

# Inherit the Wind

By Jerome Lawrence and Robert E. Lee

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## ACT II

### Scene 2 (The Defense)

JUDGE

We shall proceed with the case for the defense. Colonel Drummond.

DRUMMOND

*(Rising)*

Your Honor, I wish to call Dr. Amos D. Keller, head of the Department of Zoology at the University of Chicago.

BRADY

Objection.

*(DRUMMOND turns, startled.)*

DRUMMOND

On what grounds?

BRADY

I wish to inquire what possible relevance the testimony of a Zoo-ology professor can have in this trial.

DRUMMOND

*(Reasonably)*

It has every relevance! My client is on trial for teaching Evolution. Any testimony relating to his alleged infringement of the law must be admitted!

BRADY

Irrelevant, immaterial, inadmissible.

DRUMMOND

*(Sharply)*

Why? If Bertram Cates were accused of murder, would it be irrelevant to call expert witnesses to examine the weapon? Would you rule out testimony that the so-called murder weapon was incapable of firing a bullet?

JUDGE

I fail to grasp the learned counsel's meaning.

DRUMMOND

Oh. *(With exaggerated gestures, as if explaining things to a small child)* Your Honor, the defense wishes to place Dr. Keller on the stand to explain to the gentlemen of the jury exactly what the evolutionary theory is. How can they pass judgment on it if they don't know what it's all about?

BRADY

I hold that the very law we are here to enforce excludes such testimony! The people of this state have made it very clear that they do not want this zoological hogwash slobbered around the schoolrooms! And I refuse to allow these agnostic scientists to employ this courtroom as a sounding board, as a platform from which they can should their heresies into the headlines!

JUDGE

*(After some thoughtful hesitation)*

Colonel Drummond, the court rules that zoology is irrelevant to the case.  
*(The JUDGE flashes his customary mechanical and humorless grin.)*

DRUMMOND

Agnostic scientists! Then I call Dr. Allen Page – *(Staring straight at BRADY)* Deacon of the Congregational Church – and professor of geology and archeology at Oberlin College.

BRADY

*(Drily)*

Objection!

JUDGE

Objection sustained.

*(Again, the meaningless grin.)*

DRUMMOND

*(Astonished)*

In one breath, does the court deny the existence of zoology, geology, and archeology?

JUDGE

We do not deny the existence of these sciences, but they do not relate to this point of law.

DRUMMOND

*(Fiery)*

I call Walter Aaronson, philosopher, anthropologist, author! One of the most brilliant minds in the world today! Objection, Colonel Brady?

BRADY

*(Nodding, smugly)*

Objection.

DRUMMOND

Your Honor! The Defense has brought to Hillsboro – at great expense and inconvenience – six noted scientists! The great thinkers of our time! Their testimony is basic to the defense of my client. For it is my intent to show this court that what Bertram Cates spoke quietly one spring afternoon in the Hillsboro High School is no crime! It is incontrovertible as geometry in every enlightened community of minds!

JUDGE

In *this* community, Colonel Drummond – and in this sovereign state – exactly the opposite is the case. The language of the law is clear, we do not need experts to question the validity of a law that is already on the books.

*(DRUMMOND, for once in his life has hit a legal roadblock.)*

DRUMMOND

*(Scowling)*

In other words, the court rules out any expert testimony on Charles Darwin's *Origin of Species* or *Descent of Man*?

JUDGE

The court so rules.

*(DRUMMOND is flabbergasted. His case is cooked and he knows it. He looks around helplessly.)*

DRUMMOND

*(There's the glint of an idea in his eye.)*

Would the court admit expert testimony regarding a book known as the Holy Bible?

JUDGE

*(Hesitates, turns to BRADY)*

Any objection, Colonel Brady?

BRADY

If the counsel can advance the case of the defendant through the use of the Holy Scriptures, the prosecution will take no exception!

DRUMMOND

Good! (*With relish*) I call to the stand one of the world's foremost experts on the Bible and its teachings – Matthew Harrison Brady!

(*There is an uproar in the courtroom. The JUDGE raps for order.*)

DAVENPORT

Your Honor, this is preposterous!

JUDGE

(*Confused*)

I – well, it's highly unorthodox. I've never known an instance where the defense called the prosecuting attorney as a witness.

(*BRADY rises. Waits for the crowd's reaction to subside.*)

BRADY

Your Honor, this entire trial is unorthodox. If the interests of Right and Justice will be served, I will take the stand.

DAVENPORT

(*Helplessly*)

But Colonel Brady – (*Buzz of awed reaction. The giants are about to meet head-on. The JUDGE raps the gavel again, nervously.*)

JUDGE

(*To BRADY*)

The court will support you if you wish to decline to testify – as a witness against your own case ....

BRADY

(*With conviction*)

Your Honor, I shall not testify against anything. I shall speak out, as I have all my life – on behalf of the Living Truth of the Holy Scriptures!

(*DAVENPORT sits, resigned but nervous.*)

JUDGE

(*To MEEKER, in a nervous whisper*)

Uh – Mr. Meeker, you'd better swear in the witness, please ...

(DRUMMOND moistens his lips in anticipation. BRADY moves to the witness stand in grandiose style. MEEKER holds out a Bible. BRADY puts his left hand on the book, and raises his right hand.)

MEEKER

Do you solemnly swear to tell the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth, so help you God?

BRADY

(Booming)

I do.

MRS. KREBS

And he will!

(BRADY sits, confident and assured. His air is that of a benign and learned mathematician about to be quizzed by a schoolboy on mailers of short division.)

DRUMMOND

Am I correct, sir, in calling you as an authority on the Bible?

BRADY

I believe it is not boastful to say that I have studied the Bible as much as any layman. And I have tried to live according to its precepts.

DRUMMOND

Bully for you. Now I suppose you can quote me chapter and verse straight through the King James Version, can't you?

BRADY

There are many portions of the Holy Bible that I have committed to memory.  
(DRUMMOND crosses to counsel table and picks up a copy of *Darwin*.)

DRUMMOND

I don't suppose you've memorize many passages from the *Origin of Species*.

BRADY

I am not the least interested in the pagan hypotheses of that book.

DRUMMOND

Never read it?

BRADY

Never will.

DRUMMOND

Then how in perdition do you have the gall to whoop up this holy war against something you don't know anything about? How can you be so cocksure that the body of scientific knowledge systematized in the writings of Charles Darwin, in any way, irreconcilable with the spirit of the Book of Genesis?

BRADY

Would you state that question again, please?

DRUMMOND

Let me put it this way. (He flips several pages in the book. On page nineteen of *Origin of Species*, Darwin states –  
(DAVENPORT *leaps up.*)

DAVENPORT

I object to this, Your Honor. Colonel Brady has been called as an authority on the Bible. Now the “gentleman from Chicago” is using this opportunity to read into the record scientific testimony which you, Your Honor, have previously ruled is irrelevant. If he's going to examine Colonel Brady on the Bible, let him stick to the Bible, the Holy Bible, and only the Bible!

(DRUMMOND *cocks an eye at the bench.*)

JUDGE

(*Clears his throat*)

You will confine your questions to the Bible.

(DRUMMOND *slaps shut the volume of Darwin.*)

DRUMMOND

(*Not angrily*)

All right. I get the scent in the wind. (*He tosses the volume of Darwin on the counsel table.*) We'll play in your ball park, Colonel. (*He searches for a copy of the Bible, finally gets MEEKER'S. Without opening it, DRUMMOND scrutinizes the binding from several angles.*) Now, let's get this straight. Let's get it clear. This *is* the book that you're an expert on?

(BRADY *is annoyed at DRUMMOND'S elementary attitude and condescension.*)

BRADY

That is correct.

DRUMMOND

Now tell me. Do you feel that every word that's written in this book should be taken literally?

BRADY

Everything in the Bible should be accepted, exactly as it is given there.

DRUMMOND

*(Leafing through the Bible)*

Now take this place where the whale swallows Jonah. Do you figure that actually happened?

BRADY

The Bible does not say "a whale: it says "a big fish."

DRUMMOND

Matter of fact, it says "a great fish" – but it's pretty much the same thing. What's your feeling about that?

BRADY

I believe in a God who can make a whale and who can make a man and make both do what He pleases!

VOICES

Amen, amen!

DRUMMOND

*(Turning sharply to the clerk)*

I want those "Amens" in the record! *(He wheels back to BRADY)* I recollect a story about Joshua, making the sun stand still. Now as an expert, you tell me that as true as the Jonah business. Right? *(BRADY nods, blandly)* That's a pretty neat trick. You suppose Houdini could do it?

BRADY

I do not question or scoff at the miracles of the lord – as do ye of little faith.

DRUMMOND

Have you ever pondered just what would naturally happen to the earth if the sun stood still?

BRADY

You can testify to that if I get you on the stand.

*(There is laughter.)*

DRUMMOND

If they say that the sun stood still, they must've had a notion that the sun moves around the earth. Think that's the way of things? Or don't you believe the earth moves around the sun?

BRADY

I have faith in the Bible!

DRUMMOND

You don't have much faith in the solar system.

BRADY

*(Doggedly)*

The sun stopped.

DRUMMOND

Good. *(Level and direct.)* Now if what you say actually happened – if Joshua hailed the sun in the sky – that means the earth stopped spinning on its axis; continents toppled over each other, mountains flew out into space. And the earth, arrested in its orbit, shriveled to a cinder and crashed into the sun.

*(Turning)* How come they missed this tidbit of news?

BRADY

They missed it because it didn't happen.

DRUMMOND

It must've happened! According to natural law. Or don't you believe in natural law, Colonel? Would you like to ban Copernicus from the classroom, along with Charles Darwin? Pass a law to wipe out all the scientific development since Joshua? Revelations – period!

BRADY

*(Calmly, as if instructing a child)*

Natural law was born in the mind of the Heavenly Father. He can change it, cancel it, use it as He pleases. It constantly amazes me that you apostles of science, for all your supposed wisdom, fail to grasp this simple fact.

*(DRUMMOND flips a few pages in the Bible.)*

DRUMMOND

Listen to this: Genesis 4:16, "And Cain went out from the presence of the lord, and dwelt in the land of Nod, on the East of Eden. And Cain knew his wife!" Where the hell did she come from?



BRADY

Who?

DRUMMOND

Mrs. Cain. Cain's wife. If, "In the beginning" there were only Adam and Eve, and Cain and Abel, where'd this extra woman spring from? Ever figure that out?

BRADY

*(Cool)*

No, sir. I will leave the agnostics to hunt for her.  
*(Laughter)*

DRUMMOND

Never bothered you?

BRADY

Never bothered me.

DRUMMOND

Never tried to find out?

BRADY

No.

DRUMMOND

Figure somebody pulled off another creation, over in the next county?

BRADY

The Bible satisfies me, it is enough.

DRUMMOND

It frightens me to imagine the state of learning in this world if everyone had your driving curiosity.

*(DRUMMOND is still probing for a weakness in Goliath's armor. He thumbs a few pages further in the Bible.)*

DRUMMOND

The book now goes into a lot of "begats." *(He reads)*

"And Aphraxad begat Salah; and Salah begat Eber" and so on and so on.

These pretty important folks?

BRADY

They are the generations of the holy men and women of the Bible.

DRUMMOND

How did they go about all this “begetting”?

BRADY

What do you mean?

DRUMMOND

I mean, did people “begat” in those days about the same way they get themselves “begat” today?

BRADY

The process is about the same. I don’t think your scientists have improved it any.

*(Laughter)*

DRUMMOND

In other words, these folks were conceived and brought forth through the normal biological function known as sex. *(There is a hush-hush reaction through the court. HOWARD’S mother damps her hands over the boy’s ears, but he wriggles free)* What do you think of sex, Colonel Brady?

BRADY

In what spirit is this question asked?

DRUMMOND

I’m not asking what you think of sex as a father, or as a husband. Or a Presidential candidate. You ‘re up here as an expert on the Bible. What’s the Biblical evaluation of sex?

BRADY

It is considered “Original Sin.”

DRUMMOND

*(With mock amazement)*

And all these holy people got themselves “begat through “Original Sin”? *(BRADY does not answer. He scowls, and shifts his weight in his chair.)* All this sinning make ‘em any less holy?

DAVENPORT

Your Honor, where is this leading us? What does it have to do with the State versus Bertram Cates?

JUDGE

Colonel Drummond, the court must be satisfied that this line of questioning has some bearing on the case.

DRUMMOND

*(Fiery)*

You've ruled out all my witnesses. I must be allowed to examine the one witness you've left me with my own way!

BRADY

*(With dignity)*

Your Honor, I am willing to sit here and endure Mr. Drummond's sneering and his disrespect. For he is pleading the case of the prosecution by his contempt for all that is holy.

DRUMMOND

I object, I object, I object.

BRADY

On what grounds? Is it possible that something is holy to the celebrated agnostic?

DRUMMOND

Yes! *(His voice drops, intensely)* The individual human mind. In a child's power to master the multiplication table there is more sanctity than in all your shouted "Amens!", "Holy, Holies!" and "Hosannahs!" An idea is a greater monument than a cathedral. And the advance of man's knowledge is more of a miracle than any sticks turned to snakes or the parting of the waters! But are we now to halt the march of progress because Mr. Brady frightens us with a fable? *(Turning to the jury, reasonably)* Gentlemen, progress has never been a bargain. You've got to pay for it. Sometimes I think there's a man behind the counter who says, "All right, you can have a telephone; but you'll have to give up privacy, the charm of distance. Madam, you may vote, but at a price; you lose the right to hide behind a powder-puff or a petticoat. Mister, you may conquer the air; but the birds will lose their wonder, and the clouds will smell of gasoline!" *(Thoughtfully, seeming to look beyond the courtroom)* Darwin moved us forward to a hilltop, where we could look back and see the way from which we came. But for this view, this insight, this knowledge, we must abandon our faith in the pleasant poetry of Genesis.

BRADY

We must *not* abandon faith! Faith is the important thing!

DRUMMOND

Then why did God plague us with the power to think? Mr. Brady, why do you deny us the *one* faculty which lifts man above all other creatures on earth: the power to reason? What other merit have we? The elephant is larger, the horse is stronger and swifter, The butterfly more beautiful, the mosquito more prolific, even the simple sponge is more durable (*Wheeling on BRADY*) or does a sponge think?

BRADY

I don't know. I'm a man, not a sponge.

*(There are a few snickers at this; the crowd seems to be slipping away from BRADY and aligning itself more with DRUMMOND.)*

DRUMMOND

Do you think a sponge thinks?

BRADY

If the Lord wishes a sponge to think, it thinks.

DRUMMOND

Does a man have the same privileges that a sponge does?

BRADY

Of course.

DRUMMOND

*(Roaring for the first time: stretching his arm toward CATES)*

This man wishes to be accorded the same privileges as a sponge! He *wishes to think!*

*(There is some applause. The sound of it strikes BRADY exactly as if he had been slapped in the face.)*

BRADY

But your client is wrong! He is deluded! He has lost his way!

DRUMMOND

It's sad we aren't all gifted with your positive knowledge of Right and Wrong, Mr. Brady. (DRUMMOND *strides to one of the uncalled witnesses behind him and takes from him a rock, about the size of a tennis ball.* DRUMMOND *weighs*

*the rock in his hand as he saunters back to BRADY*) How old do you think this rock is?

BRADY

*(Intoning)*

I am more interested in the Rock of Ages, than I am in the Age of Rocks.

*(A couple of die-hard "Amens." DRUMMOND ignores this glib gag.)*

DRUMMOND

Dr. Page of Oberlin College tells me that this rock is at least ten million years old.

BRADY

*(Sarcastically)*

Well, well, Colonel Drummond! You managed to sneak in some of that scientific testimony after all.

*(DRUMMOND opens up the rock, which splits into two halves. He shows it to BRADY.)*

DRUMMOND

Look, Mr. Brady. These are the fossil remains of a pre-historic marine creature, which was found in this very county – and which lived here millions of years ago, when these very mountain ranges were submerged in water.

BRADY

I know. The Bible gives a fine account of the flood. But your professor is a little mixed up on his dates. That rock is not more than six thousand years old.

DRUMMOND

How do you know?

BRADY

A fine Biblical scholar, Bishop Usher, has determined for us the exact date and hour of the Creation. It occurred in the year 4004 B.C.

DRUMMOND

That's Bishop Usher's opinion.

BRADY

It is not an opinion. It is a literal fact, which the good Bishop arrived at through careful computation of the ages of the prophets as set down in the

Old Testament. In fact, he determined that the lord began the Creation on the 23rd of October in the Year 4004 B.C. at – uh, at 9 A.M.!

DRUMMOND

That Eastern Standard Time? (*Laughter*) Or Rocky Mountain Time? (*More laughter*) It wasn't daylight-saving time. was it? Because the Lord didn't make the sun until the fourth day!

BRADY

(*Fidgeting*)

That is correct.

DRUMMOND

(*Sharply*)

The first day. Was it a twenty-four-hour day?

BRADY

The Bible says it was a day.

DRUMMOND

There wasn't any sun. How do you know how long it was?

BRADY

(*Determined*)

The Bible says it was a day.

DRUMMOND

A normal day, a literal day, a twenty-four-hour day?

(*Pause. BRADY is unsure.*)

BRADY

I do not know.

DRUMMOND

What do you think?

BRADY

(*Floundering*)

I do not think about things that ... I do not think about!

DRUMMOND

Do you ever think about things that you do think about?

(*There is some laughter. But it is dampened by the knowledge and awareness throughout the courtroom, that the trap is about to be sprung*)

Isn't it possible that first day was twenty-five hours long? There was no way to measure it, no way to tell! Could it have been twenty-five hours?

*(Pause. The entire courtroom seems to lean forward.)*

BRADY

*(Hesitates – then)*

It is ... possible ...

*(DRUMMOND'S got him. And he knows it! This is the turning point. From here on, the tempo mounts. DRUMMOND is now fully in the driver's seat. He pounds his questions faster and faster.)*

DRUMMOND

Oh. You interpret that the first day recorded in the Book of Genesis could be of indeterminate length.

BRADY

*(Wriggling)*

I mean to state that the day referred to is not necessarily a twenty-four-hour day.

DRUMMOND

It could have been thirty hours! Or a month! Or a year! Or a hundred years!  
*(He brandishes the rock underneath BRADY'S nose)* Or ten million years!

*(DAVENPORT is able to restrain himself no longer. He realizes that DRUMMOND has BRADY in his pocket. Red-faced, he leaps up to protest.)*

DAVENPORT

I protest! This is not only irrelevant, immaterial – it is illegal!

*(There is excited reaction in the courtroom. The JUDGE pounds for order, but the emotional tension will not subside)*

I demand to know the purpose of Mr. Drummond's examination! What is he trying to do?

*(Both BRADY and DRUMMOND crane forward, hurling their answers not at the court, but at each other.)*

BRADY

I'll tell you what he's trying to do! He wants to destroy everybody's belief in the Bible, and in God!

DRUMMOND

You know that's not true. I'm trying to stop you bigots and ignoramuses from controlling the education of the United States! And you know it!

*(Arms out, DAVENPORT pleads to the court, but is unheard. The JUDGE hammers for order.)*

JUDGE

*(Shouting)*

I shall ask the bailiff to clear the court, unless there is order here.

BRADY

How dare you attack the Bible?

DRUMMOND

The Bible is a book. A good book. But it's not the only book.

BRADY

It is the revealed word of the Almighty. God spake to the men who wrote the Bible.

DRUMMOND

And how do you know that God didn't "spake" to Charies Darwin?

BRADY

I know because God tells me to oppose the evil teachings of that man.

DRUMMOND

Oh. God speaks to you.

BRADY

Yes.

DRUMMOND

He tells you exactly what's right and what's wrong?

BRADY

*(Doggedly)*

Yes.

DRUMMOND

And you act accordingly?

BRADY

Yes.



DRUMMOND

So you, Matthew Harrison Brady, through oratory, legislation, or whatever, pass along God's orders to the rest of the world! (*Laughter begins*) Gentlemen, meet the 'Prophet from Nebraska!' "

(BRADY'S oratory is unassailable; but his vanity – exposed by DRUMMOND'S prodding – is only funny. The laughter is painful to BRADY. He starts to answer DRUMMOND, then turns toward the spectators and tries, almost physically, to suppress the amused reaction. This only makes it worse.)

BRADY

(*Almost inarticulate*)

Please – !

DRUMMOND

(*With increasing tempo, closing in*)

Is that the way of things? God tells Brady what is good! To be against Brady is to be against God!

(*More laughter.*)

BRADY

(*Confused*)

No, no! Each man is a free agent –

DRUMMOND

Then what is Bertram Cates doing in the Hillsboro jail?

(*Some applause*) Suppose Mr. Cates had enough influence and lung power to railroad through the State legislature a law that only Darwin should be taught in the schools!

BRADY

Ridiculous, ridiculous! There is only one great Truth in the world –

DRUMMOND

The Gospel according to Brady! God speaks to Brady, and Brady tells the world! Brady, Brady, Brady, Almighty!

(DRUMMOND bows grandly. *The crowd laughs.*)

BRADY

The Lord is my strength –

DRUMMOND

What is a lesser human being – a Cates, or a Darwin – has the audacity to think that God might whisper to him? That an un-Brady thought might still be holy? Must men go to prison because they are at odds with the self-appointed prophet?

*(BRADY is now trembling so that it is impossible for him to speak. He rises, towering above his tormentor – rather like a clumsy, lumbering bear that is baited by an agile dog)*

Extend the Testaments! Let us have a Book of Brady! We shall hex the Pentateuch, and slip you in neatly between Numbers and Deuteronomy!

*(At this, there is another burst of laughter. BRADY is almost in a frenzy.)*

BRADY

*(Reaching for a sympathetic ear, trying to find the loyal audience which has slipped away from him)*

My friends – Your Honor – My Followers – Ladies and Gentlemen –

DRUMMOND

The witness is excused.

BRADY

*(Unheeding)*

All of you know what I stand for! What I believe! I believe, I believe in the truth of the Book of Genesis! *(Beginning to chant)* Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy, Joshua, Judges, Ruth, First Samuel, Second Samuel, First Kings, Second Kings –

DRUMMOND

Your Honor, this completes the testimony. The witness is excused!

BRADY

*(Pounding the air with this fists)*

Isaiah, Jeremiah, Lamentations, Ezekiel, Daniel, Hosea, Joel, Amos, Obadiah –

*(There is confusion in the court. The JUDGE raps.)*

JUDGE

You are excused, Colonel Brady –

BRADY

Jonah, Micah, Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah –

*(BRADY beats his clenched fists in the air with every name. There is a rising counterpoint of reaction from the spectators. Gavel.)*

JUDGE

*(Over the confusion)*

Court is adjourned until ten o'clock tomorrow morning!

*(Gavel. The spectators begin to mill about. A number of them, reporters and curiosity seekers, cluster around DRUMMOND. DAVENPORT follows the JUDGE out.)*

DAVENPORT

Your Honor, I want to speak to you about striking all of this from the record.

*(They go out.)*

BRADY

*(Still erect on the witness stand)*

Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi ...

*(His voice trails off. He sinks, limp and exhausted into the witness chair.*

*MRS. BRADY looks at her husband, worried and distraught. She looks at DRUMMOND with helpless anger. DRUMMOND moves out of the courtroom and most of the crowd goes with him; Reporters cluster light about DRUMMOND, pads and pencils hard at work. BRADY sits, ignored, on the witness chair. MEEKER takes CATES back to the jail. MRS. BRADY goes to her husband, who still sits on the raised witness chair. )*

MRS. BRADY

*(Taking his hand)*

Matt—

*(Brady looks about to see if everyone has left the courtroom, before he speaks.)*

BRADY

Mother. They're laughing at me. Mother!

MRS. BRADY

*(Unconvincingly)*

No, Matt. No, they're not!

BRADY

I can't stand it when they laugh at me!

*(Mrs. Brady steps up onto the raised level of the witness chair. She stands beside and behind her husband, putting her arms around the massive shoulders and cradling his head against her breast.)*

MRS. BRADY

*(Soothing)*

It's all right, baby. It's all right,

*(Mrs. Brady sways gently back and forth , as if rocking her husband to sleep)*

Baby . . .Baby ...

CURTAIN