

**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

NOTICE

The amateur and professional (equity) rights to this work *There's No Justice – Just Court Costs* are controlled exclusively by *Fox Publications Inc.* (hereinafter “Fox”) without whose written permission no performance of this work may take place. Royalty fees are reflected in the Fox website and catalogue and these fees are subject to change without notice. Royalty fees must be paid every time the play is performed, whether or not the work is presented for profit, and whether or not an admission is charged. A play is performed any time it is acted before an audience. All inquiries concerning amateur and equity rights should be addressed to *Fox Publications Inc.*, 1834 Pennsylvania Avenue, Allentown, Pa. 18109.

Copyright law gives the author or his agent the exclusive right to make copies of this work or any portion thereof. This work is fully protected under the copyright laws of the United States of America, The British Commonwealth, including Canada, and all other countries of the Copyright Union. The copyright law provides authors with a fair return for their creative efforts. Authors earn their living from the royalties they receive from book sales and from the performance of their work. Conscientious observance of copyright law is not only ethical, it encourages authors to continue their creative work. This work is fully protected by copyright. No alterations, deletions or substitutions may be made in the work without the prior written consent of the publisher, *Fox Publications Inc.* No part of this work may be reproduced or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic or mechanical, including photocopy, recording, videotape, film, or any other form of information storage and retrieval system, without prior permission in writing from the publisher.

The work may not be performed either by professionals or amateurs without payment of royalty fees. All rights, including but not limited to the rights applicable to professional and amateur pursuit of motion pictures, radio, television, videotape, foreign language translation, tabloid use, recitation, lecturing, publication, and reading are reserved. Live stage performance rights to *There's No Justice – Just Court Costs* are controlled exclusively by *Fox Publications Inc.*, and licensing arrangements and performance licenses must be secured well in advance of presentation or production. Licensing fees are derived in accordance with the licensee's circumstances. When applying for a licensing quotation and a performance license, please provide *Fox Publications Inc.* with the number of performances intended, dates of production, venue seating capacity and admission fee. Licensing fees are payable no later than one week prior to the opening performance of the play and must be tendered to *Fox Publications Inc.* at 1834 Pennsylvania Avenue, Allentown, PA. 18109.

The following language must conspicuously appear on the cover of all programs, playbills, advertisements, and similar writings: “Produced by special arrangement with *Fox Publications Inc.* of Allentown, Pennsylvania.” Due authorship credit must be similarly reflected as follows upon all programs, printing and advertising for the play: “Playwright – Lawrence B. Fox.”

Publication of this play does not imply availability for performance. Both amateurs and professionals considering a production are advised to apply to *Fox Publications Inc.*, for written permission before commencing rehearsals, advertising, or booking a venue.

THERE'S NO JUSTICE – JUST COURT COSTS ©

A Comedic Stage Play In Two Acts

By

Lawrence B. Fox, Esquire
1834 Pennsylvania Avenue
Hanover Township
Allentown, PA 18109

Telephone 610-861-9297
Facsimile 610-861-5989
lbfox@lbfoxlaw.com
www.lawrencebfox.com

All rights reserved under International and other applicable Copyright Conventions. Published in the United States by Lawrence B. Fox. No quotations or other portions of this play may be reproduced in any form without written permission from the author.

This play is a work of fiction. Names, characters, places and incidents are the products of the author's imagination or are used fictitiously. Any resemblance to actual events, locales or persons, living or dead, is entirely coincidental.

The storage, transmission, retention, or other publication of the material contained herein is prohibited without the express written agreement of Playwright Lawrence B. Fox.

Copyright 2009 by Lawrence B. Fox. This play is registered with the Writers Guild of America, East. ISBN 978-0-9724891-8-8

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 95th 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