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Murder on Denial

A parody of TV's Judge Judy Show
by Craig Sodaro



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CHARACTERS

5 females, 3 males

Judge Snooty

star of the hit courtroom
reality show, “Denial”

Gracie Palmer

Judge Snooty’s personal assistant
and all around go-fer

Lila Knapp

the director of “Denial”

Stu Spicer

owner of “Spice Up Your Life”
cooking shop, the victim

Max Mushmelon

used car salesman, a suspect

Paula Magill

owner of Snips ’n Clips, a suspect

Mabel Periwinkle

a long retired librarian, a suspect

Quentin Seaton

the bailiff

PRODUCTION NOTES

The set is of the hit TV courtroom reality show, “Denial,” before and during a taping. There’s a judge’s bench Up Center with a chair behind it. If possible, the bench should be raised above the rest of the set on a platform. Two chairs in front of the bench, one at right for the victim, the other at the left for the suspects. A sign above and behind the judge’s bench reads: “Denial! Judge Snooty Can Tell Who’s Lying!” It’s not necessary to have cameras, but if desired, they will create the illusion of a TV show being filmed.

Costumes can be simple. Judge Snooty should wear a judge’s robe — a graduation robe, or a choir robe will work. Quentin Seaton should dress like a bailiff. Mabel Periwinkle can be dressed like an elderly woman and her walker can be substituted for a cane. The other characters can be dressed nicely, but nothing too fancy.

Scene One

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(At rise, GRACIE sits at the bench studying a book carefully, flipping pages.)

GRACIE: Ah ha! (She flips a page.) Ah ha! (She flips another.) Ah ha! (LILA enters carrying a glass filled with a dark liquid.) Uh oh!

LILA: Gracie, what are you doing in that chair? If Judge Snooty finds you sitting up there she'll blow up like Mount St. Helens!

GRACIE: I just found the judicial precedent that completely reverses Judge Snooty's last case!

LILA: The man hit by the truck in a hit-and-run?

GRACIE: How could that little old lady have run him down? She was driving a '52 Packard that couldn't go over twenty-five miles per hour!

LILA: Judge Snooty decided the old lady was lying.

GRACIE: But the precedent says there has to be evidence.

LILA: Gracie, Judge Snooty uses intuition and psychic powers to get to the truth. Evidence doesn't mean anything to her.

GRACIE: That's illegal!

LILA: It's a hit TV show! I just got the numbers for this week — we own our time slot nine to one. There's talk about moving "Denial" to prime time!

GRACIE: What about the poor man with the two broken arms that she fined for snatching that woman's purse?

LILA: (Weakly) It could have happened.

GRACIE: The woman had fifty pounds on the guy and both his arms were in casts!

LILA: Gracie, the suspects all sign a lot of legal papers that say they agree to do this show rather than stand trial in a regular court and they also agree to abide by the decision of Judge Snooty. (JUDGE SNOOTY enters right. GRACIE doesn't see her.)

GRACIE: And another thing! I still don't think that teenager

1 made his dog bite that cop.
2 **LILA:** *(Nervously)* Gracie!
3 **GRACIE:** The kid didn't even own a dog!
4 **JUDGE SNOOTY:** Who died and made you judge?
5 **GRACIE:** *(Jumps up.)* No one, Judge Snooty! I'm sorry ... I
6 just ... I just ...
7 **LILA:** Gracie felt a little faint and needed someplace to sit
8 down.
9 **JUDGE SNOOTY:** You don't feel faint on this set, do you hear
10 me? You are always on because I'm always on! You're my
11 p.a. and you do as I say.
12 **GRACIE:** Yes, ma'am.
13 **JUDGE SNOOTY:** Yes, *your honor!*
14 **GRACIE:** Your honor. *(As GRACIE moves to Center Stage with*
15 *book, JUDGE SNOOTY snatches it out of GRACIE's hand.)*
16 **JUDGE SNOOTY:** *(Reading title)* *The Basics of Jurisprudence?* Do
17 you dare to second-guess my decisions, little missy?
18 **GRACIE:** Well, there are one or two —
19 **LILA:** *(Trying to change the subject)* Here's your prune juice,
20 Judge Snooty, nice and cold, just the way you like it.
21 **JUDGE SNOOTY:** *(Ignoring her)* The cases on this show might
22 be real, little missy, but the outcomes are pure television.
23 Do you understand? *(Pointing)* There is a crime victim who
24 sits here. *(Pointing)* There are three suspects who sit there.
25 The suspects will deny any involvement in the crime. Two
26 will be telling the truth. One will be lying. I pick the liar!
27 **GRACIE:** But what if the person you pick is telling the truth?
28 **JUDGE SNOOTY:** It doesn't make any difference! I pick
29 whoever gets the biggest audience response, understand,
30 little missy?
31 **GRACIE:** But that's not justice!
32 **JUDGE SNOOTY:** "Denial" isn't about justice. It's about
33 ratings! *(STU runs on left.)*
34 **STU:** Hide me! You gotta hide me! *(STU runs up to the bench and*
35 *hides behind it.)*

1 LILA: Mr. Spicer? You can't go up there!
2 JUDGE SNOOTY: Who is that?
3 GRACIE: He's the victim, your honor.
4 STU: *(From behind the desk)* And I don't want it to happen
5 again! *(MAX enters angrily, clutching papers.)*
6 MAX: Where is that liar? Spicer! Get out here and face me like
7 a man!
8 GRACIE: Good afternoon. You must be Max Mushmelon, one
9 of the suspects.
10 MAX: What is all this? I get a subpoena saying show up here
11 and then all these papers to sign and no time to even read
12 them —
13 LILA: They don't say anything important.
14 JUDGE SNOOTY: Unless you did it!
15 MAX: Did what?
16 STU: Robbed my store, Spice Up Your Life.
17 MAX: I told the cops that I didn't have anything to do with
18 that!
19 JUDGE SNOOTY: And now you can deny it on national TV.
20 MAX: Yeah ... yeah ... I've seen your show, lady.
21 GRACIE: Your honor.
22 MAX: Whatever. I'll have you know I'm missing three
23 important meetings and who knows how many customers
24 at my used car dealership. Time is money and you're
25 wasting my time!
26 LILA: Well, Mr. Mushmelon, we'll be taping in about ten
27 minutes and it won't take long, so we'll have you out of
28 here in a jiff
29 JUDGE SNOOTY: Unless you're the thief! Mushmelon, is it?
30 MAX: Yeah, that's right. And how can I be guilty? I don't even
31 know what got took.
32 STU: *(From behind desk)* Two hundred dollars in cash, a gallon
33 of French olive oil, and two spice racks.
34 MAX: Why you! *(MAX chases STU around the set in a circle, but*
35 *MAX runs into QUENTIN, who enters right.)*

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