collar that hides most of his neck and chin. He sports a pair of dark sun glasses. He walks into the Pink Alligator Bar and approaches the bouncer.)**

BOUNCER:

**(Missing teeth – 6 feet tall) “Dat’l be ten bucks.”**

OLD FOX:

**(Whispers loudly to the audience.) “That was a bargain, since I would have handed over my wallet, watch, and ring had he asked.”**

BOUNCER:

**“Enjoy yourself ... Stallion.” (Young Fox proceeds as described by Old Fox, who addresses the audience as the spotlight returns to Old Fox.)**

OLD FOX:

**“I made my way through a wall of exhaled smoke to the combination bar and dance area. The scratched wooden bar was wide enough for exotic dancers to perform their artistry for**

**the enthusiastic clientele.”**

(Spotlight on stage right. A bartender stands at a bar with his back to the audience. Five or six forgotten drunks sit on stools at various locations, staring toward the audience, as if dancers are performing in front of them. Each drunk wears a baseball cap and a dirty jacket with the collar pulled up around his neck, similar to Young Fox. Every so often the bartender grabs a microphone and makes an announcement. Young Fox tries to hide his face as he discreetly inches onto an empty bar stool next to a drunk patron. Grinding strip bar music begins to play in the background as the bouncer takes the microphone in hand, talking as if he were half asleep and taking part in a bad dream.)

BOUNCER:

**“Gentlemen, put your hands together for our next lovely lady ... ummm ... Daisy.”**

(With that introduction, an imaginary dancer appears before the drunks i.e. the theatre audience must use its imagination that a dancer is actually dancing. Two or three drunks applaud politely as the grinding strip music continues to play in the background. Joe, the barfly sitting to the left of Young Fox, strikes up a one-sided conversation:)

JOE:

(Wears a jacket with a large soccer ball on the back and a singular word “coach” in large letters. He points in the direction of an imaginary dancer.) **“I wish every hospital had nurses just like her? I’d agree to a barium enema just so she could bring me a bed pan.”** (All of the drunks’ heads move back and forth in synchronized unison as they watch the floor show, as if they are attending a tennis match. These patrons stare in the direction of the audience as they point at the dancers who don’t actually appear on stage. Joe speaks in a drunken stupor.) **“I think I’m in love.”**

(Spotlight returns to Old Fox standing at stage left. He addresses the audience:)

OLD FOX:

**“I began to suspect that this performer wasn’t actually a nurse. Most of the nurses I’ve known have, for the most part, kept their uniforms on while working. Every time she removed a portion of her clothing, one or more of these bums would issue forth an inebriated cheer. (The drunks cheer in unison.) It was possible she was now naked. It was hard to tell. The lights were dim, the smoke was thick, and she didn’t stand in one place very long. Without warning, she defied gravity and began to shinny up the same pole in the opposite direction from whence she had initially arrived. Ultimately, she wrapped one finely sculptured tattooed leg around the pole, and released her hands, her torso pointing downward as she hung like a fruit bat in a cave.”**

(Spotlight returns to the bar. The bum, Bill, sitting to Young Fox’s right, addresses Young Fox:)

BILL:

(Voice pleasant, but slightly inebriated.) **“Ain’t she something, Larry?”**

(Spotlight returns to Old Fox who addresses the audience:)

OLD FOX:

**“Oh my God! He knew my name!”**

BILL:

**“Is this your first trip to dreamland, Counselor?”**

(Spotlight returns to Old Fox who addresses the audience:)

OLD FOX:

**“I’d been discovered! My reputation was toast. Why hadn’t I listened to that angel?”**

(Spotlight returns to the bar.)

YOUNG FOX:

(Addresses Bill's question in an embarrassed manner.) **"I'm ... I'm here on behalf of a client.**

**By the way, who the hell are you?"**

BILL:

**"Your insurance agent, Bill – Bill Smithers. And hey, that's a great line** (he mocks Young Fox with air quotes) **'on behalf of a client.'** I gotta remember that. Hey Bub, how 'bout this one: **'I'm here to check out this building'** (air quotes) **'for ... insurance purposes.'** (Bill winks and slaps Young Fox hard on the back laughing.) **You lawyers sure think fast on your feet.** (Bill rolls a one dollar bill into a ball and throws it in the direction of the audience.) **Ain't you gonna tip the dancer? Listen, if my old lady hung from a pole like that,** (he points) **I wouldn't be here, and she'd be a dollar or two richer. Every home should have a pole right down the middle of the dining room table, don't you think?"**

(Spotlight returns to Old Fox who addresses the audience:)

OLD FOX:

**"The scope and depth of the talent on display that night can not be overstated. There was a lion tamer, a French waitress, a flight attendant, and a vacuum cleaner saleslady. One beauty could make the tassels glued to her breasts swirl in different directions simultaneously similar to the counter-balanced propellers on a twin-engine airplane. Then suddenly, my rapt attention was interrupted."**

(Spotlight returns to the bar as Amos Krazaluski approaches Young Fox and taps him on the shoulder.)

AMOS:

**"You Lawyer Fox?"**

YOUNG FOX:

(Exasperated. Addresses the audience.) **“Is there anyone in here who *doesn’t* know who I am?”**

AMOS:

**“Amos ... Amos Krazaluski is the name. I’ve been expecting you. Enjoyin’ the floor show?”**

(Amos and Young Fox shake hands. A half naked policewoman dances by twirling a traffic whistle on the end of a chain hanging from her neck.)

YOUNG FOX:

(He stares at the policewoman and then recovers.) **“Yes ... as a matter of fact, I am.”**

AMOS:

(He uses the best educated vocabulary he can concoct.) **“Well, glad you’re having a good time. Ya know, I instill in every employee here, from the gentle bouncer to the good-natured bartender and all of these lovely entertainers, that our high-class clientele expect the very best. How else could we have stayed in business?”** (He motions with his hand to the dumpy backdrop and furnishings.)

POLICEWOMAN:

(She dances near the bar as a drunk puts his hand on her leg. She hits him on the head with her night stick and screams:) **“Hey jerk! How many times have I told you? *Don’t touch the merchandise!*”**

(The offender falls off the bar stool, dusts himself off, sits back down, smiles and unfazed orders another beer.)

AMOS:

(Undaunted.) **“Well, I suppose you’re here to talk business.”**

(The policewoman walks over and rubs her chest on Young Fox’s head. Then she bends over and sticks her fanny in his face and gyrates.)

YOUNG FOX:

(Distracted.) **“Say what?”**

AMOS:

(With a knowing nod of his head.) **“Yeah, after a while you don’t even notice. All them tits just look like sunny side up eggs. But you should take that little ... uh ... up close and personal introduction as a compliment. Roxy don’t warm up to just anyone.”**

YOUNG FOX:

**“I did hit the gym last week. I’m up to ten pounds on the bench. (He smooths a hand over his own biceps.) Well ... business first. I have a few questions.”**

AMOS:

**“Fire away, pal.”**

YOUNG FOX:

**“My clients would like to buy your establishment. Why are you selling?”**

AMOS:

(Philosophically.) **“Bouncing breasts, giggling fannies, naked bodies everywhere – it’s hard work keeping all this organized.”**

(The policewoman bounces by twirling a baton. Distracted, Fox’s eyes follow the policewoman as he tries to keep an ear on the conversation.)

**“It’s time to retire.”**

YOUNG FOX:

(Still distracted.) **“Uhh ... I see what you mean ... Tell me, Mr. Krazaluski ...”**

AMOS:

(Amos interrupts Young Fox.) **“Just call me Kraz ...”**

YOUNG FOX:

**“Tell me – ”**

AMOS:

(Leading.) **“Kraz –”**

YOUNG FOX:

**“Kraz – how many dancers work here?”**

AMOS:

**“Usually eight on a shift. It’s important to keep the right mix.”**

YOUNG FOX:

**“Mix?”**

AMOS:

**“You gotta diversify. I try to have a gorgeous one, a tall one, a slender one, one with a couple extra pounds, representatives of the major racial groups, a genuine blonde and redhead, which around here is easy to tell, and ... oh yeah ... an ugly one – maybe a couple teeth missing.”**

YOUNG FOX:

**“Ugly one? (Laughs incredulously.) Why?”**

AMOS:

**“You’ve got a lot to learn, Counselor. The girls who look like they got hit across the face**

**with a bag of nickels always pull in the best tips.”**

YOUNG FOX:

**“Pardon?”**

AMOS:

**“Yeah ... Look around you, Ace. These guys - every single one of them – losers. And they know it. No hot broad is gonna give them the time of day. So they invest a buck with the only dog who’ll pant in their direction.”**

YOUNG FOX:

**(Intrigued.) “These girls on a payroll?”**

AMOS:

**“As in ... ‘W-2’? You’ve got to be kidding. Independent contractors ... all of ‘em. They hustle for tips – I get 20%”**

YOUNG FOX:

**“You run ads for dancers?”**

AMOS:

**“Ads? The girls find me. I’ve got a waiting list. A couple are even college students, hoping to put a dent in their tuition. The lion tamer just got accepted to med school. The policewoman? Gonna be a CPA.”**

**(Spotlight returns to Old Fox.)**

OLD FOX:

**“Kraz shared all his business secrets, gleaned from 40 years of grueling labor. He explained the necessity of inadequate lighting, why bouncers may drink as much as they want for free, how to tastefully decorate for the Christmas holiday, and why the menu need**



**only provide pizza and beer, hamburgers and beer, and hot dogs and beer. Then we discussed such minor issues as the sale price, transfer of the liquor license, and mortgage financing. A week later, my clients had a signed agreement of sale, contingent upon zoning approval. If we prevailed at the hearing, these girls would soon be gyrating for new owners.”**

(Spotlight on Zoning Hearing proceeding. The Zoning Hearing Board Chairman presides as he sits at a large table. A sign over the table reads *Zoning Hearing Board*. Young Fox, Monica, and Fernando sit in the front row in the zoning hearing audience, facing the board chairman. Behind Young Fox and his clients are several interested on-lookers. Old Fox, standing at stage left, addresses the audience.)

OLD FOX:

**“Zoning hearings are a perfect example of democracy at its best. Members of the community have the opportunity to assemble for the purpose of expressing their thoughts and concerns. Of course, the down side is that those who have nothing worth saying get a chance to say it here, as well. That’s why tyrannies are so efficient.”**

MONICA:

(Addresses Young Fox:) **“Counselor, what are all these people doing here?”**

YOUNG FOX:

(He looks about with hesitation.) **“I can only guess, but since yours is the only hearing on the agenda tonight, I’ve got a feeling ... it’s about nude dancing in the downtown area.”**

MONICA:

**“For or against?”**

YOUNG FOX:

(Points to the spectators.) **“See those faces? These people probably take showers fully clothed. The only place they want to gaze at naked breasts is on the ceiling frescos of their churches.”**

CHAIRMAN:

(The chairman bangs his gavel. He is old, wears a coat and tie, and projects a conservative image.) **“Tonight’s zoning hearing will come to order. We have convened to consider the application of Monica and Fernando Ramos, who seek to conduct (loudly and biased) NUDE DANCING (the spectators groan in unison) while serving ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGES (the spectators groan in unison) at 1701 Lexington Avenue, also known as the Pink Alligator Bar, Monday through Saturday 7 p.m. until 1 a.m. Are the petitioners present?”**

(Intimidated Monica and Fernando raise their hands very slowly as they look around.)

MONICA:

**“Yes, we are.”**

(First Old Lady in the audience turns to Second Old Lady sitting next to her and points.)

FIRST OLD LADY:

**“Look, Mildred, those must be the *perverts* everyone’s been talking about.”**

SECOND OLD LADY:

**“*Pervs!* I can’t remember the last time I saw one.”**

FIRST OLD LADY:

**“Probably not since your Harvey died, God bless him.”**

SECOND OLD LADY:

(Nods her head up and down.) **“It’s been awhile.”**

CHAIRMAN:

**“Is the perverts’ – pardon me ... I mean the *petitioners*’ counsel present?”**

YOUNG FOX:

(Young Fox stands up.) **“Yes, I’m Attorney Fox.”**

FIRST OLD LADY:

**“Perverts *and* their lawyer! First they repealed Prohibition – Now this! (muttering) Jesus Cwist.”**

(Older Man stands up among the zoning spectators and points a threatening finger at Young Fox.)

OLDER MAN:

**“You’ve got some nerve standing there in that drip-dry Sears and Roebuck suit, representing ... THEM (he points) You – you – LAWYER – you! Does your mother know you do this for a living?”**

FIRST OLD LADY:

(She points to Monica’s chest as she comments to the friend seated next to her.) **“Her boobs are about as real as the rubber grapes on my dining room table.”**

OLD FOX:

(Addresses the audience:) **“During the next two hours, my clients were compared to Bonnie and Clyde, Adolph Hitler, and the Taliban. The hearing dragged on past 11:00 P.M. More than 40 irate citizens placed comments on the record.”**

FIRST OLD LADY:

(First Old Lady struggles to stand.) **“If God had wanted us to be nude, we would have been born that way instead of in a hospital. It’s well documented that Nudity always leads to**

**other perversions like Communism and rap music.”** (The audience cheers approval in unison as someone yells “She’s right!”)

SECOND OLD LADY:

(Second Old Lady struggles to stand.) **“I agree. If we permit naked dancing, what is to stop people from eating and sleeping naked, and then all the clothing stores will go out of business.”** (The audience cheers.)

OLDER MAN:

(Older Man stands.) **“And remember: where there’s smoke there’s fire. Sure, it may start with just one exposed breast, but they usually travel in pairs and sooner or later there’s gonna be two!”** (The audience cheers.)

FIRST OLD LADY:

(First Old Lady stands.) **“Throwing a dollar at a naked woman just cheapens sex. It should be much more expensive, like marriage.”** (The audience cheers.)

SECOND OLD LADY:

(Second Old Lady stands.) **“If we permit nude dancing, it will open the flood gates. Next will come nude bowling or ice skating, and that’s just too dangerous for words. Imagine skateboarding without underwear. An entire generation could be lost.”** (The audience cheers.)

CHAIRMAN:

(Scratches his head in a perplexed manner.) **“All of these insightful comments require careful analysis and review. The zoning hearing board will adjourn for this evening and reconvene next month to render a decision.”** (He bangs his gavel.)

OLDER MAN:

(Older Man stands.) **“Just one final thought for the record: Without clothing, our military forces would be in total disarray. No one would be able to distinguish a general from his privates. What exactly are they gonna salute?”**

End of Scene Six. (Spotlight focuses upon the Statue of Justice.)

## SCENE VII

### Falling In Love

(Old Fox rummages through his “memorabilia box” and produces a small chunk of rough plaster.

He smiles as he addresses the audience:)

#### OLD FOX:

**“Looks like garbage, doesn’t it? It isn’t. This unassuming chunk of plaster was instrumental in assuring that Justice prevailed during a jury trial. Our system of jurisprudence is founded upon one constant: an unwavering belief in God. When someone takes the witness stand, he swears to tell the truth, under oath, secure in the awful knowledge that if he tells a lie, he shall answer to the Almighty on the last great day. One of my very first clients needed a little coaxing to tell the truth. I remember his trial as if it were yesterday even though it took place more than 30 years ago. I was a young lawyer, fresh out of law school ...”**

(The spotlight falls on Young Fox as he approaches a jail cell. Ronald Muncy sits inside the cell.

He is dressed in a prison jumpsuit. Young Fox is outside the cell door shuffling through the papers in his file as Old Fox, the narrator, continues to enlighten the audience.)

**“Ronald Muncy was a part-time crook and a full-time liar. Everyone at the Courthouse knew him. Now it was my turn to represent him. This bum wasn’t bright enough to engage in any significant felonious undertakings. Rather, he would try to pass a bad check, or attempt to shoplift an \$8 item. He *always* got caught. He *always* insisted he was innocent. There was *always* a costly time-consuming jury trial.”**

#### YOUNG FOX:

(Takes a chair outside the cell and looks at Muncy who sits on a chair in the cell facing Young

Fox.) **“Mr. Muncy, this police report reflects that you broke into a candy vending machine at the bus station. They found your fingerprints – ”**

MUNCY:

(Interrupts emphatically.) **“That don’t mean nothin’! There was probably hundreds of prints on that machine – from all sorts of people!”**

YOUNG FOX:

**“Quite possibly, but yours where the only prints found on the interior coin box.”**

MUNCY:

**“That don’t mean nothin’! The cops probably mixed up my prints with somebody else. I’m innocent and I want a trial.”**

OLD FOX:

(Addresses the audience) **“I didn’t care for Muncy – not because I thought he was guilty. Rather, he was just another chump wasting the time of the judicial system. He should have accepted his punishment like a man. But instead he always chose to take the witness stand and lie.”**

-----

(The scene shifts to the Courthouse Prothonotary’s Office.)

(Old Fox describes what the actors are doing on stage as the spotlight focuses upon Tommy Hines and Loretta Figlear, two young Prothonotary office clerks sitting side-by-side at typewriter desks. The two clerks try to engage in a subtle conversation. Once in a while they type a word or two.)

**“Spring was in the air at the Northampton County Courthouse. The birds in the Courthouse Bell Tower were beginning to chirp as flowers started to push through the**

earth of the prison garden. And in the Prothonotary's Office, a hint of love had found its way into the hearts of two young file clerks as they toiled amongst the mortgage foreclosure and tax lien files."

TOMMY:

(Lovingly.) "Did I ever tell you my uncle Stan has a hunting Beagle with eyes the same color as yours?"

LORETTA:

(She blushes.) "Stop."

TOMMY:

"But your eyelashes are longer than the dog's. It's true, Loretta, and the way you type ... Like a little woodpecker."

LORETTA:

"Really? You mean it?"

TOMMY:

"Really! Sometimes, after work, I can't stop thinking about you or woodpeckers."

LORETTA:

"Tommy – you're so romantic." (They both type a word or two while looking longingly at each other.)

---

(Spotlight on Young Fox and Muncy sitting in Courtroom Number 1.)

YOUNG FOX:

(He turns to Muncy.) "They're just about ready to start your trial. Are you planning to present a defense?"



MUNCY:

(In a know-it-all style.) **“I thought that was *your* job. What do you think I’m paying you for?”**

YOUNG FOX:

**“Umm ... Mr. Muncy, I get paid by the taxpayers of this County who actually hold down a job.”**

MUNCY:

**“What’s that got to do with anything?”**

-----

(Spotlight on Tommy and Loretta. They are each holding brown paper lunch bags. They stand at a closed door at the bottom of the staircase leading to the Courthouse attic. Loretta looks doubtful as Tommy attempts to reassure her.)

TOMMY:

**“This is the place I’ve been telling you about all week. We can eat our lunch in private. I even brought candles, for (excited because he knows the word) *amb-ulance*.”**

LORETTA:

**“But Tommy, the sign on the door says ‘No Trespassing – Keep Out’.”**

TOMMY:

**“They don’t mean *us*. We’re county employees.”**

LORETTA:

**“Maybe we should just eat outside in the courtyard.”**

TOMMY:

**“Listen, this staircase leads up to the Courthouse attic where they store useless stuff. Every**

**once in a while they send me up here to find some files. How else would I have a key?"**

(Tommy fumbles for the key in his pocket and unlocks the door. He leads Loretta up the stairs as he talks.)

LORETTA:

**"Tommy, this is creepy." (She peeks around the door.) "It's an attic. What if there are spiders? I hate spiders? And in the dark? Ugh." (Loretta shudders.)**

TOMMY:

**"That's why I brought candles, Loretta. We can have our first romantic lunch together - just the two of us."**

LORETTA:

**"What if someone finds us up here? We could get in trouble."**

TOMMY:

**"I'll lock the door behind us. I'm the only one with the key."**

-----

(Young Fox sits in the Courtroom, ready for trial. Above the Courtroom stretches the staircase to the attic. Tommy and Loretta can be seen tentatively ascending the dark staircase. Each holds a candle to illuminate the way. They finally reach the dark courthouse attic situated above the Courtroom. Young Fox and Muncy sit below them, unaware of the lovers' presence one floor above.)

LORETTA:

(Whining.) **"Tommy, there's like, no place to sit up here."**

TOMMY:

**"But isn't this great! Alone at last."**

(The spotlight returns to the Courtroom below the attic. Muncy has taken the witness stand. He raises his right hand as he stands before the court clerk. The judge sits on the bench next to the witness stand.)

CLERK:

**“Do you swear to tell the truth and nothing but the truth, so as you shall answer unto God on the Last Great Day? Do you so swear?”**

MUNCY:

(Unconvincingly.) **“Uh ... yeah sure ... I do.”**

(In the attic above Muncy, Loretta and Tommy sit side-by-side on a rafter, the two candles serving as their primary illumination. They begin to unwrap their lunches. Tommy inches closer. He puts his arm around Loretta’s shoulder.)

TOMMY:

**“Isn’t this romantic?”** (He sighs. Loretta does not share his romantic mood.)

LORETTA:

**“Tommy, I think I heard a spider running along the rafter right over there.”** (She points.)

TOMMY:

**“It won’t hurt you, Loretta. It obviously needs to get somewhere else.”**

LORETTA:

(Rolls eyes at herself.) **“But what if he decides to return on the same rafter?”**

TOMMY:

**“Loretta, this is the moment I’ve been dreaming of.”**

LORETTA:

**“But Tommy, we only have half an hour.”**

(The spotlight returns to Muncy, now sitting in the witness box in the Courtroom.)

MUNCY:

**“You see, Your Honor, it wasn’t nothing at all like what the district attorney said. I’m as innocent and pure as the driven snow. Here’s what actually happened. I put a dollar in the vending machine, and then it jammed. Well, ain’t it funny. I just happened to be carrying an eight inch screw driver and a set of bolt cutters, so I decided to try to retrieve my hard earned money. That’s probably how my fingerprints ended up on the coinbox. But I didn’t steal nothing. My dollar was the only thing in the box.”**

(The spotlight returns to the attic. Loretta and Tommy are still sitting on a rafter. Loretta is dissecting her sandwich.)

TOMMY:

**“Loretta, it’s now or never, Baby.”**

LORETTA:

**“But I just dropped my pickle.”**

(The spotlight returns to the Courtroom.)

MUNCY:

**“And then, wouldn’t you know it, just as I’m putting the vending machine back together, the cops show up and charge me with theft! Me! Of all people!”**

(The spotlight returns to the attic above the Courtroom. Tommy inches closer to Loretta, almost smothering her.)

LORETTA:

**“Tommy, if you get any closer, I’m gonna lose my balance.”**

(The spotlight returns to the Courtroom.)

MUNCY:

**“I swear on my dead dog’s grave, ladies and gentlemen of the jury, I am innocent! If I’m lying, may God strike me dead!”** (He dramatically raises a finger into the air.)

(Spotlight returns to the attic.)

TOMMY:

**“Loretta, kiss me!”**

(Tommy attempts to kiss Loretta, but she falls off the rafter. Her hips and skirt remain above the attic floor but her naked leg falls through the attic floorboard and dangles through the ceiling of the Courtroom below. A large chunk of ceiling plaster is dislodged, and falls downward toward Muncy as he stands up while pointing his finger in the air.)

MUNCY:

(Dramatically.) **“I’m innocent!”** (The chunk of plaster hits Muncy on the head, knocking him to the ground. The judge and jury look upward in disbelief at Loretta’s dangling leg. The judge bangs his gavel as the jury reacts in disbelief.)

JUDGE:

**“Order! Order in the court. Members of the jury, please compose yourselves. Haven’t you ever seen a lady’s leg before?”**

(Muncy regains consciousness and crawls back into the witness box seat. He shakes his head back and forth as he brushes the plaster out of his hair.)

MUNCY:

**“So like I was sayin’ ... Oh hell! I’m guilty. I’ve been guilty for as long as I can remember. But I swear to God above that if I’m given just one more chance, I’ll never do nothin’ bad never again. And that’s the truth!”** (Muncy looks toward the ceiling and cringes, worried some

more plaster will fall. Loretta's leg is pulled up through the hole in the ceiling by Tommy.)

TOMMY:

**"Loretta, are you alright?"**

LORETTA:

**"Tommy, you're some kisser – better than my mother's French poodle."**

(They hug each other and begin to fall backwards together on the rafters. The audience can see their shoes dancing in the air.)

OLD FOX:

(Addresses the audience:) **"And so Justice was served. Muncy got a month in the slammer. Tommy got a life sentence when he married Loretta, and many observers swear that ever since the day Muncy was the recipient of a chunk of plaster straight from the Almighty, not a single defendant has dared to tell a lie in Courtroom 1."**

End of Scene Seven. (Spotlight focuses upon the Statue of Justice.)

## SCENE VIII

### Golden Dragon

(Old Fox rummages in his “memorabilia box” and produces a Chinese menu with a golden dragon pictured on the front. He addresses the audience:)

#### OLD FOX:

**“This Chinese take-out menu brings back a memory or two. I have represented Winslow Township for quite some time. This municipality has a business privilege tax. Rarely does a business refuse to pay the tax, but if so, I am called upon to pursue the offender. The township supervisors asked me to stop by so they could discuss the particulars of one such case.”**

(Spotlight on the township office conference room. There is a big map of the township on the wall, and pictures of each supervisor. Young Fox sits with supervisors Burt and Emma as they review a delinquent account.)

#### BURT:

**“Well, Attorney Fox, here’s the story. Each year we send out the business privilege tax forms to collect our revenue based on gross receipts. Most businesses comply, but there always seems to be an exception.”**

#### EMMA:

**“This year it’s the Chinese restaurant tucked away in the Skidsville Plaza. It’s called *The Golden Dragon*.”**

#### BURT:

**“We’ve sent them notice of their tax liability for two years straight, but have heard nothing. Based on our estimation of sales, they owe the township about seventeen hundred**

**bucks, plus penalties and interest. We want you to go after them and collect the money.”**

YOUNG FOX:

**“I’ll send a demand letter by certified mail today, and contact you in two weeks to confirm that the township has received payment.”**

(Spotlight on Old Fox at stage left. He addresses the audience:)

OLD FOX:

**“A certified letter usually resolves a delinquency. Unfortunately, one week passed, and my letter was returned to sender.”**

(Spotlight returns to the same municipal office with the same actors at the same table.)

BURT:

**“So them Chinese want to play hard ball. Well, so can we, Fox. We want you to sue and collect the money. Do whatever it takes. Understand? We can’t permit a dangerous precedent of non-payment. Other merchants might catch wind of this.”**

(Spotlight extinguished.)

-----  
OLD FOX:

(Spotlight on Old Fox who addresses the audience:) **“I had my marching orders. I decided it might be prudent first to make a personal visit to the Golden Dragon restaurant to talk with the owner. Perhaps there was a mere oversight regarding payment of the tax.”**

(Spotlight on Golden Dragon Chinese take-out restaurant. A Chinese woman is busy cleaning a table and answering the telephone. Young Fox enters the restaurant and approaches the woman.)

CHINESE WOMAN:

(Irritated. On telephone. Choppy and curt.) **“Numba seven ... wit egg roll ... 10 minute ...”**



(She turns to Young Fox.) **“You pick-up?”**

YOUNG FOX:

**“I’m Larry Fox, attorney for this township. Are you the owner of this restaurant?”**

CHINESE WOMAN:

(Irritated.) **“English no good.”**

YOUNG FOX:

**“I sent a letter here two weeks ago. It was returned.”**

CHINESE WOMAN:

(Irritation continues.) **“No unnastan.”**

YOUNG FOX:

**“Who is the owner? Ya know ... the boss?”**

CHINESE WOMAN:

(She begins to understand.) **“Big boss in New York. You talk him.”**

YOUNG FOX:

**“Where in New York?”**

CHINESE WOMAN:

(Very irritated.) **“New York City – Big boss. You talk him.”**

OLD FOX:

(Addresses the audience:) **“I wasn’t getting very far so I went upstairs to the plaza administrative office. Someone there should be able to tell me who owned the Golden Dragon and where I could send notice of the tax due.”**

(Young Fox enters the plaza administrative office. A secretary, Lucy, sits at a desk.)

LUCY:

**“May I help you?”**

YOUNG FOX:

**“I’m the attorney for the township and I need to know who owns the Golden Dragon downstairs. I want to send a tax bill to the owner.”**

LUCY:

**“That’s not as easy as it sounds. It’s unclear who pays the rent each month.”**

YOUNG FOX:

(Irritation begins to grow with each question.) **“How can that possibly be?”**

LUCY:

**“A valid check arrives here on time each month, but it’s signed in Chinese characters. We can’t tell who signs the checks.”**

YOUNG FOX:

(More irritated.) **“There’s no address on the check?”**

LUCY:

(She searches for a book and produces it.) **“We make copies of each check received. As you can see, there’s no address or company name, just a signature in Chinese.”**

YOUNG FOX:

(More irritated.) **“Well, then, who signed your lease?”**

LUCY:

**“Somebody using the same type of Chinese characters.”**

YOUNG FOX:

(Very irritated.) **“But who are you dealing with? Is it an individual? A partnership? A**

**corporation? C'mon!"**

LUCY:

(Produces a copy of the lease and studies it.) **"It doesn't say."**

YOUNG FOX:

**"Honestly, doesn't the lease state the mailing address of the tenant? Where do you send notices to the Golden Dragon?"**

LUCY:

(She studies the lease.) **"Uh ... maybe this is something ... Golden Dragon, 78<sup>th</sup> floor, Room 780, Empire State Building, New York, New York."**

YOUNG FOX:

**"Finally! A lead."**

OLD FOX:

**"It was time to retain a detective in New York City, to find out who operated the Golden Dragon from the 78<sup>th</sup> floor of the Empire State Building. I located Private Eye Shubert Gumm through the Internet and asked him to investigate. A week later he called."**

(Two spotlights: one on Young Fox's office; and one on Detective Gumm's office in New York. The two men speak to each other by telephone.)

GUMM:

**"Fox, this is Detective Gumm. I have some information for you regarding that office in the Empire State Building."**

YOUNG FOX:

**"Good. So, who owns the Golden Dragon? And ... to whom do I send the tax bill?"**

GUMM:

**“It’s not quite that simple, Counselor. We need to talk face to face. What I need to tell you ... can’t be discussed over the phone.”**

YOUNG FOX:

**(Surprised.) “If you think that’s necessary. I’m about 80 miles from Manhattan. Can we meet somewhere about half way?”**

GUMM:

**“Sure. How about in P-burg? There’s a Chinese restaurant on Main Street called the House of Dong. Two o’clock tomorrow?”**

YOUNG FOX:

**“It’s a date. By the way, how will I know who you are?”**

GUMM:

**“I’ll be wearing a black tie with a diamond stick pin in the middle. It’s my trademark. I don’t go anywhere without it.”**

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**(A spotlight illuminates the “House of Dong” restaurant as the actors gather on stage. Old Fox describes the scene.)**

OLD FOX:

**“Even though we were in far away P-burg, the House of Dong was just as I expected – exotic and mysterious. There were strings of glass beads cascading in front of the entrance door. The tables were illuminated by low wattage hanging lights enclosed in silken lanterns. Mysterious Chinese music danced in the air. A small man about 40 years old appeared out of the shadows. He was dressed entirely in black, from the tips of his shoes to**

**his black shirt accented by a black tie with a diamond stick pin in the middle. He was Detective Gumm.”**

(Young Fox and Gumm shake hands and proceed to an isolated table in a back corner, and sit across from one another, as a lone candle flickers on the table. A waitress, carrying a pitcher and water glasses, appears from behind the curtain. She has delicate porcelain skin and striking dark almond-shaped eyes.)

WAITRESS:

(Using a Brooklyn, New York accent.) **“Youse guys want some wooders?”**

GUMM:

**“I’ll take a wooder.”**

YOUNG FOX:

**“Me, too.”** (He turns to Gumm.) **“You always dress in solid black?”**

GUMM:

**“If I wore solid white with sequins, like an Elvis impersonator, it might draw unwanted attention.”**

YOUNG FOX:

**“That makes sense.”**

GUMM:

**“Now, down to business, Fox. As you probably know, there are two types of Chinese restaurants: those similar to this place, where patrons enjoy an eat-in dining experience. Then there are the cramped standing-room-only take-out eateries like in your township, such as the Golden Dragon. The large restaurants maintain a sizable staff and are owned and operated by easily identifiable individuals. That’s not the case with most take out-**

**joints.**

**“Suppose, Mr. Fox, you decided next week to move with your wife and small child to Beijing, in order to start up a little take-out restaurant serving American fare. Do you think you’d succeed?”**

**YOUNG FOX:**

**“Of course not. I don’t speak Mandarin. I wouldn’t have the slightest idea how to negotiate a foreign lease, transfer the working capital necessary to purchase cooking equipment, telephones, or supplies. I’d be a fish out of water.”**

**GUMM:**

**“How, then, is it possible for penniless Chinese immigrants who speak no English to arrive in this country on a Monday, and open a restaurant by Tuesday afternoon? Where does the half million in start-up capital come from? How do they gross one million the first year when other businesses fail?”**

**YOUNG FOX:**

**(Shrugs his shoulders.) “I never gave it much thought.”**

**GUMM:**

**“Did you ever take notice that each take-out place between here and San Diego has the same printed menu in the same order, the same take-out containers, the same food, all at basically the same price?”**

**YOUNG FOX:**

**“What are you driving at, Gumm?”**

**GUMM:**

**“Ever hear of the Chinese Mafia?”**

YOUNG FOX:

(Surprised.) **"The what?"**

GUMM:

**"The drill is quite simple, Fox. They extricate a young family from China with the promise of living in America. In return the immigrants work their fingers to the bone with only a day off for Chinese New Year. They get a place to eat and sleep. The mob forges the passports, sets up the lease, buys the equipment, and keeps the profits. And it ain't like the Italian Mafia with their big cars, flashy suits, and interviews with the press. With the Italians, if there's a problem, they invite you to dinner, then they shoot you. Everyone cries at your funeral. The hit man does 30 to life at Sing Sing. Not so with the Chinese. If there's a problem, you simply disappear. No dinner, no crying, no church, no funeral."**

YOUNG FOX:

**"Ok ... So ...?"**

GUMM:

**"Don't you get it? These thugs are now operating the Golden Dragon in Wynslow Township. I'm trying to convince you to forget about collecting the tax. What I'm talking about is bigger than you think. The Golden Dragon is connected directly to the mob and the Big Man himself!"**

YOUNG FOX:

**"Big Man? What Big Man?"**

(Gumm looks nervously to his left, and then to his right. Then he whispers.)

GUMM:

**"Binney Wang."**

YOUNG FOX:

(Loudly. Pronounced Wang as in ‘fang’.) **“Binney Wang?”**

(Gumm waves his arms in distress while shushing Young Fox.)

GUMM:

**“Shhh! Someone might hear you!”**

(Young Fox looks to his left and right. As he does so, the waitress approaches unseen from behind a curtain.)

WAITRESS:

**“More wooders?”** (Both Young Fox and Gumm jump out of their seats in surprise.)

**“What’s wrong? Did ya think it was the tuna surprise? Jeesh. Youse guys sure are jumpy.”**

(Spotlight fades out on the restaurant scene. Spotlight on Wynslow Township Municipal meeting room. The same supervisors, Emma and Burt, sit at a table facing Young Fox.)

EMMA:

**“Thanks for stopping in. We were wondering about your progress with the Golden Dragon tax issue. It’s been three weeks. Where do we stand?”**

YOUNG FOX:

**“I went to the Golden Dragon to locate the owner. The waitress spoke almost no English, so I looked at the lease at the plaza office. Believe it or not, rent is sent from an office on the 78<sup>th</sup> floor of the Empire State Building. When those folks didn’t respond to my certified letters, I hired a detective in New York to find out who owns the restaurant.”**

EMMA:

(Impatient) **“So tell us, already. What’s the deal?”**



YOUNG FOX:

**“Simply put, the Golden Dragon may be operated by the Mafia.”**

BURT:

(Incredulous.) **“The Italians are running a Chinese restaurant? Do they know how to steam rice?”**

YOUNG FOX:

**“No, no, Mr. Supervisor. The *Chinese* Mafia.”**

EMMA:

(Incredulous) **“The Chinese have a Mafia?”**

YOUNG FOX:

**“They tend to keep a low profile. They usually don’t feed you before they kill you.”**

BURT:

(Persistent.) **“But who actually owns this restaurant?”**

YOUNG FOX:

(Young Fox looks cautiously to the left and then to the right. He whispers:) **“Binney Wang.”**

EMMA:

(Loudly.) **“Benny Hill?”**

YOUNG FOX:

**“Shhhh. Shhhh. Shhhh! Binney ... Binney Wang.”**

BURT:

**“Sounds like what happens when a piston falls out of the engine of a cheap foreign car.”**

(Burt and Emma knock each other on the arms as both laugh out loud.)

YOUNG FOX:

(Very serious.) **“Gentlemen, this is no laughing matter. We’re dealing with a dangerous mobster capable of – ”**

EMMA:

(Interrupts and abruptly stops laughing.) **“Just one minute there, Mr. Fox. You’re not suggesting ... that mobsters should be exempt from paying valid township taxes, are you?”**

YOUNG FOX:

**“I could argue the point either way. In the present case, the cost of tracking down ... (he whispers as he looks to the left and right) Binney Wang ... and serving him with legal papers could far exceed the tax itself.”**

BURT:

**“I’m not sure that matters. Don’t we have an obligation to the taxpayers of this township to show them we take these matters seriously? Now let’s see ... (Burt opens a file folder) ... If my calculations are correct, the township has already paid you \$435 in legal fees. And there’s a bill from Metro Detective Agency of New York. We’ve paid a Detective Gumshoe ...**

YOUNG FOX:

**“... that’s Shubert Gumm ...”**

BURT:

**“... Whatever – the additional fee of \$650. Does that sound about right?”**

YOUNG FOX:

**“Yes ... Yes, it does.”**

BURT:

**“Well then, we must protect our initial investment. Thus far we have expended \$1,085 trying to collect about \$1,600. This matter must be pursued to the very end. Don’t you agree, Emma?”**

EMMA:

(Nods her head and speaks slowly and resolutely.) **“The bitter end.”** (Emma and Burt leave the stage as a spotlight focuses on Young Fox who talks to himself as he walks into his law office.)

YOUNG FOX:

(Starts to see the big picture as he shakes his head.) **“I guess I’ll have to track him down. But to be safe, I’ll draft a letter, on township stationery. If Binney and his criminal gang come gunning for me, at least they’ll come to the township municipal building first. That way, there will be witnesses to my abduction and murder. I’ll write a letter that requests in a polite, rather diplomatic manner that if it isn’t too much trouble, Binney might consider paying his overdue business privilege tax, plus accrued penalties and interest. I’m definitely gonna send this unsigned, so my name and whereabouts don’t fall into the wrong hands.”**

(Spotlight focuses upon Young Fox’s private law office conference room where Young Fox sits alone working at a desk. Young Fox’s secretary knocks and enters the room.)

SECRETARY:

**“Pardon me, Mr. Fox, there is a gentleman here to see you. I told him I could schedule an appointment for sometime next week, but he said you are very old friends and you’d gladly drop everything to see him for 10 minutes.”**

YOUNG FOX:

**“What’s his name?”**

SECRETARY:

**“Wang, Mr. Binney Wang.”**

YOUNG FOX:

(Shocked, he yells out:) **“BINNEY WANG! HERE?”** (Realizes he should not have said the name loudly and puts his hand over his mouth as he looks to the left and then to the right.)

SECRETARY:

(Matter-of-factly.) **“Yes, Sir. He arrived in a chauffeur-driven stretch limo.”**

YOUNG FOX:

**“Oh my God!”**

SECRETARY:

(Unimpressed.) **“Well, should I show him in?”**

YOUNG FOX:

(Stands up and clears his files from the table, speaking as he does so.) **“Yes, of course, show my very uh ... old ... uh ... dear friend in.”**

(The secretary leaves for a moment, then ushers in a six-foot five well-dressed Chinese man wearing a three-piece suit and black hat, followed by a small Chinese man similarly dressed. Young Fox walks up to the larger Chinese man and shakes his hand. The secretary leaves and shuts the door. Young Fox nervously stares at his two unexpected guests.) **“Mr. Wang, how kind of you to come.”**

LARGER MAN:

**“I no Wang.”** (He steps aside and points at the smaller Chinese man behind him.) **“He Wang.”**

(The smaller Chinese man steps from behind the larger Chinese man. He is Binney Wang. He is soft-spoken and speaks in broken English. He and Young Fox shake hands.)

YOUNG FOX:

**“Won’t you be seated?”** (Wang and Young Fox sit down at the table. The larger Chinese man remains standing.)

WANG:

**“I get retter. It say regal action. You want business tax.”**

YOUNG FOX:

**“Well, I hope you didn’t take it personally. *Everyone* gets those little letters. By the way, how did you find me?”**

(Wang smiles and moves his hand back and forth as if the question is naïve.)

WANG:

**“Mr. Fox, you persistent. I need rawyer rike you. You work for Binney Wang. It pay well.”**

YOUNG FOX:

(Shocked.) **“But you don’t even know me.”**

WANG:

**“Oh, I know you ... Fox.”**

OLD FOX:

(Addresses the audience:) **“I hadn’t been both this flattered and terrified since JoAnne Dingerlacher asked me to the senior prom. I wondered if Wang knew I had said yes. I wondered if he knew I was about to soil myself.”**

WANG:

**“You team prayer. You get 25 grand for week. Prus bonus.”**

OLD FOX:

(Addresses the audience:) **“Twenty-five thousand clams a week! Last month my banker turned me down for a \$5,000 line of credit with my house as collateral.”**

WANG:

**“You answer now, Fox. I very busy man.”**

(The same angel dressed in white satin with gossamer wings appears at stage left.)

ANGEL:

(In a sing-song sweet voice again.) **“Laaaary ... Laaaary ... sweet Laaaary ... Don’t do it. You’d make a lousy mobster. We both know you’re a wimp. And when Binney Wang tires of you, Laaary, he’ll grind you up as wonton stuffing.”**

(Fox tries to respond, but the devil dressed in red with a pointy tail and a pitch fork appears at stage right.)

DEVIL:

**“Opportunity only knocks once, Pal. That’s over a million bucks a year. And this guy don’t pay taxes, so you won’t, either. Get it? Tick tock, Fox. Wang is waiting.”**

WANG:

**“Bodyguard owns hotel in Caymans. He do O.K. You do O.K., too.”**

(The larger Chinese man shakes his head up and down to confirm the fact. Young Fox looks at the devil, then at the angel, who projects a sign of caution in his direction.)

WANG:

**“Pity, Fox. I rare-ry make such offers. (Wang waits a second, then produces a check from his**

inside pocket. He pushes it across the table toward Young Fox.) **O.K., Fox. Here Township check. Tax rast year – One Thousand Six Four Eight Dollar and Fifty Cent. Penalties. Interest. Township get same check each year now. But Fox, no contact Binny again.**

(Binney shakes his head and waggles a finger at Young Fox.) **Would be foorish.** (Wang gets up to leave, then turns to Young Fox as Wang reaches into another pocket and produces a solid black tie with a diamond stick pin in the middle.) **Oh yeah, Detective Gumm ... must have dropped this ... by accident.** (Wang hands Young Fox the black tie. Then Wang and the larger Chinese man disappear out the door.)

YOUNG FOX:

(Picks up a phone as he holds the tie while looking at it. It has a huge diamond. He nervously dials the detective's office.) **"This is Larry Fox. Is the detective in?"**

RECEPTIONIST:

(Answers phone in New York City. Frantic.) **"In? Oh my God, Mr. Fox. He's been missing for three weeks!"**

(Young Fox slowly hangs up the phone and stares into space as the stage lights are extinguished.)  
End of Scene Eight. (Spotlight focuses upon the Statue of Justice.)

## SCENE IX

### It's An Emergency

(Old Fox rummages through his "memorabilia box" and unearths a discarded telephone bill. He exams it as he shakes his head incredulously.)

### OLD FOX:

(Addresses the audience:) **"One thing I've learned during nearly four decades in the law business: There truly are no emergencies – not even little ones. Webster defines the word as "a sudden unforeseen occurrence." There is no such thing in law – because excruciating delays never happen suddenly. Some may disagree with me. This phone bill comes to mind.** (He holds up a bill.) **My client, Jesus Romanoff, a prisoner at the penitentiary, placed a collect call to me. I had represented him at his murder trial, after which his luck began to take a dramatic turn for the worse. One day, quite some time after his conviction, he contacted me unexpectedly."**

(Spotlight on Young Fox who is sitting in his law office conference room. Second spotlight on the execution chambers at the penitentiary where Jesus Romanoff is strapped – both hands and legs – into the electric chair. He wears a black hood over his face. A prison guard, Officer Switcher, stands next to him. Switcher is dialing on an old rotary telephone. He addresses Romanoff:)

### SWITCHER:

**"I'll see if he's in, but I gotta tell ya, it sure would surprise me. Every time I call my lawyer, he's on the back nine."**

(The telephone rings on Young Fox's conference table. Young Fox stops writing on a pad of paper and picks up the phone.)



YOUNG FOX:

**“Hello?”**

SWITCHER:

**“Is the lawyer in?”**

YOUNG FOX:

**“Speaking. Who’s this?”**

SWITCHER:

**“The State Penitentiary.”**

YOUNG FOX:

(Turns to audience.) **“This doesn’t sound good.”** (Back to phone.) **“Yes ...?”**

SWITCHER:

**“Officer Switcher here – in the execution chambers.”**

YOUNG FOX:

(Addresses audience.) **“And this doesn’t sound like billable time, either.”**

ROMANOFF:

(The hood over his face causes his voice to be muffled, as if he has oatmeal in his mouth.

Anxious and fearful.) **“Did you get ahold of him? Did you?”**

SWITCHER:

(Agitated. He puts his hand over the phone and turns to Romanoff.) **“Hey! Can’t you see I’m on the damn phone? Just sit tight.** (Switcher resumes his pleasant conversation with Young Fox.) **Listen, Fox, any calls made from this phone gotta be billed back to the recipient. It’ll cost you about 75 cents. Will you accept the ... charge?** (He turns to Romanoff.) **No pun intended, pal.”**

ROMANOFF:

**“Tell Fox this is an emergency. I really got to talk to him. (Motions with his chin.) Ask if he remembers me.”**

SWITCHER:

**“Fox – I hope I’m not interrupting your morning – but it would be pointless to call later. Did you represent Jesus Romanoff?”**

YOUNG FOX:

**“Why yes ... yes ... I did.”**

SWITCHER:

**“Well, he’d like to talk to you for a minute. O.K.?”**

YOUNG FOX:

**“Sure, if he’s free.”**

(Switcher puts the phone to the side of Romanoff’s head which is still concealed with a black hood.)

ROMANOFF:

(His voice is still muffled.) **“Fox, is that you, buddy?”**

YOUNG FOX:

**“Jesus? Hey, I’m having trouble hearing you. Your voice. It’s ... it’s muffled.”**

ROMANOFF:

(Addresses Switcher:) **“Yo Switch – could you take this hood off? I gotta talk to Fox here.”**

(Switcher puts the phone under his armpit, removes the hood, and places the phone to Romanoff’s ear.)

ROMANOFF:

**“Can you hear me now?”**

YOUNG FOX:

**“Much better. How are you?”**

ROMANOFF:

**“Been better and I’m *way* short on time, so I’ll get to the point. This is an emergency! Can you do something? Fast?”**

(Spotlight on Old Fox who addresses the audience:)

OLD FOX:

**“Jesus went into as much detail as his abbreviated schedule would permit. Now, at first blush, one might think Romanoff’s unfortunate situation rose to the level of an emergency. But let’s analyze this. Jesus had received a fair, perhaps even above average trial. He had taken advantage of every conceivable appeal I could think of, and some he had dreamed up on his own.”**

YOUNG FOX:

**“Jesus, try to look at things from the prison’s point of view ... in all probability, the writ of execution has been properly signed and witnessed. The executioner has, in all likelihood, taken the requisite number of hours of advanced electrocution courses. The model and type of electric chair have been certified by the state as safe for human use. Quite frankly, your situation is not an emergency, since we’re not actually dealing with a ‘sudden unforeseen occurrence.’ You knew it was coming. It can’t be that much of a shock. Why did you wait until the last minute to telephone? If you had called earlier, I would have, at the very least, advised you not to sit down.”**

(Old Fox walks to center stage as the spotlight is extinguished on Romanoff.)

OLD FOX:

**“On rare occasions, a medical emergency may require some immediate legal help. I recall one particular situation when a call came directly from a hospital operating room.”**

(Spotlight returns to Young Fox sitting in his conference room. His secretary Jill enters.)

JILL:

**“Mr. Fox, Dr. Wombat is on the phone. He says it’s an emergency and that he must speak to you this very instant.”**

(Jill leaves as Young Fox rushes to pick up the phone. He speaks in a concerned manner.)

YOUNG FOX:

**“Doctor – is something wrong?”**

(Spotlight on Dr. Wombat and his nurse assistant standing in an operating room. They wear face masks and full surgical scrubs as they hover over a patient undergoing open heart surgery. The doctor has a scalpel in one hand and a cell phone in the other.)

DR. WOMBAT:

(Excited and concerned. He speaks in a thick foreign accent.) **“I should say there is! It’s my house!”**

YOUNG FOX:

(Alarmed.) **“Oh my God! What happened?”**

DR. WOMBAT:

**“This morning the First National Bank began advertising a new mortgage rate a quarter of a percent lower than my present rate – a quarter percent! Do you realize what that means?”**

YOUNG FOX:

(No longer concerned, and now slightly annoyed.) **“That you want to refinance ... *again*?”**

DR. WOMBAT:

**“Larr, I may be able to save up to \$26 a month! Now here’s what I want you to do ... (He momentarily stares at his unconscious patient.) Hold on a second, Counselor, I’ll be right back**

**... (He turns to the nurse and yells at her as blood begins to spurt out of the body into the air:)**

**Now look what’s happened – the clamp fell off the artery – for God’s sake tie something around it. I can’t do everything – can’t you see I’m on the phone?”**

(The doctor returns to his phone conversation as the nurse pounds on the body with her fists.)

DR. WOMBAT:

**“Larr – you still there?”**

YOUNG FOX:

(Monotone and irritated.) **“Yes ... Where you calling from?”**

DR. WOMBAT:

**“Work. (Pause) Now, as I was telling you, I’m losing \$26 a month. Call the bank and get the ball rolling. By the way, you’re not going to charge me, are you, because the paperwork should be the same as the last three refinancings.”**

(Spotlight extinguished on operating room. Old Fox addresses the audience:)

OLD FOX:

**“A few days later, another equally pressing medical emergency arose. It had been a hectic Thursday morning at the law office. My staff was working at non-stop pace and no one had time for lunch.”**

YOUNG FOX:

(Addresses his secretary.) **“I’m starving. I’m gonna run across to the gas station and grab a hot dog.”**

OLD FOX:

**“It may have been cooking for five minutes – or five days. Who could tell? I ate it in four bites while running back to the office. About twenty minutes later I knew I was in trouble. One of my secretaries found me in pain writhing on my office floor.”**

(A secretary, Christine, walks into Young Fox’s office and finds him moaning on the floor. She rushes to him.)

CHRISTINE:

**“Oh my God! Mr. Fox! Are you O.K.?”**

YOUNG FOX:

(He can barely respond.) **“Gas station ... hot dog ... probably fatal ...”**

CHRISTINE:

**“Oh my God! But Mr. Fox – you can’t die yet. We have two more appointments this afternoon.”**

YOUNG FOX:

**“Oooh ... my stomach.”** (He rolls around on the floor. Christine runs to the door and calls out for the other two secretaries, Laura and Jill.)

CHRISTINE:

**“Laura ... Jill ... get in here. It’s an emergency!”** (Laura and Jill rush into the room.)

JILL:

(Addresses Christine in an accusatory manner:) **“What did you do, hit him?”**

CHRISTINE:

**“No – I found him on the floor just like that!”** (She points at the body.)

LAURA:

**“Mr. Fox, what are you doing down there?”**

YOUNG FOX:

**“... Ooooooh ... Somebody ... shoot ... me ...”**

JILL:

(Becoming concerned.) **“We better call 911, don’t cha think?”**

OLD FOX:

(He addresses the audience:) **“And that’s just what they did – those quick witted secretaries.**

**Five minutes later the ambulance arrived.”**

(Young Fox is still on the floor. He moans once in awhile. The three secretaries surround him.

Two ambulance attendants, Hilda and Archie, enter the room carrying a stretcher and a large leather bag. They begin to take Fox’s vital signs.)

HILDA:

(Speaks in a take-charge abrupt thick German accent.) **“Vhat happened to him?”**

JILL:

(Doesn’t seem to hear the question.) **“Is he dead?”**

LAURA:

**“I don’t think so. He’s still sweating. Is he supposed to twitch like that?”**

CHRISTINE:

**“I think he’s gonna hurl. We better move his files. Quick!”**

HILDA:

**“Pardon me – does anyone know what happened to him?”**

LAURA:

**“This is terrible! I don’t think he signed the payroll checks.”**

JILL:

**“What should we tell the two callers on hold?”**

CHRISTINE:

(Tilting head side to side in her own world of thought as she speaks slowly.) **“You know ... my mom always said to wear clean underwear just in case ... Do you think Larry’s got clean –”**

(Archie starts to pull Young Fox’s underwear out of his pants.)

HILDA:

(Interrupts as she pushes Archie aside. Using loud nursing home speak, and putting her face within inches of Young Fox.) **“Sir ... Are you able to open your eyes?”**

YOUNG FOX:

(In pain.) **“... Ooooooh ...”**

HILDA:

**“Can you tell me your name?”**

JILL:

(Trying to be helpful.) **“It’s Lawrence Fox, but he usually answers to ‘Larry’.”**

HILDA:

**“Listen, lady, I want *him* to answer – not you. It’s a test to see if he’s dead.”**

JILL:

(Happy and upbeat to understand what the ambulance personnel are trying to do.) **“Oh ... O.K.”**



HILDA:

**“Larry ... Ve’re going to put you on a stretcher and take you out to the ambulance. Do you understand?”**

YOUNG FOX:

**“... Hot dog ...”**

ARCHIE:

(With some hesitation.) **“Good. Hilda – that hallway isn’t very wide. We may have to use the drag bag.”**

HILDA:

**“Vell, let’s roll him on his side first, ‘cause I think there’s a file stuck to his ass.”**

(Old Fox addresses the audience as Hilda and Archie place Young Fox in a type of hammock – the ‘drag bag’ – in preparation for his journey through the hallway to the waiting ambulance.)

OLD FOX:

(With sadness.) **“For the first time in my life I felt the unmistakable hand of death reaching for my body. I now understood how the people in all those old hospital movies *knew* when they were going to bite it. Death was just minutes away. I began to search for the white light.”**

HILDA:

(Very loudly within inches of Young Fox’s face.) **“Larry – Ve’re gonna have to strap you in. Ve don’t vant you falling out, O.K.?”**

OLD FOX:

**“I was beginning to look like Jesus Romanoff. They had secured my arms and legs. They knew that I, similar to Jesus, was about to leave them. So this was it. This was how I**

would make my grand exit – out the back door in a drag bag. In seconds I was suspended in this stupid leather pouch. So humiliating. I couldn't even wave a last goodbye to my comrades – my loyal staff."

ARCHIE:

"Watch out, Hilda. I think his ass is dragging on the floor."

OLD FOX:

"The next time I'd see everyone would be at the cemetery. Life was so short, so unpredictable. One lousy hotdog - that's all it took. And that's when I heard the squeal of brakes and smelled burning rubber. I could see down the hallway that someone had parked a Mercedes next to the ambulance. A fancy suit sprinted into the crowd of office well-wishers, some of whom were wiping away a few tears. It was Dr. Wombat. Surely he had come to help."

DOCTOR WOMBAT:

(Breathless.) "Is that Fox? Let me talk to him."

YOUNG FOX

(Moans from within the body bag.) "Somebody get a bucket."

JILL:

(Happy and animated.) "I think the cleaning lady has one in the coat closet. I'll go check."

ARCHIE:

"Maybe we better flip him so he's facing down." (Archie and Hilda nod at each other as they roll Young Fox face down. Jill returns with the bucket, as Young Fox sticks his head in the bucket and loses lunch. Simultaneously, Dr. Wombat talks to Young Fox.)

DR. WOMBAT:

(Unconcerned.) **“Listen, Counselor, you look busy, but I gotta ask a favor, ‘cause it’s an emergency. See, if we can get the new mortgage application to the bank by this afternoon, I can shave off another quarter percent. What do you think?”**

OLD FOX:

**“In an instant I could feel the hand of death loosen its grip from my lifeless torso. The sun was beginning to shine again and the birds were chirping. I had received a reprieve from the call of the Grim Reaper.”**

(Young Fox barfs into the bucket again as all stage lights go black.)

DR. WOMBAT:

(He bends over Young Fox.) **“Was that a ‘yes’ or a ‘no’?”**

End of Scene Nine. (Spotlight on the Statue of Justice.)

SCENE X

The Angel

(Old Fox rummages about in his memorabilia box, muttering to himself. The same Angel who appeared in the prior scenes flutters into the room. Old Fox looks up and happily acknowledges her presence as he addresses her.)

OLD FOX:

**“Oh. Hello. It’s nice to see you again ... You know ... I don’t think we’ve ever been properly introduced.”**

ANGEL:

**“Hello again, Larry.”**

OLD FOX:

**“People pay me by the hour for my advice. I’ve never paid you for yours, and yet you’ve always been there for me. Why?”**

ANGEL:

(With modesty) **“Think nothing of it ... I do have a personal question.”**

OLD FOX:

**“Shoot.”**

ANGEL:

**“I’ve been watching you all these years. I’m just curious – Have you enjoyed practicing law?”** (Old Fox begins to ponder as the Angel continues her inquiry.)

**“Let me help. If you had a child, would you have encouraged your young one to become an attorney?”**

OLD FOX:

**“Practicing law is similar to taking a leak in your pants. Once in a while there’s a momentary warm feeling. But it never lasts. Perhaps the morning starts off on a high note as you represent a couple who want to adopt. An infant is about to begin its life journey with a wonderful new family, and you’re there to help. But that same afternoon you find yourself standing in court next to a criminal who just shot someone dead.”**

ANGEL:

**“Did that upset you?”**

OLD FOX:

**“In the beginning. But not for long, ‘cause I swore to defend the defenseless, the indigent, the downtrodden. It’s been O.K. (Old Fox pauses in thought.) I have to say, just between us, you know what I did find disconcerting?”**

ANGEL:

**“Tell me.”**

OLD FOX:

**“All those ‘lawyer jokes’ people felt compelled to tell me over the years. You never see the teachers or maintenance men get thrown under the bus. Nope. Just lawyers, as if the practice of law could never be a noble profession.”**

ANGEL:

**“You’re right. By the way, do you know the difference between a domestic relations lawyer and a pit bull? You can reason with the pit bull, and sooner or later it will let go of your leg. (The Angel starts to laugh as Old Fox stares at her in disbelief. She doesn’t seem to care.) And here’s another one: It was so cold out yesterday ... (off-stage chorus: “How cold**

was it?") ... **that I saw a lawyer with his hands in his own pockets!"**

OLD FOX:

**"Not you, too!"**

ANGEL:

(Shocked at herself as she regains her composure.) **"Oh, I'm *sooo* sorry. I don't know what got into me."**

OLD FOX:

**"Truth be told, there is one lawyer joke I heard maybe 30 years ago that's actually kinda funny. Want to hear it?"**

ANGEL:

**"That would be heavenly."**

OLD FOX:

**"A lawyer driving his fancy car comes upon a destitute family eating a few sparse blades of grass that grow by the side of the road. He jams on the brakes to ask about their plight. The father replies that they are so poor they have nothing else left to eat. The lawyer says "Get in my Mercedes – I'm taking you home for dinner!" They comply, and he drives them to his palatial estate. He opens the car door and announces: "You folks are in for a real treat – the grass in my back yard is almost a foot high."**

(The Angel laughs as Old Fox continues.)

OLD FOX:

**"When I look back, it's been a good life, although there could have been a little more Justice."**

ANGEL:

**“Sometimes it *is* hard to find ...”**

OLD FOX:

**“Well, I’m almost done with my packing. I’ll call the movers in the morning.”**

ANGEL:

(Hesitating and looking down, maybe fidgeting.) **“Actually ... that ... won’t be necessary.”**

OLD FOX:

**“Sure it will. See, tomorrow – ”**

ANGEL:

(Interrupts.) **“Mr. Fox?”**

OLD FOX:

**“Yes?”**

ANGEL:

**“As they say in the law business ... your request for a continuance has been denied ... It’s time for you to transition to a place where Justice always prevails.”**

OLD FOX:

(Surprised and upset.) **“But I never finished my Will! I’d been meaning to get to it ...”**

ANGEL:

**“Larry, it really doesn’t matter any more. All those details are best left for the living.”**

OLD FOX:

**“But lawyers. They’re so expensive. I was trying to avoid probate. Put everything you’ve got in tax deferred municipal bonds.”**

ANGEL:

**“Thanks for the advice, Counselor, but I don’t own anything ... By the way, you’re not going to send me a bill, are you?”**

(The Angel and Old Fox begin to walk off the stage hand in hand. The Angel decides there’s time for another “lawyer joke.”)

ANGEL:

**“You’re gonna love this one. Suppose you’re trapped on a desert island with Hitler, Mussolini, and a lawyer, and you have a gun with only two bullets in it. Who do you shoot?”**

OLD FOX:

**“I dunno?”**

ANGEL:

**“The lawyer – *twice!*”** (The Angel laughs as Old Fox stares at her as they exit the stage.)

End of Play.