

TOUGH DECISIONS

By Rod

This sketch is a follow on from 'Family Business' [i.e. Godfather 2] and is based on the meeting of the chief priests and Pharisees with Pilate featured in the end of the gospels. Caiaphas and Annas are represented as two mafia chiefs while Pilate is likened to a state governor.

CAST

Don Caiaphas The Godfather of the 'Phariseeci' family
Annas Concilieri or chief adviser to the Godfather. He carries a violin case under his arm
Governor Pilate State Governor
2 bodyguards These accompany Pilate. They should look like FBI agents – dark suits, earpiece in one ear etc

The theme from the Godfather is being played as Don Caiaphas and Annas enter. Pilate enters from the opposite side accompanied by two bodyguards. Pilate waits to one side as the bodyguards go across and check Caiaphas and Annas for weapons. They find none – even in the violin case, which is opened for the audience to see that it contains – a violin! But they remain suspicious of it and so place it to one side. When satisfied they signal for Caiaphas and Annas to approach Pilate. The music stops

Don Caiaphas Good morning, Governor Pilate. It is most gracious of you to see my friend Annas and me, especially so early in the morning.

Pilate Good morning, Don Caiaphas. I assume the pressing business you mentioned in your message concerns the man, Jesus Nazareni.

DC You are right, of course.

Pilate But why would you not come to my office. We could have breakfasted together in comfort.

Annas It would not be wise for Don Caiaphas to be seen entering the offices of the state law department: it might give some people the wrong impression about his motives.

Pilate [*Doubtfully*] Ah, yes, his motives. [*Positively*] Well I have to tell you that I have examined this man personally and I find no basis for a charge against him.

Annas If he were not a criminal we would not have handed him over to you.

Pilate I say again: I find no basis for a charge against him. If he is guilty of breaking one of the laws of your so-called ‘brotherhood’, judge him yourselves. I am sure you have ways of making people ‘disappear’ – if you get my drift.

Annas *[Feigning innocence]* Governor, what are you suggesting? You know that we Phariseecis are good, upright citizens. We would not dream of taking the law into our own hands.

DC What Annas says is true. We have great respect for the President. We pay our taxes regularly *[Pause]* – unlike Jesus Nazareni.

Pilate What do you mean?

DC He has said openly that he opposes the paying of taxes.

Annas And he stirs up the people all over the state. He began in the North and now has moved his operation to the South. You need only ask Commissioner Herod, who has jurisdiction in the North, what kind of trouble this man can cause.

Pilate I already have.

Annas And what did Herod say?

Pilate He, too, found Jesus to be an innocent man – but left the decision up to me.

Annas *[Sarcastic]* Huh! Very courageous!

Pilate I also had a message from my wife this morning. It seems she has been troubled in a dream. She tells me not to have anything to do with this Jesus, for he is an innocent man.

DC *[Dismissively]* Women know nothing of these matters. They worry. They dream dreams. *[Pointedly. With bite.]* It is left to we men to make the tough decisions.

Pilate Yes, well I’ve made my decision: I will punish him, just to give him a little warning, and then let him go.

DC I think releasing him would be unwise.

Pilate Well, I don’t: and I run the city.

DC I think such a course of action could backfire on you, Governor. You may run the city, but we Pariseecis run the people.

Pilate I don't give in to threats.

DC *[Feigning hurt innocence]* Threats? Who mentioned threats? I merely point out the facts.

Annas If you let this man go you will suggest you are no friend of the President. Anyone who claims to be a king clearly opposes the President.

Pilate A king?

Annas Yes, he calls himself the King of the Jews. He is subverting our nation. He is guilty of treason. That is why we handed him over to you in the first place. The President will want to know your reasons for setting free a known subversive terrorist.

Pilate He is no terrorist. He is no king. I will not kill an innocent man.

DC There might be a solution to our little problem.

Pilate What is that?

DC Well, it is the time of the festival and, as a goodwill gesture, you usually release one of the prisoners.

Pilate Yes, the people have already been on to me about releasing Barabbas. Now he really is a terrorist – and a murderer!

DC Well, there is our solution.

Pilate How do you mean?

DC You can offer the people a choice – either Barabbas or Jesus.

Pilate *[Understanding. Smiling to himself]* Yes. I like that. Let the people decide.

DC Precisely.

Pilate But you realise you won't get what you want. The people are bound to choose the innocent Jesus over the murderer Barabbas.

DC

We shall see, Governor. We shall see. Like I said – you may control the city but we control the people.

Music resumes. Don Caiaphas and Annas turn and leave watched by Pilate. He looks after them deep in thought, gives a final despairing sigh and leaves from his side followed by his bodyguards.

THE END