

"Jury Duty"

ACT I

FADE IN:

INT. NIGHTCLUB LOUNGE - NIGHT - STAGE

JERRY

We all have ESP in certain degrees, you know. I had an uncle who knew exactly how and when he was going to die, months before it actually happened. Okay, so he had a little help... .. the Judge told him. Women have ESP. You can't fool them. Don't even try. They can predict the future too. Sure, I'll prove it. You there...

(to lady in audience)

... you with this fellow? Married, dating? I bet you already know whether he's going to get lucky tonight. See what I mean? ESP.

INT. JERRY'S APARTMENT - DAY

Jerry is alone, opening his mail as Elaine enters.

JERRY

Huh, guess what? I'm summoned for jury duty.

ELAINE

You too? Isn't that curious?

JERRY

You got one too?

ELAINE

Just this morning. Hope I get to sit on a rape case. I'd like to hang some s.o.b. for violating a woman.

JERRY

Excuse me? I think the concept of justice and trial by jury is to reach a fair and impartial verdict.

ELAINE

Of course, I'd listen to all of the evidence first.

JERRY

I hope so.

ELAINE

I wouldn't want anyone to think
I was prejudiced.

JERRY

I hope not.

ELAINE

I can be as fair as the next
person.

JERRY

I hope so.

The door buzzer SOUNDS, Jerry answers.

JERRY (Cont'd)

Yeah?

GEORGE (O.S.)

It's me.

JERRY

Come on up.

(to Elaine)

You know, just the idea of
sitting on a jury makes me feel
proud to be an American.

ELAINE

Like you'd get a patriotic kick
out of sending someone to the
electric chair.

George enters.

GEORGE

Who's going to the electric
chair?

JERRY

Elaine's fantasizing.

GEORGE

I had an uncle once who hung
himself.

JERRY

The plastic surgeon.

GEORGE

He was quite a man.

ELAINE

Oh, that's so sad.

GEORGE

You wouldn't feel that way if you knew him. Anyway, guess what I got in the mail?

JERRY

First you guess what we got in the mail.

GEORGE

What? You know I'm no good at guessing. How should I know what you got in the mail? Come on.

ELAINE

We both got summonses for jury duty.

GEORGE

That's incredible! Guess what I got?

JERRY

Don't tell me, let me guess.

ELAINE

Tell us.

JERRY

No, don't tell us. I want to see if I can guess.

GEORGE

Okay.

ELAINE

What?

GEORGE

Jerry said not to tell you.

ELAINE

What? You can tell me. Let him guess.

GEORGE

You're sending me mixed signals here. First you tell me not to tell you, then you tell me to tell you. No wonder I'm in therapy.

ELAINE
So, which is it?

GEORGE
What?

ELAINE
Are you going to tell us?

GEORGE
Do you want to know? You don't
want to know.

JERRY
So, tell us.

GEORGE
You're not going to believe it.

JERRY
Don't tell us, you got a summons
for jury duty.

GEORGE
There you go again. Make up
your mind. Do you want me to
tell you or not?

JERRY
(to Elaine)
Do we want him to tell us?

ELAINE
I'm not sure anymore. Do we
have a need to know?

JERRY
If my guess is correct we already
know.

ELAINE
Either that or we'll never know.

GEORGE
Well?

JERRY
So, you're on jury duty, right?

GEORGE
Yeah. How'd you know that?

Kramer enters, holding an envelope.

JERRY
Easy. ESP.

KRAMER

You have ESP?

JERRY

Sure. I knew you were coming through the door just then.

KRAMER

You did?

JERRY

Sure.

KRAMER

How'd you know?

JERRY

Easy... ESP.

KRAMER

Wow! Awesome. Bet you can't guess what I just got in the mail?

GEORGE

Yeah, let's see you guess what Kramer got.

JERRY

(putting his
forefingers to his
temple)

Let me see if I can pick up your thought waves.

(humming)

Hummmmmmmmmmmmmmmmm.

KRAMER

Should I hold the envelope up to my head?

JERRY

It would help.

ELAINE

Wuss.

JERRY

All right, I'll do it without the envelope. Hide the envelope.

KRAMER

What should I think about?

JERRY

Make it tough. Think... blank.

GEORGE
That's a challenge.

KRAMER
Gosh, I don't know if I can do that.

GEORGE
You're too modest.

JERRY
Try.

KRAMER
Okay, here goes.

Jerry hums. Kramer and the others join in unison, then switch to harmonics of the chord.

ELAINE
All right, all right, my fillings are vibrating.

KRAMER
Well?

JERRY
It's a summons for jury duty.

KRAMER
Ohhhhhhhhhhh!

JERRY
Well?

KRAMER
Awesome.

GEORGE
Don't tell me... you're on jury duty too?

KRAMER
Okay.

GEORGE
Well, what?

KRAMER
You just told me not to tell you.

ELAINE
Is this déjà vu?

JERRY
All over again.

ELAINE

Don't tell George, just tell us.

KRAMER

It's a summons for jury duty.

GEORGE

No!

KRAMER

I'm not talking to you.

GEORGE

(to Jerry)

How'd you do that?

JERRY

Easy... ESP.

KRAMER

Awesome.

JERRY

I bet you'll never guess what I got in the mail today.

GEORGE

What?

JERRY

Not you, we just went through this.

KRAMER

You won ten million dollars in the Publishers Clearinghouse Sweepstakes.

ELAINE

Don't be ridiculous.

KRAMER

Well, I gave it my best shot.

JERRY

Put your forefingers to your temples like this... and hum.

They all follow Jerry's instructions as we

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. RESTAURANT - DAY - LATER

Jerry and George are alone.

GEORGE
I can't serve on a jury.

JERRY
Why not?

GEORGE
My therapist told me to avoid
controversies.

JERRY
You can see both sides of an
issue, can't you?

GEORGE
I'd say yes and no... maybe...
depends, I guess.

JERRY
You're a rock.

GEORGE
I can't help it, I have
difficulty making decisions.
(pause)
I can't do it. That's final.

JERRY
Are you sure?

GEORGE
That's definite.

JERRY
Final.

GEORGE
Affirmative.

JERRY
Irrevocable.

GEORGE
I am the rock.

JERRY
There. You did it.

GEORGE
Did what?

JERRY
You can do it.

GEORGE
Do what?

JERRY

Make a decision and stick to it.

GEORGE

No, I can't.

JERRY

What are you talking about?
You just did. And, I am mighty proud of you, too.

GEORGE

What are you talking about?
This is Mister Indecision.

JERRY

You just made a decision.

GEORGE

What decision?

JERRY

You made a decision not to have to make a decision.

GEORGE

It's not a real decision.

JERRY

Sure it is. It's definite, final and irrevocable. If that's not a real decision, I'd like to know what is?

GEORGE

A decision to avoid making a decision is not a decision.

JERRY

What is it?

GEORGE

It's merely an extension of the indecision making process.

JERRY

I didn't realize that.

GEORGE

You learn that in therapy.

INT. JERRY'S APARTMENT - DAY - LATER

George rips a piece of paper and throws it in the trash as Jerry, Elaine and Kramer watch.

JERRY

Hey, that's not your summons
for jury duty, is it?

GEORGE

No, it's only a parking ticket.

JERRY

You're not going to pay it?

GEORGE

Are you kidding? Why should I
pay a fifty dollar parking ticket
so some crook in the City Parking
Violations Bureau can embezzle
it and spend the winter in
Mexico?

JERRY

You know, they're catching up
with scofflaws.

GEORGE

So what are they going to do if
they catch up with me?

KRAMER

I heard a story once where they
cut some guy's hands off.

GEORGE

In New York?

KRAMER

Could have been ancient Persia.

JERRY

They had illegally parked cars
in ancient Persia?

KRAMER

Might have been a camel.

JERRY

Well that sounds more like it.

KRAMER

That's why I can't go down to
the Courthouse for jury duty.

JERRY

You illegally parked your camel?

GEORGE

I can't wait to hear this.

KRAMER

I've been on the run for five years now. I've been laying low.

JERRY

You're a wanted man?

GEORGE

For what? Impersonating a primate?

KRAMER

Worse than that.

ELAINE

Talking straight on phone sex lines?

KRAMER

Worse. I didn't pay a library fine for an overdue book.

JERRY

In ancient Persia they'd poke your eyes out for that.

KRAMER

I know.

GEORGE

Don't joke, this is serious. Do you want to talk about it?

KRAMER

Well, there's not much to tell. It's not like I intended to be late, I just forgot. So I waited one night until the library was closed and I slipped it in the overnight book drop. Then I got the heck out of there.

JERRY

So you returned the book. What's the big deal?

KRAMER

I still owe the money, man.

JERRY

They forgot about it.

KRAMER

Librarians never forget.

They all laugh in a ridiculing way.

GEORGE

That's why I like you, Kramer.

KRAMER

Why?

GEORGE

When you're around, I can almost convince myself that I don't need therapy.

KRAMER

We also serve who sit and wait.

JERRY

Let's take a vote. If we were a jury, would we find Kramer guilty or not guilty on the charge of unpaid fines?

ELAINE

Not guilty.

JERRY

Not guilty.

GEORGE

Guilty.

JERRY

What do you mean, guilty?

GEORGE

He confessed.

JERRY

(to Kramer)

Don't you need the money?

GEORGE

Money? Wait a minute. Money? What money? I don't remember anything about money. We get paid for jury duty?

JERRY

Sure.

GEORGE

All right! Why didn't somebody say we get paid? That puts a whole new light on the subject.

JERRY

Feeling civic minded all of a sudden?

GEORGE
Civic mindedness surging within
me.

JERRY
Surging.

GEORGE
Overflowing.

JERRY
I'm impressed.

GEORGE
Of course, it's not all a matter
of money.

JERRY
There's the matter of finances.

GEORGE
Finances are important. I do
have rent to pay.

JERRY
And there's the matter of
economics.

GEORGE
Economics are important. I
need food to live, and we need
adequate nutrition for our brains
to function properly, you know,
like making a judgment call in
a serious trial.

JERRY
Don't forget, you have to
maintain your health.

GEORGE
Health's important. How can I
serve justice if my immune system
breaks down, for example, in
the middle of a trial and I
have to be rushed to a hospital?

JERRY
Not a matter of money.

GEORGE
That's the least important
consideration. Health, now
that's important.

JERRY
Health.

GEORGE

Health.

(pause)

So... how much does it pay?

JERRY

I have no idea. Does it really matter?

GEORGE

No, of course not,

(pause)

What do you figure, about a hundred bucks a day?

JERRY

More or less, probably.

GEORGE

Okay, a hundred bucks more or less, probably.

JERRY

Almost certainly more or less.

GEORGE

You're sure about that.

JERRY

Definitely... more or less.

GEORGE

All right, now if I can get out of work and still get paid... let's see... I can make five hundred bucks on the deal for an easy week's jury duty. Great, that's a week in Yucatan.

JERRY

Wait a minute. You're not supposed to make a profit from serving on a jury, it's a civic duty thing.

GEORGE

You're kidding.

ELAINE

It doesn't matter one way or the other to me, I can't do it.

JERRY

What? What kind of an American are you?

ELAINE

I have to baby sit my girl
friend's cat. She's going away
for the week.

JERRY

Doesn't she have a dog too?

ELAINE

Yes.

JERRY

Who's watching the dog?

ELAINE

She's taking the dog with her.

JERRY

Taking the dog, leaving the
cat.

ELAINE

Yeah.

JERRY

The cat doesn't count?

ELAINE

She loves her cat.

JERRY

She loves her dog more.

ELAINE

No, she loves them equally.

JERRY

They just take separate
vacations.

ELAINE

You could say that.

JERRY

Separate vacations, equal love.

ELAINE

Uh huh.

JERRY

Separate, but equal.

GEORGE

Sounds like discrimination to
me.

JERRY

Who are we to judge?

GEORGE

I know discrimination, believe me.

ELAINE

Your parents took your dog on vacation and left you home?

JERRY

Be serious, Elaine.

GEORGE

You may not believe this, but as a child, I was short, fat and...

ELAINE

Bald?

GEORGE

... wore glasses.

JERRY

So your parents didn't take the dog on vacation and leave you home.

GEORGE

We didn't have a dog.

JERRY

Too bad. Every boy should have a dog. If only to eat his homework.

GEORGE

Not really, if we did, they probably would have taken the dog and left me home.

JERRY

So, did the dog want to go on vacation?

ELAINE

How do I know?

JERRY

Maybe it didn't. Maybe the cat wanted to go and the dog didn't. Cats like to travel.

ELAINE

Dogs don't?

JERRY

Cats are second class citizens?

ELAINE

Cats can look after themselves,
dogs can't.

JERRY

Ever hear of Old Yeller?

KRAMER

Yeah, they shot him, didn't
they?

GEORGE

What? They shot Old Yeller?

KRAMER

It was awful.

ELAINE

Even if the dog could take care
of itself, she wouldn't leave
it home alone.

JERRY

Why not?

ELAINE

Because it gets lonely.

KRAMER

I understand lonely.

JERRY

Cats don't get lonely? Does
she at least call the cat?

ELAINE

She can't.

JERRY

Why not?

ELAINE

The dog gets jealous.

GEORGE

Who cares about dogs and cats
staying home alone?

KRAMER

You're very insensitive.

GEORGE
 (to Elaine)
 That's a pretty lame excuse for
 trying to get out of jury duty.

JERRY
 So what's the real reason?
 What deep, dark secret are you
 trying to hide?

ELAINE
 I have nothing to hide.

JERRY
 You are some sorry group of
 Americans. What would be the
 condition of the justice system
 in this country if everybody
 had your sense of responsibility?

All mumble AD LIB.

JERRY (Cont'd)
 You should be ashamed of
 yourselves.

All mumble AD LIB.

JERRY (Cont'd)
 At least I have a legitimate
 excuse.

ALL
 (in unison)
 What?

JERRY
 I've got a club date out of
 town.

FADE OUT:

ACT II

FADE IN:

INT. COURTHOUSE HALLWAY - DAY - LATER THAT WEEK

PEOPLE mill about the hallway as they wait for their
 cases to be called. Jerry, Elaine, George and Kramer
 are among them.

GEORGE

I can't believe it.... eight dollars and two lousy subway tokens! And, I'm losing a day's pay.

KRAMER

I can't believe it... eight dollars and two subway tokens. Pay dirt... I'm on Easy Street.

GEORGE

(ungratefully)

And I can thank you for it, Jerry.

KRAMER

(gratefully)

And I can thank you for it, Jerry.

GEORGE

If it hadn't been for you, I would have gotten out of jury duty.

KRAMER

If it hadn't been for you, I would have missed jury duty.

GEORGE

Thanks a lot, Jerry.

KRAMER

Yeah, thanks a lot, Jerry.

GEORGE

Eight dollars and two stinking tokens.

KRAMER

Boy, eight dollars and two tokens.

Kramer bounces the token off the floor and catches it, distracting George.

GEORGE

How'd you do that?

KRAMER

Easy.

He does it again. George tries, but the token rolls under a vending machine.

George and Kramer get down on their knees and look for it.

JERRY

Now, look, there's a lesson to be learned here... somewhere... it's about civic pride... and justice... we represent justice... our peers depend on us for justice.

ELAINE

Like that creep whose trial is going on now... the village Romeo?

JERRY

A perfect example. He's entitled to a fair trial, and if our system of justice is to work, it's up to us to see that he gets one.

ELAINE

Oh, I'd give him a fair trial, all right.

JERRY

I think that's what his lawyer was afraid of and why he bounced you off his jury.

ELAINE

Well, I don't think his questions were fair... asking me if I was prejudiced because I was a woman.

JERRY

Well?

ELAINE

Climbing in women's bedroom windows at night and snatching kisses.

George and Kramer give up trying to retrieve the token.

JERRY

Well?

ELAINE

That bastard.

JERRY

Well, are you?

ELAINE

Am I what?

JERRY

Prejudiced against him?

ELAINE

No!

GEORGE

What was he doing?

ELAINE

Snatching kisses.

GEORGE

Snatching kisses... I've never done that... snatched a kiss.

JERRY

You have to be careful.

GEORGE

Snatching kisses... ever snatch a kiss, Kramer?

KRAMER

Yeah, I've kissed a few... wait a minute...

ELAINE

You're not being funny.

JERRY

I think this has been a positive experience so far.

GEORGE

They could do a little better, maybe supplement the big bucks with food stamps or something.

JERRY

Like a cholesterol screening...

GEORGE

... or an immunization clinic.

JERRY

Free, free, free... gimme, gimme, gimme... shame, shame, shame! All you can think about is yourself.

ELAINE

You lost a club engagement,
Mister Civic Duty. How do you
feel about that?

JERRY

I turn it around into
opportunity. I see material
all around me.

ELAINE

Like what?

JERRY

Courtroom movies.

INT. RESTAURANT - DAY - LATER

JERRY

"Witness For The Prosecution";
"Anatomy Of A Murder."

GEORGE

I loved those movies.

JERRY

I can't wait to see that last
trial when it comes out on video.

GEORGE

That's good. Gee, Jerry, I
really admire how you do that.

JERRY

You should.

GEORGE

How do you do that?

JERRY

I'm witty.

GEORGE

Why can't I do that?

JERRY

You're dull.

GEORGE

It's that simple.

JERRY

That simple.

GEORGE

God tapped you on the head and
said, "Thou shalt be witty."

JERRY

That simple.

GEORGE

It's not fair.

JERRY

Is there any justice in the universe?

GEORGE

Wait a minute... an idea! How about we write the pilot for our sitcom about being chosen for jury duty and we critique the trials the way movie critics do?

JERRY

Like thumbs up and thumbs down?

GEORGE

Yeah, three stars, four stars...

JERRY

I loved that trial this afternoon.

GEORGE

I wouldn't recommend it to anyone. Written for a brain dead teen audience. Too much gratuitous violence. Too many chases.

JERRY

I agree about the chase scenes. Seems like the prosecution threw them in as filler.

GEORGE

Too many clichés.

JERRY

The story line was poorly structured and hard to follow. You can't be jumping back and forth in time with that flashback style of testimony and expect to maintain a continuity of plot.

GEORGE

Right, I've always said that. Flashbacks can be a good story telling device... when they work.

JERRY

This time they were overdone.

GEORGE

Just a little.

JERRY

Too much. The result was confusion.

GEORGE

What about the acting? Oscar® stuff? Or what?

JERRY

Well, I thought we saw some astonishing performances during this trial.

GEORGE

Distinct and different.

JERRY

But with some sameness.

GEORGE

Was it good casting, at least?

JERRY

Best yet in this Court. I liked that young prosecutor, I think she has a lot of potential.

GEORGE

But not enough to save an awful script.

JERRY

An understatement. The character of the coroner was simply not credible.

GEORGE

Was it the dialogue or the direction?

JERRY

Whoever wrote the script doesn't understand forensic pathology.

GEORGE

I don't think the defendant was very convincing, either. I just didn't believe her story.

JERRY

Just because the femme fatale
sports thick tendrils of ebony
hair and dreamy ice blue eyes...

GEORGE

I like that... thick tendrils,
ebony hair, ice blue eyes...

JERRY

... thank you... but it doesn't
make her believable.

GEORGE

I'd like to get to know her
better anyway.

JERRY

Show up in Court tomorrow, maybe
she'll be there.

GEORGE

What about plot? How can we
work in plot?

JERRY

Or should we say "plod"? How
many times have we seen the
same old story?

GEORGE

A love triangle... bisexual...

JERRY

... with interracial overtones...

GEORGE

... ending with a smoking gun...

JERRY

... in the U.S. Senate Chamber...

GEORGE

... It's got everything...

JERRY

... It's trite...

GEORGE

... too formulaic... but full
of surprises...

JERRY

... too predictable.. I knew
from the opening remarks who
did it and why. What's left to
guess?

GEORGE

You could almost lip-sync the dialogue. Thumbs down.

JERRY

Thumbs up.

GEORGE

Thumbs up? What are you talking about, thumbs up? It stunk.

JERRY

What stunk?

GEORGE

The movie.

JERRY

What movie?

GEORGE

The trial movie.

JERRY

What trial movie? We made it all up. It was your idea for a story for us to do for a pilot, remember?

GEORGE

Oh, yeah... Well, what do you think? Good idea?

JERRY

I think it's great.
(remorsefully)
And I said you were dull.

GEORGE

Bite your tongue.

INT. COURTHOUSE HALLWAY - DAY - NEXT DAY

George is on his knees looking under the vending machine. Jerry and Kramer watch him.

GEORGE

I think I can see it. I should have brought a coat hanger or something.

Two officious looking men approach the group and address Kramer.

MAN

Kramer V. Kramer?

KRAMER

Who wants to know?

MAN

(flashes badge)

Library Police. Know why we're here?

GEORGE

(aside)

I knew it! It's a sting!

MAN

It's about a past due book and an unpaid fine of one dollar.

He shows Kramer the handcuffs.

MAN (Cont'd)

You coming quietly?

KRAMER

(holding out his hands)

You got me, G-Man.

JERRY

Wait a minute, you can't be serious.. One dollar?

Both men brandish billy clubs menacingly.

MAN

Just try obstructing justice, Junior, and find out the hard way.

KRAMER

Can we talk about this?

MAN

Hey, pal, you play, you pay.

KRAMER

All I have is a subway token.

He offers it to the man.

MAN

(grabbing token)

Settled!

GEORGE

You guys are good. Ever consider a job with the I.R.S?

MAN

Oh, an indignant citizen. What's your name pal? You look like a scofflaw.

The Man gets out a list of names as two other officious plainclothesmen drag away a client.

CLIENT

But it was only one parking ticket, and I lost it in a snow storm, honest!

MAN

What's the name, pal?

GEORGE

Michael Jackson.

MAN

(looking)
Jackson, Jackson... Nope. Oh well, next time.
(to Kramer)
Don't let it happen again.

The men leave.

JERRY

Well, let that be a lesson to us all.

KRAMER

Expensive lesson... cost me fifty cents.

JERRY

(to George)
Michael Jackson?

GEORGE

And you said I was dull.

JERRY

Kramer V. Kramer?

KRAMER

Yeah?

JERRY

Kramer V. Kramer? That's your name?

KRAMER

Always has been.

JERRY

I thought Kramer was your last name.

KRAMER

It is.

JERRY

Well, it's a little unusual to have your last name for a first name too.

KRAMER

Didn't you ever hear of William B. Williams?

JERRY

The radio personality?

KRAMER

Yeah, and Bob Roberts?

JERRY

The movie?

KRAMER

Yeah, and Nicely-Nicely?

JERRY

The 'Guys And Dolls' character?

KRAMER

So?

GEORGE

You know when this man frightens me most?

JERRY

When he acts strange?

GEORGE

No, when he makes sense.

Elaine joins them. She looks dejected.

JERRY

Elaine, why so glum?

ELAINE

They did it again. Bounced off another jury. I am really ticked off. Let's get out of here.

INT. JERRY'S APARTMENT - DAY - LATER

Jerry and Elaine are alone.

JERRY

So, Elaine, why this time?

ELAINE

They asked me if I had ever been a victim of a crime.

JERRY

Did you tell them, 'Yes, I'm robbed every payday'?

ELAINE

It was more than that. I was sexually molested once. That's why I didn't want to go down there in the first place. I knew they would ask me about it and I didn't want to have to relive those awful memories.

JERRY

I'm sorry, I didn't know. You could have lied. No one would have known.

ELAINE

I would have known. What kind of justice could we expect to get... or give, if jurors lied and concealed their prejudices. It wouldn't be fair. I couldn't do it.

JERRY

There is hope...

ELAINE

For what?

JERRY

For justice in the universe.

INT. NIGHTCLUB - NIGHT - STAGE

JERRY

Imagine you're asleep in bed one night and suddenly there's a crashing noise as your front door is kicked off its hinges and armed police drag you out of bed naked and make you lie on the floor face down while they ransack your house.

(beat)

"Library Police, you're under arrest. Where's 'Moby Dick'?"

(MORE)

JERRY (CONT'D)

"We haven't seen him, officer, honest, we don't even know Mister Dick." "Look in the freezer, Al, they always try to hide 'em in the freezer."

(beat)

And, what if... not returning a book to the library was a capital crime?

(beat)

I'm talking serious stuff. What would you like your last recorded words to be? Have you given it much thought?

(beat)

You should... after all, your last words are as important as making out a will. So, gather your thoughts together and... be brief. This is not a novel you're writing.

(beat)

And remember, your last words will forever be your last words. You can't keep changing your mind.

(beat)

So you can't say something like... 'Have a nice day', then follow it with, 'How was that? Grammar and syntax okay? Did the subject and verb agree? Not too trite?', because then your last words would have been 'How was that? Grammar and syntax okay? Did the subject and verb agree? Not too trite?'

(beat)

And who the hell would record that?

(beat)

God forbid you should be hung with a participle dangling.

FADE OUT:

THE END