

CONSPIRACY OF BETRAYAL

by Dixie C. Manning



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Conspiracy of Betrayal

Satan vs. Judas in a courtroom drama

by DIXIE C. MANNING

DEDICATION

***For the congregation of St. Matthew's United Methodist Church,
for being overwhelmingly supportive of my new avocation.***

"Then when Judas, who had betrayed him, saw that he had been condemned, he felt remorse and returned the thirty pieces of silver to the chief priests and elders, saying, 'I have sinned by betraying innocent blood.' But they said, 'What is that to us? See to that yourself!' And he threw the pieces of silver into the sanctuary and departed; and he went away and hanged himself."

— *Matthew 27:3-5*

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CAST
(in order of appearance)

BAILIFF:	Male, any age, wears modern security uniform.
JUDAS:	The defendant, midtwenties to mid-forties, wears biblical clothing.
GABRIEL:	Archangel and presiding officer of the court, male or female, ageless looking, wears modern judge's robe.
COURT REPORTER:	Preferably female, any age, wears modern business clothing. The Court Reporter quietly types throughout the play. She has no spoken lines.
SATAN:	Chief prosecutor, preferably male, ageless looking, wears sharp-looking modern suit.
JESUS:	Defense counselor, male, early thirties, wears biblical clothing. His palms are splattered with red paint to simulate his wounds from the Crucifixion.
MARY:	Sister of Martha and Lazarus, a witness at the trial, midtwenties to early forties, wears biblical clothing.
JOHN:	One of the disciples, a witness at the trial, male, twenties, wears biblical clothing.
CAIAPHAS:	High Priest of Israel, a witness at the trial, male, any age, wears biblical clothing.
JURY:	Twelve jurors and one alternate, male and female, variety of ages.

PRODUCTION NOTES

SYNOPSIS: “Conspiracy of Betrayal” is a courtroom drama presenting the heavenly trial of Judas Iscariot, who is charged with conspiracy to commit murder in the death of Jesus of Nazareth. Twelve members of the audience form the jury and, by their vote, actually determine the outcome of the play. There are two endings to accommodate either a “guilty” or a “not guilty” verdict.

NOTE ON JURY: The jury should be chosen at random from members of the audience as they arrive. The jury actually votes on the verdict, and the play’s ending is determined by that vote. Unlike actual trials, a simple majority is sufficient. In case of a tie, the alternate’s vote is read. Written instructions for the jury are included.

NOTE ON COURTROOM PROCEDURE: When Jesus and Satan address Gabriel, either to call a witness or to object, they should always stand.

PROPS: Briefcase with papers in it — Satan; pens — Gabriel and Satan; court papers with charges on them — Gabriel; gavel — Gabriel; thirteen ballot slips, jury instruction sheets and pencils — Jury; court reporter’s machine or suitable substitute — Court Reporter.

SETTING: We are in what appears to be a courtroom, with witness stand and judge’s bench center, prosecutor’s table and chair left, and defense table and two chairs right. The jury box with thirteen chairs is Up Left; Up Right are Court Reporter’s and Bailiff’s stations.

NOTE TO JURORS

Thank you for agreeing to serve as a member of the jury. Please take your role seriously and treat this case just as you would a real, modern-day trial. Listen to the evidence as it is presented by both sides, and then vote based solely on the testimony. Do not try to second-guess us or vote how you think we “want” you to vote. There is no “right” or “wrong” decision. *We are prepared for either verdict.* Also, don’t let the personalities involved sway you. Voting guilty does not mean you are voting “for” Satan and “against” Jesus, nor does voting not guilty mean you are voting “for” Judas. The question at hand is whether or not Judas is guilty or not of the charges against him. We just want your honest opinion, based on the facts as they are presented. *Either vote is right, as long as it’s what you believe.*

Shortly after the play begins, the Bailiff will say, “All rise.” Please do so, just as you would in a real courtroom.

After Gabriel has given her instructions to the jury, you may mark your ballot by writing “GUILTY” or “NOT GUILTY.” Of course, we want you to have plenty of time to make your decision; but you might want to keep in mind that the play can’t continue until you have finished voting. Therefore, please write out your ballot as quickly as possible and pass it in to the Bailiff.

At the end of the play, simply remain seated until the rest of the audience begins to leave.

Again, thank you for taking part in our production.

1 *(When the play opens, the stage is empty. As jurors are selected,*
 2 *they are sent to the jury box. Once the jury is full, while the*
 3 *audience is still coming in, GABRIEL, BAILIFF, COURT*
 4 *REPORTER and JUDAS enter and begin preparing for the trial.*
 5 *The following should be ad-libbed, sotto voce. The audience*
 6 *shouldn't clearly hear what the actors are saying, but the actors*
 7 *should actually speak. The idea is to heighten the sense of reality,*
 8 *that the audience is in an actual courtroom, with the participants*
 9 *arriving at the same time as the audience. BAILIFF leads JUDAS*
 10 *to the defense table at right, then goes to talk to COURT*
 11 *REPORTER. JUDAS sits in dejection. GABRIEL goes to the*
 12 *bench and sits. SATAN enters carrying a briefcase. He goes to*
 13 *the prosecution table, sets up, then goes to confer with GABRIEL.*
 14 *He returns to his seat and waits for a while, checking his watch*
 15 *from time to time. After a while, he confers with GABRIEL again.*
 16 *Obviously there is some delay in starting, which he protests.*
 17 *GABRIEL tells him he'll just have to wait a while longer. He*
 18 *goes over to have a word with BAILIFF, who snubs him. He then*
 19 *goes over to the defense table, leans on it and says something to*
 20 *JUDAS, who cowers away from him. Pleased with this reaction,*
 21 *SATAN goes back to his table again and waits. Finally, he runs*
 22 *out of patience and rises to speak.)*

23 **SATAN: Your Honor.**

24 **GABRIEL: Yes?**

25 **SATAN: (Crossing to the bench) As you well know, this trial was**
 26 **scheduled to start fifteen minutes ago.**

27 **GABRIEL: And as you well know, no counsel for the defense**
 28 **has arrived yet.**

29 **SATAN: Did the deceased ask for any representation?**

30 **GABRIEL: No, but . . .**

31 **SATAN: Then there can be no justification for postponing**
 32 **this any further.**

33 **GABRIEL: What would it hurt to wait just a few more**
 34 **minutes?**

35 **SATAN: Let me see; how does it go? Oh, yes. "Let punishment**

- 1 **quickly overthrow the violent man.”** (Psalm 140:11, editor’s
 2 paraphrase) **Isn’t that what it says in your propaganda?**
- 3 **GABRIEL:** Psalm 140. We all know that even you can quote
 4 Scripture, though I don’t see how you can do it without
 5 choking.
- 6 **SATAN:** It’s a talent I’ve developed over time. Which brings
 7 me back to my original point. It’s time. I insist that you
 8 start this trial *now*.
- 9 **GABRIEL:** *(Reluctantly)* Very well. *(To BAILIFF)* Let’s get
 10 started. *(SATAN crosses back to his table.)*
- 11 **BAILIFF:** All rise. *(JUDAS and JURORS stand.)* The Court of
 12 Judgment is now in session, the archangel Gabriel
 13 presiding, the fallen angel Satan representing the
 14 prosecution.
- 15 **GABRIEL:** You may be seated. *(Everyone sits.)* Is there anyone
 16 here tonight who will speak on behalf of the defendant?
 17 *(GABRIEL looks around. No one comes forward.)* In that case,
 18 the defendant will rise while the charges against him are
 19 read. *(JUDAS stands. BAILIFF crosses to GABRIEL and gets*
 20 *the charges to be read.)*
- 21 **BAILIFF:** Judas Iscariot, you are hereby charged with
 22 conspiracy to commit murder; to wit, last night, being
 23 Thursday night of Passover, you conspired with the chief
 24 priests of Israel to betray Jesus of Nazareth so that he
 25 might wrongfully be put to death.
- 26 **GABRIEL:** You have heard the charge against you. How do
 27 you plead? *(Before JUDAS can answer, JESUS enters right*
 28 *and speaks.)*
- 29 **JESUS:** The defendant pleads not guilty.
- 30 **SATAN:** Your Honor, I protest! What’s *he* doing here, and
 31 how dare he enter a plea for the defendant?
- 32 **JESUS:** I am here as counsel for the defense. I apologize for
 33 the delay, but *(To SATAN)* as you know, until just a short
 34 time ago, I was unavoidably detained.
- 35 **GABRIEL:** Very well. Let the record show that Jesus Christ

1 is representing the defendant, who pleads not guilt
 2 (*JESUS and JUDAS sit. SATAN crosses to the bench. BAILIFF*
 3 *crosses back to his station.*)

4 **SATAN:** Your Honor . . .

5 **GABRIEL:** I know, you protest. Your protest is duly noted.
 6 You may now present your opening remarks.

7 **SATAN:** (*He's not happy, but he adjusts quickly, crossing a few*
 8 *steps towards the jury.*) Ladies and gentlemen of the jury,
 9 we are here tonight to examine a murder that is . . . well,
 10 I'm afraid the only word for it is *despicable*. How else
 11 can you describe such a monumental act of betrayal? You
 12 will hear evidence proving beyond all doubt that the
 13 defendant, Judas Iscariot, deliberately turned his leader,
 14 Jesus of Nazareth, over to men who subsequently put
 15 him to death. You will hear that he did this for the basest
 16 of all reasons — for money.

17 (*To specific members of the JURY*) I know it's hard for
 18 you to conceive of such treachery. I know you will find
 19 the testimony highly distressing. Do not let that deter
 20 you. You must listen to the testimony, and then you must
 21 reach the only possible verdict — guilty. (*SATAN sits.*)

22 **GABRIEL:** We will now hear from the defense.

23 **JESUS:** Our Father in heaven . . .

24 **SATAN:** Objection!

25 **GABRIEL:** Defense counsel has the right to address whoever
 26 he wants to in his opening statement. If he wants to talk
 27 to his heavenly Father instead of the jury, that's his
 28 business. (*SATAN sits down in disgust.*)

29 **JESUS:** Father, grant that we may listen to what is said
 30 tonight with hearts full of understanding and
 31 compassion. Show us your will in this matter, and give
 32 us strength and wisdom to carry it through. We pray this
 33 in all humility. Amen.

34 **GABRIEL:** We will begin with the chief prosecutor's case.
 35 You may call your first witness.

- 1 **SATAN:** I call Mary, sister of Lazarus.
- 2 **JESUS:** Objection. Mary is still alive.
- 3 **SATAN:** So?
- 4 **JESUS:** (*Crosses toward SATAN.*) Since this is not an earthly
5 court, how do you propose she appear in it? This is
6 nothing more than a trick to rob her of her life.
- 7 **SATAN:** Why would I want to do that? If she dies right now,
8 she'll go straight to heaven. Rest assured, I'm not about
9 to help anyone get there any faster than necessary.
- 10 **GABRIEL:** So what do you have in mind?
- 11 **SATAN:** It's night on earth. She's already sniveled herself to
12 sleep. Surely counsel for the defense can arrange to bring
13 her here in spirit, if not in person. That ought to be easy
14 enough. After all, he keeps saying all things are possible
15 with him. When she gets through, he can send her right
16 back to her miserable life on earth. If she remembers
17 anything later, she'll just think it was a dream.
- 18 **GABRIEL:** Counselor? (*JESUS hesitates.*)
- 19 **SATAN:** She's a key witness. Would you subvert the law by
20 preventing me from questioning her?
- 21 **JESUS:** I'm not concerned with the law, but rather with a
22 higher concept. However, in the name of justice, I
23 withdraw my objection.
- 24 **GABRIEL:** (*To BAILIFF*) Bring in the witness. (*BAILIFF exits*
25 *right and returns with MARY. When MARY sees JESUS, she*
26 *runs to him and collapses into his arms, crying.*)
- 27 **MARY:** My Lord! I knew you couldn't really be dead! I *knew*
28 it was all a mistake!
- 29 **JESUS:** (*Gently detaching her*) It was no mistake. It's true.
- 30 **MARY:** But you're here. I see you.
- 31 **JESUS:** For tonight. Tomorrow morning I'll be gone again.
32 But have faith in me a little while, and all will be made
33 clear to you.
- 34 **MARY:** From the first moment I met you, I believed in you. I
35 won't stop now.

- 1 SATAN: Very touching. Now that we've gotten that over
2 with, could we please proceed with the business at hand?
- 3 GABRIEL: The witness will take the stand. (*JESUS indicates*
4 *the witness stand to MARY. BAILIFF crosses to MARY to*
5 *administer the oath. MARY raises her right hand.*)
- 6 BAILIFF: Do you solemnly swear that the testimony you are
7 about to give is the truth, the whole truth, and nothing
8 but the truth, so help you God?
- 9 MARY: I do.
- 10 BAILIFF: You may be seated. (*MARY sits. BAILIFF returns to*
11 *his station.*)
- 12 SATAN: You are Mary, the sister of Martha and Lazarus,
13 are you not?
- 14 MARY: I am.
- 15 SATAN: From the poignant reunion just enacted, is it safe to
16 say you are closely acquainted with counsel for the
17 defense?
- 18 MARY: With Jesus? Oh, yes, indeed!
- 19 SATAN: I believe that he has been a guest in your home
20 several times.
- 21 MARY: Yes.
- 22 SATAN: As has the defendant.
- 23 MARY: (*Looking at JUDAS with loathing*) Yes, he was there, too.
- 24 SATAN: When was the last time these two men were there?
- 25 MARY: Just last week. Jesus came to Bethany on his way to
26 Jerusalem for Passover.
- 27 SATAN: He stayed with you for supper?
- 28 MARY: Yes.
- 29 SATAN: (*Crosses to his table, picks up some papers.*) Would you
30 please tell the court what happened at that supper?
- 31 MARY: Well, Martha was serving, and everyone else was
32 eating.
- 33 SATAN: (*Turning back to MARY*) Yes?
- 34 MARY: I wanted to do something really special for Jesus. I
35 mean, he raised my brother from the dead! How do you go

- 1 about repaying someone for a miracle like that?
- 2 **SATAN:** You're asking the wrong person that question.
- 3 **MARY:** I had some perfume of nard—it was the most
- 4 expensive thing I ever owned. So I decided to anoint
- 5 Jesus with it.
- 6 **SATAN:** Which you did.
- 7 **MARY:** Yes.
- 8 **SATAN:** What was the defendant's reaction?
- 9 **MARY:** Judas was furious. He said it was a waste to use the
- 10 perfume like that. He said it could have been sold for
- 11 three hundred denarii, and that the money should have
- 12 been given to the poor.
- 13 **SATAN:** Did Jesus agree with him?
- 14 **MARY:** No. He told Judas to leave me alone, that I had done a
- 15 good thing and would be long remembered for it. It was
- 16 obvious that Judas didn't like that answer.
- 17 **SATAN:** So he was very upset.
- 18 **MARY:** Yes.
- 19 **SATAN:** What did he do?
- 20 **MARY:** He got up and left.
- 21 **SATAN:** What kind of mood was he in?
- 22 **MARY:** He was very angry.
- 23 **SATAN:** Angry enough to have gone to the high priest to plot
- 24 against this Jesus?
- 25 **JESUS:** Objection. Calls for speculation on the part of the
- 26 witness.
- 27 **SATAN:** I'll rephrase my question. Do you believe that he was
- 28 angry enough to have done harm to Jesus at that
- 29 moment?
- 30 **MARY:** Yes, I believe he was.
- 31 **SATAN:** No further questions. (*SATAN crosses to the prosecu-*
- 32 *tion table. JESUS crosses to the stand.*)
- 33 **JESUS:** You say that Judas was upset over the waste of the
- 34 perfume.
- 35 **MARY:** Yes, you know he was.

- 1 **JESUS:** What about the other disciples?
- 2 **MARY:** What do you mean?
- 3 **JESUS:** Was Judas the only one who was angry?
- 4 **MARY:** No.
- 5 **JESUS:** In fact, weren't they all pretty indignant about it?
- 6 **MARY:** Yes, they were.
- 7 **JESUS:** So Judas shouldn't be faulted any more than the
8 others for not understanding what you were doing.
- 9 **MARY:** *(Reluctantly)* No, I guess not.
- 10 **JESUS:** No further questions. *(JESUS sits.)*
- 11 **GABRIEL:** The witness is excused. *(MARY just sits there.)* You
12 may leave now.
- 13 **MARY:** Do I have to?
- 14 **GABRIEL:** The trial has to continue.
- 15 **MARY:** But I don't want to go. Jesus said he won't be there
16 tomorrow. I want to stay here with him as long as I can.
- 17 **GABRIEL:** Your place has always been seated at Jesus' feet.
18 You may go there now, until the trial is over. *(MARY does*
19 *so.)* Prosecution may call the next witness.
- 20 **SATAN:** I call John, the son of Zebedee.
- 21 **JESUS:** Stipulate the same conditions as with the last
22 witness.
- 23 **SATAN:** Of course.
- 24 **GABRIEL:** Summon the witness. *(BAILIFF starts to exit.)* And
25 this time, maybe you'd better warn him who's in here. I
26 think the chief prosecutor has been "touched" by
27 reunions about as much as he can stand for one night.
28 *(BAILIFF exits right and comes back in with JOHN. He looks*
29 *at JESUS almost in a daze. BAILIFF leads him, unresisting, to*
30 *the witness stand. JOHN raises his right hand for the swearing*
31 *in.)*
- 32 **BAILIFF:** Do you solemnly swear that the testimony you are
33 about to give is the truth, the whole truth, and nothing
34 but the truth, so help you God?
- 35 **JOHN:** I do.

- 1 **BAILIFF:** You may be seated. (*JOHN sits. BAILIFF crosses to*
2 *his station.*)
- 3 **SATAN:** Please state your name for the court.
- 4 **JOHN:** It's John.
- 5 **SATAN:** You are one of the so-called "disciples" of Jesus?
- 6 **JOHN:** Yes, I am.
- 7 **SATAN:** You have spent quite some time with him over the
8 past few years.
- 9 **JOHN:** Yes.
- 10 **SATAN:** (*Crosses to the stand.*) In fact, you are one of his closest
11 associates, are you not?
- 12 **JOHN:** I'd like to think so.
- 13 **SATAN:** So naturally, you were seated at his side during his
14 last Passover supper.
- 15 **JOHN:** Yes, I was.
- 16 **SATAN:** I understand he said something that really upset
17 you while you were eating.
- 18 **JOHN:** He told us that one of us would betray him.
- 19 **SATAN:** I can see how that would disturb a man of sensitivity
20 like yourself. What else was said?
- 21 **JOHN:** Well, Simon Peter was sitting on my other side. He
22 wanted me to ask Jesus who he was talking about, so I did.
- 23 **SATAN:** And what did Jesus tell you?
- 24 **JOHN:** He said, "It is the one whom I will give a bit of bread to
25 after I have dipped it in the sauce." (John 13:26, editor's
26 paraphrase)
- 27 **SATAN:** And then?
- 28 **JOHN:** He dipped a piece of bread and gave it to Judas.
- 29 **SATAN:** The defendant.
- 30 **JOHN:** Yes, I guess. That man over there.
- 31 **SATAN:** (*Crossing a few steps toward JUDAS*) What did Judas do?
- 32 **JOHN:** He left.
- 33 **SATAN:** And when was the next time you saw him?
- 34 **JOHN:** A little later than night. Jesus wanted to go to the
35 Garden of Gethsemane, and we all went with him. Peter

1 and my brother James and I left the other disciples to
2 go pray with him, but we kept falling asleep. He finally
3 woke us up and told us that the one who was to betray
4 him was at hand.

5 **SATAN:** And that's when you saw Judas?

6 **JOHN:** That's right. He was with a bunch of priests and
7 soldiers.

8 **SATAN:** And what did he do?

9 **JOHN:** He greeted Jesus, and then . . .

10 **SATAN:** And then?

11 **JOHN:** And then he kissed him. *(With great passion)* He kissed
12 him, and then the soldiers seized Jesus and took him
13 away!

14 **SATAN:** And when was the next time you saw Jesus after he
15 was taken away?

16 **JOHN:** *(With great difficulty)* On the cross. When he was being
17 crucified.

18 **SATAN:** *(Crosses to JOHN.)* John, in your mind, is there any
19 question that Judas betrayed Jesus to his death?

20 **JOHN:** No. There is no doubt about it. I saw him do it.

21 **SATAN:** *(Gesturing to JOHN)* Counselor? *(SATAN sits.)*

22 **JESUS:** *(Crosses to the stand.)* When Judas kissed me, did you
23 hear what I said to him?

24 **JOHN:** Yes. You said, "Friend, do what you have come for."
25 *(Matthew 26:50)*

26 **JESUS:** When I was seized, did I put up any kind of struggle?

27 **JOHN:** No.

28 **JESUS:** Did I let any of the others fight?

29 **JOHN:** No. We tried to protect you, but you made us put up
30 our swords.

31 **JESUS:** Did I go willingly with the soldiers?

32 **JOHN:** Yes.

33 **JESUS:** *(Crossing a few steps left)* At supper, when I said that
34 one of you would betray me, what was the first reaction?

35 **JOHN:** We were all stunned.

- 1 **JESUS:** What was said?
- 2 **JOHN:** Everybody started asking, "Could I be the one he
3 means?"
- 4 **JESUS:** (*Turning back to JOHN*) Everybody? Not just Judas,
5 but all of my disciples?
- 6 **JOHN:** Yes.
- 7 **JESUS:** (*Crosses back to JOHN.*) And you, John?
- 8 **JOHN:** Me, Lord?
- 9 **JESUS:** Yes, you, John. My most beloved disciple. Did you
10 think in your heart, "Could it be me?"
- 11 **JOHN:** (*Almost a whisper*) Yes, Lord. I did.
- 12 **JESUS:** That's all, John.
- 13 **JOHN:** (*Dejectedly*) Yes, Lord. I'm sorry, Lord. (*JOHN starts to*
14 *leave.*)
- 15 **JESUS:** John?
- 16 **JOHN:** Yes?
- 17 **JESUS:** How is my mother holding up?
- 18 **JOHN:** She grieves, but she says she has known all along this
19 day would come.
- 20 **JESUS:** (*Crossing to JOHN*) It lightens my burden to know I
21 can trust you to look after her. Just as it means a great
22 deal to me that you were with me at the end. I won't
23 forget you, John.
- 24 **JOHN:** I won't forget you, Master. (*JOHN exits. JESUS sits.*)
- 25 **GABRIEL:** The prosecution may call the next witness.
26 (*SATAN doesn't respond.*) Is the prosecution ready to
27 proceed?
- 28 **SATAN:** (*As if waking up*) What? Oh, sorry, Your Honor. I seem
29 to have dozed off during the sappy part.
- 30 **GABRIEL:** Call your next witness.
- 31 **SATAN:** (*Crosses toward JESUS.*) Gladly. I don't think we will
32 be quite so maudlin over this one. I call Caiaphas, High
33 Priest of Israel, to the stand.
- 34 **GABRIEL:** Bring in the next witness.
- 35 **SATAN:** (*As BAILIFF leaves*) Just a minute, Your Honor. I

- 1 think you're getting ahead of yourself.
- 2 **GABRIEL:** What are you talking about?
- 3 **SATAN:** I thought counsel for the defense might have
- 4 something to say.
- 5 **JESUS:** Not at this time.
- 6 **SATAN:** What? No stipulation?
- 7 **JESUS:** Oh, that goes without saying.
- 8 **SATAN:** Too bad. I thought for a minute you were going to let
- 9 me keep this one.
- 10 **JESUS:** No, not even Caiaphas.
- 11 **SATAN:** Well, it doesn't really matter. He'll be mine in the
- 12 end anyway. I can wait. (*BAILIFF leads CAIAPHAS to the*
- 13 *stand. CAIAPHAS raises his right hand.*)
- 14 **BAILIFF:** Do you solemnly swear that the testimony you are
- 15 about to give is the truth, the whole truth, and nothing
- 16 but the truth, so help you God?
- 17 **CAIAPHAS:** I do.
- 18 **BAILIFF:** You may be seated. (*CAIAPHAS sits. SATAN crosses*
- 19 *to the stand.*)
- 20 **SATAN:** Please state your name for the record.
- 21 **CAIAPHAS:** I am Caiaphas.
- 22 **SATAN:** You're a rather prominent member of this community,
- 23 aren't you?
- 24 **CAIAPHAS:** Yes, I am High Priest this year.
- 25 **SATAN:** And a very conscientious one, I'm sure. (*SATAN*
- 26 *crosses to his table and looks at some papers.*) Tell me, in that
- 27 capacity, have you ever had any dealings with the
- 28 defendant?
- 29 **CAIAPHAS:** (*Pointing to JESUS*) That one? Oh, yes, I know
- 30 him. We've had quite a lot of trouble with him stirring
- 31 up the riffraff. Pilate will put an end to that.
- 32 **SATAN:** (*Taking a couple of steps toward CAIAPHAS*) I'm sorry,
- 33 but you've made a bit of a mistake, though that's certainly
- 34 understandable. No, I'm afraid that the defendant is the
- 35 other man sitting over there.

1 CAIAPHAS: Oh. Yes, I know him too, though to tell you the
2 truth, he's not much better.

3 SATAN: How did you meet the defendant?

4 CAIAPHAS: He came to me. He was a follower of this Jesus,
5 but he said he'd become disillusioned with him for some
6 reason or another. Why isn't really important.

7 SATAN: Did he come merely to complain about him?

8 CAIAPHAS: Oh, no. He wanted to take action. He asked how
9 much money we would give him to deliver Jesus into our
10 hands.

11 SATAN: (*For JURY's benefit*) He wanted to betray his leader?
12 For money?

13 CAIAPHAS: Yes.

14 SATAN: And how did you feel about this?

15 CAIAPHAS: I was delighted. I agreed on the spot to give him
16 thirty pieces of silver when we had Jesus in custody.

17 SATAN: Did he keep his end of the bargain?

18 CAIAPHAS: Oh, yes. A few days later he came running in
19 saying the time had come. We sent him a troop of soldiers,
20 and they were able to capture the man Jesus with very
21 little trouble.

22 SATAN: (*Crosses to CAIAPHAS.*) Tell me, why did you want
23 this Jesus?

24 CAIAPHAS: He was causing nothing but trouble with all of
25 these so-called miracles of his. Rome wouldn't let an
26 agitator like that go unchecked. The whole nation
27 would've suffered. It was more expedient for one man to
28 die for the people than for the whole nation to perish.

29 SATAN: So it was your plan all along to have Jesus killed.

30 CAIAPHAS: Absolutely.

31 SATAN: A plan that Judas made possible.

32 CAIAPHAS: Yes.

33 SATAN: Because Judas deliberately and with malice afore-
34 thought betrayed this man to you.

35 CAIAPHAS: Yes, he did.

- 1 **SATAN:** Betrayed him to his death.
- 2 **CAIAPHAS:** *(With great satisfaction)* To his death.
- 3 **SATAN:** I have no further need of this witness.
- 4 **GABRIEL:** Counselor? *(SATAN sits.)*
- 5 **JESUS:** You don't think much of my client, do you?
- 6 **CAIAPHAS:** No, I don't.
- 7 **JESUS:** *(Crossing to the stand)* Why not? After all, he made it
- 8 possible for you to attain your goal.
- 9 **CAIAPHAS:** And I was very grateful. But obviously he didn't
- 10 have any backbone.
- 11 **JESUS:** Why do you say that?
- 12 **CAIAPHAS:** After you were condemned, he lost his nerve. He
- 13 came cringing back and tried to return the money, saying
- 14 he had sinned. When we wouldn't take it, he threw the
- 15 money on the floor and left.
- 16 **JESUS:** He suffered remorse over what he had done.
- 17 **CAIAPHAS:** He lost his nerve.
- 18 **JESUS:** He was sorry.
- 19 **CAIAPHAS:** Well, sorry didn't do you any good, did it?
- 20 **JESUS:** This is not a matter of my good. It has never had
- 21 anything to do with my good.
- 22 **CAIAPHAS:** For the good of the people you were condemned.
- 23 I am not the least bit sorry about my part in that.
- 24 **JESUS:** You've never understood me, have you? Even now,
- 25 you don't have any idea what you've done. Well, I'm
- 26 through with you. You've played your part in my Father's
- 27 plan. Now go.
- 28 **CAIAPHAS:** Look, you can't talk to me like that.
- 29 **GABRIEL:** He just did. Now get out of here. *(CAIAPHAS looks*
- 30 *at JESUS with pure hatred, but decides to cut his losses and*
- 31 *exits with as much dignity as he can muster. GABRIEL turns*
- 32 *to SATAN.)* Are you through?
- 33 **SATAN:** I have just one more witness, Your Honor. *(Crossing*
- 34 *toward the JURY)* In a way, you might say I've saved the best
- 35 for last. *(Turning toward JESUS)* I call Jesus of Nazareth.

- 1 **JESUS:** (*Crosses toward the bench.*) **Objection!** As defense
 2 **counsel, you can't possibly expect me to testify against**
 3 **my client.**
- 4 **SATAN:** (*Crosses toward the bench.*) **On the contrary. I not only**
 5 **expect it, I demand it.**
- 6 **GABRIEL:** **This is highly irregular.**
- 7 **SATAN:** **Having the victim defend the accused is highly**
 8 **irregular. I'm just calling an eyewitness to testify.**
- 9 **GABRIEL:** **He has a point there. I'm afraid he has every right**
 10 **to call you.**
- 11 **JESUS:** **Very well.** (*He takes the stand. BAILIFF goes to administer*
 12 *the oath.*)
- 13 **BAILIFF:** **Do you solemnly swear that the testimony . . .**
- 14 **SATAN:** (*Interrupting*) **Your Honor, since it is well known that**
 15 **this witness is incapable of telling a lie, prosecution**
 16 **waives the swearing of the oath.**
- 17 **GABRIEL:** **That's very generous of you. You may proceed.**
 18 (*JESUS sits. BAILIFF returns to his station.*)
- 19 **SATAN:** **Just in case there's anyone who hasn't figured it out**
 20 **yet, why don't you tell us your name?** (*JESUS starts to*
 21 *answer; SATAN interrupts.*) **Just your given name will do —**
 22 **all those titles you go by aren't necessary.**
- 23 **JESUS:** **Jesus.**
- 24 **SATAN:** **And just for the record, you are the man the defendant**
 25 **is accused of conspiring to kill.**
- 26 **JESUS:** **I am.**
- 27 **SATAN:** **Actually, it's rather handy having you as counsel for**
 28 **the defense. It speeds things up.** (*SATAN crosses toward*
 29 *MARY.*) **I could make you confirm Mary's testimony about**
 30 **the defendant's anger over the wasted oil, but why**
 31 **bother? If she had been in any way wrong about that,**
 32 **you would have challenged her on it during cross**
 33 **examination.** (*Turning back toward JESUS*) **I might have**
 34 **you recount your experiences in the Garden of**
 35 **Gethsemane when you were betrayed, but you've already**

- 1 done that for us when John the Disciple was on the stand.
 2 And even though your exchange with Caiaphas was
 3 rather acrimonious, you don't seem to have anything to
 4 offer that would refute his tale of treachery by the
 5 defendant. I could question you on all these issues, but
 6 I won't. I'll just go straight to the core of the matter.
 7 *(Stepping up to JESUS' level)* Were you crucified on the
 8 cross as a direct result of the defendant's actions?
- 9 JESUS: The outcome would have been the same . . .
- 10 SATAN: Yes or no, were you crucified as a result of his actions?
- 11 JESUS: It's far more complicated than . . .
- 12 SATAN: *(Crosses to JESUS.)* Answer the question, yes or no.
- 13 JESUS: I'm trying to . . .
- 14 SATAN: *(Leaning on the witness stand)* Yes or no!
- 15 JESUS: *(Reluctantly)* Yes.
- 16 SATAN: *(Straightening up)* That's what I wanted to hear.
 17 Thank you. *(Starts to cross back to his table.)*
- 18 JESUS: That doesn't tell the whole story.
- 19 SATAN: *(Stops and looks back.)* But it answers my question.
 20 *(SATAN crosses back to his table, picks up some papers and*
 21 *looks at them with his back to the stand.)*
- 22 GABRIEL: *(When SATAN doesn't speak)* The witness may step
 23 down. *(JESUS stands and takes a couple of steps toward the*
 24 *defense table.)*
- 25 SATAN: Oh, yes, I have one last question. *(JESUS stops and*
 26 *looks back.)* Aren't you guilty of practicing a bit of deception
 27 right now?
- 28 JESUS: What deception?
- 29 SATAN: You've come to this courtroom straight from your
 30 own crucifixion. For a man who's just been tortured to
 31 death, you look remarkably healthy to me. Is this really
 32 what you looked like, say, a few hours ago?
- 33 JESUS: What I looked like a few hours ago is irrelevant now.
- 34 SATAN: Not to this court. The defendant is accused of causing
 35 your death. The jury has a right to see what kind of death

- 1 **you really died, not the sanitized version.** (*JESUS bows*
2 *his head, as if in thought or prayer. Slowly he raises his arms,*
3 *palms out. As he does, blood is seen on his hands. The sight of*
4 *it is too much for JUDAS. He runs to grovel at JESUS' feet.*)
- 5 **JUDAS:** (*Crying*) **Stop! Please stop! I didn't mean it. Please,**
6 **God, I didn't mean it!** (*JESUS looks at SATAN. He then*
7 *lowers his arms, helps JUDAS to his feet and leads him back*
8 *to the defense table.*)
- 9 **GABRIEL:** **Is the prosecutor quite finished?**
- 10 **SATAN:** **Your Honor, the prosecution rests.** (*SATAN sits.*)
- 11 **GABRIEL:** **Is the defense ready to proceed?**
- 12 **JESUS:** **I am, Your Honor.**
- 13 **GABRIEL:** **Then you may call your first witness.**
- 14 **JESUS:** **I call the chief persecutor . . . excuse me, I mean, the**
15 **chief prosecutor to the stand.**
- 16 **SATAN:** **You're calling me?**
- 17 **JESUS:** **You opened this door when you called on me to**
18 **testify.**
- 19 **SATAN:** (*He thinks about it for a second, then shrugs his shoulders.*)
20 **Why not? This could be interesting.** (*SATAN crosses to the*
21 *stand. BAILIFF crosses to SATAN to administer the oath.*)
- 22 **BAILIFF:** **Do you solemnly swear that the testimony . . .**
- 23 **JESUS:** (*Interrupting him*) **Your Honor, since it is well known**
24 **that the chief prosecutor is incapable of telling the whole**
25 **truth and nothing but the truth, defense is willing to**
26 **waive the oath.** (*There is general laughter.*)
- 27 **GABRIEL:** **Your point is well taken, though I fail to see how**
28 **you expect this witness to be of any value to you under**
29 **these circumstances.**
- 30 **SATAN:** **I was wondering that myself.**
- 31 **JESUS:** (*Crossing toward GABRIEL*) **I know my opponent, Your**
32 **Honor. Outright lying holds no appeal for him. It's far**
33 **too easy and presents no sense of challenge.** (*JESUS*
34 *crosses toward the JURY.*) **Oh, he'll lie quickly enough if he**
35 **has to. But how much more satisfying to twist the truth**

1 into whatever shape he finds most useful so that the truth
2 becomes, in fact, a lie.

3 **SATAN:** You should try it sometime. It can be quite
4 exhilarating.

5 **JESUS:** *(Crosses to the stand.)* Yes, he'll tell the truth whenever
6 possible, but only so far as it suits his purposes. He'll do
7 it not because of some oath that holds no meaning for
8 him, but because he can't help himself. He just can't resist
9 the temptation of beating me at what he considers my
10 own game.

11 **SATAN:** Your Honor, did counsel for the defense call me to
12 the stand to cross-examine me, or merely to explain to
13 the jury how I get my thrills?

14 **GABRIEL:** Let's move this along. Proceed.

15 **JESUS:** All right. You certainly seem well informed about
16 the events that have been described to this court. It leads
17 me to wonder just where you were when they occurred.

18 **SATAN:** "Where were you on the night of the murder?" Really,
19 Counselor, how trite!

20 **JESUS:** It's a legitimate question. Where were you?

21 **SATAN:** I'm afraid you'll have to be a little more specific.

22 **JESUS:** Where were you Thursday night during the Passover
23 Feast?

24 **SATAN:** *(Looking JESUS squarely in the eye)* In hell.

25 **JESUS:** *(To JURY)* You see, here we have the truth from him.
26 He takes hell with him wherever he goes; so no matter
27 where he was, he was in hell.

28 **SATAN:** You asked; I answered.

29 **JESUS:** Let me rephrase the question. Where were you in
30 relationship to the defendant?

31 **SATAN:** As a matter of fact, I believe I was fairly close to
32 where he was.

33 **JESUS:** How close?

34 **SATAN:** Close enough to see what he was doing at all times.
35 Now that I think about it, I can testify as an eyewitness

1 that your client did exactly what he's accused of. He went
2 straight from your Passover table to the high priest,
3 gathered his co-conspirators, then betrayed you to them.

4 **JESUS:** *(Crossing to SATAN)* You can testify to this as an
5 eyewitness, or as an instigator?

6 **SATAN:** What do you mean?

7 **JESUS:** I contend that you were much closer to the defendant
8 than you have admitted. I contend that he did these
9 things only after you had entered into him.

10 **SATAN:** Oh, I see. "The Devil made me do it." What an original
11 defense, Counselor. I'm surprised at you. You can't expect
12 this jury to accept that as justification.

13 **JESUS:** Justification, no. But maybe as mitigation.

14 **SATAN:** He broke the law. *Your* law. "Thou shalt not kill,"
15 remember? Now he has to pay for it.

16 **JESUS:** That's not for you to decide.

17 **SATAN:** No, these "twelve good men and true" will. Oh,
18 excuse me, and one alternate.

19 **GABRIEL:** It seems to me we've taken a detour here. Let's
20 get back to the point.

21 **JESUS:** Of course, Your Honor. I notice that you didn't
22 bother to deny the allegation in my last question.

23 **SATAN:** It's been so long ago, I've forgotten what it was.

24 **JESUS:** That you entered into Judas, provoking his actions.

25 **SATAN:** Are you going to charge me with conspiracy now? I
26 can't wait to hear what you think there's left to do to me
27 as punishment.

28 **JESUS:** You still don't deny it.

29 **SATAN:** What difference does it make?

30 **JESUS:** *(JESUS takes a few steps toward JUDAS.)* If he was
31 under your influence, then what he did was not entirely
32 of his own free will. You might say he was acting under
33 duress.

34 **SATAN:** You might, but I wouldn't. Look, I couldn't have gotten
35 a toe in the door if he wasn't at least a little receptive.



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