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# The Shaft: The Hadley v. Baxendale Song

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### INTRODUCTION

## THE SHAFT: THE HADLEY V. BAXENDALE SONG

Franklin G. Snyder†

[to the tune of Bob Dylan's Like a Rolling Stone<sup>1</sup>]

Once upon a time, well, things were fine
The mill wheels whine, you'd make a dime
Didn't you?
Grain would come and you'd grind some
And really, chum, you'd soon become
Wealthy, too.
Then one day, the mill shaft broke,
The big smoke stacks stopped belching smoke.
Now the grain, it isn't ground
Now the workers, they just stand around
And you know, you've got to
Get it fixed.

### CHORUS:

How does it feel? Ah, how does it feel? Does it drive you daft? Or make you want to laugh? To see the lawyers' craft Give you the shaft?

So you're up a creek, the shaft's unique
Things are looking bleak, you've got to seek
The Pickfords man.
Because you know, shaft's got to go
To Greenwich, oh, but not go slow
And Pickfords can
Get it there the next day if
It's there by eleven, the young clerk sniffs.
So you get it there by ten.
You sign the contract with your pen,
And he says, "Two pounds, four—
And we've got a deal!"

### **CHORUS**

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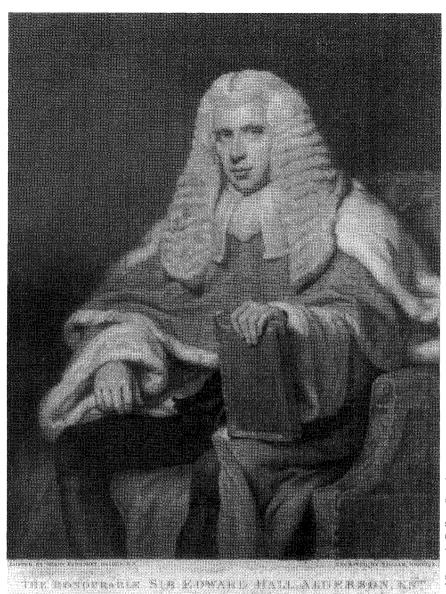
<sup>1.</sup> Bob Dylan, Like a Rolling Stone, Highway 61 Revisited (1965).

So you sit around, stare at the ground
Pet your hound, wait for the sound
Of Pickfords van.
But it don't show, and home you go,
And then, you know, you're full of woe
'Cause Pickfords' man
Says the shaft has gone astray,
"Don't worry, it will turn up any day!"
But the flour mill is closed,
And you know that you are hosed—
You're losing money—
Every day

### **CHORUS**

So you're losing loot, you figure, shoot,
On this dispute you should bring suit
For profits lost
The problem, though, with getting dough
You'll have to show, did Pickfords know
What would be the cost
Of what would happen if the ball were dropped?
Could it foresee that the mill was stopped?
If not, you're out of luck.
With your own losses you'll be stuck.
And next time you better—
Have a spare . . . .

### **CHORUS**



on I it's faller of the Small Cook of becomes the

National Portrait Gallery, London.

