

# **BEFORE YOU ACCUSE ME**

## **February 2, 2004**

The George "Old" MacDonald Hall of Justice is a remarkable place to spend one's time, edifying and entertaining at once, and an hour spent there is often better than a movie by Stephen Spielberg. Wednesday, a criminal trial began which has captured the hearts and minds of soft-shoe dance fans everywhere, for on Wednesday, the Case of the People against Michael Johansson began, presided by Commissioner Rasch. The charge: Molestation of Turtles.

Johansson is the youngest member of the hysterically famous barbershop quartet plus two in soft shoe, The Kinsey Six. Most recently, Johansson won an award for his music video, "Spiller," in which the entertainer pours a pitcher of beer slowly over the head of his ex-lover.

We have transcripts of the trial on tape and in typed form and would like to share a few gems with you.

Apparently, everyone except the long suffering Commissioner arrived 20 minutes late due to Officer O'Madhaun pulling people over at the entrance to the courthouse parking lot for failure to stop before a turn.

After a fair amount of courtly business, we can hear Commissioner Rasch scolding each of the parties in turn over coming late to trial. Eventually, he turns his attention to the Accused.

"Sir do you understand the importance of this trial which just might send you to the slammer for the rest of your natural life and the nature of the charges against you . . . . Hell, I am not sure I understand myself. Where is the arresting Officer?"

O'Madhaun stepped up at this point.

Commissioner: "Oh Christ. you again. Is there perhaps some form of traffic violation involved here perhaps?" Here, the Commissioner indicated his familiarity with the Officer.

Officer O'Madhaun: "Transportin' reptiles without no license and parkin' in the blue zone!" O'Madhaun shouted triumphantly. "Plus jaywalkin with a box of turtles! Besides the main charge."

Commissioner: "But we have no ordinance specifically referring to reptiles on this island, and certainly not of turtles that I know of."

Officer O'Madhaun: "Ah, this molestin' is hurtin' the animals. Sure cruelty it is, yer Honor."

Commissioner: [sighs] "All right then, cruelty to animals it is. In the form of, er, turtle molestation." Turns to address the prisoner. "Says here you are African American, Mr. Johansson. And five foot eight in height. You appear to be six three, very blond and Swedish."

Johansson: "Had an operation, your honor."

At this point, yet another lengthy bit of court business ensued in which the identity of the prisoner was firmly established. This involved viewing several music videos, presented both by the prosecution and by the defense as well as a

mini concert performed by the defendant with the bailiff keeping time by tapping his truncheon on the banister.

Commissioner Rasch was heard, several times, attempting to regain order in the court. Rasch finally came to brass tacks after several exasperating episodes in which visitors, apparent fans of Michael J., threw themselves over the desk used by the Defense.

Commissioner: [somewhat exasperated] "We'll find out later just how it is possible for a man to molest a turtle, but why in god's name is the man in chains?"

Officer O'Madhaun: "Flight risk, yer Honor."

Commissioner: "You think the man is going to run away for jaywalking with turtles!?" [Here the Commissioner put his head in his hands, then raised up after mastering himself.] "Bail is set at fifty dollars. Bailiff, unlock the man. Do it now."

Officer O'Madhaun: "Ah, let me issue an objection here, if I . . .".

Commissioner: [holding up his hands] Now stop. Stop. [pause] Just. Stop. Bail is hereby set. And before we have any more objections, Court is recessed until tomorrow. [Bangs his gavel and exits shaking his head]

As the shackles were removed from the Defendant in the Court, per instructions, Officer O'Madhaun was heard to remark, "I'll be watchin' your driving, me bucko!"

Recess.

Stay tuned for further developments in this trial of the century.