

**GEORGE
BAKER**

GENTLEMEN OF
THE JURY

George Baker

Gentlemen of the Jury

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Gentlemen of the Jury A Farce

FOR MALE CHARACTERS ONLY

CHARACTERS

Peleg Precise, Foreman. Job Timorous, Jacob Doubtful, Abel Strongfist, Jarvis Jolly, Solomon Snowball, Dennis O'Rourke, Nathan Short, Enos Paunch, Brazen Blower, Peter Punster, Simeon Slow, Jurors.

Scene. —A Jury Room. Table, C., with paper, pens, ink, &c. Twelve chairs around stage

Enter from R. all the characters, in the order in which their names are written, single file, across Stage, and face Audience. Door at R. is slammed and locked

Timorous. Good gracious! we're locked in! (*Rushes across stage to R.*) Here, officer! officer! *Slow* (*at extreme R., catching Timorous by arm, and swinging him round*). Stop that. It's all right, you know.

Timorous. No, I don't. I'm afraid of fire —

Punster (*swinging him round to next man*). What er that?

Timorous. And subject to fits —

Blower (*ditto*). You're no *fit* juror.

Timorous. I must have air —

Paunch (*ditto*). Where *air* you, now?

Timorous. Or smother —

Short (*ditto*). Take him to his mother.

Timorous. What do you call this treatment?

O'Rourke (*ditto*). The movement cure, bedad.

Timorous. It's outrageous —

Snowball (*ditto*). Da's a fac', da's a fac', honey.

Timorous. Diabolical —

Jolly (*ditto*). Ha, ha! now you go ag'in.

Timorous. Infamous!

Strongfist (*ditto*). Move on, stupid.

Timorous. I won't stand it.

Doubtful (*pushes him into chair*). Then sit down.

Precise (*at table*). Gentlemen, be seated. (*All sit.*) Before we discuss the case with which we have been intrusted, perhaps we had better take a vote.

Short. My idea exactly.

O'Rourke. Begorra, let's take something cowl'd.

Precise. We have been instructed to bring a verdict, “Guilty or not guilty.” Please write your verdict. Here are slips of paper. (*Passes them round. All write, some on the table, some on chairs; Snowball writes his against the wall.*)

O’Rourke (*approaches Snowball*). Whist! I say, d’ye write Guilty wid a G or a J?

Snowball. Ob course not. Write him wid a pencil – so.

O’Rourke. O, be jabbers! It’s yerself’s a heathen – you ignoramus.

Precise. Now, gentlemen, if you are ready. (*Collects votes, spreads them on table, and assort.*)

Timorous. I want a glass of water – I’m faint.

Strongfist. Shut up. Don’t disturb the meeting.

O’Rourke. Bedad, it’s a glass eye ye’ll be wantin’ if yer do.

Punster. His eye waters at the thought.

Precise. Gentlemen, the vote stands, six “Guilty,” six “Not guilty.”

Jolly. Hallo, a clean cut!

Short. Six mules in the crowd, certain.

O’Rourke. A majority on both sides, d’ye mind.

Snowball. Major who? Major who? Dar ain’t no sogers here, hey, I ax you?

Precise. Well, gentlemen, there’s work before us; and, that we may know each other, I propose that those who voted “guilty” take seats on the right, those who voted “not guilty,” on the left.

Short. Good. I’m for the right.

Jolly. I feel decidedly *guilty*.

Slow. And so do I.

Strongfist. Right face. March!

O’Rourke. Begorra, captain, I’ll train in that company. (*They all pass to R. as they speak. Doubtful, Timorous, Snowball, Paunch, Punster, and Blower pass to L.*)

Punster. Though on the left, we’re in the right.

Paunch. Well, look here, I’m getting hungry. Ain’t we going to have our dinner?

Blower. You’re always thinking of eating.

Snowball. By golly, da’s a fac’. Dat ar Mr. Punch hab an appetite like an earthquake.

Paunch. Bah! what do you know about it? Well, wake me up when you’re through. (*Tips his chair back against wall, throws his handkerchief over his face, and falls asleep.*)

Snowball. Dar, de old man gwine for Morphine.

Precise. My vote was “Guilty,” and of course I belong with the party on the right.

O’Rourke. Thru for yez, honey; and ye’ll find it the party that’s always right, jist.

Snowball. Hold yer hush, hold yer hush!

O’Rourke. Vat’s that, ye heathen? I’d jist like to pound that thick pate till I had yer spachless – so I would. Begorra, ye’d cry Guilty then.

Timorous. O, come, let’s have peace.

O’Rourke. Pace, is it? Ye’ve had a pace of my mind, onyhow.

Precise. No quarrelling, gentlemen. The quicker we decide this case the better. The government has charged one Peter Popgun with an attempt to defraud the revenue of the manufacturer’s tax on gunpowder. Its secret agents, suspecting said Popgun, made a descent upon his establishment, which is a country store, seized certain articles, such as saltpetre, sulphur, and charcoal, which they found in a certain little back shop, said articles being, in their opinion, used by said Popgun in the manufacture of gunpowder. The said Popgun denies the manufacture of gunpowder, and sets up a defence that the said articles are used by him in concocting a certain patent medicine, known as the “Medical Dead Shot.” Evidence has been produced on both sides. We have been charged to bring in a verdict on the evidence alone. I am quite convinced, by the testimony, that said Popgun did manufacture gunpowder, and evade the tax. Still, I should like to hear a free expression of opinion.

All (jumping up). Mr. Foreman.

Precise. Stop, stop. One at a time.

Конец ознакомительного фрагмента.

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