

The mailman delivers good news and bad news. Topping the “bad news” list for many people who live in Los Angeles is a jury summons. This document tells you that you must respond by mail or phone for possible service on a jury. Many people feel that jury duty is a boring chore and would prefer not doing it.

In fact, court clerks say that the most common question they hear is: Why do I have to serve? The official response is: Jury duty is a responsibility that all qualified citizens must share.

If you are a citizen, if you can read and understand English, if you’re over 18 years old, and if you’re not a felon, you are eligible for jury duty. If you ignore the summons, you might be fined up to \$1,500.

A jury trial might last one day or one month. If you work for the government, this is no problem, because the government will pay you your regular salary while you are on jury duty. However, if you are self-employed, you lose your regular income for that time period. Instead of your regular income, you get \$15 a DAY for sitting on a jury. This is another reason people try to avoid jury duty.

Jack got the bad news yesterday. Even though he was retired and sat around all day watching reruns of old movies, he told his wife Polly he wasn’t going to be a juror. He hated jury duty and he was not going to let the courts interfere with his retirement.

“So how do you think you are going to get out of it?” Polly asked, both amused and irritated. “Are you going to claim that you’re dead? Or are you going to tell them you’ve moved out of the country?”

“No, both of those involve too much paperwork. I’ve got a better idea. It’s a medical excuse. It says here that if you have a physical disability, you can be dismissed.”

“What’s your disability? Your “bad back” doesn’t allow you to sit in a chair watching reruns all

day?”

“No. Something better than that. I’ve got gas. It’ll offend the other jurors and everyone else in the courtroom. They’ll have to open all the windows or issue gas masks.”

“But there’s one problem. You don’t have gas.”

“But I know how to create it. I’ll eat a lot of peanuts and fruit the morning that I go to court. As soon as they get a whiff of my ‘problem,’ they’ll tell me to go home and stay home.”

“That’s a brilliant idea!” Polly said, as she rolled her eyes. At least it would get him out of the house for one day, she thought.