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## Cast of Characters

FOREMAN, overly eager to please, energetic. Takes improv classes at the Y but has only one character, "a cooky cockney lady" she randomly inserts into conversation.

TWO, nervous, prone to anxiety attacks. Terrible at making arguments or standing up for herself.

THREE, a sensible every man or woman.

FOUR, a bratty teenager. Always texting. Rude, inconsiderate, easily annoyed.

FIVE and SIX, a bickering couple. Loud, argumentative, but gosh darn it if they don't love each other.

SEVEN, sweet but lonely. Unemployed and lives with his grandmother. Thinks he's found a friend in the prosecutor.

EIGHT, believes he or she should have been a lawyer. Persuasive and self righteous.

NINE, creepy guy. Eats fries all the time. Keeps to himself mostly.

TEN, angry, at almost everyone. Definite rage issues. Probably should be medicated.

ELEVEN, works in PR. A fast talker though not much of an intellect.

TWELVE, an emigrant from some where in Eastern Europe. Has trouble expressing her ideas and understanding others.

## Production Notes

The only thing really needed for this production is a long table, twelve chairs, and twelve actors.

A door and water cooler would be nice, but in no way necessary. At one point a prop TV is wheeled in, but you could easily do this on a lap top.

At one point there is a video that is heard by the audience. If you'd like to get ambitious and film the video and project it some how, go for it! But don't feel like you need to.

All the roles, in my opinion can be played by either a man or a woman. If you go with an all male or all female cast, then feel free to change the title (or if you'd prefer *12 Incompetent Jurors* for a mixed sex cast, you can do that as well).

Otherwise, keep the pace up and have fun.

# 12 INCOMPETENT MEN (AND WOMEN!)

by Ian McWethy

*(A Jury Room. A table, twelve chairs. A water cooler. There is one door upstage right for entrances. There are two windows, one with an air conditioning unit.)*

**JUDGE.** *(Off stage:)* Ladies and Gentlemen, this is by far one of the most bizarre cases I have ever seen in my thirty years on the bench. To be honest, I don't even know how it came to trial. For the past two weeks you have seen a plethora of evidence against Mr. Pleats, the man accused of the abduction of half a dozen cats. You've heard from eye witnesses, seen videos, and, at one point the defendant even said "Alright I did it, I kidnapped all the cats. Are you happy?" As a judge, I am not supposed to give you my opinion one way or the other, but come on. This is one of the most open and shut cases I've ever seen. The man stole cats. If you are in there for more than fifteen minutes I am going to be very, very, very disappointed in you. As human beings. So get to it.

*(Lights up on the Jury room. The twelve jurors enter. Some sit, some stand, there are a few ad-libs here and there.)*

*(TWELVE takes out a cigarette and starts to light it.)*

**SEVEN.** Uh, I don't think you can smoke in here.

**TWELVE.** Huh!?! Smoke?!? Yes!

**SEVEN.** No. No smoking.

**TWELVE.** But stupid judge not here! He always says no smoke, but he not here!

**SEVEN.** It doesn't matter, some of us are asthmatic.

**TWELVE.** Huh?!?

**SEVEN.** Asthmatic. In my chest.

**TWELVE.** With heart. Your heart explode! Boom.

**SEVEN.** No. Ast—

**TWELVE.** Eh...

*(TWELVE puts her cigarette away, disgruntled.)*

**ELEVEN.** Gum? Gum anyone?

**FIVE.** Nah, I don't chew things I can't swallow.

**ELEVEN.** Oh yeah, why's that?

**FIVE.** What's the point of chewing if you ain't gonna swallow it, ya know? Who am I a cow?'

**SIX.** No one's sayin' you're a cow.

**FIVE.** I know! I'm just sayin'. Proving a point.

**SIX.** Well he's just bein' nice, you don't have to be such a pain in the butt.

**FIVE.** Oh! What a mouth. We're in an official building here, you can't just talk like that.

**THREE.** So if we could just get everyone to the table, I don't think this will take too long. Yeah, everyone.

**ALL.** Yeah...okay...fine...I'm coming...yeah, yeah, yeah...alright...

**THREE.** Hey, buddy. We're gonna get started.

*(EIGHT, who was staring out the window, turns around and joins the group.)*

**EIGHT.** Oh. I'm sorry.

**ELEVEN.** So this is kind of a crazy case, huh? Guy stealing cats.

**EIGHT.** Allegedly.

**ELEVEN.** Right, yeah, but...I mean, who's ever even heard of something like that. Guy stealing cats. It's pretty freaky.

**TWO.** It's fairly um...undocumented in uh...the things I've read...boy...I do not feel good.

**ELEVEN.** You need to go to the bathroom or something?

*(TWO waves him away and pushes on his sides.)*

**FOREMAN.** Soooo...we can do this a couple of ways. We can talk, if you want, and I'm totally for talking...or...we can take a vote...*(Cockney accent:)* Right at the tip top of it!

**THREE.** I don't know, it might just be good to take a vote, to see where we stand?

**ALL.** Yeah...okay...sure...okay...yeah.

*(FOUR is texting away on her cell phone.)*

**THREE.** Hey, we're not supposed to have cell phones in here.

**FOUR.** Oh no?

**THREE.** No.

*(FOUR keeps texting.)*

**THREE.** So why don't you put it away?

**FOUR.** Totes. I'm on it.

*(She continues to text.)*

**THREE.** Maybe I should call in the guard.

**FOUR.** FINE! Geez, didn't realize my dad was here!

**FOREMAN.** Alright, we're uh... *(Cockney:)* gettin' a little off track here! So...why don't we...take a vote shall we?

*(Everyone nods/murmurs agreement.)*

**FOREMAN.** Alright, all those voting guilty?

*(THREE, SEVEN, TEN, and TWELVE put their hands up instantly. The foreman, TWO, FOUR, FIVE, and SIX follow a second later. Then ELEVEN puts his hand up, and a few seconds later, NINE.)*

**FOREMAN.** Okay. And all those voting not guilty?

*(EIGHT's hand goes up. Everyone looks at him.)*

**TEN.** What the hell! Darn it!

**THREE.** Whoa, whoa, whoa, no. It's alright, we don't need to resort to violence.

**TEN.** Well where does he get off?! I've got a life, Mister! Do you hear me?! You're not better than me!

**EIGHT.** I never said I was.

**TEN.** WHAT?!?

**THREE.** Okay! Hey!

**SEVEN.** Yeah, there's no need for that, come on.

**THREE.** Look I think we can all talk about this civilly. You...think he's innocent?

**EIGHT.** No. I'm just not sure. A man's life is at stake.

**THREE.** Well, no. Not a man's life. A man's three to six months is at stake.

**EIGHT.** Which in prison, can be an eternity.

**THREE.** Um...yeah...

**TWELVE.** How can you not be sure?! We see so many things! Video! The witness! He guilty! We put him in cage, yes?

**THREE.** No. He is not going into a cage. He'd be going to prison. The point is...you (*Pointing to EIGHT:*) believe he's not guilty.

**EIGHT.** Well I'm sorry to keep you all here, but I take this very seriously. A man could be sent to prison. For up to six months. That's a long stretch of time and I think we owe it to Mr. Pleats to review the evidence at hand.

**ALL.** Aaahhh...gees...bah...come on...errr...okay...

**FOREMAN.** Well, perhaps we should just go in order of our numbers, and talk about why we think he's guilty...that may be a good way to start a discussion. (*To TWO:*) We'll start with you.

*(TWO stands up.)*

**TWO.** ...okay...um...I think...that...he...eeeehhh...we were all there, we saw it...and...we SAW THE VIDEO. OW OW OW! OHH-HHHhhhhhh.

*(TWO grabs his side and sits down in pain. Everyone sits for a minute.)*

**EIGHT.** Well I hardly think that is a good enough reason to put a man—

**THREE.** Yeah, okay. That wasn't a very well thought out argument. Look, if you're done I'll just go ahead and go over the evidence.

*(TWO nods his head.)*

**THREE.** Great. So here's what we know: Mr. Pleats is accused of stealing half a dozen cats. We have seen a video that shows, in broad daylight, the abduction of these cats. We've heard from several eye witnesses. And on top of all that, Mr. Pleats himself admitted he was guilty on the witness stand. And it didn't take long, five minutes of questions and he started crying and confessing. So really...our jobs are pretty easy. All evidence points to him doing it. And I'm not sure he has a defense of any kind...that I'm aware of.

*(Everyone around the table nods and murmur-agrees.)*

**EIGHT.** I don't know, it doesn't fit.

**ALL.** What?... No... come On... Good God...

**THREE.** Everyone! Come on, let's...what do you mean it doesn't fit?

**FIVE.** Yeah, you sayin' you believe his alibi?

**SIX.** Yeah, come on! He said he was at the movies and clearly he wasn't. I mean we saw the tape, it was time coded.

**EIGHT.** So because we saw a video of Mr. Pleats at one place, clearly that means he must of been there.

**THREE.** ...yeah.

**EIGHT.** Well I saw a video of an island...a theme park island, where dinosaurs coexist with human beings.

**SEVEN.** No way. They have that?

**THREE.** No he's trying to prove a point.

**EIGHT.** I'm not proving a point!?! I've seen a video where dinosaurs exist. Therefore they must, according to you.

**THREE.** Clearly there is a difference between a Hollywood blockbuster and a home movie and...Jurassic Park is a complete fabrication. I mean, does anyone else think the video of Mr. Pleats is a fake?

**SIX.** I don't know. I mean I think it's real but maybe we should see it again.

**FIVE.** What! You're buyin' this?

**SIX.** No! Not necessarily! But maybe it's worth another look, just so we can prove it's real. Couldn't hurt, right?

**EIGHT.** Should we ask the guard to see the tape again?

*(All murmur, agree yes.)*

**THREE.** Fine.

*(The FOREMAN walks over to the door, knocks on it. It opens.)*

**FOREMAN.** *(To the guard off stage:)* So, we'd like to see Exhibit C again, if you wouldn't mind—oh—it's right here. Okay. Thank you.

*(The FOREMAN wheels in a TV and DVD player.)*

**FOREMAN.** Could somebody help me set this up?

*(THREE and FIVE help the FOREMAN move the TV in place, plug it in, etcetera.)*

*(SEVEN and ELEVEN walk downstage to the water cooler and get a drink.)*

**ELEVEN.** So what are you thinking? Thinking that guy's *(Motioning to EIGHT:)* case makes any sense or what?

**SEVEN.** Oh, no way. I'm still thinking about the prosecutor's closing arguments.

**ELEVEN.** Yeah...I don't know. I just hate it when people get bogged down in facts and stuff. Like that guy *(Pointing to THREE:)*. He seems like a "reader" ya know? Blah. Books are the worst.

**SEVEN.** But didn't you think the prosecutor made a really compelling closing argument?

**ELEVEN.** Yeah, but—

**SEVEN.** I mean, it's just like, obviously that prosecutor is just...the coolest guy. I mean, he speaks and you feel like he's your best friend, ya know?

*(ELEVEN nods, not really sure what to say.)*

**ELEVEN.** I mean, I don't...really understand what you're saying but—

**SEVEN.** But basically, I mean, we're on the same page—

**ELEVEN.** Well, not really, in a literal sense—

**SEVEN.** Well right, but—

**ELEVEN.** I mean I agree that he's—

**SEVEN.** Totally, that's what I'm...we're all about.

**ELEVEN.** Right.

*(ELEVEN finishes his drink, crumples up his cup and throws it away. SEVEN does the same.)*

*(The TV is now set up.)*

**THREE.** Alright, we all ready to watch this thing again?

*(The TV is positioned with its back facing the audience, so we hear the audio but can't see the video itself.)*

*(THREE presses play.)*

**BRAD.** *(Off stage:)* Hello. And welcome to the Lucas family yard sale extravaganza.

**SHELLY.** *(Off stage:)* Oh, God. Brad, can you put that stupid thing away and help me?

**TWELVE.** Ah! This is the worst movie. All they do is mwa mwa mwa. Is awful.

**THREE.** The point of this is not to be entertained. This is evidence. Not a movie.

**TWELVE.** Yes. Movie! This movie has no tigers! How can movie be good with out Tigers?!?

**ELEVEN.** Shhh! This is important!

**TWELVE.** Eh. I need smoke? Is okay if I smoke?

**ALL.** No!

**TWELVE.** Bruishnick—Mot! Ah!

**THREE.** Alright, here it comes.

**BRAD.** (*Off stage:*) Alright, looks like we have our first customer...it's Harold...from down the block.

**MR. PLEATS.** (*Off stage:*) It's Donald! Donald Pleats! I tell you this every time!

**BRAD.** (*Off stage:*) Oops! My bad! Any who, welcome to the yard sale! Lookin' for anything in particular?!

**MR. PLEATS.** (*Off stage:*) Um...maybe the chair, in the way back there.

**BRAD.** (*Off stage:*) Chair? Honey, do we have a chair for sale back here?

**SHELLY.** (*Off stage:*) No. We're not selling any chairs. Not back here or...is he...is Harold talking Mumsy's kittens?

**BRAD.** (*Off stage:*) Uh, Harold...those cats aren't for sale. Are you interested in—

**SHELLY.** (*Off stage:*) He's running to his car! Oh my God, he's stealing them!

**BRAD.** (*Off stage:*) Harold! Harold, give us those kittens! Harold!

**MR. PLEATS.** (*Off stage:*) My name is DONALD Pleats! I told you! My name is Donald Pleats!

*(The sound of a car driving away is heard.)*

*(The video ends. The FOREMAN stops the tape. They sit for moment.)*

*(THREE looks to EIGHT.)*

**THREE.** Well?

**EIGHT.** What?

**THREE.** You're the only one who has a problem with this.

*(EIGHT stands up and paces around the room.)*

**EIGHT.** I would like to show you a different video, if I could. One that takes you away to an extraordinary land...where dinosaurs WALK with men.

*(Everyone groans.)*

**EIGHT.** If I may.

*(EIGHT goes to put the DVD in the DVD player.)*

*(From the video we hear a T-Rex roaring, and various people screaming. This plays for only about ten or fifteen seconds.)*

**EIGHT.** Now I don't expect you to believe...that this dinosaur is real.

**TWELVE.** No. Is too LOUD. Real life, it hiss. SSSSSS! Is tricky in that way.

**EIGHT.** Sure. But what I do want to point out, is that this movie used two types of special effects to create the T-Rex. Most of the shots were done with an animatronic, life sized replica, created by the Stan Winston studios. While only roughly 20 percent of the shots used digital animation, created by George Lucas's Industrial Light and Magic. The clip I showed you was an example of the life sized replica. Are we all in agreement?

*(All murmur, yes, and nod.)*

*(EIGHT points to THREE, as if to say "I want to hear you say it too.")*

**THREE.** Yeah, I agree.

**EIGHT.** Wrong! The clip we just saw was a mix of both digital and practical effects. The first five seconds were of the animatronic Dinosaur, and the last ten, when the dinosaur starts running, were digitally created. Observe.

*(EIGHT plays the clip again.)*

**FIVE.** Oh yeah. The colors are kinda different once he starts moving.

**SIX.** What'll they think of next. Uh, those men and their computers.

**SEVEN.** If you think that's impressive, you should see what they can do with video games these days. I've been designing—

**TEN.** Son of a gun! No one wants to hear about your computers ya big nerd! Ever! *(To EIGHT:)* Where is this going?!

**EIGHT.** The point is that no one here could tell the difference between a computer-generated dinosaur, and a life-size replica.

**THREE.** So therefore, what? Mr. Pleats was computer animated? That's your suggestion?

**EIGHT.** Maybe.

**SEVEN.** By who? Who would computer animate Donald Pleats, just to use it against him in a cat-napping case?

**FIVE.** Cat napping! Hey! How come no one used that phrase before?! That's funny!

**EIGHT.** All I'm suggesting is that it's something to think about.

**FIVE.** Is no one gonna jump on board this “cat-napping” thing?

**THREE.** Okay, let’s think about it. In order to computer animate a COMPLETELY REALISTIC person, something that has never been successfully done before, you would need access to...many computers, the best animators in the world, and enough money to pay for all the hundreds of hours of rendering it would take to produce such a clip.

**EIGHT.** I agree. To create something that realistic you would need George Lucas himself to do it for you.

**THREE.** Yes exactly!

**EIGHT.** BOOM!

(EIGHT takes a newspaper clipping out of his pocket.)

**EIGHT.** A picture in the local Samson County newspaper of our plaintiff, Brad Lucas, with his arm around his cousin...GEORGE.

(THREE looks at the picture, surrounded by FIVE, SIX, ELEVEN, and TEN.)

**FIVE.** Oh! I didn’t know Brad Lucas and George Lucas were cousins! I thought it was just a common last name.

**ELEVEN.** Oh, you know what? I think I heard something about this.

**THREE.** No, please stop supporting this—

**ELEVEN.** No, I read it in *Variety*. There was the article that said like, George Lucas was determined to digitally animate the most realistic looking human being ever. It said he’s been working on it for months.

**THREE.** So this is how he chooses to unveil it!? By secretly framing his cousin’s neighbor as a cat burglar.

**FIVE.** Hey! I thought we were calling him the cat-napper. That was good right?

**ELEVEN.** Well the Pleats guy said that the Lucas’s hated him, right? Maybe they like...asked cousin George to help frame him. I mean he’s got time. There hasn’t been a new Star Wars in years.

**THREE.** Do you realize how insane this sounds? Did you just listen to what you said?

**ELEVEN.** Yeah, I did. Kind of. And I don’t think I appreciate what you’re trying to say!

**THREE.** So you think he’s innocent now.

**ELEVEN.** No. Not necessarily. I mean it’s still a long shot I guess.

**THREE.** Does anyone? Does anyone really think that Mr. Pleats was computer-generated?

*(No one is willing to raise their hands.)*

**THREE.** I think I think we should take a vote. *(Referring to EIGHT:)* Without you.

**EIGHT.** What! You can't do that!

**THREE.** You've had time to try and convince us with your ridiculous argument, so I say let's vote without you. If the vote is still unanimously guilty, than you should stand down. If even one person votes not guilty without you voting...then you can keep arguing.

**ALL.** yeah...come on...let's just vote...that's fair...

**EIGHT.** Fine. Vote. If that's how you all feel...fine.

**FOREMAN.** Well, if everyone is in agreement, I suggest we *(Cockney:)* Get to it! Perhaps a secret ballot would be best.

**TEN.** Sounds good to me! Sweet Mercy! Sounds good.

*(The FOREMAN passes out slips of paper as EIGHT walks over to the window and stares out the window. Everyone writes their vote on a slip of paper and returns it to the FOREMAN.)*

**FOREMAN.** Guilty. Guilty. Guilty. Guilty. Guilty. Guilty. *(Cockney:)* That's half a dozen guiltys that is.

**THREE.** Just keep going.

**FOREMAN.** Guilty. Guilty. Guilty. *(Pauses for a moment:)* Not Guilty. Guilty.

**ALL.** Aahhh... No... Come on... Darn it...what... God...

**EIGHT.** *(To THREE:)* YES! In your face! Who's all alone now?

**THREE.** You. More or less.

**TEN.** AAAHH! Who did this, huh? I wanna know, who did this?!?

**EIGHT.** We agreed this would be a anonymous vote.

**THREE.** He's right, we shouldn't force anyone to—

**TEN.** Ah! Be a man! Huh?!? Show a little fuzz on those fists.

**ELEVEN.** Is that a saying? Do you say that in your regular life?

**TEN.** I wanna know! Who voted not guilty! WHO!

*(He slams his fist on the table. No one says anything.)*

*(Then, SIX coughs.)*

*(Note: the following should happen quickly and on top of one another.)*

**TEN.** *(Pointing at SIX:)* Ah-ha!

**SIX.** *(What?)* Oh!

**FIVE.** *(Hold on:)* Ay!

**SEVEN.** Hey!

**THREE.** Wha?

**TWELVE.** *(Like a goat:)* Baaah?

**NINE.** *(The pain:)* Errrrgghh.

**ELEVEN.** *(Bad breath:)* Ew.

**FOUR.** *(So annoying:)* Eehhh

**TWO.** *(Overwhelmed:)* Oooohh

**FOREMAN.** *(Can we get back on track:)* Um...

**TWELVE.** Eh? For money!?

*(TEN slams his fist on the table.)*

**TEN.** Hey! Stop making noises. We're missing the point! She did it! She's the one who voted guilty!

**SIX.** OH!

**FIVE.** Ay!

**THREE.** No! We're not doing this again. Let's just...okay, let's just... get on with the discussing why you changed your vote.

**SIX.** Who says I changed my vote?

**SEVEN.** You did give a suspicious "cough."

**ELEVEN.** It seemed a little incriminating.

**THREE.** So if you want to talk about it—

**NINE.** There's nothing to discuss. She didn't vote guilty.

*(Everyone turns at NINE, as he slowly eats a french fry.)*

**NINE.** I did.

**THREE.** Why?

**ELEVEN.** Yeah, you've hardly said anything the entire time, now all of a sudden you're "Johnny has an opinion."

**NINE.** I believe in this man. Sure he's...got a look about him. His forehead could be a little more...sloped. But, he's right. This isn't about...uh...

*(NINE eats another fry, then slowly licks his finger.)*

**FIVE.** Buddy, do you have to eat in here?

**NINE.** This is my food.

**FIVE.** I know but it's disgusting!

**NINE.** It's the only thing keeping me alive! THAT AND THE LIQUIDS!

**THREE.** Okay! Just...sir! If we take the time to convince you of Mr. Pleats guilt...would you be willing to change your vote?

**NINE.** Of course. What would this world be without...the power of persuasion. If it weren't for persuasion...I would never have a single companion for reading nights at the library. But I do. Every Sunday. Because I *make them*.

*(NINE winks slowly.)*

*(Everyone tries desperately to ignore what he just said.)*

**THREE.** What about the corroborating witnesses?

**ELEVEN.** There he goes again, with his tenth grade English. Got any other big words, show off? Huh? Like "Triniticate?" Or "Blam-campy?"

**THREE.** Those are not words.

**ELEVEN.** There he goes again! Uh! The nerve!

**THREE.** The neighbors across the street. Mr. and Mrs. Hurwitz—who said they heard Mr. Pleats say "My name is Donald Pleats." And then by the time they got to the front yard, SAW Mr. Pleats drive away in his car.

**SIX.** That's true. They heard him say the exact same thing at the same time the video was taken.

**THREE.** Which they said was at Two o'clock?

**SEVEN.** That's right. He said he looked at his watch and it was Two o'clock on the nose. Then he and his wife walked from the backyard to the front yard and saw him drive away.

**TWO.** "Clearly," Mr. Hurwitz said. Said he got a, uh...good look at him.

**THREE.** And on the video, the time log at the right hand corner clearly says the time was Two o'clock.

**EIGHT.** Do we have a diagram of the Hurwitz property?

**ELEVEN.** No. Why?

**EIGHT.** I'm just wondering how long it would take someone to walk all the way from the back yard to the front yard. Does anyone know where the house is located?

**FOREMAN.** I think they said they lived in Samson County, right off of Claremont, right?

**FIVE.** Yeah, that's right, I got a cousin who just moved there.

**SIX.** What? Since when?

**FIVE.** I dunno. Two weeks ago. Tommy-John. I went over Sunday to watch the game.

**SIX.** Tommy-John moved to Samson County and I wasn't invited!?!?

**FIVE.** It was just a few guys! Relax, will ya!

**SIX.** Oh, I'll relax. Next time you see Tommy-John, you let him know...we are going to have words.

**FIVE.** Oh, yeah, you'll have words alright.

**EIGHT.** Do you remember the distance from the back yard to the front yard?

**FIVE.** Mmm...sixty feet, give or take. And it's a track community so the back yards from one house to the next are near identical.

**EIGHT.** Great. So...let's say they were in the very front of the back yard...what would you say, forty feet?

**FIVE.** Yeah.

**EIGHT.** But they probably didn't get all the way to the front yard to see Mr. Pleats in his car. So we could say they only traveled...twenty feet. Is that fair?

**ELEVEN.** More than fair.

**THREE.** What is the point of this?

**EIGHT.** The Hurwitzes said they heard a man say "My name is Mr. Pleats." And by the time they got to the front yard they saw him driving away. Now according to the video, the time he said "My name is Mr. Pleats," and the time in which he drove away was roughly...ten seconds, yes?

**TWO.** That seems about right, yeah?

**EIGHT.** Well let's test it, here in the room.

*(EIGHT walks foot over foot from one end of the room to the other.)*

**EIGHT.** About twenty feet from one side of the room to the other. Perfect. Why don't we just see? Two of us can walk from one side of the room to the other, and see if it actually takes ten seconds. Will anyone volunteer to be Mr. and Mrs. Hurwitz?

*(The FOREMAN shoots up her hand.)*

**FOREMAN.** Oh! I...if no one else minds, I've been taking improv classes at the Y. Working on developing a few *(Cockney:)* crazy characters, I have! Unless...anyone else wants to—

**EIGHT.** No, you'd be perfect. I think we've all been charmed by your "cooky old British woman voice" you've been doing today.

*(The FOREMAN is beaming. Everyone else looks down at their shoes.)*

**EIGHT.** And what about a Mr. Hurwitz?

**ELEVEN.** Yeah, I could do it. Why not? I did some acting in high school.

*(EIGHT moves ELEVEN and the FOREMAN to one side of the room.)*

**ELEVEN.** Alright, ready?

**FOREMAN.** Now, just so we're on the same page. Mr. and Mrs. Hurwitz are an elderly couple, and we're in their backyard and we start moving once we hear "My name is Donald Pleats!"

**EIGHT.** Does anyone want to record the time?

**NINE.** I have a perfectly good watch...with one of those hands...the kind of hand we need for something like this.

*(Beat.)*

**THREE.** A second hand?

**NINE.** *(Insistent:)* The kind we need.

**EIGHT.** That works for me. So are we all set? When you give the signal, somebody yell "My name is Mr. Pleats" and we'll start walking. Sound good?

*(Everyone nods and murmur agrees.)*

*(NINE looks at his watch, he points his finger in the air. Then, for what seems like an eternity, he slowly points his finger at EIGHT and FOREMAN.)*

**NINE.** Yes.

*(Beat. No one says anything for a few moments.)*

**THREE.** Wait, are we starting, is no one going to... "My name is Mr. Pleats?"

*(This re-enactment is very shmacktily done. Both ELEVEN and FOREMAN are doing broad impressions of an elderly couple.)*

**ELEVEN.** Oh, Barbara, my Shpilkiz! We better go and see what all this yelling is about?

**FOREMAN.** You just stay there, Harold. What with your heart? Dr. Mayfield said you need to rest. You've been pushing yourself too hard.

**ELEVEN.** Nonsense! I'm as healthy as I've ever been. Hold on to my arm—we'll go together.

**THREE.** This is ridiculous, can we—

**SEVEN.** Shhh! I'm trying to pay attention.

*(EIGHT and FOREMAN begin slowly walking to one side of the room.)*

**FOREMAN.** I hope it isn't the gangs. We left the city to get away from such nonsense. What if they followed us here?

**ELEVEN.** Then we'll start a neighborhood watch. We've been running our whole lives. From your parents, from the city. I'm tired. I want my last few years to be in peace. In one solid place.

**FOREMAN.** But what if things get bad?

*(ELEVEN stops walking.)*

**ELEVEN.** Barbara, can I tell you something?

**THREE.** Why are you stopping?!? Don't stop, that's the whole point!

**FIVE.** Would you be quiet? Nobody interrupts you when you speak!

**ELEVEN.** These past few years have been tough on us. I know that. You know that. But if I didn't believe, with every fiber in my being, that we weren't doing the right thing— I would take us back to the two bedroom apartment in a heartbeat.

**FOREMAN.** You know Harold, from the first moment I met you I knew you were the man I was going to spend the rest of my life with. I knew it wouldn't always be easy, that there would be good times and bad times. But I never doubted you. I never doubted.

**ELEVEN.** You're my little bupkis you know that?

**THREE.** Oh God.

**ALL.** Shhhhhh!

**ELEVEN.** Shall we go see about this yelling?

**FOREMAN.** Yes. Let's...together.

*(They hold hands and continue to walk. FINALLY, they reach the wall, the distance they needed to travel.)*

**EIGHT.** Time. How long?

**NINE.** About...four Minutes.

**FIVE.** Whoa! Four minutes, now that's something.

**SEVEN.** He couldn't have possibly seen him drive away, Mr. Pleats would've been long gone by that time.

**FIVE.** They must of been lying!

**THREE.** No, no, no.

**SIX.** I don't know, you think it really...

**EIGHT.** At the very least it shows there's doubt. It proves maybe they were lying.

**THREE.** That was the most! Inaccurate...I mean how is everyone believing that...re-enactment? Look, I'll show you how long it takes to walk across the room

*(THREE goes, EIGHT stops him.)*

**EIGHT.** What is your problem? You just want to see Mr. Pleats fry, don't you?

**THREE.** HE'S NOT GOING TO FRY! Nobody even uses the electric chair anymore. And he's going to be in prison for LESS THAN A YEAR! STOP TRYING TO SWAY THESE PEOPLE!

**EIGHT.** What happened to you? What in God's name happened to you that makes you want to punish this man so much?

**THREE.** Nothing. I just think if a man steals things, he should be punished. Particularly if there's mountains evidence proving so!

**EIGHT.** You're a sadist! You wanna punish this man! You enjoy seeing pain brought upon people! You're the one who should be in jail! You're the one!

*(THREE lunges at EIGHT, they hold him back.)*

**SEVEN.** Come on guys, everyone just calm down. Let's just think about this.

**ELEVEN.** I think we should take another vote. See where things stand.

**THREE.** Why does that even matter? If his argument is that Mr. Pleats wasn't even there, that he was "computer-generated," then the Hurwitzes wouldn't have heard anything.

**EIGHT.** Maybe it does matter, or maybe it doesn't. Maybe they heard something, maybe they didn't. Maybe he was computer-generated and maybe he wasn't. All I'm saying is that there is doubt.

**THREE.** But is there *reasonable* doubt!? Is it *reasonable* doubt to assume that George Lucas computer-generated Mr. Pleats in a conspiracy to put him behind bars?

**FIVE.** Yeah, it does sound kind of crazy when you say it like that.

**ELEVEN.** George Lucas and the plaintiff are cousins! The neighborhood hated him. I say it's possible.

**EIGHT.** Let's vote, we're not going to get anywhere until we vote this out. Foreman?

**FOREMAN.** Yes. I'll start it off. (*Cockney:*) Not Guilty!

**EIGHT.** Delightful as always.

(*The FOREMAN blushes. THREE rolls his eyes.*)

**TWO.** Ummmmm...Guilty.

**THREE.** Guilty.

**FOUR.** Guilty.

**FIVE.** Not guilty.

**SIX.** Guilty.

**SEVEN.** Guilty.

**EIGHT.** Not guilty.

**NINE.** Not guilty.

**TEN.** Guilty!

**ELEVEN.** Not guilty.

**TWELVE.** Not guilty.

**FOREMAN.** That's six to six.

(*They all groan.*)

**THREE.** (*To TWELVE:*) Do you even understand what's going on?

**TWELVE.** Yes! How dare! I see everything you say!

**THREE.** Then how can you vote not guilty?

**TWELVE.** I see old people walking! I see the dinosaur! It wrong dinosaur but it look real! I don't know, the movie is no good. The movie is BORING!

(THREE *rubs his face. A lost cause.*)

**FOUR.** This...you guys...this is stupid.

**THREE.** If you could just be more specific.

(FOUR *slams down her phone.*)

**FOUR.** This is all just dumb. Who cares if he was a cartoon, or if the neighbors heard anything or not? He confessed. He said he did it. Right?

**ALL.** Oh yeah...yeah...gees...right...darn it...oh...yes...

**FOUR.** So who cares, if he said he did it. He did it. Let's all vote guilty and go. I'm so tired of this stupid trial. Uh...

(*They all sit. She has made a good point.*)

**FIVE.** It's true, we completely forgot about the confession.

**SIX.** I guess we just blew right over it. I got so caught up in the dinosaurs and whatnot.

**EIGHT.** Now wait just a second—

**ELEVEN.** He's got a point, chief. Look I'm no fan of "big words Magee" over here, but we completely overlooked the fact that he confessed.

**EIGHT.** Well, he didn't confess—

**THREE.** Oh boy, here we go again.

**EIGHT.** Now hold on a sec. If he confessed, there wouldn't have been a trial. If he confessed...we wouldn't be here—

**THREE.** He had a fair trial! It lasted two weeks! What is your problem!?

**EIGHT.** I believe in justice! I never had a fair trial, so Donald at least should!

(*Beat. What?*)

**EIGHT.** I mean...

**THREE.** You...you never had a fair trial.

**ELEVEN.** Yeah, buddy, what did you mean by that?

**FOUR.** He meant he has like, "lawyer issues." He had a bad trial or whatever.

**SEVEN.** Is that true?

**EIGHT.** No.

**ELEVEN.** You were just using us! You manipulated us because what, you had a bad trial experience or something?

**SEVEN.** Hey! Leave him alone!

**FIVE.** Oh!

**THREE.** What happened? Just tell us, so we can put this whole thing behind us. What happened to you that made you want to set this man free? Were you a lawyer?

*(Beat.)*

**EIGHT.** Yes, I was, or almost was. I...I was working for a lawyer. His name was Jonathan Aldridge. He was a trial lawyer for Putnam and Putnam, a big firm in Eastern Rhode Island. It was a murder trial. And the day of closing arguments, Roland J. Putnam got the flu. He asked me to do the closing arguments in his place. And man was I good. The Jury was crying. The judge was crying. The stenographer...was crying. I was going to save a man's life. But the Jury deliberated, and because of some technicality, apparently there was "a ton" of "hard" evidence that our client was in fact...guilty...they put him away. And he's still there. The next day I was so distraught from the loss that I...failed the bar exam. And I never tried again.

*(EIGHT walks over to the window.)*

**EIGHT.** Some days...I think about that man. I think about him sitting in prison, and I swore to myself...if I ever got the chance...if I ever was on Jury...I would make sure it never happened again. It would never...

*(EIGHT buries his face into his hands. Everyone is silent for a moment.)*

**THREE.** Well...I'm glad you told us. Here.

*(THREE brings him to his chair and hands him a tissue.)*

**THREE.** So...all of this, the dinosaur defense, the conspiracy theories...this was all to make up for that case you lost.

**EIGHT.** Yes...I...led you all astray. I...wanted Donald Pleats to be innocent so badly I...manipulated all of you. I did it. This, is my confession.

*(Beat. Everyone takes it in.)*

**THREE.** Well the important thing is—

**EIGHT. NOT!**

**ALL.** What?...No...he's good...who...wait, what?...old reference... huh...

**EIGHT.** I've never even been to Rhode Island, I've never tried a criminal case and my reasons for dropping out of law school had to do with a drug problem. Ladies and Gentlemen! What you just saw was a "confession." Filled with real emotion and tears. You all believed it, I really said it, and yet...it was a complete fabrication.

**FIVE.** I'm done, that was very good.

**SIX.** He's good, he's very good.

**SEVEN.** I'm switching my vote too.

**THREE.** But what does that even prove!? Why would Donald Pleats falsely indict himself!? Why!

**FOUR.** I dunno, he was pretty weird.

**THREE.** No, not you too!

**FOUR.** What?!? I can vote however I want! God!

**THREE.** But you were the one that brought up the confession—

**FOUR.** Yeah and he changed my mind! Get off my back! Narc!

**THREE.** So this is really happening, everyone's believing the "computer-generated, neighborhood conspiracy, man falsely confesses to his own crime because he's weird," defense?

**FIVE.** We're just sayin' it's possible.

**ELEVEN.** Yeah. Could be, couldn't be. That's all we're sayin.

**THREE.** But that's not a reasonable defense!

**NINE.** Says who? You, the guy with the strangely shaped forehead! Is that any more reasonable?

**TWELVE.** Yes. Big man who doesn't let us smoke?!? Who made you so big?

**THREE.** EVERYONE SAID YOU CAN'T SMOKE! EVERYONE!

**TWELVE.** BUT YOU SAID IT THIRD! YOU DID! ADMIT YOU SAID IT THIRDLY!

**TEN.** Darn it! I've had enough! ENOUGH!

*(TEN slams his fist on the table several times and stands. Everyone stops talking.)*

**TEN.** I don't understand you people! You're gonna let this man walk free. We all know what kind of man this person is. Lives alone, festering. Praying on the unsuspecting. He's a freak. And freak's don't deserve sunlight. They deserve darkness. They deserve to starve.

*(No one is feeling this speech. TEN starts working around the room.)*

**TEN.** You all act like you don't know what I'm talking about. And maybe you don't. I mean look at you. LOOK AT YOU. YOU! (SEVEN:), you're disgusting. And no one likes you. Your face...is disgusting. Your hair is disgusting. And you (EIGHT:), you should go to jail too! All your talking, all your fancy arguments, you don't deserve to pee when you want! You...should be institutionalized. You pee on the Government's time. And let's not forget about ol' French Fry bag. (NINE:) It's not fair TO EAT THEM ALL YOURSELF! YOU SHOULD'VE LEARNED TO SHARE! (ELEVEN:) Oh, look at me, I'm acting in front of everybody. You are a terrible actor! (TWELVE:) I WANT TO DEPORT YOU! THIS IS MY COUNTRY! NOT YOURS! I have ways. This will not end today! (FOREMAN:) YOU'RE AN IDIOT! AND YOU'LL NEVER BE LOVED! EVER! (TWO:) COWARD! LOSER! (THREE:) American. You, I salute. (FOUR:) I AM ATTRACTED TO YOU! BUT YOU NEVER LOOK AT ME! WELL, I WON'T LOOK AT YOU! IN JAIL! (FIVE:) You, and your big man attitude, walking in here, talking all big! I'M BIG! I'M! BIG! And you. (SIX:) You're the worst of all. You deserve a punishment—

**FIVE.** I'm just warning you. If you say one bad thing about her. At all. I will knock your teeth in.

**TEN.** But—

**FIVE.** Knock your teeth in! You understand me!

*(TEN takes a moment, he's confused as to what to do.)*

**EIGHT.** Are you done?

*(TEN stews. Then sits down.)*

**TEN.** I vote with him (THREE.). That's...where I am. I've done all I can.

**THREE.** Yeah, that was a big help, thanks.

*(EIGHT leans back in his chair. Case closed.)*

*(THREE sadly turns to TWO.)*

**THREE.** (To TWO:) Are you still with me?

**THIS PLAY IS  
NOT OVER!**

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