ARREST THESE MERRY GENTLEMEN

CREATED BY

STEVE MOORE, ROB HOWARD AND DAVID GUTHRIE

Song 1 - A PEACEFUL LITTLE TOWN

chorus
Woah, this is where we live
Woah, in the Judean hills
Woah, you’ll love it here
In the peaceful little town called Bethlehem
In the peaceful little town called Bethlehem

verse
You’ll find our citizens most polite
Where all is calm and all is bright
And we love a good silent night
In the peaceful little town called Bethlehem

We mind our own business everyday
Where our sheep and cattle choose to graze
It’s no wonder we’re here to stay
In the peaceful little town called Bethlehem

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Scene 1

(At the end of “A Peaceful Little Town,” townspeople go about their business in a very orderly manner, very quietly. There is a certain “living in a rut” quality to their movements. Rookie enters and approaches Joe. On Joe’s uniform is a prominent gold badge in the shape of a star.)

ROOKIE: Maybe the snitch was wrong, Joe. Things seem pretty quiet!

JOE: It may be quiet right now, Rookie, but I can smell it … there’s trouble brewing. With all these people here to register for the census, I think that informant was right--some big trouble is about to happen.

ROOKIE: I’ll go look around, boss.

(As Rookie reaches centerstage, all on stage freeze. Spot on Sabbath as the lights dim slightly on the rest.)

JOE: We had gotten a tip that something was gonna happen that night in Bethlehem. Something big. So I headed downtown. That night started out quiet. A silent night. All was calm, all was right. People were sleeping in peace. Heavenly peace. But it didn’t stay that way. Things changed in a hurry.

(Joe turns to look at all the people on stage. They unfreeze, and lights are brought up. They immediately continue their boring routine. Joe walks upstage toward the crowd and into the story, when we hear excited screams from offstage getting closer. Traveler and Seamstress arrive on stage, out of breath. Seamstress speaks with a British accent.)

TRAVELER: They’re coming!

SEAMSTRESS: They saw angels!

ROOKIE: Quiet!

SEAMSTRESS: But … angels!

ROOKIE: Angels are on the way here?!

(A crowd begins to build around the Seamstress and the Traveler.)

TRAVELER: No! Shepherds are on their way!
SEAMSTRESS: But the Shepherds saw angels!

CROWD: (The crowd breaks into a huge, excited hubbub, “We saw angels,” “Angels in Bethlehem,” “Unbelievable,” “It’s incredible!” etc.)

JOE: Quiet! (The crowd calms down. Joe shows his I.D. wallet.) Sergeant Joe Sabbath! And this is my rookie patrolman, Patrolman Rookie!

ROOKIE: (arrogantly) And you’re all under arrest!

JOE: (rolling his eyes at Rookie) Nooo, they’re not! (to the crowd, pointing to the badge on his chest) But you see this star? It means I’m the Peace Officer in this town and it’s up to me to keep things quiet! (in a warning tone now) And if anybody disturbs the peace, I’m gonna run ’em in! So now, what’s going on?!

CROWD: (The hubbub begins again, “We saw angels,” “Angels in Bethlehem,” “Unbelievable,” “It’s incredible!” etc.)

ROOKIE: (after a few seconds) Quiet!

(The crowd is silent again.)

JOE: (fighting to control his temper) Listen! In the last few weeks we have had disturbance after disturbance. First the Census, now this! This has to end! I’m gonna make an example out of someone! Now, just one person, tell me what’s going on here. Please.

SEAMSTRESS: You won’t believe what I just heard! I was coming into town and I met a bunch of shepherds and they were acting strange!

(Joe begins to write on a small pad.)

JOE: Strange?

SEAMSTRESS: Well, they seemed crazy! They were telling everyone!

JOE: Just the facts, ma’am, just the facts.

SEAMSTRESS: Well, they said they saw angels.

ROOKIE: Angels?! (disbelieving) In this day and age?
SEAMSTRESS: That’s what I thought! And then they said the angels told them a *king* was born in Bethlehem tonight!

ROOKIE: A king?! In Bethlehem? They *were* crazy!

SEAMSTRESS: They’re all on their way into town, dozens of them. They’re shouting, screaming, singing, they’re just *loud*! They were very merry gentlemen, they were.

JOE: Merry?

SEAMSTRESS: Happy! Jumping up and down! Excited! You know, merry!

ROOKIE: Were these gentlemen disturbing the peace, ma’am?

SEAMSTRESS: I guess you could say they were! *(She walks back to the crowd and they excitedly murmur about the situation together.)*

JOE: You know what we may have here, don’t you?

ROOKIE: What, Boss?

JOE: We got ourselves a “4-5-6-6-7-3-2-A … Merry Gentlemen with Intent to Celebrate.” I’m gonna throw the book at ’em.

*(music begins to “Arrest These Merry Gentlemen”)*

ROOKIE: Hey, Boss. Do you really think they saw angels?

JOE: I’ve been around the block kid, and I’ve never seen an angel. Nobody’s seen angels in generations! You gotta learn the streets! They’re always up to something, there’s always a reason they make this stuff up. But I’m on to ’em, Rookie. Just you watch.

ROOKIE: You gonna show ’em who’s boss, Boss?

JOE: It’s not about being ’em. The people count on me to keep peace around here. If we let things get out of control, well, things get out of control … fast!

*[Dialog during “Arrest These Merry Gentlemen” begins measure 43]*

*(Joe spies a suspect on the side of the stage.)*
JOE:   (running to him) Hey! You! Thought you’d get away with it, didn’t you?

GOAT NAPPER: What did I do?

JOE: Goat-napping!

GOAT NAPPER: But I didn’t steal any goats!

JOE: I never said you did! But you let your goats sleep on the sidewalk. Goat-napping is illegal in this town! Take him in, Rookie.

(Rookie starts placing handcuffs on the guy, then points to another suspect chewing on a pita.)

ROOKIE: Hey Boss, look at that guy!

JOE: What now?

ROOKIE: Chewing with his mouth open!

JOE: Rookie, the goat napper!

ROOKIE: He’s making a run for it!

(Joe breaks into a run offstage.)

(Dialog during “Arrest These Merry Gentlemen” begins measure 83)

JOE: It’s already been a busy night. Goat-napping, not opening a door for a lady, the girl wearing white after Labor Day … this place is out of control!

ROOKIE: And those shepherds, you think they’re up to no good?

JOE: I’d bet my badge on it. I just don’t trust shepherds.

ROOKIE: Why, boss?

JOE: Well, you know what that curve at the end of the shepherd’s staff is called?

ROOKIE: A crook?

JOE: Ex-actly.
SONG 2: “ARREST THESE MERRY GENTLEMEN”

chorus
What we need is a silent night
A little law and order sounds nice
When all of these census crowds are driving us crazy
What we need is a clean sweep
Less noise so we can get some good sleep
We’re thinking these shepherds are beginning to sound a little shady
Can you tell by now we’re saying
Arrest these merry gentlemen!

bridge
We gotta have a little peace tonight
This chaos has been out of sight
We wish the citizens would be polite
We need an evening that’s calm and bright

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Scene 2

(Joe and Rookie enter, searching.)

ROOKIE: They’re sure taking a long time getting here, Boss. You think they’re really coming?

JOE: Oh, they’re comin’! A band of merry gentlemen is heading this way, disturbing the peace. What we don’t know is why. I say we stake ’em out.

ROOKIE: Boss! I hear something!

(Scoop and Cub stand across the stage, dimly lit.)

CUB: So, the Angel says, “Don’t be afraid!”

SCOOP: Write that down!

ROOKIE: You hear that? They’re talking about angels. Like the shepherds! I think we’ve heard enough! Let’s haul ’em in!!

JOE: Wait!
(Rookie jumps out at the source of the noise, and lights come up on that part of the stage. It’s Scoop the reporter, and her assistant Cub. They’re talking in the shadows. Each has a pad and pen.)

ROOKIE: Aha! You’re under arrest!

CUB: (screams) You almost scared me to death!

ROOKIE: You’re not shepherds!

SCOOP: An amazing observation by the police!

ROOKIE: Who are you and what are you two doing?!

SCOOP: My name’s Scoop! I’m a reporter for the Bethlehem Examiner. This is my cub reporter, Cub.

ROOKIE: Newspaper reporters?

SCOOP: Nothing gets by you coppers. I’m simply stunned.

JOE: I’m Sergeant Joe Sabbath and this is my rookie partner, Rookie. We’re here to keep the peace. We just learned there’s a mob of shepherds inbound to the city to cause havoc!

SCOOP: That’s old news, Sergeant. We’ve been on the story for an hour.

ROOKIE: Well, they’re gonna be surprised when they get into town.

SCOOP: You think you can stop them?!

JOE: Yes I do! (points to his prominent gold star-shaped badge) You see this star? This star says I’m the boss! I have the authority. Do you have a star?

SCOOP: No, I suppose I don’t. But this just might be the biggest story of my career!

JOE: A bunch of shepherds is a big story? This is a sleepy little town!
SCOOP: Shepherds?! You think this is about shepherds? They’re saying that a baby born tonight right here in Bethlehem, is a king!

CUB: You know, as in the long-awaited Messiah? The future King of Judah?

JOE: Judah already has a King … Herod. Only card decks should have more than one king!

SCOOP: But Joe! If this is who the angels said it is, the Savior of the world was born in Bethlehem tonight! That’s the biggest thing that’s ever happened in history!

(Joe reacts with great skepticism.)

(music begins to “Christ Is Born”)

SONG 3: “CHRIST IS BORN”

chorus
Na na na na, Christ is born
The Savior of the world
Na na na na, Christ is born
The Savior of the world

verse 1
Hark! the herald angels sing,
“Glory to the newborn King;
Peace on earth and mercy mild;
God and sinners reconciled.”
Joyful all ye nations rise,
Join the triumph of the skies;
With angelic hosts proclaim,
“Christ is born in Bethlehem!”
Hark! the herald angels sing,
“Glory to the newborn King.”

verse 2
Hail the heav’n-born Prince of Peace!
Hail the Sun of righteousness!
Light and life to all He brings,
Ris’n with healing in His wings.
Mild He lays His glory by,  
Born that man no more may die,  
Born to raise the sons of earth,  
Born to give them second birth.  
Hark! the herald angels sing,  
“Glory to the newborn King.”

bridge  
Come and worship  
Come and worship  
Worship Christ the newborn King

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Scene 3  

(As the song ends, Scoop, Cub, Joe and Rookie are waiting for the shepherds at an intersection down the road toward the fields.)

ROOKIE: Here they come!  

(They all scramble for hiding places. Within a second of them finding hiding places, we hear the shepherds, rowdy and excited about what they have seen.)

SHEPHERDS: (all ad lib “Angels!” “A King!” “Right here in Bethlehem!” etc.)

(Rookie looks at them through a spyglass.)

ROOKIE: Wow, they’re tiny! I always thought Shepherds were bigger.

(Joe looks, and realizes that Rookie has the spyglass backwards. He turns it around.)

JOE: You had the spyglass backwards!

(Rookie looks through the scope correctly.)

ROOKIE: Woah, they’re huge!
JOE: Put that thing down! That’s them alright! I can smell a disturbance a mile away.

SCOOP: That’s not a disturbance, Joe, shepherds just smell that way.

JOE: I thought this disturbance smelled a lot like sheep!

(As the shepherds come into the area, the team discusses their options.)

ROOKIE: Boss! Should I arrest these merry gentlemen!?

JOE: No. That’s just what they’d be expecting us to do. We’re gonna watch them and find out what they’re up to. There they go.

(Joe and Rookie follow the shepherds offstage, leaving Scoop and Cub.)

SCOOP: Quick, Cub! While they’re gone, let’s talk to our “sources.”

CUB: (whistles very loudly)

SCOOP: That was subtle.

(Several sources come out of the bushes. All wear fake noses and glasses. The sources approach Cub and one recites a code phrase.)

SOURCE 1: The dove flies alone in the morning.

CUB: Everybody else left last night.

SCOOP: Is that the right secret code, Cub?

CUB: Sure is, Scoop.

SCOOP: Okay, what do you have for us?

SOURCE 1: Angels spoke to the shepherds!

CUB: We know that!

SOURCE 2: I’ve got something! (unrolls a scroll) The Messiah is supposed to be born in Bethlehem.
CUB: Wow! Right here?!

SCOOP: Seems that way!

SOURCE 3: (holding another scroll) Check this out! The prophet Micah says that the Messiah will be born in Bethlehem!

CUB: The Messiah is supposed to be born here? Now? This is starting to sound pretty amazing!

SOURCE 1: (referring to their scroll) The King will be worshipped by shepherds!

SCOOP: Where’d you get that?

SOURCE 1: Straight from the Psalmist and the Prophet Isaiah. These people know what they’re talking about.

CUB: Shepherds, huh?!

SOURCE 1: And honored by kings.

CUB: Wow! Born in Bethlehem.

SOURCE 1: And worshipped by shepherds and honored by kings!

CUB: So, could it really be, Scoop? Our shepherd story that became an angel story that became a baby story is starting to sound like it could be the Messiah story! Could this baby really be the One?!

(music begins to “He Is the One”)

SONG 4: “HE IS THE ONE”

verse 1
Foretold by prophets of old
A baby will be born in Bethlehem (Micah 5:2)
Descendent of David and heir to the throne (Jeremiah 23:5-6 // Isaiah 9:7)
He is the One, yes, He is the One
chorus
He is the One we’ve waited for
Wonderful Counselor, Prince of Peace
He is the One we’ve waited for
Lord of lords, King of kings
God’s only begotten Son
He is the One

verse 2
Our Savior, sent to redeem
The Promised Messiah, our Savior is He
The virgin will call Him Immanuel (Isaiah 7:14)
Worshipped by shepherds and honored by kings (Psalm 72:9 // Psalm 72:10, 15 // Isaiah 60:3)
He is the One, yes, He is the One

bridge
Rejoice! Rejoice!
Emmanuel shall come to thee
O Israel!

last chorus
He is the One we’ve waited for
Wonderful Counselor, Prince of Peace
He is the One we’ve waited for
Lord of lords, King of kings
God’s only begotten Son
The proof of the Father’s love
He is the One

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Scene 4

(At the conclusion of the song, the shepherds start walking from off stage right to off stage left. As they see the shepherds, Joe, Rookie, Scoop and Cub jump into hiding places. After they pass, the group emerges.)

ROOKIE: We’ve been following them for four hours, boss, and all they’ve done is look around in mangers. You think they really are looking for a baby king?

JOE: You are so new, Rookie. They’re up to no good, and they’re disturbing the whole town. When we finally arrest these merry gentlemen, I’m gonna make an example of ’em.
(As he is speaking, Camel Driver “CD” comes running on stage.)

CD: Hey! Somebody! You gotta hear this!

(Joe steps out in front of him and catches him as he runs.)

ROOKIE: Hey, hey! What’s the rush? And who are you?

CD: (in trucker drawl) Name’s CD. I’m a big-rig driver.

SCOOP: Big-rig?


CUB: Your camel runs on diesel?

CD: No. His name’s Diesel. We had a caravan of big rigs inbound from Baghdad to Jerusalem. I was hauling figs.

ROOKIE: So you were driving a …

JOE: Please don’t say it, Rookie.

ROOKIE: A big fig-rig? Sorry, I couldn’t help myself.

CD: We had the hammer down and needed to get into J-town by dawn. But my rig broke. Blew out a hoof. Didn’t have a spare, so I tried to make it to Bethlehem. Word has it there’s a great Camel Lot here. But I didn’t make it. Limped into an oasis and there they were, and they were on their way to Bethlehem.

JOE: I know, I know. Shepherds.

CD: Shepherds? What shepherds?

ROOKIE: Not shepherds?

CD: You got a copy on me at all, son? I don’t know what shepherds you’re talking about.

SCOOP: Then who’s coming?

CD: Wise men!
SCOOP: *Wise men?!

ROOKIE: *Wise guys?!


CUB: *Magi?

CD: Magi are wise men from countries east of here! They’re educated and know the scriptures! They’re on the road a lot. Well, apparently they believe that some big King has been born somewhere around here! They’re on their way to give Him gifts and worship Him!

CUB: *Where are they?

CD: They’re a long way off. Days. Weeks. They don’t even know *where* He was born!

SCOOP: *Then how do we know they’re coming here?

CD: They’re followin’ a star, and the star is coming this way, night by night! But that’s the problem, they can only travel at night. They’re going to be a while!

JOE: *(sarcastically)* They’re followin’ a *star*? Now I’ve heard everything. You had me scared for a minute! Whew.

ROOKIE: *You don’t believe in the star?

JOE: *(tapping his badge)* The only star I believe in is right here.

ROOKIE: But Boss, they’re coming!

JOE: Sure they are, Rookie. Following a star. I’m the only one around here with a star! Tell you what, when they get here, arrest those Magi gentlemen!

*(CD leaves suspiciously, back toward his camel.)*

ROOKIE: *(confused)* Boss? Why didn’t you believe him?

JOE: Because there are no such things as Magi.

ROOKIE: But he saw them! He said they were …
JOE: You think that driver’s story is believable?

ROOKIE: Semi. Boss, this isn’t like you. Why are you afraid of Magi?

JOE: You think I don’t know what Magi are? They’re powerful men from the orient. They’re obviously working with the shepherds. These guys are smart enough to decide who’s king around here. Wait a minute! I’ve got it! You know where those shepherds are going?

ROOKIE: No. Where?

JOE: I’d bet my badge they’re on their way to rendezvous with those Magi guys! We’ve gotta head ’em off before they meet up with ’em!

(Joe and Rookie run out. As they do, the Magi enter, opposite stage, at the downbeat.)

(music begins to “Look for the Light”)

SONG 5: “LOOK FOR THE LIGHT”

verse 1
The road ahead seemed long  
And the journey they started on  
Began with the faith to take one step  
With the star shining overhead  
They traveled where it led  
Lighting the way to Bethlehem

chorus
Look, look, look for the light  
Shining through the dark, dark, darkest of night  
When your way’s unclear  
No need to fear  
Just look, look, look for the light

verse 2
When you find yourself alone  
Lost and on your own  
Don’t worry the Lord is by your side  
Always faithful He  
Will be the light you need  
To guide you safely through the night
bridge
O star of wonder, star of night
Star with royal beauty bright
Westward leading, still proceeding
Guide us to thy perfect light

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Scene 5

(Shepherds stumble into a hay-baled room, and begin searching. They are over-the-top merry. Comically, they throw hay in the air and boxes around. After several seconds, they realize the manger is empty.)

SHEPHERDS: (ad lib one at a time, “Empty!” “Not here!” “Just another donkey!” etc.)

HERB: Are we all here? Have we lost anybody?
FRANK: I don’t see Shep anywhere!
HERB: We lost Shep? Is he lost? How about everyone else? Frank?
FRANK: Here.
HERB: Vince?
VINCE: Yo.
HERB: Merv?
MERV: Present.
HERB: Okay, so we at least have Frank and Vince and Merv. (said quickly like frankincense and myrrh)
MERV: You know, I don’t mean to tell the angels how to do their job, but you think they could have mentioned which manger we’d find Him in?
VINCE: How many more mangers can there be in this town?
FRANK: I don’t care if there’s a thousand. I’m not going to stop until I find Him.

MERV: (suddenly reflective) Why do you think God told us first?

FRANK: Yeah. Why us? If God is sending the world a king, why did He tell us first?

HERB: Maybe He’s a king for all of us. Remember what the angels said? “Good news of great joy which will be for all the people!” Maybe He’s telling us that shepherds are just as important as kings.

FRANK: I know I’ll never forget what I saw!

VINCE: How could you see anything? You were so scared, you were hiding your face.

FRANK: I was not! I was bowing down!

MERV: And shaking!

FRANK: I was fearless! (Frank continues to search the manger.) There’s one thing you don’t need to worry about, and that’s me worrying! I have nerves of steel.

(As these words leave his mouth, he opens a door, and as he opens the door we are all startled by Shep standing on the other side of the door, almost as if he’s a body. Frank screams.)

SHEPHERDS: Shep!

VINCE: Shep! Where ya been?

SHEP: Searching the other side of the stable!

FRANK: You, uh, startled me.

MERV: Just like tonight with the angels?

HERB: That’s why they said, “Fear not.”

VINCE: Well, I think they said, “Fear not, Frank!”
FRANK: Well, I’ll admit I was afraid then. But now, I feel totally different.

(music begins to “No Fear”)

HERB: You know? After what they told us, what do we have to be afraid of anymore?

SONG 6: “NO FEAR”

turnaround
Ba ba da ba da ba da
Ba ba da ba da ba ba, no fear

verse 1
A lonely night out in the fields
Watching shooting stars appear
Then out of nowhere a blinding light
A voice like thunder spoke the words
You won’t believe all that we heard
Breaking through the silent night

chorus
No fear, no fear, our God is here
Good news, great joy for all
A Baby has been born
Our Savior, Christ the Lord
Our God, our God is here, so no fear

verse 2
We huddled there together afraid
A hundred angels on display
We’ve never seen such a glorious sight
Peace on earth goodwill to men
They sang it over and over again
The song rang out across the night

bridge
Gloria, in excelsis Deo
In excelsis Deo
Gloria, in excelsis Deo
In excelsis Deo

Ba ba da ba da ba da
Ba ba da ba da ba ba
Ba ba da ba da ba da
Ba ba da ba da ba ba, no fear

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Scene 6

(Lights up as Joe and Rookie approach a stable, searching. They bump into Scoop and Cub.)

JOE: (at first being polite, then realizing who it is) How many mangers are there in this town? Oh, excuse me … you again. Still working on your (makes “quotes” signs with his fingers) “Big Story”?

SCOOP: Yes! The baby who’s going to be King! The Messiah!

JOE: Don’t you get it? These shepherds are part of a plot. They’re just looking for a place to meet where no one will find Him. The baby story is just a cover. There’s no baby. There’s no angel, there’s no star. And there’s no king. Okay, look, I’ll show you. Look down here. These are the shepherds, and these are the angels, right?

CUB: The circle is the shepherds?

JOE: No. The “X” is the shepherds, the circle is the angels …

(Joe then moves a rock.)

CUB: And this rock is the manger, right?

ROOKIE: What’s the lizard supposed to be?

JOE: Nothing. It’s just a lizard. It was under the rock. Wait. This isn’t working. (Joe looks around and sees the manger and an idea occurs to him.) Here. Follow me.

(Joe enters the stable, and all follow him. We find the shepherds staring at an angel, all terrified at the sight. Rookie, Scoop and Cub are stunned, but Joe seems oblivious.)

JOE: Okay, first we had the shepherds, right? (He looks at the shepherds) Okay, you guys be the shepherds.

HERB: (looking at Joe like he’s temporarily crazy) Uh … okaaaaay?

(Joe moves all the shepherds into one area of the manger, all together and facing in one direction.)

JOE: So we have the shepherds … here … out in the fields.
ROOKIE: Keeping watch over their flocks by night.

(Joe notices the angel.)

JOE: Exactly. And then, supposedly, an angel of the Lord appeared to them … (Joe grabs the Angel and moves the angel to an appropriate place in front of the shepherds) You be the angel. What’s your name?

GABRIEL: Gabriel.

JOE: Okay, Gabriel’s gonna be our angel. And the angel is here. What’s supposed to have happened next?

SCOOP: The glory of the Lord shone around them.

(The angel is lit spectacularly, and all are stunned except Joe.)

SCOOP: Wow …

(Mary and Joseph appear from behind a hay bale. Mary holds Jesus, swaddled nearly completely. Joe continues, oblivious.)

JOE: (impressed, but still not getting it) Very nice, Gabriel, thanks. And they’re supposed to go looking for some manger or a stable. (looking around and gesturing to the building they are in) Let’s say this is a manger.

SCOOP: Just for argument’s sake.

CUB: We’ll just imagine.

(Joe rapidly looks around and finds a feeding trough filled with hay. He picks it up, moves it between the shepherds and the angel, setting it down, briskly.)

JOE: And in this manger, there’s a little baby in a little bed. We’ll use this. There’s no crib for a bed. It’s as close as we can come. And in this crib, in this manger, in this small city, in this big world, is supposed to be a baby. (Joe approaches Mary and puts his arms out to see if he can hold the baby.) May I hold your baby? I’ll be careful. We need him to be the Messiah for just a little while. We won’t hurt Him.

(Mary confusedly hands baby Jesus to Joe. As the shepherds see the child, they kneel in reverence. Joe gently places the baby into the crib.)
SCOOP: What about the Messiah’s parents?

JOE: (to Joseph and Mary) You two … you be them.

(Joe, with his hands on their shoulders, moves them to a kneeling position at the foot of the crib. We now have in front of us, the entire traditional manger scene.)

JOE: Don’t you see what I’m talking about? We’re supposed to believe that an angel (points to Gabriel) appears to a bunch of shepherds (they all wave comically at everyone else when called out) out in the field, to tell them some baby (pointing at the manger) has been born here, in a manger in Bethlehem, and we’ll find Him with his parents. Don’t you see how this simply couldn’t happen?

(All slowly shake their heads.)

ROOKIE: It looks like it just did.

(Baby Crying SFX)

SCOOP: Isn’t that just like God? We’ve been searching for Him all night, and just when we wanted to give up, we found He had been here all the time. What do you say now, Joe?

CUB: (wondering aloud) You think God really did send a king to earth? A Messiah?

SCOOP: Well, all the evidence seems to say He did.

JOE: I don’t know. I’m just not sure.

(At this moment a gradual glow begins above the manger.)

SCOOP: (points to the star) Look! That’s the star the wise men are following!

JOE: (amazed) There really is a star!

(music begins to “Peace Is Here for You”)

SCOOP: What did you say a star was?

JOE: A sign of authority. It says who’s in charge … who keeps the peace.
(Joe, Rookie, Scoop and Cub all observe the tender moment of the nativity.)

**SONG 7: “PEACE IS HERE FOR YOU”**

**chorus**
Peace is here for you  
Christ has come this silent night  
Peace is here for you  
He is the Way, the Truth, the Life  
Gift of the Father  
The perfect sacrifice  
Bringing peace, heavenly peace for you

**verse 1**
O little town of Bethlehem  
How still we see thee lie  
Above thy deep and dreamless sleep  
The silent stars go by  
Yet in thy dark streets shineth  
The everlasting Light  
The hopes and fears of all the years  
Are met in thee tonight

**verse 2**
For Christ is born of Mary  
And gathered all above  
While mortals sleep, the angels keep  
Their watch of wond’ring love  
O morning stars, together  
Proclaim the holy birth  
And praises sing to God the King  
And peace to men on earth

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**Scene 7**

(Joe stands at the foot of the crib, moved by what he has experienced. As they wait expectantly for Joe’s next move, he stands and faces them.)

**JOE:** You all may be right, but I have a job to do! I’m still the Peace Officer in Bethlehem. (sternly, he points at the Shepherds) You guys! I find that you have caused a disturbance in Bethlehem! I find you guilty of waking people up, of making noise, and being outrageously happy without a license! (then, to Scoop and Cub) You!
SCOOP: Let me guess! Writing a story without authorization! I’m sure my pencil made squeaking marks that disturbed the peace. *And*, I helped the shepherds get their message out!

CUB: I rustled a lot of papers and maybe spoke too loud? My hair made too much noise when I combed it maybe?

JOE: Ex-actly! *(to Mary, Joseph and the Baby)* *And you three!*

ROOKIE: Joe, you gotta give these people a break! Sure, they disturbed the city of Bethlehem, but they also could be changing the world! You said yourself you just want Bethlehem to be peaceful!

JOE: You’re getting soft, Rook! *(to everyone else)* *And the rest of you!*

PERSON 1: Cheering after dark?

PERSON 2: Singing without a license?

PERSON 3: Unauthorized worship?

JOE: Yes, yes and yes. In all my years as the Peace Officer of Bethlehem, I’ve never seen anything like this. I could run you all in!

*(to Rookie, who takes dictation on a small pad with a pencil)*

Rookie, take a message to headquarters. From Sergeant Sabbath, “I am with shepherds reported to have been disturbing the peace. I have found the baby that has caused this alleged disturbance. After thorough investigation, I find that peace has come to Bethlehem tonight! And everyone is being set free! Signed, Joe Sabbath.” *(to the group)* It may not be the quietest place in the world, but it’s the most peaceful place. All is calm, all is right.

CROWD: *(cheers, etc.)*

ROOKIE: *(to Scoop)* Hey! Don’t you have an extra to get out? The presses are stopped. You gotta get the news out!

SCOOP: For once, we have *good* news!
(Scoop runs out as Joe looks sternly at the shepherds staring at him.)

JOE: What are you guys staring at? Aren’t you supposed to be out telling the world that the Savior has come?!

MERV: You’re right! Let’s go!

SHEPHERDS: (The shepherds start out in a boisterous manner, “Let’s go!” “Share the news!” “Get the word out!” etc.)

JOE: Hold on!

(The shepherds all stop in confusion and fear.)

SHEPHERDS: (nervously) Ye-e-e-s-s-s?

JOE: Wait for me and Rookie. We’re coming with you!

(music begins to “Share the News”)

CROWD: (all cheer)

**SONG 8: “SHARE THE NEWS”**

verse 1
Joy to the world the Lord is come
Let earth receive her King
Share the news, share the news
Let every heart prepare Him room
And heaven and nature sing
Share the news, share the news

chorus
Share the news with the restless
Love has come, God’s only Son
There is hope for the hopeless
Share the news with everyone

verse 2
Joy to the earth the Savior reigns
Let men their songs employ
Share the news, share the news
While fields and floods, rocks, hills and plains
Repeat the sounding joy
Share the news, share the news
Bridge
Go, share the news
Over the hills and everywhere
Go, share the news
That Christ is born, Christ is born

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Scene 8

(All freeze as Joe re-enters the stage slowly, calmly.)

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(music begins to “Silent Night Underscore”)

JOE:
Well, it turns out the tip was right. Something big happened in Bethlehem that night, and our “peaceful little town” was never quite the same. Turns out that the little baby was the Savior we’d been waiting for … God’s own Son. He grew up strong and wise, but He was never crowned king in Jerusalem. In fact, (slowly) He was arrested and tried and crucified alongside real criminals. Even though His only “crimes” were healing the sick and the blind, and teaching us about His Father’s kingdom, this innocent man took the penalty for all of us.

I wish I could say that I solved the case as soon as we found the Baby King in the manger, but I could only see part of the story that night. All those years later, when Jesus rose up out of the grave … that’s when the case was finally solved … for good.

(“Silent Night Underscore” ends)

Now, what are you waiting for? Don’t make me run all of you in on a “5-2-2-9-4-B … Failure to Celebrate the Best News Ever!” He’s the One! Let’s get out there and share the news! And … the louder the better!

(music begins to “Arrest These Merry Gentlemen Curtain Calls”)

CROWD: (all cheer)