

*At the start, all lights are out except spot on mirror ball. Music: opening bars of 'The House of the Rising Sun.' Start smoke. No one speaks for at least a minute.*

Narrator: *(Quietly but urgently)* Brethren, *(music stops)* there is an elite group of Freemasons in England over whom the United Grand Lodge has no jurisdiction. The majority of Freemasons have no idea of their existence. Members of Craft Freemasonry often argue that Freemasonry is not a secret society but a 'society with secrets'. No such case can be made out for the wealthy society-within-a-society based at 10 Duke Street.

*Quiet but threatening music*

Nobody looking at that fine but anonymous house from outside could suspect that behind its pleasing facade, beyond the two sets of sturdy double doors and up the stairs there is a Black Room, *(beat)* a Red Room *(beat)* and a Chamber of Death.

Nobody walking down Duke Street from Piccadilly is likely to suspect the true nature of what goes on inside that building, even if he or she happens to notice the small plate to the right of the entrance which says: "The Supreme Council. Ring only once."

*Sharp chord - music continues*

Even the Grand Master of all England is only a Freemason of the 3rd degree and Freemasons are in most cases quite unaware of the thirty superior degrees to which they will never be admitted not ever hear mentioned. This is the real picture, with the three lowly degrees governed by Grand Lodge and the thirty higher degrees governed by a Supreme Council.

*Music stops*

Initiation into these higher degrees is open only to those who are *selected* by the Supreme Council. *(chord)* Only a small proportion of these progress beyond the 18th degree, *(chord)* that of Knight of the Pelican and Eagle *(chord)* and Sovereign Prince Rose Croix of Heredom. *(chord)* With each degree, the number of initiates diminishes *(chord)* - the 31st degree is restricted to 400 members *(chord)*, the 32nd to 180 *(chord)* and the 33rd to only 75 members *(series of chords)*.

*Quiet but threatening music starts again.*

The Most Puissant Sovereign Grand Commander- is truly Britain's highest Freemason whatever might be said of the Duke of Kent. Few of the many hundreds of Freemasons interviewed had even heard of him and, of those few, only five knew of his secret role as the highest Mason of the highest degree.

*Director enters and stands in the centre of the lodge.*

Brethren, it is time for these secret leaders to be unmasked. It is time the ordinary Mason knew who was, covertly and quietly, the real power in Freemasonry - those who know the Black Room and the Room of Death - those who are superior even to the Duke of Kent himself. Fearlessly, we will name them.

*Music gets louder - triumphant music Narrator has to speak loudly to be heard.*

Without a qualm, we will force him to step forward into the light - so today, you will know, for the first time, who pulls the puppet strings of the Craft.

*Music stops. No more smoke.*

Director Step forward .....

*Dazzling set of chords. Director names a volunteer Bro. by his Rose Croix title and name. The Director pulls him forward as if he is unwilling to be unmasked. Full stage lights. Brother takes a bow and returns to his seat..*

Narrator     The words I have just read were from a book called *The Brotherhood* written by Stephen Knight. The late Stephen Knight started out as a journalist. Nothing wrong with that one may suppose but as the tabloid newspapers stand witness, people want sensation - and he gave it to them. Most of it he made up, basing his imagination on half-digested or deliberately misused odds and ends of fact.

Brethren, this afternoon we are going to explore a little of how our ancient brethren conducted the affairs of their lodges. However, do remember that our material is drawn from published exposures of Freemasonry and may be no more reliable than the rubbish you have just heard, confusing Rose Croix with the Craft.

To be honest, which few of them were, the 18th century exposure writers plagiarised each other unmercifully. Many of them simply copied, word for word, whole chunks of what had been published before. However, they are the only source of information that we have about Masonic ritual of the time and so we must do what we can with them.

*Music starts - Beggar's Opera*

So come with us back to 1730 to the time of the publication of a book called *Masonry Dissected*.

*Act1 enters the Lodge and gives the Director a broadsheet to read. Act1 moves to stand in west.*

Director     (*Reads over the music, talking like a Town Cryer, trying to read it all in one breath, ending up puffing.*) Being a universal and genuine description of all its branches from the original to this present time as it is delivered in the constituted regular lodges both in the City and country, according to the several degrees of admission, giving an impartial account of their regular proceedings in initiating their new members in the whole three degrees of Freemasonry viz. Entered Prentice, Fellow Craft, Master to which is added the Author's vindication of himself by Samuel Prichard. (*Music pauses*)

Act1 (*From centre of lodge, tone undercutting the Director*) 29 pages, six pence.

*Lights spin. Mirror ball removed. Music starts again - a jolly catch as the actors enter and assemble in the centre of the lodge. Business during the music. Actors walk around a bit, exchange grips and greetings in dumb show, shaking hands with brethren in the front rows, particularly visitors. Then line up, 1,2, 3 in the East and 4, 5, 6 in the West. Actors 1 and 2 walk to the centre of the lodge and exchange the G of an EA. Lights on centre only. Music stops. (For the rest of the entertainment, the Director should feel free to move around the lodge at will.)*

Act1 From whence came you?

Act2 From the Holy Lodge of St John's.

Act1 What recommendations brought you from hence?

Act2 The recommendations which I brought from the Right Worshipful Master, Brothers and Fellows of the Right Worshipful and Holy Lodge of St John's from whence I came and greet you thrice heartily well. (*Actors 1 & 2 freeze, maintaining the G of an EA.*)

Narrator     The exposure *Masonry Dissected* is the first exposure in English to describe the third degree. Much of what it contains is familiar to us today but much is very different. Whether this is because the author did not really know the ceremonies or because they have changed since his time, we do not know. It is in the form of catechisms - question and answer. Let us work some of these catechisms together.

*Full stage lighting. Actors 1 & 2 move back to their original positions in East.*

Director Many of the brethren were earlier given BLUE cards on which is printed a number, a question and an answer. This is how it works. Our Worshipful Master will read a question. That question will be on one of the BLUE cards that someone here has. The first card is numbered 1, the second 2 and so on. Keep an eye on your card and its number and on the board being held up. When you hear the Master read your question, stand and read the answer. BLUE cards only brethren. The Green ones come later. Here - we will show you. Worshipful Master.

WM Where stands your Master?

Act4 (*Holds up card 1 and then reads from it.*) In the East

WM Why so?

Act5 (*Holds up card 2 and then reads from it.*) As the sun rises in the East and opens the day, so the Master stands in the East to open the lodge and set his men to work.

WM Where stands your Wardens?

Act6 (*Holds up card 3 and then reads from it.*) In the West.

Director Now it is over to you brethren. The next question and answer is number 4. Who has a card numbered 4? (*Actors look around to find the brother and gets him to hold his card up*) Thank you, Brother. So when the Master asks the question on your card, you will read the answer. Are you ready? Good. Who has number 5? (*Actors look around to find the brother and gets him to hold his card up*) Thank you, Brother. Good! So you answer your question after the brother with number 4 has answered his. Off we go. We will start again from the beginning. WM, please. (*Actors 1 & 4 help by identifying the brethren with the cards. Other actors remain in position.*)

Act4 (*Holds up card 1 and then reads from it.*) In the East

WM Why so?

Act5 (*Holds up card 2 and then reads from it.*) As the sun rises in the East and opens the day, so the Master stands in the East to open the lodge and set his men to work.

WM Where stands your Wardens?

Act6 (*Holds up card 3 and then reads from it.*) In the West.

WM What's their business?

Brother (4) As the sun sets in the West to close the day, so the Wardens stand in the West to close the lodge and dismiss the men from labour, paying their wages.

*As Brother (4) says this, all actors make the sign of F. Act2 places a level on a chord about the neck of Act5 and a plumb-rule on a chord about the neck of Act6. Actors 5 & 6 then take station in the West as Wardens. The Director conducts them to their position.*

WM Where stands the Senior Enter'd Prentice?

Brother (5) In the South

*The Director conducts Act2 to stand in the South.*

WM What is his business?

Brother (6) To hear and receive instructions and welcome strange brothers.

WM Where stands the Junior Enter'd Prentice?

Brother (7) In the North

*The Director conducts Act4 to stand in the North. Act1 continues to help identify the brethren with the cards.*

WM What is his business?

Brother (8) To keep off all cowans and evesdroppers

WM If a cowan is to be caught, how is he to be punished?

Brother (9) To be placed under the eaves of the house in rainy weather till the water runs in at his shoulders and out at his shoes.

WM What are the secrets of a Mason?

Brother (10) Signs, tokens and many words.

WM Where do you keep those secrets?

Brother (11) Under my left breast.

WM Where do you keep the key to those secrets?

Brother (12) In a bone box that neither opens nor shuts but with ivory keys.

WM Does it hang or does it lie?

Brother (13) It hangs.

WM What does it hang by?

Brother (14) A tow-line 9 inches or a span.

WM What metal is it of?

Brother (15) No manner of metal at all; but a tongue of good report is good behind a Brother's back as before his face.

WM Have you seen your Master today?

Brother (16) Yes, he was clothed in a yellow jacket and blue pair of breeches.

*Actors and Director turn to look at the WM in amazement.*

Act6 No, brethren. Our Master is not in fancy dress. The yellow jacket is the arms of a pair of compasses and the blue breeches, the steel points of them.

*Actors and Director turn back in visible relief. Director stands beside the WM.*

WM Give me the enter'd prentice's sign.

*Act1 walks to the centre of the lodge, facing the WM and looks towards the Director and follows his instructions as he says:*

Director The enter'd prentice's sign is given, says Samuel Prichard, by "extending the four fingers of the right hand and drawing of them cross his throat."

Act1 *(Gives the sign and then turns to speak to the Narrator)* That does not seem right.

*Other actors try the sign out for themselves, shaking their heads towards the audience in disagreement.*

Narrator It gets more odd.

*Act4, rises, walks up and faces the WM.*

WM Give me the word.

Act4 I'll letter it with you.

WM B ...

*Act4 and the WM letter the word together. Act2 then walks up and joins Act4 facing the WM.*

WM Give me another.

Act2 I'll letter it with you.

WM J ...

*Act 4 and the WM letter the word together. Both actors return to their places.*

Director But - two words in the same degree?

Narrator That is what Samuel Prichard wrote.

Director And the sign is wrong as well?

Narrator It may well be.

Director So was there one word for each degree or two?

Narrator We don't know. Both words occur together in the EA degree in most English exposures before Prichard. Have one of your colleagues give us a section of one of the earliest, from the year 1700.

*Act2 walks to the East. Other actors rise and mime the actions in the West while Act2 speaks - deliberately pronouncing the word 'yow' to rhyme with 'cow'.)*

Act 2 *Imprima*, yow are to put the person, who is to get the word, upon his knees: And after a great many ceremonies to frighten him, yow make him to take up the Bible; and, laying his right hand upon it, yow are to conjure him to secrecy by threatening that if he shall break his oath, the sun in the firmament and all the company there present will be witnesses against him which will be an occasion of his damnation. And likewise they will be sure to murder him. After he promised secrecy, they give him the oath as follows: The words are J ... & B ...

*Actors remain motionless frozen in posture.*

Director Two words again!

Narrator Yes. The words have caused a lot of trouble.

Director Are you going to tell us about that?

Narrator We shall come to it.

Director I think we need a break for a song.

Narrator Good idea. Singing played a large part in the meetings of our earlier brethren. Let's have the *Enter'd Prentice's Song*, written by by Bro. Matthew Birkhead.

*Actors hand out song sheets to the lodge at large.*

Director Brethren, our musicians will play the tune through once and then we will all join in.

*Actors encourage everyone to join in.*

COME, let us prepare,  
We Brothers that are,  
Assembled on merry occasion.  
Let's drink, laugh, and sing,  
Our Wine has a Spring,  
Here's a health to an Accepted MASON.

The World is in pain,  
Our Secrets to gain,  
And still let them wonder and gaze on.  
They ne'er can divine,  
The Word or the Sign,  
Of a Free and an Accepted MASON.

'Tis This, and 'tis That,  
They cannot tell What,  
Why so many GREAT MEN of the Nation,  
Should Aprons put on,  
To make themselves one,  
With a Free and an Accepted MASON.

Great KINGS, DUKES, and LORDS,

Have laid by their Swords,  
Our Myst'ry to put a good Grace on,  
And ne'er been ashamed,  
To hear themselves nam'd,  
With a Free and an Accepted MASON.

*Actors sit.*

Director Tell us about the trouble the words have caused.  
Narrator It all started with that Samuel Prichard.  
Director He's quite a trouble maker, isn't he?  
Narrator Indeed he is. Perhaps one of your colleagues could read from the Minutes of Grand Lodge, 15 December 1730.

*Actors gather around as if a Grand Lodge Meeting. Act5 stands at front as if he is WM. Act1 stands at side as if he is the Secretary. Act2 holds a minute book as if he is a lectern. Act1 has collected minute book, which he now places on the 'lectern', opens and reads. Lights centre only.*

Act1 *(This is nearly all one sentence, so in reading it Act1 runs out of breath a few times.)*  
The Deputy Grand Master took notice of a pamphlet lately published by one Prichard, who pretends to have been made a regular Mason, in violation of the obligation of a Mason which he swears he has broke in order to do hurt to Masonry. Expressing himself with the utmost indignation against both him (styling him an imposter) and of his book as a foolish thing not to be regarded, the Deputy Grand Master, in order to prevent the lodges being imposed upon by false brethren or imposters, proposed till otherwise ordered by the Grand Lodge, that no person whatsoever should be admitted into lodges unless some member of the lodge then present would vouch for such visiting Brother being a regular Mason, and then the member's name to be entered against the visitor's name in the lodge book.

Act5 All those in favour?

All Actors Aye!

*All show hands in usual manner. Act2 does this as well - perhaps some business about trying to vote while also being a lectern.*

Act5 That proposition has been carried. Brother Secretary.

*The real lodge Secretary stands.*

Sec Thank you, Very Worshipful Brother Deputy Grand Master.

*Secretary sits as do all actors. Full stage lighting.*

Director That sounds a very reasonable proposition.

Narrator Yes, it was the beginning of the signature book that we know today. However, some say they did more than this. Ask one of your colleagues to read a passage concerning the EA word from *Hiram*, a 1764 exposure.

*Director hands paper to Act6 who moves to the centre and reads.*

Act6 Formerly it was the Fellow-Craft's, till a pretended discovery of Free-Masonry came out, wrote by Samuel Prichard, which was about three fourths fiction, and the other fourth real; however it made a great confusion among the Masons at that time, and in order to prevent being imposed upon by Cowans or Imposters, there was a general council held, and the Entered Apprentice and Fellow-Craft's words were exchanged, tho' there are some lodges still retain the old custom.

*Director exchanges the paper for a copy of Bernard Jones' book. Act6 puts on mortar board.*

Director     So they exchanged the words in the degrees to catch out imposters. That must have caused some trouble. Imagine how this Lodge would have reacted to something like that!

Narrator     Indeed, one shudders to think. Bernard Jones, the great Masonic historian is quite censorious about the decision.

Act6 *Grand Lodge made the alteration with the best of intentions but in doing so was guilty of, at least, a profound error of judgement, and in due course paid a heavy price for its mistake. The alteration was regarded by many of its members, and by the whole of the Masons outside its organisation, as a grievous and wholly improper interference with a landmark purporting to date from time immemorial.*

*Act4 and Act5 rise and face each other. Act5, offers the back of his hand to Act4 who slaps it as if Act5 has been a naughty boy. Both actors return to their seats.*

Director     Let us see how it worked. WM, will you open the lodge in the time of 1760?

*The opening is carried out by the real officers of the lodge, guided as necessary by the Director. House lights on to enable officers to read. WM puts on a top hat and gives three knocks.*

WM *(To JD)* What is the care of a Mason?

JD     To see that his lodge is tyl'd.

WM     Pray do your duty.

*JD goes to the door and knocks. Tyler replies from inside the lodge, having been invited in to witness the entertainment.*

JD     Worshipful, the lodge is tyl'd.

WM     The Junior Deacon's place in the lodge?

JD     At the back of the Senior Warden or at his right hand if he permits it.

WM     Your business?

JD     To carry messages from the Senior to the Junior Warden, so that they may be dispersed around the lodge.

WM *(Still to JD)* The Senior Deacon's place in the lodge?

JD     At the back of the Master, or at his right hand if he permits it.

WM *(To SD)* Your business here?

SD     To carry all messages from the Master to the Senior Warden.

WM *(to SD)* The Junior Warden's place in the lodge?

SD     In the South.

WM *(to JW)* Your business there?

JW     The better to observe the sun at high meridian; to call the men off from work to refreshment and to see that they come on in due time, that the Master may have pleasure and profit thereby.

WM *(to JW)* The Senior Warden's place in the lodge?

JW     In the West.

WM *(to SW)* Your business there?

SW     As the sun sets in the West to close the day, so the senior stands in the West to close the lodge, paying the hirelings their wages and dismissing them from labour.

WM *(to SW)* The Master's place in the lodge?

SW     In the East.

WM     Why is he placed there?

SW     As the sun rises in the East to open the day, so the Master stands in the East to open his lodge to set his men to work.

WM *(Takes off his hat.)* This lodge is open, in the name of God and holy St John, forbidding all cursing and swearing, whispering, and all profane discourse whatsoever, under the no less penalty than what the majority shall think proper, not less than one penny a time, nor more than six pence.

*WM gives three knocks and puts top hat on again. Knocks are echoed by the SW and the JW and by the Tyler - again from inside. Music - an opening ode. No singing - just fade the music under the Narrator as he says ...*

Narrator That was the opening of the lodge from the exposure *Three Distinct Knocks*, published in 1760, some 30 years after Prichard. Let us go on a bit.

Director *(Rises and moves to centre of lodge)* Brethren, some of you have GREEN cards. Hold them up. Good! Please be ready to read your answer in turn. We start with Green card number 1. Back to you WM.

*Actors identify the brethren who have cards. (G1=Green card 1)*

WM After you had received your obligation, what was the first thing that was said to you?

Brother G1 I was asked what I most desir'd.

WM What was your answer?

Brother G2 To be brought to light.

WM Who brought you to light?

Brother G3 The Master and the rest of the brethren.

WM After you had been instructed in the greater and lesser lights, what was then done to you?

Brother G4 The Master took me by the right hand and gave me the grip and word of an enter'd apprentice and said, rise up Brother B\_\_\_\_\_.

WM Have you got this grip and word, Brother?

Brother G5 I have, Worshipful.

*The Director motions Brother G5 to step forward.*

WM Give it to your next Brother.

Narrator *(House lights out.)*

Before you do my Brother, you had better know how the grip was supposed to have been given - by pinching your thumb-nail on your Brother's r h.

*Brother G5 gives the grip to the Director and then sits. The Director, in East, turns and gives the grip in turn to Act1.*

Act1 What's this?

Director The grip of an Enter'd Apprentice.

Act1 Has it got a name?

Director It has.

Act1 Will you give it to me?

Director I'll letter it with you, or halve it.

Act1 I'll halve it with you.

Director Begin.

Act1 No, you begin first.

Director *First syllable of B.*

Act1 *Second syllable of B.*

*The rest of the actors rise and all form a line in the middle of the lodge. Act1, in dumb show, gives grip to Act2, who turns and so on down the line. At the end of the line, Act6 receives the grip and turns to the WM. Party music as if the actors are playing 'pass the parcel.' Actors crouch so that Act6 can see the WM over them.*



Act6 It is right, WM.

*Music stops. Actors 6, 2 & 5 stand line abreast in the West. Others actors sit.*

Director Wait a minute. Wait a minute. Wait a minute. I thought you said that the words were changed around in the 1730's. *Three Distinct Knocks*, you tell us, was published in 1760 but the word B \_\_\_\_ is still there.

Narrator You are right but *Three Distinct Knocks* reflects the practice of the premier Grand Lodge, the one that is said to have changed the words.

Director There was more than one Grand Lodge?

Narrator Yes, the premier Grand Lodge was founded in 1717 but in 1751, another Grand Lodge appeared: the Grand Lodge of the Antients. They maintained they alone kept the original landmarks and caused a split in Masonry lasting more than 50 years. Take a look at the words in another exposure, *Shibboleth* published in 1765.

Act6 Formerly Masons, upon admittance of a new member, used a prayer which the MODERNS omit, and as soon as the oath is taken, proceed to teach the signs, grip and password of an entered apprentice as follows:

Act2 The sign is given by drawing your right hand across your throat edgeways, indicating that an entered apprentice would sooner have his throat cut than reveal the secrets of the Craft.

*All actors rise and give sign facing outwards to the audience.*

Act5 The grip is taking a Brother with your r h and pressing hard with your thumb nail upon his h. The word is whispering in his ear J ...

*Act5 gives this grip to Act2 whispering the word who gives it to Act6 speaking a little louder.) (Director eavesdrops.*

Director *(Turns to Narrator.)* Ah-ha! J ... ! The word has been changed.

Narrator Not so fast! *Shibboleth* describes the workings of the Antients Grand Lodge who claimed to have maintained the original landmarks.

Act1 *(musingly)* ... with the words in the right order?

Act4 So the words today are in the *wrong* order?

Act2 So J ... is the *real* EA word *(chord)*

Act5 and B ... is *really* the FC word? *(chord)*

Narrator Well it seems possible, doesn't it?

Director Is there any more evidence?

Narrator Let us take a trip to France where Freemasonry was very different. In England, Scotland and Ireland, most Masons were middle class people but in France, early Freemasonry was for the aristocracy.

*18th century French music. The actors stand up, put on sashes, hats and swords. The actors parade around the lodge in a showy sort of way. Music stops.*

Director What exposure are we looking at now?

Narrator One written by L'Abbé Gabriel Louis Calabre Perau in 1742, entitled *Le Secret des Francs-Maçons*.

Director *The Secret of the Freemasons?*

Narrator That's right.

*The actors mime the ceremony. The Director directs the dumb show. Music very quietly under the voice.*

The lodge of initiation should consist of several rooms, one of which must be in total darkness.

*Lights out except West.*

It is to this room that the sponsor brings the candidate. They ask him if he feels the necessary desire to be received; he replies

Act4 (as candidate) Oui.

*Actors mime applause for Candidate's command of French. Candidate bows & gives thumbs up. During what follows, actors set up the lodge in West with floor covering and candles. Candles in centre are lit.*

Narrator Then he is deprived of all metal articles such as buckles, buttons, rings, snuff-boxes, etc. There are some lodges where they carry correctness so far as to deprive a man of his clothes if they are ornamented with metal braid. After this, they lay bare his right knee and make him wear his left shoe as a slipper.

Then they put a bandage over his eyes and he is left to his own reflections for about an hour; the room in which he waits is guarded inside and out by Brother Wardens with drawn swords in hand. The sponsor waits with the candidate but does not speak.

The sponsor strikes three times upon the door of the initiation room. *(Tyler knocks three times from inside.)* The Worshipful Grand Master *(WM knocks)* responds from within by three other knocks and orders the door to be opened, that the candidate be allowed to enter in; the Wardens place themselves either side, to conduct him.

*Two actor wardens do so.*

In the centre of the lodge room is a large space on which are drawn two columns, relics of the temple of Solomon; on either side of this space are drawn a capital J and a capital B. In the centre of the space, there are three lighted candles, arranged in the form of a triangle.

*Actors lay out a sheet with the Lodge drawn on it, place the candles in position and take the candidate around three times.*

The candidate is led three times round, and then to the centre of the space where he is made to advance by three steps towards the Worshipful and the Gospel according to St John.

*IPM hurriedly changes the pages of the VSL, the implication being that it was open at the Old Testament as usual. Music stops.*

Director The Grand Master then asks the candidate:

WM *(Uses 'Ello 'Ello comic French accent throughout this section.)* Do you feel a vocation to be received?

Act4 (as candidate) Oui.

WM Let him see the day. He has been deprived of light long enough.

Narrator The brethren then remove the bandage from his eyes and while doing this, they form a circle round him, with drawn swords in their hands, all pointed towards him. *(Actors do so.)* The candidate is then advanced three steps to a stool which stands at the foot of the armchair and on which are displayed a square and compasses. A brother, called the orator, then says:

WM You are about to enter a respectable order, which is much more serious than you may imagine. It admits of nothing contrary to the law or religion or the king nor anything contrary to morals.

Director The candidate is told to rest his knee on the stool and the Worshipful Grand Master says to him:

*Act4 kneels in front of the WM.*

WM *(still using the accent)* Do you promise never to delineate, to write, nor to reveal the secrets of Free-Masons & of Masonry except to a brother inside the lodge and in the presence of the Worshipful Grand Master?

Act4 Oui.

Narrator They next uncover his breast to see that it is not a woman who has presented herself; and although there are some women who are hardly better than men in this respect, they are good enough to be satisfied with a cursory examination.

Director Are you reading from the text?

Narrator Oui - I mean yes. That is what the Abbé wrote! Next they place the point of the compasses to the candidate's left breast. The candidate holds it in his left hand, lays his right hand upon the Gospel and pronounces the oath.

Director Is the oath different from that we have already heard?

Narrator Not really.

Director We'll skip that then. What next?

Narrator When the oath is ended, the candidate kisses the Gospel and the brethren give him the Freemason's apron. They also give him a pair of gloves for himself and a pair of lady's gloves for the Lady he esteems most. This lady may be the candidate's wife or belong to him in some other fashion. They do not worry much about this point. (*Actors freeze.*)

Director Are you sure you are reading from the text?

Narrator Yes, yes! But listen to this. Then they instruct the newly-made Mason in the signs and explain the meaning of the letters drawn in the space on the floor - that is to say:

*Actors positioned around floor cloth, point down at the letter J.*

Act2 The letter J, which represents the word J ... (*chord*)

All J ... ?

Director J ... So maybe the original word was J ...

*Full stage lights on quickly.*

Narrator Virtually all French exposures use J ... What may be further evidence for this comes from the plagiarism that we spoke of earlier. This exposure, *Le secret des Francs-Maçons* was copied word for word into another exposure ...

Act2 *L'Ordre des Francs-Maçons Trahi* - or the *Order of the Freemasons Betrayed* to translate its title ...

Act1 which also has the word J ...

Narrator which was pirated by another rogue into English as ...

Act4 *A Master Key to Freemasonry*

Narrator which in its turn was stolen by an exposure published in 1762 as ...

Act5 *J... and B ...* in that order.

Narrator the rest of which was stolen from the 1760 exposure ...

Act6 *Three Distinct Knocks*

Director ... by which time the EA word has become B ... (*chord*) So we can see the word has changed!

Narrator Yes, it would seem that J ... was the original EA word and that the premier Grand Lodge changed it to B ...

*Actors make exaggerated faces of amazement at the audience, shake heads in disgust then turn and return to their seats.*

Director The problem is whether you can rely upon such a bunch of rogues and rascals who stole most of their work from other writers, while pretending to be exposing the rituals of Freemasonry.

Narrator Exactly.

Director     So Stephen Knight is nothing new - just one of many rogues who sought to make money by exposing and attacking Freemasonry?

Narrator     Not that what he had to say was original. The first attack on Freemasonry that I know of, was published in 1698.

*Music - Beggar's Opera. Actors move around the lodge quickly as if on their way to somewhere in a hurry. Set up soap box. Lots of business and movement. Actors hand out placards to brethren. Actors encourage brethren to shout their slogans. Lots of noise.*

Act4 *(Calls out loudly)* Hear me! Hear me!

*Actors rush about and get some of the brethren to join them shouting on the 'stage'. Music very loud. If possible, the musicians also move about amongst the crowd. They might be busking and some of the actors can give them a coin or two.*

Act4 Hear me! Hear me!

*Act 4 stands on soap box. Act1 becomes his assistant and starts to hand out leaflets to the other actors and brethren in the lodge. Still lots of noise. Actors gather around the soap box and get those brethren on stage to do so as well - but still lots of noise.*

Act4 Hear me! *(Uses narrator's microphone)* Hear me!

*Music quietens, noise subsides. Actors get brethren to sit down again. Lights focus on soap box.*

Act4 All Godly people, in the City of London! Hear me!

*Quiet descends. Music stops.*

Act4 Having thought it needful to warn you of the mischiefs and evils practised in the sight of God by those called Freemasons, I say take care lest their ceremonies and secret swearings take hold of you - and be wary that none cause you to err from Godliness.

Actors     Oooh!

*Act2 pushes Act4 off the soap box and climbs up himself and continues. Threatening music starts.*

Act2 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?

Actors     Aaah! *(Music pauses)*

*Act1 pushes Act4 off the soap box. Music starts again.*

Act1 Knowing how that God observeth privily them that sit in darkness, they shall be smitten and the secrets of their hearts layed bare. Mingle not among this corrupt people lest you be found so at the world's conflagration.

*Music reaches crescendo.*

Actors     Oooh! *(Music stops)*

Act6 *(Calls out to Act1)* How do you know?)

Act1 Well - er - I don't!

Actors     Oh!

*All actors freeze. Full stage lighting.*

Director     I think that sums it up, don't you?

Narrator     Indeed I do.

*Music - a jolly 'catch'. Actors line up facing the East and bow to the WM. They bow to the South, the West and North. The Director gets the WM to rise and take a bow. The Director*

*waves to the officers of the lodge who stand and bow. Music stops. The Director brings forward the musicians for a bow. Actors exit.*