

## Ravens Court

'What's the pecking order today?' Asked the senior usher Jan Raven.

The Woodpecker, Woody who was a fledgling usher replied. 'The running order has changed, I'm afraid to say, because the pelicans brief has gone down with very bad flu. So that means we've brought forward the case of Jack Daw.' 'Oh not him again?' Jan sighed 'How many times has that light taloned blighter been up before the beak? I've never known anyone so transfixed by the sight of anything shiny that doesn't belong to them. I think he won't find it easy today as the judge is the falcon from Malta a high flying bird, by all accounts, who won't stand any nonsense.

Let's get on swearing in the jury. Goodness knows where we got this lot from, I've never seen such a motely flock.'

The selection process seemed to take ages. The crow was rejected on the grounds he looked too like the defendant. He couldn't hide his relief and made a swift exit. 'I could murder a cup of tea.' he cackled. A blue budgie also failed the test on the grounds that his repeated calls of 'Who's a pretty boy' were irritating. A black hawk was down to attend but missed the dawn chorus and was a no show. At last 12 were selected and they sat on their allotted perches. Some feathers were ruffled when the little, but feisty, round robin remonstrated with a peacock. 'I can't sit at the back, I can't see anything we'll have to swap seats.' The peacock was too busy preening himself to hear at first but after a quick peck from an impatient eagle, he moved - albeit reluctantly.

Jack Daw was pleading not guilty to the charge of stealing a bracelet and flying off with it. At this stage the jury didn't know of his long list of felonies. What they were seeing was an elegant, well presented, highly intelligent bird who was well able to hold his own in the court. He spoke at length about his deprived upbringing being the product of a one parent family. His parents had nested in an old oak tree which was warm and safe but one winter's night the wind was howling and the rain torrential. Suddenly there was a massive boom of thunder and a fiery finger of lightning struck the tree sending it to the ground with an almighty thud. His dad was never seen again. His mother tried her best but it was very hard to find a new home. Most of the jury listened in rapt awe.

'I don't know what he's got to moan about - you should have seen my mum' whispered the cuckoo to the peacock. 'A puny little thing who took ages to feed me, thank goodness I didn't have any brothers or sisters.'

'Silence', squawked the judge. 'I will not have all this chirping in my court.'

Other than Jack Daw the defense didn't have much to offer. The prosecution, on the other hand had 3 hawkeyed vultures who had a birds eye view of the theft and witnessed everything.

After just one day the case concluded and the jury were directed to deliberate

The jury went into the large bird cage at the back of the court room. The chicken ran in first with the penguin marching in behind, somewhat pigeon toed. Then followed a diverse cross section from the avian world. A note was on the table which read 'Your first duty is to appoint a forebird of the jury who will act as spokes bird for the whole flock.

'Well that's the easiest task' crowed the magpie - 'it should be me.' Eddie the Eagle was not impressed. 'That would be like turkeys voting for Christmas. I suggest the owl, he looks wise also he

can turn his head round to see what's behind him. All in favour raise a wing.' 10 wings flapped upwards.

'I really don't want that albatross around my neck' hooted the owl but after much hen pecking, reluctantly, he agreed.

For the next two hours they debated the merits of the case. 'He's guilty - just look at how close his grey eyes are together' 'I was burgled once and that was by a Jackdaw.' 'That bird's a liar if ever I heard one'. 'He looks foreign to me did he migrate here?' And these were the more considered opinions.

'As for those witnesses. You can never trust vultures, one flew over my nest' said the cuckoo 'and I had to duck down as it swooped – it gave me real goosebumps'

'I think we need a break', muted the Black swan as it glided to the refreshment bird table. The tiny robin was craning to see what was on the menu. There was a lot to choose from including a little chicken, assorted seed, bread and some foul looking concoction. 'That looks like duck soup' quacked Howard 'A little insensitive!' his eyes out on stalks 'and hard to swallow if you are vegetarian'.

'Should we be spending more time discussing the case rather than what's on the menu?' The eagle dared to ask, his pleas landed on deaf ears as everyone tucked into the light luncheon. All but two birds on a wire. Two turtle doves were sitting innocently cooing to each other. They were darting nervous looks to the large Chinese parrot 'that bird keeps repeating everything we are saying, it's mocking us I wonder how we could get rid of it.'

After their break the owl called for order. 'I think we have discussed this case enough. Personally I think Jack Daws chickens have come home to roost, so let's have a show of wings. There was a murmuration of approval. So with that, they returned to Ravens Court.

'Have you reached a decision and are you birds of a feather?' asked the judge

'Yes we are. We find Jack Daw guilty on all counts and especially that of having eyes too close together.'

## **22 Films referenced**

Woody Woodpecker, Pelican Brief, Maltese Falcon, The Crow, Round Robin, Blackhawk Down, Bird Cage, Chicken Run, March of the Penguins, Eddie the Eagle, Albatross, One flew over the cuckoo's nest, Goosebumps, The Black Swan, Chicken Little, Duck Soup, Howard the Duck, Storks, Where Eagles Dare, Bird on a Wire, Chinese parrot, To Kill a Mockingbird.

## **28 Birds referenced**

Raven, woodpecker, pelican, jackdaw, falcon, crow, budgerigar, hawk, robin, peacock, eagle, cuckoo, vultures, chicken, pigeon, magpie, turkey, owl, albatross, lyre bird, duck, goose, swan, crane, storks, swallow, turtle doves, parrot

.....and around 40 words, phrases etc. that are bird related.....Sorry!