

Jingle Bells



JURY

By Jay Moriarty

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JINGLE BELLS JURY

By JAY MORIARTY

CAST OF CHARACTERS

(In Order of Speaking)

	<u># of lines</u>
CAROLER #1.....	4
CAROLER #2.....	4
CAROLER #3.....	4
BAILIFF.....	11
JUDGE PFEFFERNUESSE.....	59
CLERK.....	8
PROSECUTING ATTORNEY.....	24
CITIZEN #1.....	5
CITIZEN #2.....	4
JIM DANDY.....	45
BAD KID #1.....	19
BAD KID #2.....	16
ROBERTA EGGNOG.....	10
MAGIC OF CHRISTMAS.....	21
LETTER WRITER #1.....	3
LETTER WRITER #2.....	3
REINDEER-IN-TRAINING.....	8
MOTHER.....	11
FATHER.....	13
SNOW.....	6
TOY MAKER.....	20
ANGEL.....	10
MRS. BOB CRATCHIT.....	7
TINY TIM.....	5
WISE MAN #1.....	6
WISE MAN #2.....	4
WISE MAN #3.....	5
SHEPHERD.....	5
INNKEEPER'S WIFE.....	7
SANTA CLAUS.....	4

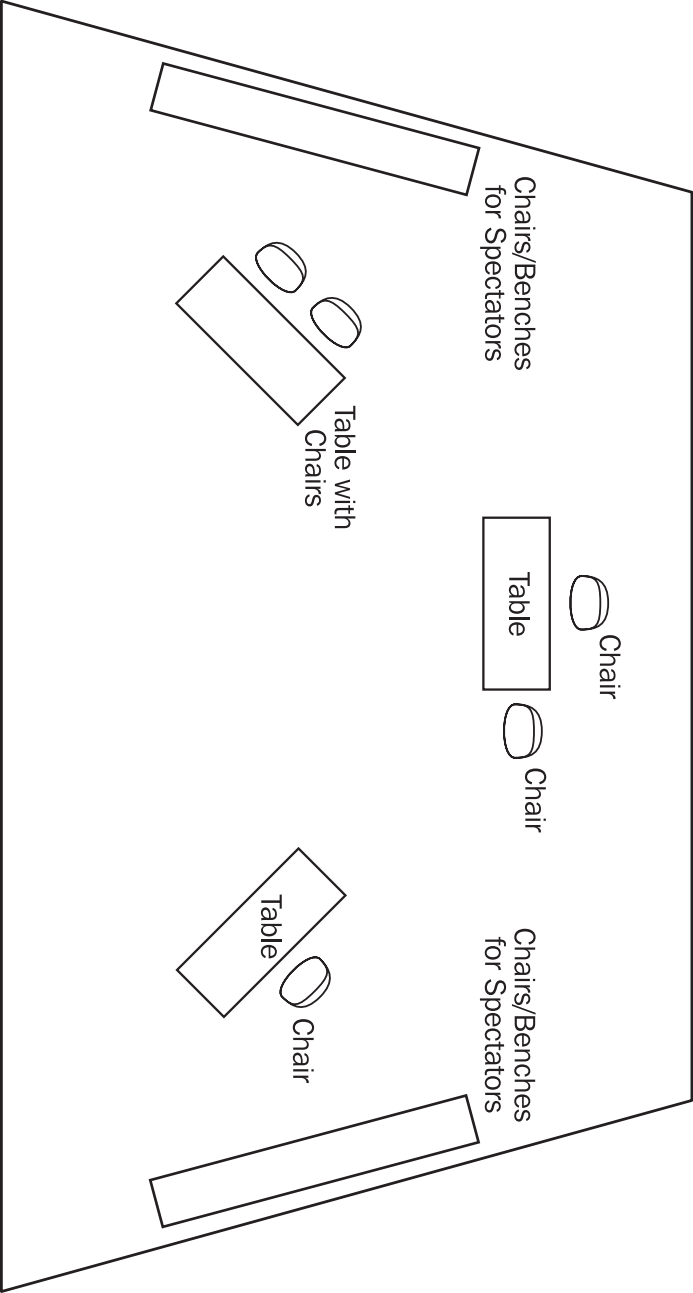
Optional EXTRAS can be utilized as additional COURT SPECTATORS, CAROLERS, LETTER WRITERS, REINDEER, and/or SHEPHERDS.

SYNOPSIS

The action takes place in Candy Cane Court, located in the town of Candy Cane which is just south of Toyland.

The time is the present.

SET DESIGN



JINGLE BELLS JURY

PRIOR TO LIGHTS UP: We hear CHRISTMAS CAROLERS (#1, #2, #3) singing in the darkness. Any well-known selection will do. For example, “Away in a Manger,” “We Three Kings of Orient Are,” “It Came upon a Midnight Clear,” etc.

CAROLERS: (*Singing.*) Dashing through the snow

In a one-horse open sleigh,
O'er the fields we go,
Laughing all the way.
Bells on bobtail ring,
Making spirits bright.
What fun it is to ride and sing
A sleighing song tonight!
Jingle bells! Jingle bells!
Jingle all the way!
Oh, what fun it is to ride
In a one-horse open sleigh!
Jingle bells! Jingle bells!
Jingle all the way!
Oh, what fun it is to ride
In a one-horse open sleigh!

(At end of song the STAGE LIGHTS COME UP, we realize we're in a courtroom. The CAROLERS stand DOWNSTAGE CENTER dressed for winter: caps, scarves, mittens, etc... They hold open songbooks. The CAROLING continues as long as it takes for various CHARACTERS to ENTER the courtroom and take positions. UP CENTER is a table and chair for the JUDGE. Witness chair is to the LEFT of the JUDGE'S table. RIGHT CENTER is a table with two chairs behind it, one for the COURT CLERK and the other for the PROSECUTING ATTORNEY. There's another table with chair LEFT CENTER. STAGE RIGHT and STAGE LEFT, behind the tables, are chairs and/or benches for SPECTATORS. A couple of large, optional painted candy canes are somewhere in view, and perhaps a decorated Christmas tree. ENTRANCES are STAGE RIGHT for SPECTATORS and witnesses and STAGE LEFT for the official members of the court. During the caroling, BAD KID #1 and BAD KID #2 ENTER STAGE RIGHT, cross and sit STAGE LEFT. CITIZEN #1, CITIZEN #2 and SPECTATORS ENTER RIGHT and fill in the rest of the seats for SPECTATORS, except for two seats left empty in the RIGHT section. They're in an excited mood. PROSECUTING ATTORNEY ENTERS LEFT and goes to his/her table. He carries a briefcase, sets it atop the table and

takes out various papers and legal briefs. Sits. COURT CLERK also ENTERS LEFT and crosses to table, sits. He or she carries a large ledger and quill pen. The BAILIFF, a large badge on his shirt to denote he's a court officer of sorts, ENTERS LEFT and stands DOWN LEFT. Handcuffs dangle from his belt.)

SPECTATORS: (*Ad lib.*) Candy Cane has never had a case like this.
Shocking, that's what it is.
A scandal.

Who would have thought it?

Wherever did Jim Dandy get such an idea? (*COURT CLERK produces a small bottle of ink and sets it by the ledger, in which he occasionally writes something as the trial progresses. BAILIFF checks his pocket watch, nods to himself signifying it's time for the trial to commence. He calls out in a booming voice.*)

BAILIFF: Hear ye! Hear ye! Hear ye! (*CAROLERS scurry for seats, sit.*)
Hear ye! Hear ye! Hear ye!

OTHERS: Hear ye! Hear ye! Hear ye!

BAILIFF: The Candy Cane Court is now in session. Honorable Judge Pfeffermuesse presiding. All rise. (*ALL rise. Pause. JUDGE PFEFFERNUESSE ENTERS from UP LEFT, steps behind his table. He wears a choir robe and might, for a comic touch, wear a judge's white wig. He surveys the courtroom. He has a gavel and bangs it on the table or a wooden block. He sits.*) All sit! (*ALL except BAILIFF sit.*)

JUDGE: (*Indicates audience.*) The jury has already been sworn in. The clerk will call the first case.

CLERK: (*Stands.*) Docket number 3-0-3. Young Jim Dandy. (*Sits.*)

SPECTATORS: (*Ad lib.*) Young Jim Dandy. Wow!

What a confused boy!

Causing all this trouble.

At Christmastime, too.

He ought to be ashamed of himself.

Whatever happened to such a good kid?

Could he be a grinch?

(*BAD KID #1 and BAD KID #2 only pretend to agree with the CROWD and are having a good time doing so.*)

JUDGE: (*Picks up the gavel and bangs it.*) Order in the court, order in the court.

OTHERS: Order in the court!



BAILIFF: Order in the court.

JUDGE: For the boy to have a fair and just trial, we must have order in the court. If there is any more of that, I must have the bailiff clear the court. Is that understood?

OTHERS: Yes, Judge Pfeffernuesse.

JUDGE: Will the defendant come forward and stand before the clerk?
(CLERK stands. Pause. No one comes forward. Hubbub of VOICES.)

SPECTATORS: (*Ad lib.*) Where is he?
Where's Jim Dandy?
He's not here.
Just like him.
Tsk, tsk.

BAILIFF: He doesn't seem to be here, Your Honor.

JUDGE: Has he been notified?

CLERK: Yes, Your Honor.

JUDGE: Where is young Jim Dandy's attorney?

CLERK: He doesn't have one, Your Honor.

JUDGE: No attorney? Then the court will appoint one.

PROSECUTING ATTORNEY: (*Stands.*) He chooses to defend himself, Your Honor.

JUDGE: Defend himself? In that case, he may be taking on a terrible client. (*Laughter from OTHERS. He bangs the gavel.*) Now, where is he? (*PROSECUTING ATTORNEY sits.*)

CITIZEN #1: (*Stands.*) I saw Jim Dandy outside in the hallway, Judge Pfeffernuesse. (*Sits.*)

JUDGE: He's supposed to be in here. What's he doing in the hallway?

CITIZEN #2: (*Stands.*) Probably too scared to come in.

SPECTATORS: (*Ad lib.*) That's it!
He's too scared to come in!
He's chicken!
Chicken Dandy!
(*CITIZEN #2 sits.*)

JUDGE: (*Bangs gavel.*) Order!

OTHERS: Yes, Judge Pfeffernuesse.

CITIZEN #1: (*Stands.*) He's not too scared to come in. He's too stubborn to come in. (*Sits.*)

JUDGE: Stubborn? In what way?

CAROLER #1: (*Stands.*) Refusing to send Christmas cards. (*Sits.*)

OTHERS: (*Horrified.*) Not sending?!

CAROLER #2: (*Stands.*) Refusing to sing Christmas carols.

OTHERS: (*More horrified.*) Not singing? (*CAROLER #2 sits.*)

CAROLER #3: (*Stands.*) Telling everyone that there is no Santa Claus.

JUDGE: (*Extremely horrified.*) No Santa Claus?!

ALL: Oh, no. (*They frantically talk among themselves. CAROLER #3 sits.*)

JUDGE: (*Bangs gavel.*) Cards, carols, Claus? This is worse than I thought! Bailiff.

BAILIFF: Yes, Judge?

JUDGE: I want him in here. If he gives you any trouble, put him in handcuffs. (*SPECTATORS gasp.*)

BAILIFF: Yes, Your Honor. (*He EXITS LEFT.*)

CITIZEN #2: Jim Dandy used to be such a nice boy.

JUDGE: That was then, this is now. (*Scattered nods of agreement.*)

CITIZEN #1: There's nothing so sad as a child gone bad.

CITIZEN #2: How true, how true.

CAROLER #1: He used to decorate Christmas trees with us.

CAROLER #2: He even made his own decorations.

CAROLER #3: He always brought along his teddy bear. He loved that teddy bear.

CITIZEN #1: What did he call it?

CAROLERS: Teddy. (*We hear the VOICES of JIM and BAILIFF.*)

JIM'S VOICE: (*From OFF LEFT.*) Hands off, hands off. Who do you think you're pushing?

BAILIFF'S VOICE: (*From OFF LEFT.*) I know who I'm pushing.

JIM'S VOICE: (*From OFF LEFT.*) Who?

BAILIFF'S VOICE: *(From OFF LEFT.)* You. *(JIM DANDY is pushed ON LEFT. He's a young boy dressed in rough street clothes. He's doing his best to appear tough. The BAILIFF follows him ON.)*

JIM: I got rights.

BAILIFF: Tell it to the judge. *(BAILIFF stands DOWN LEFT, hands behind his back.)*

JUDGE: Is your name Jim Dandy?

JIM: Of course it's Jim Dandy. You know me, Judge Pfeffernuesse. I shovel out your driveway when there's been a snowstorm.

JUDGE: I have to ask certain questions. Court formality. Didn't anyone ever tell you how important it is to sign your Christmas cards, Jim? How could anyone know who they were from? Your friends like to know you share the Christmas spirit with them.

JIM: I can handle it. *(SPECTATORS sigh and tsk-tsk.)*

JUDGE: I'm very disappointed to see you here. The clerk will swear you in. *(Gestures to table RIGHT.)*

JIM: Which one is the clerk? *(Points to PROSECUTING ATTORNEY.)* Him? *(Points to CLERK.)* Or him?

CLERK: *(Stands.)* Raise your right hand. *(JIM crosses and raises his left hand.)* No, your other right hand. *(Subdued laughter from SPECTATORS.)* You swear to tell the truth, the whole truth and nothing but—

JIM: Yeah, yeah. Whatever it takes to get me out of here.

JUDGE: Is it true you wish to represent yourself in this case, Jim?

JIM: You betcha. I can defend myself better than anyone. I know the score. I'm tough.

JUDGE: It's a very serious charge. I strongly urge you to get an attorney.

JIM: Phooey. *(OTHERS react.)*

JUDGE: Are you trying to show contempt for this court?

JIM: Naw. I'm trying to hide it. Ha, ha, ha.

SPECTATORS: *(Ad lib.)* He's gone too far!

Outrageous!

What's gotten into him?

Tsk-tsk.

JUDGE: It's your choice. You may be seated, Jim.

JIM: Where?

JUDGE: *(Indicates table LEFT.)* There.

JIM: Gotcha, Judge. *(He sits.)*

JUDGE: *(Stares out to audience. Clears his throat. His words are solemn.)* Ladies and gentlemen, boys and girls of the jury. Young Jim Dandy has been charged with a grievous offense. As you know, each December the town of Candy Cane happily embraces the Christmas spirit. However, Young Jim Dandy has been telling everyone in town that Christmas spirit is a lot of, uh—

JIM: Nonsense. That's what it is. Nonsense.

JUDGE: He has publicly stated that anyone who believes in Christmas spirit is a fool. *(To PROSECUTING ATTORNEY.)* I will ask the Prosecuting Attorney if the town of Candy Cane has any witnesses to refute Jim's position.

JIM: *(Looks to SPECTATORS, waves.)* Hi, guys. You'll agree with me. Just you wait and see.

BAD KID #1: *(Jumps up.)* We're with you, Jim.

BAD KID #2: *(Jumps up.)* Tough kids don't need no Christmas spirit.

BAD KID #1: Naw. That's for babies.

JUDGE: *(Bangs gavel.)* Sit down!

BAD KID #1: While we're at it, let's get rid of Santa Claus. Who needs him? Only softies believe in Ol' White Whiskers.

BAD KID #2: Phooey on Ol' Nick. Ha, ha, ha.

BAD KID #1: Ha, ha, ha.

JUDGE: *(Bangs gavel.)* We'll have no more of that!

BAD KID #1: Sorry, Judge.

BAD KID #2: Me, too.

JUDGE: Sit down and behave yourselves.

BAD KIDS: Sure, sure. Whatever you say. We're solid citizens. *(BAD KIDS shake hands as if the whole thing is a joke, sit.)*

JUDGE: Call your first witness.



PROSECUTING ATTORNEY: *(Stands.)* For my first witness I should like to call the well-known santalogist, Roberta Eggnog.

CLERK: *(Stands, calls out.)* Roberta Eggnog! Come into the courtroom! *(Sits. ROBERTA EGGNOG ENTERS RIGHT. She is distinguished looking. PROSECUTING ATTORNEY steps to witness chair and indicates that EGGNOG should sit there. She does.)*

PROSECUTING ATTORNEY: All the witnesses have been sworn in previously, Your Honor.

JUDGE: Proceed.

PROSECUTING ATTORNEY: Miss Eggnog, you are a graduate of the College of the North Pole.

EGGNOG: That is correct.

PROSECUTING ATTORNEY: Will you tell the court exactly what it is you do?

EGGNOG: As a practicing santalogist, it's my job to help children realize that, although Santa Claus may no longer be real to them, he is, nonetheless, part and parcel of Christmas spirit.

PROSECUTING ATTORNEY: In that sense, he "lives on."

EGGNOG: Most certainly.

JIM: That's a lot of bunk.

JUDGE: *(Slams gavel.)* Careful, Jim. Any more of that and I'm sure you'll regret it.

JIM: Mum's the word. *(Pretends to "zip" his lips.)*

PROSECUTING ATTORNEY: Would you say the defendant is misguided?

EGGNOG: I would say he's going through the "rebellious" stage. It's quite common at his young age.

JIM: *(Stands.)* Your Honor, what's the big deal? I say Christmas spirit is nonsense. So what?

JUDGE: You'll have your opportunity to speak, Jim. *(JIM sits.)*

PROSECUTING ATTORNEY: I should like to call my next witness. Thank you, Miss Eggnog. I may have to call you again.

EGGNOG: That's what I'm here for. *(She leaves the witness chair and finds a seat in the courtroom.)*

PROSECUTING ATTORNEY: For my next witness I call... Magic of Christmas!

ALL: *(Amazed, hushed tone.)* The Magic of Christmas?

CITIZEN #1: That'll be a first.

CITIZEN #2: Imagine.

CLERK: *(Stands, calls out.)* Magic of Christmas! Come into the courtroom! *(Sits. In a moment MAGIC OF CHRISTMAS ENTERS from RIGHT. He's a gentleman [or lady] wearing a long robe and a holly wreath for a hat. Glittering Christmas decorations cover the robe. The SPECTATORS are enthralled.)*

PROSECUTING ATTORNEY: *(Gestures to witness chair.)* If you wouldn't mind taking the witness chair.

MAGIC OF CHRISTMAS: Why should I mind? I'm here to help in any way I can. I consider it a civic duty. *(Applause. JUDGE bangs gavel. Rather majestically, MAGIC OF CHRISTMAS takes the witness chair.)*

PROSECUTING ATTORNEY: Would you tell us, please, what exactly is the magic of Christmas?

MAGIC OF CHRISTMAS: Simply put, it's all those things that get us in the spirit.

PROSECUTING ATTORNEY: The spirit of Christmas, you mean.

MAGIC OF CHRISTMAS: Exactly. The music. The good feelings. The warmth of a fireplace. A family gathering. A wrapped present. The shining brightness of a single star overhead. *(He points upward as if the star was visible. OTHERS look.)* The clip-clop of flying reindeer landing on a rooftop. May I illustrate some Christmas spirit?

PROSECUTING ATTORNEY: By all means. *(MAGIC OF CHRISTMAS steps in front of the JUDGE'S table. PROSECUTING ATTORNEY remains by witness chair.)*

MAGIC OF CHRISTMAS: Observe. *(If possible, the STAGE LIGHTS DIM DOWN somewhat. LETTER WRITER #1 and LETTER WRITER #2 ENTER DOWN RIGHT and DOWN LEFT, each in a CIRCLE OF LIGHT. Each holds three sheets of paper. [NOTE: Only LETTER WRITER #1 and #2 are indicated, but you might wish to use a different actor for each letter, meaning LETTER WRITER #3, LETTER WRITER #4, #5, #6.]*

LETTER WRITER #1: "Dear Santa, I would like a family photo so I can send it to my grandma who lives in a rest home. And I would like a teddy bear for myself."

PLAYWRIGHT'S NOTE

JINGLE BELLS JURY is designed for simple production. If there's a special costume requirement, it's done with minimal effort. A "suggestion" is all that's required.

Although the script refers to many roles as male, these roles, with the possible exception of JIM, BAD KID #1, MOTHER, FATHER, SHEPHERD, INNKEEPER'S WIFE, SNOW, ANGEL, MRS. CRATCHIT, TINY TIM and SANTA CLAUS can be played by either female or male cast members.

We're not in the land of realism. We're in the land of imagination.

PRODUCTION NOTES

ON STAGE: JUDGE'S table and chair. Witness chair. PROSECUTING ATTORNEY'S table with two chairs. Another table and chair. Benches or chairs for spectators. Optional Christmas tree and large candy canes.

BROUGHT ON: Winter caps, scarves, mittens, songbooks (CAROLERS); briefcase with legal papers (PROSECUTING ATTORNEY); ledger, quill pen, bottle of ink (CLERK); badge, handcuffs, pocket watch (BAILIFF); choir robe, gavel (JUDGE); letters to Santa Claus (LETTER WRITERS); antlers, jingle bells (REINDEER-IN-TRAINING); Christmas presents (FATHER, MOTHER); basket with white confetti (SNOW); leather apron, pocket knife, nutcracker soldier, eyeglasses (TOY MAKER); wings (ANGEL); large dish with plum pudding (MRS. CRATCHIT); crutch (TINY TIM); small boxes or jars (WISE MEN); staff (SHEPHERD); sack of presents to include old teddy bear (SANTA); teddy bears (BAD KIDS).

FOR A SMALLER CAST: No extras. CAROLERS can be combined with CITIZENS. CITIZENS could assume the roles of LETTER WRITERS. EGGNOG could play WISE MAN #2 or #3. SHEPHERD could be portrayed by a CITIZEN. INNKEEPER'S WIFE could be played by CITIZEN or CAROLER, etc...

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