

# Attack!

*Attack!* was first performed by members of St Laurence Lodge No 5511, the Master being W. Bro. Len West.

The set is simple; five chairs in the East around a coffee table, representing a talk show set and a soap box, used also as the court dock, placed in the West, facing east. No stage lighting is used.

The Actor	dressed in 18th century costume
Lodge DC	who introduces the programme
Jeremy Hacksman	a television interviewer
Stephen Knight	an author and pantomime villain
Professor Jones	a caricature of a famous Masonic writer
Dr Hamer	another so
Professor Knoop	yet another so
The Judge	played by the WM from his pedestal
Henry Seddon	played by the SD
Deacons, Foreman of the Jury, Clerk of the Court, Warders etc. played by brethren of the lodge.	



*(The stewards place a soap box in front of the Senior Warden. The Actor mounts the soap box. The Actor is the only one who is dressed in costume. We must imagine him to be a TV actor, brought in to act out the quotes. He is ever keen to do his bit - in fact too keen.)*

The Actor For this devilish sect of men are meeters in secret which swear against all without their following. They are the anti-Christ which was to come leading men from fear of God. For how should men meet in secret places and with secret signs taking care that none observe them to do the work of God; are not these the ways of evil-doers?

*(The Actor steps down, bows to WM and returns to a seat in the North West. Stewards set out five chairs facing West around a small table. Soap box stays in place.)*

Lodge DC Brethren, that attack dates all the way back to 1698. We will hear from the great Masonic scholars, Knoop, Jones and Hamer about early attacks and compare them with modern attacks on Freemasonry, including *The Brotherhood*, written by Stephen Knight. But first, here is Jeremy Hacksman, to introduce the programme.

Hacksman *(Stands.)* Good afternoon brethren. *(Walks to West)* Let me welcome our panellists for today. Professor Knoop, Professor Jones and Dr Douglas Hamer. Professor Knoop is a Freemason but his two eminent colleagues, Professor Jones and Dr Hamer are not. All three are respected academics and university teachers. A little applause please brethren! *(As Jeremy Hacksman introduces the readers they stand, nod to the WM and sit in a chairs by the table.)*

Now let me introduce Stephen Knight *(Stephen Knight rises, does a sort of pantomime villain face and then takes his seat)*. Boos, please brethren! Thankyou. *(Jeremy Hacksman walks to East and takes his chair)* Professor Jones, let me start with you. Do the attacks on Freemasonry go back before the establishment of the first Grand Lodge?

Jones The year 1717, which saw the establishment of Grand Lodge, has been regarded by many Masonic writers as constituting a milestone in Masonic history - Tut! Tut! - though

we personally do not share that view.

Hamer *(Interrupts)* See our *Short History of Freemasonry to 1730*, pages 138 to 139.

Knoop Thank you, Dr Hamer. To the Masonic bibliographer, the year 1717 is of no special importance. The milestone, if it can be so described - Hmmm! Hmmm! - lies in the year 1721 or 1722, marking the very substantial increase in printed references to Freemasonry.

Hamer Of the items that we print, eleven belong to the period 1638-1721 and fifty six to the fourteen years 1722-35.

Knoop Thankyou, Dr Hamer - Hmmm! Hmmm! - It would appear that this is accounted for by the growing prominence and increasing membership of the fraternity after 1721. On 24 June of that year ...

Jones *(continuing the lecture)* His Grace John Duke & Earl of Montague ...

Hamer *(interrupts and stands as if to give an academic lecture)* Spelt with an 'e' in the first minute book of Grand Lodge, from which we quote. According to Debretts John, Duke of Montagu, spelt his name without the final 'e' in contradistinction to this distant relative, Anthony Brown, Viscount Montague, Grand Master in 1732. *(Jeremy Hacksman kindly but firmly pushes him down in his seat. He continues to talk, seeming to notice nothing out of the ordinary.)* Anderson, with one exception at the end of the historical section of the Constitutions ... *(Voice fades away.)*

Jones *(goes on as if nothing has occurred)* Marquess and Viscount Mounthermer Baron Montague of Boughton, Master of the Great Wardrobe, Lord Lieutenant and *Custos Rotolorum* of the Counties ....

Hacksman *(Very kindly and patiently, as if humouring a wayward child)* Professor, please excuse me. Is the point that you are trying to make that Freemasonry was brought to the attention of the public by the increase in membership and because the nobility became leaders of the Craft?

Knoop Hmmm! Well, er... um... yes, that is what we were saying.

Hacksman I apologise Professor but time is limited. Could we get to the point? Tell us about the early attacks on Freemasonry.

Knoop Of course, of course, of course. Professor Jones, perhaps you would ... Hmmm? Hmmm? *(voice trails away)*

Jones The grounds of the attacks, in so far as they can be analysed and separated, fall under four main heads: - Tut! Tut! - religion, morality, secrecy and anti-feminism.

Knight *(leaps to his feet)* Exactly, exactly, exactly! More proof to what I have been saying. Jack the Ripper was a Freemason. It was all a cover up ...."

Hacksman When was this, Mr Knight?

Knight 1888! I have demonstrated that ...

Hacksman But Mr Knight, we are currently talking about 1721.

Knight Oh! I know you Freemasons. Hiding behind the details ... *(mumbles to himself and subsides back to his seat)*

Knoop *(recovering from the interruption)* Hmmm! Hmmm! Indeed! What? What? Under the heading of religion, the earliest attack which we have traced is from 1698 ...

The Actor *(rushes to soap box and starts to do his bit again)* For this devilish sect of men are meeters in secret which swear against all without their following. They are the anti-Christ which was to come leading men from fear of God ...

Hacksman *(interrupts)* Not now! Not now! Deacons, Deacons! *(Deacons rise, advance towards*

*the Actor and drag him back to his seat.)* Ye Gods, this place is a mad house!

Knight What god do you mean? The Masonic god, I presume.

WM Mr Knight, there is no Masonic god. Masonry is not a religion.

Knight Now, there you are wrong. *(Jeremy Hacksman appears to be about to interrupt)* No, No, hear me out! *(Stands and walks excitedly towards the West, talking to the audience)* The assurance given to candidates, that the title *Great Architect of the Universe* can be applied to whatever Supreme Being they choose, is worse than misleading; it is a blatant lie! Two thirds of Freemasons never realise the untruth of the line they are fed as to the identity of the Great Architect, because it is deliberately kept hidden from them. *(Turns to face WM)*

Most of the brethren here today will have no knowledge of this. The true name, although not the *nature*, of the Masonic God is revealed only to those who elect to be exalted to the Holy Royal Arch. *(stands on soap box)* In the ritual of exaltation, it is revealed as *(pauses for emphasis)* Jah-bu-lon! *Jah*, Jahweh, the god of the Hebrews. *Bul*, Baal, the ancient Canaanite god of licentious rites. *On*, Osiris, the ancient Egyptian god of the underworld. This compound figure is the true god of Freemasonry.

Jones Mr Knight, - Tut! Tut! - this is nonsense!

Knoop Hmmm! Hmmm! And yet, Mr Chairman, such nonsense has been the basis of attacks on Freemasonry for a very long time. Take the 1725 *Letters of Verus Commodus* ...

Hamer ... the first concerning the Society of Freemasons, the second, the Society of Gormorgons. The letters were re-printed by Gould in his History ...

Hacksman *(interrupts)* Thankyou Dr Hamer

Hamer *(subsides mumbling)* volume 3, page 475.

Actor *(puts on mortar board, pushes Knight off soapbox and climbs up himself. Knight stands aside.)* My belief is that if they fall under any denomination at all, or belong to any sect of men, they may be ranked among the Gnostics.

Knight *(Moves towards the centre of the Lodge, again talking to the audience)* My point exactly! Gnosticism, cabalism, why not the devil as well?

Hacksman Mr Knight! Please sit down! *(Stephen Knight ignores him and stands snootily in the West)* So Professor Knoop, you are saying that Freemasonry has long suffered attacks from the point of view of religion? By some with rather less heated imagination than Mr Knight here?

Knight *(sulkily)* Well, if you are going to get personal about it ...

Hacksman Professor?

Knoop *(As if he has just awoken from an academic reverie.)* What? What? Hmmm! Hmmm! Yes indeed. Ah! The attacks have centred upon the fact that Freemasons pray to the GAOTU but not through Jesus, which is the essence of Christianity.

Knight Ah-ha! See! I told you!

Knoop *(continues)* Thus, the fact that Freemasonry is open to brethren of all faiths is taken against it. Many Christians have been very exclusive about their religion which they say is the only correct one. Hmmm! Hmmm! This seems to have been the basis of the attacks by the Methodists.

Jones And - Tut! Tut! - some people, like Mr Knight, mistake openness to religious creeds as the creation of an overarching religion with its own God.

Hacksman What have been the other attacks? You mentioned the heading of morality?

Jones Yes. Some of the accusations are veiled, others quite open, and include such immoralities as - Tut! Tut! - sodomy and fornication, gluttony and drunkenness. Regarding the two last, the most outspoken attack is in *Ebrietas Encomium* ...

Hamer ... in a passage that does not appear in the original French and which must consequently be attributed to the editor. According to the title page ...

Hacksman *(interrupts)* Please Dr Hamer!

Hamer *(subsides mumbling)* *Ebrietas* was by Boniface .....

The Actor *(carrying wine bottle and pipe, leans drunkenly against the soapbox)* We had a good dinner. *(burps)* Westphalia hams and chickens, good plum pudding, not forgetting the delicious salmon, with copious libations of wine and huge walls of venison pastry. The bottle *(waves it and drinks)* went merrily about. The faces of the most antient and most honourable fraternity of Freemasons brightened with ruddy fires, their eyes illuminated, resplendent blazed. *(Drinks again, still leaning on the soap box.) (Burps.)*

Knoop Hmmm, Hmmm! I fear that some of the other attacks are less friendly

The Actor *(lustfully)* But Sally Dear's the favourite toast ...

Hamer Sally Salisbury, of course, the noted prostitute

The Actor Whose health it is they drink the most *(leers around)*  
 And every Turnkey has a taste  
 Of what lies hid below her waste.

Hacksman Thankyou, thankyou, that will be quite enough! *(The Actor leers round the room again and returns to his seat.)*

Knoop Hmmm! Hmmm! Would you like a passage that exemplifies the accusations of sodomy?

Hacksman No! No! No thank you ...

Knight *(Leaps to his feet)* But these are minor issues. What about the subversion of the police, of the justice system - and the Masonic murders of Jack the Ripper?

Hacksman Oh well! I give up. Mr Knight, you had better tell us.

Knight I will! I will! *(Strides to the West and climbs up on soapbox)* There have been cases of obvious Masonic abuse, several reported to me by men of integrity and standing in the law. There are instances where Freemason judges are influenced by their loyalty to the Brotherhood to act in a way they otherwise would not. They are by their very nature dishonourable and always detrimental to society.

Take *Operation Countryman*. The biggest investigation ever conducted into police corruption in Britain, would never have been required if the Commissioner of the City of London Police, had not been corrupted by Freemasonry.-

Hacksman Mr Knight, are you accusing the then Commissioner of the London Police of corruption?

Knight I am saying that Freemasonry corrupted him!

Hacksman But how did it do that? In your book, you seem to be saying that the Commissioner was rather too honest and believed rather too much in his fellow man - that his errors came from the fact that he took brotherly love too seriously.

Knight Exactly, he over-promoted Masons!

Hacksman Did he make the same mistake with non-Masons?

Knight Well, yes!

Hacksman So his only crime is that he had too much faith in his fellow man. That doesn't sound like corruption, does it?

Knight OK. OK. OK. But what about the judges?

Hacksman Well, I have read your book and from what I can tell, you give three or four examples of judges being influenced by knowing the defendant was a Freemason. Is that right?

Knight *(Still on soap box. As the conversation goes on, it seems more and more that Knight is in the dock and that Hacksman is grilling him.)* Yes! Exactly!

Hacksman *(Walks to soapbox but faces WM)* Let us be clear. In one case, you say that the judge, a Freemason, summed up favourably to the defendant, who gave a sign you say that showed he was a Freemason.

Knight Yes! Yes!

Hacksman *(Not looking at Knight)* What was the sign?

Knight I don't know exactly but it must have been a Masonic one!

Hacksman Why must it have been?

Knight The judge gave him only a one year sentence while the co-defendant got two years.

Hacksman *(looks at Knight)* Isn't that a circular argument, Mr Knight?

Knight What do you mean?

Hacksman The only evidence that you offer for the sign being a Masonic one, was that the defendant received a lighter sentence. You assume that the only possible reason for the lighter sentence was Masonic and so the sign must have been Masonic. But was it?

Knight I don't know what you mean.

Hacksman I am not surprised. *(Walks to E)* The next case you describe is one in which the judge is said to have actually recognised the defendant as a fellow Freemason.

Knight Yes, another one!

Hacksman But in this case, the judge gave the defendant a stiffer sentence than he would otherwise?

Knight Yes! Yes! Yes!

Jones The judge is - *Tut! Tut!* - supposed to have said that ...

The Actor *(In gown and wig, stands in front of soap box)* the crime was the more reprehensible because a Freemason had committed it and the defendant had compounded this betrayal of Freemasonry by abusing the Masonic bond of brotherhood that existed between himself and the judge. *(Gives elaborate bow to the audience.)*

Hacksman *(To Knight)* So the judge was more severe because he knew the defendant was a mason? That doesn't sound like corruption either. Then the case of the poisoner? *(Sits)*

Knight Yes! Yes! Yes! In 1912, Frederick Henry Seddon was convicted of murdering Eliza Barrow, his lodger. *(Gets down from soap box and sits in NW.)*  
*(The lodge becomes a court. The WM puts on a wig and becomes the judge. Seddon stands on the soap box as the defendant. The JD stands beside him as a warder. The panel become barristers, turning to face the WM. Other brethren become part of the court.)*

Clerk *(facing the brethren in the North East acting as jury.)* Members of the Jury, have you reached a verdict

A Brother *(as spokesman, stands. Speaks to WM)* We have, my Lord.

Clerk What is your verdict?

A Brother *(To WM)* Guilty, your my Lord. *(sits)*

Judge Frederick Henry Seddon, you stand convicted of wilful murder. Have you anything to say why the Court should not give judgement of death according to law?

Seddon I declare before the Great Architect of the Universe *(sharp intake of breath from the actors)* that I am not guilty.

Clerk *(Loudly)* Oyez! Oyez! My Lords, the King's Justices, do strictly charge and command all persons to keep silence while sentence of death is passed upon the prisoner at the bar. God save the King!

Judge Frederick Henry Seddon, you have been found guilty of the wilful murder of Eliza Mary Barrow. With that verdict I am bound to agree. There is ample evidence to show that you had the opportunity of putting poison into her medicine. You have a motive for this crime - greed of gold. This murder was a barbarous one; a murder of design, a cruel murder. It is not for me to harrow your feelings ...

Seddon It does not affect me. I have a clear conscience.

Judge You have had a very fair and patient trial. I, as a minister of the law, have now to pass upon you that sentence which the law demands, which is that you have forfeited your life in consequence of your crime. Make peace with your maker.

Seddon I am at peace.

Judge From what you have said, you and I know that we both belong to one Brotherhood *(pause)* and it is all the more painful to me to have to say what I am saying. But our Brotherhood does not encourage crime. On the contrary, it condemns it. I pray you again to make your peace with the Great Architect of the Universe. *(Pause)* And now I have to pass sentence. *(Pause. Clerk walks up to WM and puts the black cloth on his head.)* The sentence of this court is that you be taken from hence to a lawful prison and from thence to a place of execution, and that you there by hanged by the neck until you are dead. And may the Lord have mercy on your soul.

*Frederick Seddon being sentenced to death. This is said to be the only photograph of a death sentence being passed in an English Court.*

*(Clerk walks up to Seddon who holds his hands out. The Clerk mimes manacling him. Clerk leads Seddon to his seat in the lodge. They exchange nods. Seddon sits, Clerk returns to his seat. Chairs are turned round and the TV interview resumes. Knight re-mounts the soap box.)*

Hacksman Mr Knight, in your own summary of this case you write ...

Actor *(stands in front of soap box)* ... because there was nothing hidden in the interaction between Seddon and the judge, it remains interesting to the student of Freemasonry only in the depth of brotherly feeling. It tells us nothing of the alleged influence by Masonry in the courts. *(sits)*

Knight *(Sulkily)* Yes, well ...

Hacksman So the Seddon case is not evidence of wrongdoing by Freemasons?

Knight *(Sulkily)* No, but ...

Hacksman Do you have any evidence at all of judicial wrongdoing?

Knight *(Excitedly)* Jack the Ripper was a Freemason! And what is more, this truth was covered up by Scotland Yard. Jack the Ripper was no less a person than Sir William Gull, physician to the Queen and a Freemason.

Hacksman Really? How do you know that?

Knight Contemporary descriptions of the mutilations show parallels with an illustration by Hogarth of an actual Masonic murder.

Jones (*Dryly*) Tut! Tut! Hogarth's engraving is not of a murder but of a public dissection in the anatomical theatre, used for teaching purposes in the 18th century. The first anatomical theatre was built in Padua ...

Knight (*Interrupts*) And what is more, the man actively responsible for concealing the truth behind the Ripper murders was Sir Charles Warren, Commissioner of the Metropolitan Police and one of the country's most eminent Freemasons. He personally destroyed the only clue, a chalk message on a wall near the site of the fourth murder. It read:

Actor (*stands*) The Juwes are the men that will not be blamed for nothing. (*sits*)

Knight (*Gets down from soap box and moves to centre of temple*) When told of this, Warren rushed to the spot and washed the message away. He had realised that the writing on the wall was a Masonic message! So there!

*Plate IV of Hogarth's 'Four Stages of Cruelty,' showing the body of a villain being cut open by surgeons in the anatomical theatre, an amphitheatre used for teaching in 18th century universities.*

Hamer In fact, it was not Sir Charles Warren who washed the message away but Police Superintendent Thomas Arnold. He feared it might stir up anti-semitic feelings.

Hacksman The message was not Masonic?

Hamer It has no Masonic meaning. In his report Arnold wrote:

*Knowing in consequence of suspicion having fallen upon a Jew named John Pizer, alias 'Leather Apron', of having committed a murder in Hanbury Street a short time previously, a strong feeling existed against the Jews, and as the building upon which the writing was found was situated in the midst of a locality inhabited principally by that sect, I was apprehensive that if the writing were left it would be the means of causing a riot.*

Jones So - Tut! Tut! - to analyse Mr Knight's evidence, we find - Tut! Tut! - that Hogarth does not illustrate a murder but a dissection; the famous message has no Masonic meaning and it was removed in case it stirred up anti-semitic feeling; it was not Sir Charles Warren who washed away the writing; it was not done in a rush but - Tut! Tut! - carried out later on the orders of Superintendent Arnold.

Hacksman Well, Mr Knight, I do not think much of your evidence.

Knight Well you would say that wouldn't you?

Hacksman You might think so. I could not possibly comment. (*Stephen Knight sits at the table again*) Why, Professor Knoop, do we get such outlandish accusations?

Knoop Hmmm! Hmmm! Secrecy. Hmmm! Hmmm!

Jones Freemasonry has been attacked as sacrilegious and anti-Christian; - Tut! Tut! - as immoral and indulging in licentious acts; as corrupting - Tut! Tut! - the state and government officials. These attacks begin as early as 1698 and go on today. All the attacks are based upon - Tut! Tut! - a wilful misunderstanding of Freemasonry.

Hacksman Well gentlemen, I am sorry but that is all we have time for today. Thankyou for coming on the programme and ...

Knight (*leaps to feet and interrupts*) Is that all? I must protest! This is another cover up! What about the KGB and Freemasonry, the Mafia, the P2 lodge and the Banco Ambrosia, what about the fact that Freemasonry caused the Russian revolution ....

Hacksman (*Stands*) Thank you and good night. (*The cast takes a bow.*)

