

LAW & ORDER: FAIRY TALE UNIT

by Jonathan Rand

(The title appears from darkness: Law & Order: Fairy Tale Unit.)

INTENSE VOICEOVER. In the fairy tale criminal justice system, the characters from fairy tales and nursery rhymes are represented by two separate yet equally ridiculous groups: the fairy tale police who investigate fairy tale crime, and the fairy tale district attorneys who prosecute the fairy tale offenders. These are their stories.

(Lights up on the part of the stage where we find CHUH-CHUNK, LOCATION, and TIME throughout the play. 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 show.)

CHUH-CHUNK. Chuh-chunk.

LOCATION. Chestnut and Hill.

TIME. 7:26 A.M.

(Lights shift.)

(A pile of rubble, entirely made of straw. CINDY and H.D. arrive on the scene, each with a cheap cup of coffee. CINDY wears only one shoe; H.D. has his arm in a sling, a bandage wrapped around his head, maybe some other bandages and some bruises.)

(ZELLE is already analyzing the crime scene.¹ Her hair is styled in a tall beehive.)

H.D. Well well well—you're up early for a Sunday, Zelle.

ZELLE. And you're late. But hey, I'm glad t'see both of ya got your beauty rest.

H.D. You noticed.

CINDY. All right, kids, break it up... So what're we lookin' at...

ZELLE. Well you *would* be lookin' at 328 Chestnut—if it was here anymore.

¹ There can be other crime scene investigators on the scene doing their work in the background.

Start

CINDY. Accident?

ZELLE. Not a chance. Perp struck the property from the rear, letting loose some form of windpower.

CINDY. Windpower...

ZELLE. (To CINDY:) Hey what's with the missing shoe?

CINDY. Eh, lost it last night at a Prince concert. Long story.

ZELLE. (To H.D. :) What about *you*? Looks like you had a special night.

H.D. How 'bout we stick to the crime...

ZELLE. Ooh, testy.

CINDY. Any leads so far on our perp?

ZELLE. No dice. And the boys downtown got nothin' on the tenant either. But come take a look at this.

(*She holds up some straw.*)

See this yellow-tinted, fibrous material here? We're stumped on what it might be. Tommy ran it through the Crime Scene Scanning Device and it told us diddly-squat.

H.D. Dilly-squat, huh? Sounds like my first marriage.

(*They all laugh like tough cops and then quickly stop laughing.*)

H.D. Let's have a look. (*He does.*) The texture and appearance is almost *straw*-like in nature.

CINDY. Straw-like, huh... You may be on t'something.

ZELLE. Whatever it is, the whole building was made out of it.

CINDY. And I'm assuming no witnesses?

ZELLE. Actually, Blue questioned a husband and wife who were a block away. (*She hands H.D. a photo.*) Running pretty fast from the scene, these two. But they didn't see anything, so we sent 'em on their way.

H.D. Where they headed?

ZELLE. Forest Circle, why?

H.D. I've got a few questions of my own... A few questions...for them to answer...

(*Beat.*)

(To CINDY:) Let's ride.

(H.D. and CINDY start to leave. H.D. turns around.)

And Zelle...

ZELLE. Yeah.

H.D. Treat yourself to a night on the town tonight, will ya?

ZELLE. (*Dismissive:*) What're you talkin' about...

H.D. You been cooped up in that high-rise apartment for months. Get out there—let your hair down.

ZELLE. All right, maybe I will. (*Jocularly:*) For the right man, anyway.

CINDY. Ain't that the truth. You deserve a *prince*.

ZELLE. Okay, beat it. I'll be stuck here all day if I don't get busy with this straw-like material.

(ZELLE goes elsewhere to do more crime scene investigation.
H.D. and CINDY take a moment to look at the rubble.)

H.D. What a mess...

CINDY. My gut's tellin' me someone's got a problem with the tenant, and for some reason, destroyed the place in retaliation.

H.D. And whatever the reason— (*Beat.*) —it was the last straw...

(*Lights shift.*)

CHUH-CHUNK. Chuh-chunk.

LOCATION. Forest Circle.

TIME. 7:54 A.M.

(*Lights shift.*)

(CINDY and H.D. are waiting for JACK and JILL, who jog onto the scene. CINDY and H.D. hold up their badges.)

CINDY. FTPD. Finish line's right here, folks.

(JACK and JILLIAN stop running.²)

JACK. What seems to be the problem?

H.D. The problem is that you can run...but you can't hide.

CINDY. Let's hear your names.

JACK. I'm Jack.

² Other runners can silently jog in the background throughout the scene. Jack and Jillian might do some stretching to keep limber.

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Jack and Jillian:

JACK. Okay, okay. Fine. We were running. The two of us were headed up Chestnut like usual, but Jillian got dehydrated, so I ran up Hill Street to the Quick-Stop to buy a Vitamin Water.

JILLIAN. I wasn't dehydrated. He made that up so he could use a coupon.

JACK. That's not true!

JILLIAN. He does this all the time. Last week he pretended that both of us had broken legs 'cause Target had a Buy One Get One Free sale on wheelchairs.

H.D. I swear, if you don't get to the point, I will escort you to the point with my fist!

...

H.D. I swear, if you don't get to the point, I will escort you to the point with my fist!

...

CINDY. Okay, so let me get this straight: Jack... you and Jill —

JILLIAN. Ian.

CINDY. — went up Hill to buy a bottle of water —

JACK. Vitamin Water.

CINDY. Then Jack here fell down, broke the crown on his lateral incisor.

H.D. Then let me guess: You came tumbling after.

JILLIAN. No. Why would I tumble? That doesn't make any sense.

CINDY. Then what?

JILLIAN. We got stopped by those other cops, jogged here, then got stopped by you guys, who made us late for work.

H.D. I'll make you late for work! With my fist!

CINDY. (To H.D.): Heyyy, cool it! (To JACK and JILLIAN:) Did you see anything out of the ordinary? Anything at all?

JILLIAN. Come to think of it, we did see a couple of shady youths in the candy aisle.

...

H.D. ...we'll find our pot of rainbow gold...

Start
==

Hansel and Gretel (replace entire scene):

(H.D. and CINDY enter flash their badges. HANSEL and GRETEL both speak with a stereotypical German dialect. Throughout the scene, they scatter various types of candy to either unseen birds, or some silly representation of birds.)

H.D. Well well well. I guess the old expression is right: Follow ten blocks of Skittles and you'll find two Germans at a pond.

HANSEL. Ve don't vant any trouble.

GRETEL. Ja. Ve are innocence.

CINDY. How about answering some questions.

HANSEL. Ve cannot talk now; ve are busy feeding ze birdies.

Continue →

CINDY. I wasn't aware that "birdies" ate candy.

GRETEL. Oh absolutely, policemen-man. Ze candies ist very popular mit ze birdies. Ze pigeons, zey prefer ze Junior Meentz. Ze geese, zey go vild for ze Tvizzlahs. Und ze duckies? — ze Goobahs.

HANSEL. Vere you avare zat in some foreign lands, ze people feed ze birdies mit breadcrumb?

GRETEL. Breadcrumb! Can you believe zat? I get qveasy tummy just brainzinking of it. So nastygross!

H.D. If you two Dum-Dums don't shut your Wax Lips, you're gonna make friends with the Jawbreakers. (*Referring to his fists.*)

HANSEL. Ve don't have to take zees vehbal abuses!

CINDY. Hey, H.D., I forget: How many years in prison for resisting arrest?

H.D. Five hundred years.

GRETEL. Okay, okay — ve will do as you vish.

HANSEL. First of all, you should know zat ve are Gehrman.

H.D. Oh yeah? With those hats, we thought you were from Detroit.

HANSEL. Zees are traditional Gehrman alpine hats.

GRETEL. On sale last veek at T.J.Maxx.

H.D. Get on with it.

HANSEL. Ja, so okay. My name ist Hansel, und zees ist Gretel.

GRETEL. Hallo!!

HANSEL. Vee are brozer und seester, und yesterday morgen, our schtepmommy kicked us out of ze house.

CINDY. Why'd your stepmom kick you out?

HANSEL. Schtepmommy ist evil...

GRETEL. She vas so sick of zees fake Gehrman accents.

(*Beat.*)

CINDY. Wait, you're faking your accents?

(*They both now speak with the actors' regular accents.*)

HANSEL. Yeah, I mean — sure. You didn't pick up on that?

GRETEL. It sounds annoying to us, but we just figured everyone else expects it from Germans.

HANSEL. Give the people what they want, right?

H.D. All Germans are faking it?

GRETEL. Sure.

H.D. Wow...

CINDY. Yeah, wow...

HANSEL. (*Back to thick, ridiculous German:*) Anyvay, vhere vere vee —

CINDY. No-no-no! We prefer your real accents.

HANSEL. Oh yeah? Cool. Anyway, like I was saying: Last night our stepmom kicked us out and left us alone and hungry in the middle of town.

GRETEL. She's evil.

HANSEL. But we found this Quick-Stop that was like overstocked with candy, so we bought a ton and Ubered home.

GRETEL. And get this: our stepmom isn't actually evil. It was just low blood-sugar. She was totally cool after a couple of Mike-n-Ikes.

H.D. That's a fascinating story, and we're thrilled to hear the happy ending, and I'd very much appreciate a Tootsie Roll — (*GRETEL hands him one.*) — but we have a more pressing issue to discuss.

CINDY. Did either of you see anything out of the ordinary while at the Quick-Stop?

GRETEL. No. Though I did see a hairy guy walking across the street with an industrial fan.

(*H.D. and CINDY look at each other.*)

CINDY. Did you see where he was headed?

GRETEL. Hard to say. I was so hopped up on Peeps.

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H.D. *(To the JUDGE:)* I'm not gonna answer these questions.

JUDGE. And I will hold you in contempt of court.

(Pause.)

Start

H.D. All right... You wanna know? Fine. I'll tell you. I'll tell you right now. But don't blame me if you're plagued with nightmares for the rest of your life...

(The lights dim and focus on H.D. What follows is a highly emotional monologue, as slow and gripping as it needs to be.)

It was Thursday afternoon. I was on my lunch break. There I was, sitting, minding my own business. But I wasn't sitting just anywhere. No... No I wasn't... I was sitting on a wall. That's right, a wall. It seemed stable enough, sure. Why wouldn't a wall be stable? *(Pause.)* But then out of the blue...without warning...it gave way. Before I could get my bearings, I lost my balance, and... *(Pause.)* ...and I fell.

And it wasn't just your average fall. No it wasn't. It's not easy to describe the kind of the fall it was, but...if I had to choose a word... I'd say it was...great. A great fall. *(Quietly:)* It was great...

I regained consciousness in a gurney over at King's County. They did everything they could to fix my bone fractures, my torn joints, ... my broken soul. All the finest doctors lent a hand—human doctors, of course, but also horse doctors... After surgery... the chief resident put his hoof in my hand and told me everything was gonna be all right.

But he was *all wrong*...

No matter how hard they tried, they failed... they failed at putting me back together again.

You wanna know about my physical stability? Oh I'll be all right. Sure. I'll survive. But after a fall of such...great...magnitude... I may not ever recover...up here. *(Points to his head.)* And in here. *(Points to his heart.)* And along here. *(He indicates the side of his pinky.)*

For those of you out there—you young people, especially—listen to me and listen close... 'Cause I'll only say it once: The next time you see a wall...*respect* that wall... And don't sit on it. Sit on a chair... Or maybe a futon.

(Pause.)

(To PEEP:) Happy now?

I quit.

(He drops his badge on the floor and exits the courtroom.)