

**LAW & ORDER:  
RHYMES AND MISDEMEANORS**  
by Jonathan Rand

*For Ramona—  
How I wonder who you'll be*

## Cast of Characters

INTENSE VOICEOVER  
CHUH-CHUNK  
PLACE  
TIME  
PETER  
DETECTIVE ITSY  
DEPUTY TWINKLE  
LT  
RAILROAD WORKER  
BLACK SHEEP  
SOLE PROPRIETOR  
BINGO  
DEPUTY ROSIE  
HUBBARD  
KING COLE  
MACDONALD  
THE OLD MAN  
OLD-TIMERS  
PAGEANT PRODUCER  
PAGEANT HOST  
PAGEANT FRONTRUNNER  
PAGEANT CONTESTANTS  
CHERYL  
WEASEL

OFFICER EENY  
OFFICER MEENY  
OFFICER MINY  
OFFICER MOE  
EADA JACK  
ADA MARY  
LITTLE BABY  
DEFENSE ATTORNEY BLUE  
BUTCHER  
BAKER  
CANDLESTICK MAKER  
CAPTAIN BOAT  
BAKER'S MAN  
HOT CROSS  
GEORGIE  
SIMON  
MUFFIN MAN  
PETIT CHOCON  
LITTLE DOG  
SUNSHINE  
JUDGE GOOSE  
DOCTOR FELL  
ROCK-A-BYE BAILIFF

## **Production Notes**

It's unnecessary to be familiar with the *Law & Order* television drama after which this play is modeled.

Please resist the urge to sing any of the rhymes. All dialogue should be spoken.

See the Appendix for suggested doubling-casting and a rhyme guide.

Use any level of set, props, and costumes that fits your budget, but simplicity tends to be ideal. For instance, Bingo need not wear an elaborate dog costume, but instead maybe a dog nose, ears, and tail. Imagination can rule the day.

Feel free to be flexible with gender. There's probably no reason why this whole play couldn't be performed by an all-female or all-male cast. For instance, even though certain names or roles (e.g. Jack) might be assumed to be male, there's usually no reason they can't be played by females.

Please replace any outdated pop culture references if they will no longer resonate.

This play was formerly entitled *Law & Order: Nursery Rhyme Unit* and *Law & Order: Fairy Tale Unit – Episode 2*.

## **Acknowledgments**

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*(Optional: The title appears from darkness: Law & Order: Rhymes and Misdemeanors.)*

**INTENSE VOICEOVER.** In the nursery rhyme criminal justice system, citizens are represented by two separate yet equally ridiculous groups: the nursery rhyme police who investigate nursery rhyme crime, and the nursery rhyme district attorneys who prosecute the nursery rhyme offenders. These are their stories.

*(Lights shift to CHUH-CHUNK, PLACE, and TIME. They always face straight ahead toward the audience, without emotion. Perhaps they wear shirts with their character names on them in block letters. They are the human equivalent of the sound and the setting titles from the TV series.)*

**CHUH-CHUNK.** Chuh-chunk

**PLACE.** Poplar Park Penthouse

**TIME.** 8:12 A.M.

*(Lights shift.)*

*(PETER is flustered by the crime in question, but is also scurrying around in an apron preparing unique vegetable dishes. DETECTIVE ISABELLA ITSY and DEPUTY TOM TWINKLE enter, holding up their police badges. Throughout the scene, PETER periodically returns to the same nondescript pint of apparent ice cream, spooning spoonfuls into his mouth.)*

**ITSY.** NRPD: Water Spout Precinct. This is Deputy Twinkle and I'm Detective Itsy.

**PETER.** Thank you for coming. I'm freaking out.

**TWINKLE.** We're here to help. Dispatch said you want to file a Missing Persons report?

**PETER.** No, not Missing Persons.

**TWINKLE.** What then?

**PETER.** Missing Peppers.

**TWINKLE.** Sorry?

**PETER.** A Missing Peppers report.

**ITSY.** That's not a thing.

**PETER.** No, you can report Missing Peppers, Pumpkins, Parsnips – a veritable vanished-vegetable verification *vista*.

**TWINKLE.** (*Who'd been flipping through forms; surprised:*) Hunh, he's right. (*Shows the Missing Peppers form.*)

**ITSY.** You have *got* to be kidding.

**PETER.** (*Offers a snack:*) Turnip turnover?

**ITSY.** No.

**TWINKLE.** I get the sense you like vegetables.

**PETER.** I *venerate* vegetables.

**TWINKLE.** (*Pen poised:*) Okay, last name?

**PETER.** Piper.

**TWINKLE.** First name?

**PETER.** Peter.

**TWINKLE.** And tell us about your missing...peppers.

**PETER.** Wait a sec – you both look familiar. (*To ITSY:*) Weren't you in the news for some legal trouble?

**ITSY.** Sir – *focus*.

**PETER.** (*To TWINKLE:*) And I *definitely* know *you*. That *name*. (*Thinking aloud:*) Twinkle, Twinkle... (*A revelation:*) The little *star*! You were the lead in *SpaceKid*!

**TWINKLE.** (*Evasive:*) Yeah, long time ago. But back to the peppers –

**PETER.** That show was the *best*. (*Struggling to recall:*) What was your catchphrase...?

**TWINKLE.** (*Reluctantly:*) Weach fuhw duh staughs!<sup>1</sup>

**PETER.** *Yeah!!* So good. Well, except for Season Two...

**ITSY.** (*Annoyed:*) The *peppers*!

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<sup>1</sup> "Reach for the stars" but with the delivery of a young child

**PETER.** Right, right. So at six I went to Produce Palace to pick some pickled peppers.

**ITSY.** And how many pickled peppers did you pick?

**PETER.** Precisely?

**ITSY.** Painstakingly.

**PETER.** 2.3 gallons.

**TWINKLE.** (*Indicating form:*) Gallons aren't an option here.

**PETER.** Oh, 8.8 liters?

**TWINKLE.** Nope.

**PETER.** One half-kenning? A quarter-bushel?

**TWINKLE.** How about "pecks"?

**PETER.** What's a *peck*?

**TWINKLE.** I don't know. It's one of the options.

**ITSY.** Tell the man how many pecks.

**PETER.** No clue—let's find out. (*To his iPhone:*) How many pecks in a quarter-bushel?

**SIRI.** There is one peck in a quarter-bushel.

**PETER.** Sooo... one peck.

**TWINKLE.** Math checks out.

**PETER.** (*Offers a snack:*) Beet bourguignon?

**ITSY.** No.

**TWINKLE.** What happened next?

**PETER.** Well, police people, I was plum petered out from my prior personal pump-up at Planet Pecs on Pappadeaux Parkway where I'd packed in plenty of pullups, power partials, plate pinches, pyramid presses, planks, pylo pushups, and pectoral plunges, so while picking at a petite portion of those previously-presented pickled peppers, I proceeded to padlock my peepers for a picosecond while previewing *Pretty in Pink*, and then presto: pinched pickled peppers.

**TWINKLE.** That's a lotta Ps.

**PETER.** No *this* is a lotta peas.

(PETER reveals a very large container of loose peas, or empties a basket filled with an excessive number of bags of frozen peas.)

ITSY. So you called 911 for *peppers*...

PETER. Well, these aren't pedestrian, paltry, plebian, passable, prosaic, *plain* peppers. These are positively premium, prominent, peerless, preeminent, *perfect* peppers.

TWINKLE. Are they valuable?

PETER. *Prodigiously*, *preternaturally* profitable.

TWINKLE. I'll just write down "yes."

PETER. (*Offers a beverage:*) Curried cauliflower cocktail?

ITSY. NO.

TWINKLE. So here's the question: If Peter Piper picked a peck of pickled peppers, where's the peck of pickled peppers that Peter Piper picked?

PETER. And *another* question: Will SpaceKid sign my cabbage?

(TWINKLE *unenthusiastically* autographs the cabbage as the dialogue continues.)

ITSY. (*To PETER:*) Have you noticed anything out of the ordinary?

PETER. Apart from a pepperless pepper pantry?

ITSY. Apart from a pepperless pepper pantry.

PETER. No.

TWINKLE. (*To ITSY:*) A dead end...

ITSY. Knick-knack *paddywhack!*<sup>2</sup>

PETER. Come to think of it, I *did* find this towel and yoga mat.

TWINKLE. (*Reading the logo on both:*) LT Yoga Studio.

ITSY. One, two, double my clues...

TWINKLE. (*To PETER:*) Well don't worry, sir – we'll catch your pepper punk. Until then, maybe don't drown your sorrows *too* much in that Häagen-Dazs.

PETER. Oh it's not ice cream; it's puréed pumpkin.

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<sup>2</sup> An expletive in this world



**ITSY.** *(Resigned:)* Perfect...

**TWINKLE.** So, Itsy: think we'll find our pepper prowler at the yoga place?

**ITSY.** Let's just say: I wouldn't be *shock-ra'*ed.<sup>3</sup>

*(Lights shift.)*

**CHUH-CHUNK.** Chuh-chunk

**PLACE.** LT Yoga Studio

**TIME.** 9:37 A.M.

*(Lights shift.)*

*(A yoga studio where a class is underway, led by LT. Its yogi members are RAILROAD WORKER, BLACK SHEEP, and SOLE PROPRIETOR.)*

**LT.** And now let's move into our next pose: Downward Facing Dog Who Laughed to See Such Sport.

*(The YOGIS do the classic pose Downward Facing Dog, while chanting.)*

**RAILROAD WORKER / BLACK SHEEP / SOLE PROPRIETOR.** Ha ha, such sport.

*(ITSY and TWINKLE have entered, badges held up.)*

**TWINKLE.** NRPD, Water Spout Precinct. Who's in charge?

**LT.** That would be me. What seems to be the problem?

**ITSY.** *We'll* ask the questions.

**TWINKLE.** Name?

**LT.** My name is LT and I am the founder slash life compass of LT Yoga Studio. *(To the YOGIS:)* Always breathe in, breathe out...

**TWINKLE.** *(Showing LT the towel and yoga mat:)* We found these at a crime scene, so we'll need a list of all your members.

**LT.** The entire LT Yoga Studio membership is before you.

**ITSY.** You only have three members?

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<sup>3</sup> A pun combining "shocked" and "chakra"

**LT.** We receive millions of applications each year, but only accept three. We are *highly* exclusive. (*To the YOGIS:*) Hold your positions, and breathe...

**TWINKLE.** What makes your studio so in demand?

**LT.** Our signature yoga pose, of course! Last year it was named Top Yoga Pose by *Mega-Zen* Magazine.

**ITSY.** (*Disingenuous:*) Congrats.

**LT.** Would you like to see it?

**ITSY.** No.

**LT.** If you insist. Class, let us move to the LT Yoga Studio Signature Pose.

*(The YOGIS are energized by this.)*

One two three four:

*(The YOGIS chant as they carry out poses that match the words.)*

**RAILROAD WORKER / BLACK SHEEP / SOLE PROPRIETOR.** I'm a little teapot short and stout. Here is my handle, here is my spout. When I get all steamed up, hear me shout: Tip me over and pour me out.

*(And they're done. Despite the simplicity of the poses, this was draining for the YOGIS. They're immediately winded, and proud of their accomplishment. This was a big deal. High-fives all around, followed by stretching and cooling down with towels, sports drinks, etc.)*

**ITSY.** And you make *how* much cash?

**LT.** Truckloads.

**ITSY.** (*To TWINKLE:*) I'm in the wrong field.

**TWINKLE.** We'll need all your whereabouts between 7 and 8 this morning.

**LT.** Certainly. (*Clap clap.*) Everyone! Let's all help these lovely officers. I'll start: From dawn until this class I was at the Michael Kors Coarse Corps Cores Core Coeur Course.

**ITSY.** Excuse me?

**LT.** Oh it's the Michael Kors-sponsored course run by the Marine Corps that strengthens your core and your coeur<sup>4</sup> by lifting coarse apple cores.

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<sup>4</sup> For "core" she points to her midsection and for "coeur" (French for "heart") she points to her heart.

**ITSY.** Thanks.

**LT.** Of *course*.

**TWINKLE.** (To RAILROAD WORKER:) And *you*?

**RAILROAD WORKER.** I've been working on the railroad all the live-long day.

**TWINKLE.** Engineer?

**RAILROAD WORKER.** Yes. I oversee operation of Thomas the Tank Engine in my mom's basement.

**ITSY.** (To TWINKLE:) Have we gotten one *normal* answer today...?

**RAILROAD WORKER.** (Proudly:) Thomas is the cheeky one.

**TWINKLE.** (To BLACK SHEEP:) What about *you*?

**BLACK SHEEP.** I was volunteering for the yes-profit organization Wool for the Wealthy.

**TWINKLE.** Wool for the Wealthy?

**BLACK SHEEP.** We bag up rare Escorial wool for the affluent so their servants can sew them the most *nonessential* fine wool products, like this tiny sweater for a caviar fork. (Holds it up.)

**ITSY.** How vital.

**BLACK SHEEP.** Indeed! Today we provided three bags' full to those who truly need it least.

**ITSY.** And they are...?

**BLACK SHEEP.** Let's see... One for the Masters champ Jack Nicklaus, one for the Dame Judy Dench, and one for Lil' Wayne, who lives down the lane.

**TWINKLE.** (To SOLE PROPRIETOR, *an elderly woman*:) And what about you?

**SOLE PROPRIETOR.** (Sports drink in hand:) Me? Oh, I cooked and ate a goose with my wonderful family for the best Christmas Eve dinner ever.

(A moment.)

**TWINKLE.** Ma'am, it's nowhere near Christmas.

**SOLE PROPRIETOR.** Hmm? What?

**ITSY.** And we're asking for your alibi in the *morning* not *evening*.

**SOLE PROPRIETOR.** It was a *delicious* Christmas goose.

**TWINKLE.** Ma'am, you're lying.

*(A moment.)*

**SOLE PROPRIETOR.** All right, all right! I am a terrible fibber. This morning I *wasn't* eating a Christmas goose with my family. I don't even *like* my family. And I'm *Jewish*. And *vegan*.

**ITSY.** So your alibi's rubbish; let's hear the *truth*.

**SOLE PROPRIETOR.** Well... I may have sneaked into a pumpkin eater's penthouse.

**ITSY.** Ah *hah!*

**TWINKLE.** Ma'am, you're under arrest for plundering pickled peppers.

**SOLE PROPRIETOR.** *Peppers? What peppers?*

**ITSY.** The peppers pilfered from Pumpkin Pete.

**SOLE PROPRIETOR.** Oh I don't know about any peppers.

**TWINKLE.** Then why were you there?

**SOLE PROPRIETOR.** Someone stole my sole!

**TWINKLE.** Your soul?

**SOLE PROPRIETOR.** From my shoe-plex.

**ITSY.** *(Deadpan:)* You are an *old woman* who lives in a *shoe*...

**SOLE PROPRIETOR.** A shoe duplex. At the retirement village. That man eyeballed my wall-to-wall Dr. Scholl's.

**TWINKLE.** Wait, when you say "soul," you don't mean your, y'know, spiritual essence?

**SOLE PROPRIETOR.** Oh no, I mean the bottom of my *shoe* house. *(Pointing to the bottom of her shoe:)* **SOLE...** Anywho, I followed him to his penthouse, but he clearly had no interest in my sole. *(Conspiratorial:)* I think he was stalking my *corn*.

**TWINKLE.** *(To ITSY:)* Another dead end...

**ITSY.** *Dinah* blow your horn!<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> An expletive in this world

**SOLE PROPRIETOR.** And when I got back to the house, its *laces* were *also* stolen! Those really tied the shoe together!

**TWINKLE.** *(To ITSY:)* Head back up to Water Spout?

**ITSY.** Yeah...

**SOLE PROPRIETOR.** Anyway, it was probably the same crook who stole from my neighbor at the retirement village. Just horrifying. Back to yoga!!

*(She returns to a yoga pose.)*

**ITSY.** Wait, what?

**SOLE PROPRIETOR.** Oh, you didn't hear? Some *other* granny got burgled.

*(Twinkle's cell rings or vibrates.)*

**TWINKLE.** *(To his phone:)* Twinkle. Okay we'll be there. *(To ITSY:)* Yep—retirement village.

**ITSY.** Some old crone, she got robbed?

**TWINKLE.** She got robbed and maybe sobbed.

**ITSY.** It's a crime spree, deputy; put away the phone. *(Intensely:)* Time to hit the nursing home...

*(Lights shift.)*

This is just a script sample.  
For the full play, visit [TRWPlays.com](http://TRWPlays.com)