

THE UNKINDEST CUT
A Justin Thyme Mystery

By Bruce Kane

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CAST OF CHARACTERS

JUSTIN THYME - A hard boiled Sam Spade type private eye

EFFIE - Thyme's over developed secretary with the underdeveloped typing skills

NARRATOR - Wears a black suit, white shirt and black tie. Speaks in the clipped tones reminiscent of Rod Serling on the Twilight Zone.

DOLORES - Sexy, well built and hard as nails diva

WILLARD WETSY - Dreamy doctor

NURSE CLAVICLE - The world's sexiest nurse. Breathy voiced, everything she says comes out as a double entendre.

BETSY - Desperately very pregnant nurse

MED EX GUY - Delivers medications for Med Ex.

HELEN - From accounting... Prim in dress and demeanor. Wears her hair in a bun.

ORDERLY #1 - Hospital orderly

ORDERLY #2 - Second hospital orderly

PUBLIC ADDRESS VOICE - Off stage voice.

SETTINGS

THYME'S OFFICE - Generally rundown. A window faces out over a black and white cityscape. The office is furnished with a beat up wooden coat rack, desk and swivel chair.

HOSPITAL WARD - Can be as simple or detailed as you like.

PRODUCTION NOTES

Most of this play is set in a soap opera like hospital, where the main characters speak dramatically in the highly stylized, self important manner popular in television daytime dramas.

On the other hand, the characters of Justin Thyme and Effie effect the hard boiled dialogue popularized in the detective novels and films of the 1940's and 50's.

The Narrator speaks in the clipped style of Rod Serling introducing The Twilight Zone

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"THE UNKINDEST CUT"
A Justin Thyme Mystery

SCENE 1

MUSIC: The sound of a bluesy, film noir saxophone plays in the distance.

*LIGHTS UP on THYME'S OFFICE.
THYME ENTERS, hangs up his trench coat and fedora.*

THYME

(to audience)

I'd just got in from an all night stakeout. I was cold, tired and miserable. The only thing I wanted was a hot drink with a cool blonde.

(yawns)

Or a cool drink with a hot blonde.

(drops into his chair)

As long as it involved a drink and a blonde.

(leans back and yawns)

If push came to shove...

(yawns and begins to drop off
into sleep)

I really... wasn't... that... thirsty.

*Thyme falls asleep. Saxophone
out.*

THYME

(crying out in his sleep)

No... No... No... No...

*The NARRATOR ENTERS downstage and
addresses the audience*

NARRATOR

Presenting for your consideration one Justin Thyme, an operative of the F.B.I. The Fictional Bureau Of Investigation. Mr. Thyme investigates the toughest, dirtiest crimes in English literature. He is by every definition of the word - a fictional detective. In a moment, a woman will walk through that door who will launch our intrepid gumshoe on a journey that will threaten his very manhood.

EFFIE perambulates in.

NARRATOR

(embarrassed and annoyed)

No. Not that woman. Another woman.

EFFIE
(crosses to Thyme)

Boss.

THYME
No... No...

NARRATOR
On this journey Mr. Thyme will be travelling to another dimension - a dimension of sound, a dimension of sight, a dimension of mind. A land of both shadow and substance, of things and ideas.

THYME
(in his sleep)
Put down that knife!

NARRATOR
Heavenly shades of night are falling. It's Twilight Time.
Deep in the night a voice is calling... It's Twilight Time.
(hums the Twilight Zone
theme)
Do do do do. Do do do do. Do do do do.

The Narrator exits.

EFFIE
(shakes Thyme)
Boss...

THYME
(waking up)
Oh... I was having a nightmare. Someone was going to cut off my...

EFFIE
Cut off your what?

THYME
Never mind.

EFFIE
Well, don't you look like crap.

THYME

You wouldn't look so hot either if you'd been standing outside some dame's apartment in the pouring rain trying to light a wet cigarette only to find out the skirt had skipped town with some guy you'd loaned two hundred simoleons, knowing you'd never see the dough or the frail again.

EFFIE

Well, pull yourself together. There's a woman outside wants to see you.

THYME

Tell her I'm outta town... Tell her I died... Tell her...

DOLORES BARGES IN wearing a short tight fitting dress with the word DANGER printed on it.

EFFIE

Mr. Thyme?

The Narrator pops back in.

NARRATOR

(slightly annoyed)

Okay... That's the woman.

Narrator pops back out.

THYME

(to audience)

From the moment she undulated through my door I could see the dame had "danger" written all over her.

(to Effie)

Tell the lady to come right in.

EFFIE

A tower of strength.

DOLORES

I'm Dolores Campbell Robinson O'Hara Jackson Goldfarb...

And I'm Justin Thyme. THYME

And I'm not finished. DOLORES

Sorry. THYME

Where did I leave off? DOLORES

Goldfarb. EFFIE

Thank you. DOLORES

You're welcome EFFIE

Goldfarb Campbell O'Hara DOLORES

I think you covered that already... O'Hara. THYME

There were two of them. DOLORES

Two? EFFIE

Father and son. DOLORES

At the same time? EFFIE

Not exactly. Where was I? DOLORES

THYME

O'Hara... The younger.

DOLORES

Yes.. O'Hara, O'Malley, O'Shaughnesy...

EFFIE

Oh, my.

DOLORES

Johnson and Johnson..

EFFIE

Father and son?

DOLORES

The corporation.

THYME

You married a corporation?

DOLORES

Why not? According to the Supreme Court, corporations are people, too.

EFFIE

That must have been some honeymoon

DOLORES

The sex wasn't much. But the shopping was fantastic.
(to Thyme)

May I continue?

THYME

Knock yourself out.

DOLORES

Kelly, Anderson, Harkness, Mitchell, Turner, Price and Hargrove.

EFFIE

You've certainly been a busy girl.

THYME

What can I do for you Missus Hargrove?

DOLORES

That's Mizz Hargrove. I'm presently between husbands.

EFFIE

There are so many ways to view that.

DOLORES

My last husband died in a tragic backgammon accident.

THYME

A lot of that going around. Now, what can I do for you?

DOLORES

I think someone is trying to kill me?

THYME

What makes you think that?

*Dolores turns around to reveal a
knife sticking out of her back.
She turns back to Thyme.*

EFFIE

Must making sleeping on your back a real challenge.

DOLORES

It makes everything I do on my back a real challenge.

THYME

When did you first notice the shiv?

EFFIE

Immediately following the last board meeting.

WILLARD

Board meeting?

DOLORES

I inherited my late husband's corporation. I'm the CEO, the COO, the CFO and everything else that begins with C.

THYME

You think it was one of your business associates?

DOLORES

It could be anybody Mr. Thyme. You see, when I have to, I'm not above grinding my stilettos into anyone who gets in my way. Sometimes I even find it pleasurable.

THYME

(to audience)

The dame was starting to interest me.

DOLORES

Can you help me Mr. Thyme? I don't want to die. Not just yet anyway. Not when I have so much to live for. Not while I'm still young and restless.

EFFIE

One outta two ain't bad.

DOLORES

I only have one life to live and I intend to keep on living it while I'm bold and beautiful. In the here and the now without some guiding light showing me a path to another world. Find the person who is trying kill me, Mr. Thyme and I'll pay you whatever you want.

THYME

(to audience)

That sounded good. Real good.

DOLORES

(leans over Thyme's desk)

And I'll also see you're handsomely rewarded.

THYME

(to audience)

That sounded even better.

DOLORES

Money is no object, Mr. Thyme. You see, I'm rich. Very rich.

THYME

Just how rich are you?

DOLORES

I'm so rich, I don't know how rich I am.

EFFIE

That's rich.

THYME

(to audience)

I knew I'd have to watch my step around this one. She reminded me of a dame I once knew in Frisco. I'll never forget her. Her name was Velma... Or was it Selma? Anyway, she was cold, mean and vicious. She'd rip your heart out without missing a beat. I was nuts about her.

(to Dolores)

Where can I find you?

DOLORES

At Generic Hospital.

THYME

Going in to have that pig sticker removed?

DOLORES

Hardly, Mr. Thyme. I own the joint.

THYME

How do I get to this Generic Hospital?

DOLORES

Take the last train to Clarksville.

THYME

(to Effie)

Got that canteloupe knees?

EFFIE

Got it.

DOLORES

And I'll meet you at the station.

THYME

The station.

DOLORES

You can be there by four thirty if you make a reservation.

THYME

Is that it?

DOLORES

Yeah, yeah, yeah.

(crosses to door, looks back
over her shoulder
seductively)

Yeah, yeah, yeah.

Dolores exits.

EFFIE

What happened to tell her to get lost? That you were dead?

THYME

What am I supposed to do, cumquat cheeks, turn the dame away in her hour of need because she's got cleavage that makes the Grand Canyon look like the sixth hole at Pebble Beach? Leave her hanging just because she's blessed with a keester you could stage a production of Hamlet on? No. Not Justin Thyme. Not this fictional detective. Sometimes a man's gotta do what a man's gotta do.

EFFIE

(picks up phone)

Hello? Is this the Vatican? I have someone I'd like to nominate for sainthood.

Effie hangs up. Thyme gets up and crosses around his desk.

THYME

Hand me my trench coat, apple hips.

(Effie helps him slip on his
trench coat)

My fedora.

(Effie plops the fedora on
his head)

Now do me a favor and cue my saxophone accompaniment.

*Effie cues the unseen sax player.
We hear the sound of the bluesy
SAXOPHONE. Thyme and Effie exit*

LIGHTS DOWN ON THYME'S OFFICE

SCENE 2

LIGHTS UP on the HOSPITAL SET.

Saxophone out.

*TWO ORDERLIES ENTER talking.
During the exchange Thyme enters
and overhears them.*

ORDERLY #1

Google.

ORDERLY#2

Google?

ORDERLY #1

The word is Dolores is selling the hospital to Google.

ORDERLY#2

Just like that cold hearted witch. She'll make a pile of
dough and we'll be replaced by robots.

ORDERLY #1

Talk is they're gonna slap their name of everything. Google
Med, Google pharmacy, Google I.C.U. Even the medical staff.

ORDERLY#2

The medical staff?

ORDERLY #1

Once they take over, all the doctors will be referred to as Google Docs.

THYME

(reacting to the audience's groans)

And they wonder why people hate hospitals.

ORDERLY #1 walks past Thyme.

THYME

Excuse me. Could you..?

*The Orderly just keeps on going.
Thyme approaches Orderly #2.*

THYME

I was wondering if...

Orderly #2 ignores him and exits.

THYME

(to audience)

When Dolores didn't show up at the train station I hot footed it over here to see what I could find out and what I couldn't find out. Sometimes what you can't find out is more important than what you can find out. Only problem is... you can't find out.

WILLARD WETSY enters. He wears a white hospital jacket with a stethoscope draped around his neck.

THYME

Excuse me. I...

Willard holds Thyme's wrist and checks his watch, taking Thyme's pulse

WILLARD

Mmmmmmmmm.

THYME

If you could just point me...

Willard pulls down Thyme's eyelids and peers into his eyes.

WILLARD

(shakes his head)

Mmmmmmmmm. Mmmmm. Mmmmmmmmm.

THYME

You don't understand. I'm here to....

WILLARD

Open your mouth

(Thyme opens his mouth.
Willard inserts a tongue depressor)

Say 'ahhhhhh."

THYME

Ahhhhh.

WILLARD

Mmmmmmmmmmmmmmm

THYME

I'm not here for...

The bluesy saxophone announces the entrance of NURSE CLAVICLE, who undulates in.

THYME

(to audience)

Before I could tell the Doc what I was there for... my attention took a sudden turn for the nurse.

Saxophone out.

CLAVICLE

(to Thyme)

Well, hello there tall, dark and slightly jaundice.

THYME

The dame was throwin' more curves in my direction than Sandy Koufax the day he struck out eighteen. She told me her name was Clavicle.

CLAVICLE

My name is Clavicle.

THYME

(to audience)

Nurse Clavicle.

CLAVICLE

Nurse Clavicle.

THYME

(to audience)

But, I could call her what her patients called her.

CLAVICLE

But, you can call me what my patients call me.

THYME

(to audience)

Hey, nurse.

CLAVICLE

(brushing up against Thyme)

Not even close.

WILLARD

Nurse Clavicle.

CLAVICLE
(swaying in Willard's
direction)

Yes, Doctor?

WILLARD

Would you take this patient...

THYME

I'm not a...

WILLARD

What did you say your name was?

THYME

I didn't.

WILLARD

Take Mr. I didn't down to examining immediately. See that he gets a complete physical.

CLAVICLE

Head to toe?

WILLARD

Head to toe.

CLAVICLE

Top to bottom?

WILLARD

Top to bottom.

CLAVICLE

And everything in between?

WILLARD

And everything in between.

CLAVICLE

I'll do my best.

THYME

(to audience)

I was feeling better already.

Clavicle takes Thyme's tie, turns her back to him and drapes the tie over her shoulder.

CLAVICLE

If you'll come with me Mr. I didn't, we can begin padding your bill.

(starts to exit, then turns back to Willard)

Will I see you in emergency... Doctor?

WILLARD

Only if there is an emergency, Nurse.

CLAVICLE

Oh, I'm sure I can think of something.

She leads Thyme off. Willard exits in the opposite direction.

PUBLIC ADDRESS VOICE (O.S.)

Attention please. Today's cafeteria special is liver. Our thanks to patient Harry Larson in Room 4D for the donation. Have a speedy recovery, Hank.

Orderly#1 pushes in a hospital bed containing Thyme and Clavicle. She's wearing his fedora and smoking a cigarette.

CLAVICLE

I never really wanted to be a nurse. My dream was to work in waste management.

THYME

(to audience)

Nurse Clavicle had given new meaning to the phrase "complete physical." And the best part was, the whole thing was covered by insurance. Well, not the best part... but close.

Dolores strides in.

DOLORES

Nurse Clavicle. What are you doing down here caring for patients? Why aren't you in the cardiac ward, where you belong, causing heart attacks.

Clavicle returns the fedora to Thyme's head and slides out of bed.

THYME

Thanks for the check up, canteloupe cheeks. I don't think I ever enjoyed a colonoscopy more.

CLAVICLE

My pleasure. We'll have to do it again... real soon.

As Clavicle exits past Dolores she turns and makes a stabbing motion in Dolores's direction

DOLORES

And, Mr. Thyme, what do you think you're doing, lying around here dallying with my nurses when you're supposed to be finding out who's trying to kill me?

THYME

Talk to the docs. They got me pegged as a patient.

DOLORES

A patient? Really? Mmmmmm... Actually that's quite brilliant.

THYME

What're you talkin' about?

DOLORES

As long as the staff thinks you're a patient, they'll ignore you completely. It's the perfect cover.

THYME

I thought so.

DOLORES

Keep up the good work, Thyme. Let me know when you come up with something.

*Dolores exits revealing a second knife sticking out of her back.
Willard enters.*

WILLARD

Well, how are we feeling Mr. Ididnt?

THYME

My name isn't...

WILLARD

Well, that's good to hear. Now, let's take a look at your chart.

(scans Thyme's chart)

Blood is normal... Cholesterol is slightly elevated, but well within range. Oh... that's odd.

THYME

What's odd?

WILLARD

Your heart rate.

THYME

(worried)

What about my heart rate?

WILLARD

It seems to have spiked several times during your exam.

THYME

That wasn't the only thing that spiked.

WILLARD

Let's see what else we have here. Uh huh... Uh huh... Uh huh.

THYME

(nervously)

Did you find somethin' Doc?

WILLARD

Uh huh.

THYME

What?

WILLARD

Nothing I'd worry about.

THYME

Good.

WILLARD

But you? That's another story. It's look we're going to have perform an... ectomy.

Dramatic organ music sting.

THYME

An ectomy?

Dramatic organ music sting

WILLARD

Yes, Mr. I didn't. An... ectomy.

Dramatic organ music sting

THYME

(to audience)

This didn't sound good. I remember my old man once telling me there were three things in life you should never do. One... never buy a used car from a guy named Slim. Two... Never play poker with a guy named Lucky. And, three, never, ever do anything ending in ectomy.

WILLARD

Don't worry, Mr. Ididnt. Ectomy is just a surgical term we doctors use when we're going to remove something from your body.

THYME

Remove something from my body?? What something from my body??

WILLARD

I'm not sure yet. But, we'll come up with something. After all we are a hospital.

Nurse Betsy waddles in looking sixteen months pregnant.

BETSY

Willard, I have to talk to you.

WILLARD

Not now Nurse Betsy. Can't you see I'm with a patient?

THYME

(to Willard)

Could we get back to the remove something...

BETSY

(to Thyme)

Please stay out of this.

(to Willard)

I have an important announcement to make Willard.

WILLARD

I don't have time for announcements. Can't you see this man's very life hangs in the balance?

THYME

(sits up)

Balance??? What balance???

BETSY

(pushing Thyme down)

I told you to stay out of this.

(to Willard)

Willard, I want you to marry me.

WILLARD

You know that's impossible. Dolores would never permit it.

BETSY

Leave my mother out of this.

THYME

(sits up)

Dolores is your..?

WILLARD

(pushes Thyme down)

Besides, I'm old enough to be your...

BETSY

Yes? Old enough to be my...

WILLARD

Brother.

(both Thyme and Betsy give
him a "You've got be
kidding" look)

Okay... Your... father. When you think about it, I could very well be your father.

BETSY

So could half the fortune 500, but that's besides the point. You have to marry me, Willard.

WILLARD

I don't have to do anything of the sort.

THYME

Maybe you two would rather be alone.

BETSY

(to Thyme)

I told you to stay it out of this.

(to Willard)

I wasn't going to say anything, but it seems I have no choice. Willard...

(dramatically)

I'm with child.

Dramatic soap opera organ sting.

WILLARD

(looking around)

I don't see any child.

BETSY

Not with a child. With child. I'm... what's the medical term for it?

THYME

Knocked up?

BETSY

That's it.

WILLARD

You're pregnant???

BETSY

Not so loud. Do you want the whole hospital to know?

WILLARD

How far along are you?

BETSY

I don't know. Six or seven days.

WILLARD

Six or seven days? Are you sure?

BETSY

My home pregnancy test just red lined.

THYME

Red lined? It must have overheated, blown a gasket and thrown a rod.

WILLARD

Aren't you being a little bit premature?

BETSY

Speak for yourself.

WILLARD

Are you saying...?

THYME

That'd be my guess.

WILLARD

(to Thyme)

You stay out of this.

(to Betsy)

That's not possible. I had that taken care of when I signed on as your mother's lawyer slash lover. It was part of the "better safe than sorry" clause in my contract.

THYME

Did you say lawyer?

WILLARD

Yes. Lawyer. I'm her mother's lawyer.

BETSY

But you told me you were a gynecologist.

THYME

Gynecologist???

WILLARD

I always wanted to be a doctor. But when I couldn't get into medical school...

THYME

Couldn't get into..?

BETSY

(to Thyme)

Don't make me give you a shot.

(to Willard)

But if you're not my baby's father...

WILLARD

Yes?

BETSY

It had to be...

WILLARD

Yes?

BETSY

(dramatically)

Ramon.

Dramatic soap opera organ sting

WILLARD

Ramon?

THYME

Ramon?

BETSY

Yes, Ramon.

WILLARD

That's impossible.

BETSY

Why? Did he have a safe but sorry clause too?

WILLARD

Your mother had me fire him a year ago.

BETSY

Okay... Then it was...

WILLARD

Yes?

BETSY

(dramatically)

The hunky pool guy.

Dramatic soap opera organ sting.

WILLARD

Albert?

BETSY

If that's his name.

WILLARD

Couldn't be.

BETSY

Did mother have you fire him, too?

WILLARD

No, he's been servicing the widow Henderson since January.

BETSY

But the widow Henderson doesn't have a pool.

WILLARD

Who said anything about a pool?

THYME

(to audience)

Feel free to provide your own rim shot.

BETSY

Well, if it wasn't Albert.

WILLARD

Yes?

BETSY

Then it had to be...

THYME

Yes?

BETSY
(dramatically)

The MedEx Guy.

Dramatic soap opera music sting.

WILLARD

The MedEx Guy?

THYME

Who's the MedEx Guy?

WILLARD
(to Thyme)

He delivers all of our medical supplies.

BETSY

Among other things.

WILLARD

The Med Ex Guy? Really??? Those guys are in and out in two minutes... Tops.

BETSY
(ruefully)

Then it was definitely the MedEx Guy.

*The MedEx Guy enters carrying
MedEx packages. Betsy sees him.*

BETSY

You!!! I want to talk to you!

*The MedEx Guy turns and rushes
out the way he came in with Betsy
hot on his tail.*

PUBLIC ADDRESS VOICE

Doctor Wetsy.

WILLARD

What now?

PUBLIC ADDRESS VOICE

Nurse Clavicle needs you in emergency.

WILLARD

Again?

PUBLIC ADDRESS VOICE

Again.

WILLARD

(exiting)

How many emergencies can one woman have in a day?

PUBLIC ADDRESS VOICE

Don't forget the chardonnay.

Willard exits. The Orderlies enter and hook Thyme to a Rube Goldberg like machine. Feel free to invent whatever machine you want. While this is going on we hear...

PUBLIC ADDRESS VOICE

Doctor Femur, wanted in surgery... Dr. Ulna wanted in X-ray. Doctor Pectoral... wanted in seven states.

ORDERLY #1

Didya hear? The doctors took a vote on who they thought would be the first one to remove Dolores's spleen without anesthesia.

ORDERLY#2

Who won?

ORDERLY #1

It was a tie. They all voted for themselves.

ORDERLY#2

Here she comes.

ORDERLY #1

Minus her broom.

*Dolores returns. The Orderlies
quickly exit.*

DOLORES

Well, Mr. Thyme?

THYME

I'm working on it.

DOLORES

Well, you'd better hurry up. I'm a very busy woman. I have several million dollar deals in the works. Being murdered could cost me a fortune. The clock is ticking, Mr. Thyme. The clock is ticking.

THYME

You're telling me. Your Docs are getting ready to strip me for parts.

*The Med Ex Guy comes running
through, chased by Betsy.*

BETSY

Wait, I want to talk...

(spots Dolores)

Mother.

DOLORES

I told you never to call me that. Do you think I want people to know I am actually capable of supporting human life?

BETSY

I am going to marry Willard.

THYME

What about the Med Ex Guy?

BETSY

(to Thyme)

Don't make me give you a shot?

DOLORES

Don't be silly. Willard will never marry you.

BETSY

But I love him and he loves me.

DOLORES

Willard will love who I tell him to love... when it suits my needs. And it certainly won't be you, you silly girl.

BETSY

You can't stop me. I am determined to be Mrs. Willard Wetsy.

Dolores takes Betsy's arm and lead her downstage for a woman to woman talk.

DOLORES

Mrs. Willard Wetsy. That's one way to look at it. But there is another. Think about this, my darling Betsy. Do you really want to go through life known as...

(signals the audience to fill
in the blank)

AUDIENCE

Betsy Wetsy.

*As the realization sweeps over
Betsy...*

BETSY

Oh.

DOLORES

Now, if anybody wants me, I'll be in my office pulling the wings off of flies.

THYME

Is that supposed to be some kind of metaphor?

DOLORES

What gave you that idea?

Dolores exits revealing a third knife now sticking out of her back.

BETSY

Mother or not, someday I am going....

Betsy makes a knife stabbing motion.

The Med Ex Guy enters.

BETSY

You!!! Stop!!!

The Med Ex takes off. Betsy starts after him then stops.

BETSY

Oh God, I gotta pee.

She hurries off trying to hold her knees together. Willard returns.

WILLARD

Well, how are we Mr. I Didnt?

THYME

Not as good as you, apparently.

WILLARD

Excuse me?

THYME

You're coat's on backwards.

Willard takes his coat off, turns it right side out and puts it back on as HELEN, a prim looking hospital administrator in a tailored jacket, skirt and glasses... enters.

HELEN

Doctor Wetsy, I have to talk to you.

THYME

Who are you?

HELEN

Helen from accounting.

THYME

(to Willard)

Touched all the bases, did ya' Doc?

WILLARD

Not now Helen. Can't you see this patient needs my full attention?

HELEN

I work in accounting. All terminal patients look alike to me.

THYME

(sits up)

Terminal??? What do you know that I...

HELEN

(pushing Thyme down)

I've put it off long enough Doctor. I want to know when you are going to marry me.

WILLARD

Marry you? That's out of the question. You're administration. I'm medical. You know Dolores expressly prohibits mixed marriages.

HELEN

Well, if you poisoned her like you promised.

THYME

(sits up)

Poisoned her?

WILLARD

(pushing Thyme down)

You know I never meant that. It's just something guys say in the throes of passion. Like "I love you."

HELEN

Speaking of throes of passion. There is something you need to know.

WILLARD

Know? What?

HELEN

I'm...

(dramatically)

.. carrying.

Dramatic soap opera organ sting.

WILLARD

You're packing a gun?

HELEN

No, I'm not packing a gun... I'm...

Takes a very long pause.

THYME

(to audience)

This is what's known in the theatre as the "pregnant" pause.

WILLARD

Are you saying what I think you're saying?

THYME

(to audience)

Quick on the uptake, isn't he?

WILLARD

But's that's impossible.

HELEN

Why is that so impossible?

WILLARD

Well, for one thing, when I signed on as...

THYME

(to Willard)

Allow me.

(to Helen)

Y'see when Dr. Hot Pants here signed on as Dolores's shyster slash boy toy, she had him...

Makes a scissors motion with two fingers.

HELEN

You're a shyster?

WILLARD

I prefer attorney at law.

HELEN

You told me you were a podiatrist..

THYME

(to Willard)

Podiatrist? You're kidding. The was your opening line? I'm a podiatrist?

(Willard shrugs; Thyme turns back to Helen)

And you found that irresistible?

(Helen shrugs)

HELEN
Well, if it wasn't you...

WILLARD
Yes?

HELEN
It had to be...

THYME
Yes?

HELEN
(dramatically)
Kevin.

Dramatic soap opera organ sting.

WILLARD
Kevin?

THYME
Not Kevin.

HELEN
Yes, Kevin.

WILLARD
But, that's not possible. Dolores shipped him out a year ago when she caught him taking second helpings in the cafeteria.

HELEN
Well, if it wasn't Kevin... It had to be...

WILLARD
Yes?

HELEN
(dramatically)
Pierre.

Dramatic soap opera organ sting.

THYME

Who the hell is Pierre?

WILLARD

Dolores's French chef. She fired him ten months ago.

THYME

For taking second helpings in the cafeteria?

WILLARD

For taking second helpings in the secretarial pool.

HELEN

Well... If it wasn't Kevin... And it wasn't Pierre... it had to be...

WILLARD

Yes?

HELEN

(dramatically)

Phil.

Dramatic soap opera organ sting.

THYME

Phil?

HELEN

Or John... Maybe David... Could've been Bob... He was cute...
Or Harry... Or...

(points)

...that guy in the front row. Or...

The Med Ex Guy runs in.

THYME

Right on cue.

*Betsy enters chasing the Med Ex
Guy.*

HELEN

You!!! I want to talk to you!

BETSY

Get in line, sweetheart.

*They both chase the Med Ex Guy
off stage.*

THYME

Close call, Doc. Tell me something. Did you really have a
"better safe than sorry" clause in your contract?

WILLARD

I'm going to have to invoke attorney-client privilege on that
one, Mr. Ididnt.

*Willard exits. The Orderlies
return with more Rube Goldberg
devices they begin hooking up to
Thyme. Over this we hear...*

PUBLIC ADDRESS VOICE

Your attention please. Will the patient with the scalpel sewn
into his chest cavity this morning please return it to the
O.R... Immediately. Don't make us come and get it.

ORDERLY #1

I heard the nurses got together and raised over a thousand
dollars.

ORDERLY#2

For charity?

ORDERLY #1

For a hitman.

They exit as Willard returns.

WILLARD

Mr. Ididnt. I have some unfortunate news for you.

THYME

What now?

WILLARD

Your insurance won't be covering your ectomy.

THYME

Why the hell not?

WILLARD

It's considered a pre-existing condition.

THYME

What pre-existing condition?

WILLARD

Whatever it is we're going to remove.

THYME

How can that be? I was healthy as a horse when I walked into this joint.

WILLARD

Whatever it is, you had it before you got here and according to the insurance company, anything you had before you walked into the hospital is a pre-existing condition.

THYME

That's the craziest...

*The bluesy saxophone announces
the pulsating return of Nurse
Clavicle*

THYME

Well, hello there apple knees.

CLAVICLE

Well, hello there yourself.

WILLARD

Is there something you need, Nurse Clavicle?

CLAVICLE

Well...

WILLARD

Let me rephrase that.

CLAVICLE

There is something I have to tell you, Doctor.

WILLARD

Can't it wait? Mr. I didn't, here, is running out of time.

THYME

(sits up)

Running out of..?

CLAVICLE

(pushing Thyme down)

I'm afraid it can't wait, Doctor. You see...

WILLARD

Please, not another emergency. I don't think I have the strength.

THYME

I'm not doing anything.

CLAVICLE

It's not another emergency. At least not that kind of emergency.

WILLARD

Then, what is it?

CLAVICLE

I just got a text from Amazon about a sale on some darling maternity blouses.

WILLARD

Does that mean you're..?

THYME

(incredulous)

And you found out from Amazon?

CLAVICLE

Oh yes. Amazon knows everything.

WILLARD

But, why are you telling me this?

THYME

Silly question, Doc.

CLAVICLE

As the father...

WILLARD

Me? The father? That's impossible.

CLAVICLE

Why is that impossible?

WILLARD

When I signed on as...

THYME

(to Willard)

Why don't I save us all a lot of time and trouble here.

(to Clavicle)

You and Doctor Libido here have for sometime now been making... to quote the Bard.. the beast with two backs.

CLAVICLE

Beast with two backs?

THYME

Yeah, the beast with two backs. Y'now two person pushups. Getting busy. Getting down. Caulking the tub. Glazing the donut. Completing the puzzle. Sweeping the chimney. Driving Miss Daisy.

CLAVICLE

Ohhhhh.... you mean rotating the tires. Climbing the ladder. Checking the oil. Searching for loose change. Hanging twenty.

THYME

Well, yeah, if you're gonna graphic about it. You're convinced that he's responsible for your present condition. You want him to put a ring on your fourth finger and make an honest woman out of you. Feel free to stop me anytime.

(she doesn't)

Okay then... Contrary to what you may think, it wasn't Doctor Erotic here who slipped one past the goalie. His guys haven't been swimming upstream to spawn since Mother Superior put them in purgatory with the unkindest cut of all. Now, I don't know what he told you he was... Gynecologist? Podiatrist?

CLAVICLE

Urologist.

THYME

(to Willard)

Urologist??? Why would you tell her you were a urologist? Why would you tell anyone you were a urologist?

(Willard shrugs; Thyme turns
back to Helen)

The point is... it wasn't him and it wasn't Ramon, or the hunky pool guy or Kevin or Lucky Pierre or even that guy in the front row.

CLAVICLE

I guess that leaves only one person.

*The Med Ex Guy comes running
through chased by Betsy and
Helen.*

CLAVICLE

Wait!!! I want to talk to you!

HELEN

Take a number.

Clavicle joins the chase.

THYME

How'd I do?

WILLARD

Best summation I've ever heard. You missed your calling Mr. I didn't. You would have made a very successful shyster.

The Orderlies enter and begin to move Thyme's bed.

THYME

Where are we going? Where are you taking me?

WILLARD

It's time for your ectomy. Mr. I didn't.

THYME

Ectomy?

Dramatic organ chord.

WILLARD

Yes... ectomy.

Dramatic organ chord.

THYME

There's something I gotta tell ya, Doc.

The Med Ex Guy comes running in pursued by Betsy, Clavicle and Helen.

PUBLIC ADDRESS VOICE

May I have your attention please.

Everyone stops in place to listen

PUBLIC ADDRESS VOICE

It is my sad duty to inform you that at 3:45 this afternoon Dolores Campbell Robinson O'Hara Jackson Goldfarb O'Hara O'Malley O'Shaughnesy Johnson and Johnson Kelly Anderson Harkness Mitchell Turner Price Hargrove was found dead.

THYME

Dead?

PUBLIC ADDRESS VOICE

Yes, dead. Bit the big one. Gave up the ghost. Cashed in her chips. Circled the drain. Assumed room temperature. Kicked the oxygen habit.

THYME

But how?

PUBLIC ADDRESS VOICE

The police suspect natural causes.

THYME

But what about the knives in her back?

PUBLIC ADDRESS VOICE

Funny you should ask. The Coroner believes the knives found imbedded between Dolores's third and fourth ribs played no part in her death but were simply pre-existing conditions.

CLAVICLE

Willard, do you know what this means?

WILLARD

Yes. Dolores is dead.

CLAVICLE

Isn't it wonderful?

WILLARD

Wonderful?

CLAVICLE

Now you're free to marry me.

HELEN

Marry you? Why would he want to marry you when he can marry me?

CLAVICLE

(strikes a sexy pose)

And what can you do for him, that I can't do standing still?

THYME

(to Helen)

It looks like the ball is in your court.

HELEN

Can you get him a refund on his taxes?

THYME

Nice return.

BETSY

Why would he want to marry either of you when I can give him everything.

CLAVICLE

There's just one problem, honey. You don't have anything.

Clavicle and Helen exchange high fives.

THYME

Great volley.

BETSY

Oh yeah? How about ten million dollars?

THYME

Game, set, match.

BETSY

Well, Willard who is it going to be?

THYME

Hold on... Nobody is marrying anyone. Dolores didn't die of natural causes.

WILLARD

She didn't?

THYME

No, she didn't. Dolores was...

(pregnant pause)

... zoztzed.

Dramatic organ music sting.

ORDERLIES #1 & 2

Zoztzed?

Organ sting.

WILLARD

Zoztzed?

Organ Sting

CLAVICLE

Zoztzed?

Organ sting

HELEN

Zoztzed?

Organ sting.

BETSY

Zoztzed?

Organ sting

THYME

Yes. Zoztzed. Dusted, ghosted, offed, popped, smoked, wasted... whacked.

WILLARD

By all of that... could you possibly mean murdered?

THYME

That's one way to put it. Less colorful, but you could say that.

WILLARD

Why would you think Dolores was murdered Mr. I didn't,

THYME

First of all, my name isn't I didn't.

WILLARD

It isn't I didn't?

THYME

It isn't I didn't.

WILLARD

Then why did you tell me it was I didn't?

THYME

I didn't.

WILLARD

Yes, you did.

THYME

No, I didn't.

WILLARD

Did

THYME

Didn't.

WILLARD

Did.

THYME

Thyme.

WILLARD

(checks his watch)

Four thirty.

THYME

No, no, no. My name is Thyme. I'm a detective. Dolores hired me to find out who was trying to murder her.

BETSY

Mother thought someone was trying to murder her?

THYME

You seem surprised.

BETSY

No, not really.

THYME

We didn't tell anyone who I was, so we could keep the whole thing under wraps. Didn't want the perp to know we were looking for him... or her. At least that's what I wanted Dolores to think.

WILLARD

I don't understand.

THYME

Dolores told me her last husband died in a tragic backgammon accident.

WILLARD

That's what she told everybody.

THYME

I never bought it for a minute.

WILLARD

You suspect Dolores of foul play?

THYME

In my experience, when a mug dies in a backgammon accident, nine times out of ten it's a dame that's rollin' the dice.

HELEN

But what about those knives in her back?

THYME

The old stab yourself in the back trick. A device to throw me off the track. Seen it a hundred times.

WILLARD

But that still leaves the question of who zotzed Dolores.

THYME

I did a little nosin' around while I was layin' in this hospital bed to see which one of you fit the three M's.

BETSY

Three M's?

HELEN

What three M's?

THYME

Motive... Method... and...

HELEN

And what?

THYME

Uh... Moppportunity.

WILLARD

And what did you find?

THYME

Only one of you hit the trifecta. And it was that person who murdered Dolores Campbell Robinson O'Hara Jackson Goldfarb O'Hara O'Malley O'Shaughnesy Johnson and Johnson Kelly Anderson Harkness Mitchell Turner Price Hargrove.

WILLARD

Well, who was it?

PUBLIC ADDRESS VOICE

(dramatically)

Yes. Who was it? Who whacked Dolores Campbell Robinson O'Hara Jackson Goldfarb O'Hara...

*Annoyed, they all start mumbling
"Yeah, yeah, yeah." "We know... We
know... etc"*

PUBLIC ADDRESS VOICE

Was it Orderly Number One?

Dramatic Organ Music sting.

*The Orderlies point at each other
trying to figure out which one is
Orderly Number One. They finally
decide. Orderly #1 strikes a
worried pose.*

PUBLIC ADDRESS VOICE

Or Orderly Number Two?

Dramatic Organ Music sting.

*Orderly Number Two strikes a
fearful pose.*

PUBLIC ADDRESS VOICE

Or, was it Betsy, the neglected daughter with the weak
bladder?

Dramatic Organ Music sting.

*Betsy strikes a pose holding her
knees together.*

PUBLIC ADDRESS VOICE

How about Nurse Clavicle?

Dramatic Organ Music sting.

PUBLIC ADDRESS VOICE

(admiringly)

How about Nurse Clavicle!

*Nurse Clavicle strikes a sexy,
seductive pose.*

PUBLIC ADDRESS VOICE

Or, could it have been Helen from accounting with a bun in her hair and another in the oven?

Dramatic Organ Music sting.

*Helen peers disapprovingly over
her glasses..*

PUBLIC ADDRESS VOICE

Could it be Willard, the only would-be urologist who could sue himself for malpractice?

Dramatic Organ Music sting.

Willard strikes a handsome pose.

PUBLIC ADDRESS VOICE

Or....

(pause)

Was it the guy in the front row?

Dramatic organ sting.

*Everybody enthusiastically nods
in agreement.*

PUBLIC ADDRESS VOICE

For the answer to this and other important questions be sure to return for the next dramatic episode of Generic Hospital when we hear Willard say...

WILLARD

Gentlemen, if you'll strap Mister Thyme to the bed we can begin his ectomy.

The Orderlies strap Thyme to the bed.

THYME

No... No... Not an ectomy!

WILLARD

Relax Mr. Thyme. You'll be happy to know the ectomy we gave chosen for you is... Drum roll please.

The Orderlies pound out a drum roll on Thyme's bed.

WILLARD

A... "vas!".

Game Show type organ sting.

As Willard and the Orderlies start to wheel Thyme off stage.

THYME

(confused)

A vas?

Thyme, Willard and The Orderlies exit.

THYME (OFFSTAGE)

A vas!!!!????

BETSY

(to Med Ex Guy)

Hey, maybe you should get one of those.

The Med Ex Guy laughs, puts his arms around Betsy, Clavicle and Helen. They all exit laughing. After a moment or two we hear...

THYME (OFFSTAGE)

Nooooooooooooo!!!!!!!!!!!!

BLACKOUT

*LIGHTS UP on Thyme's office.
Thyme is slumped over his desk,
sound asleep, crying out.*

THYME
(having a nightmare)

No... No... No....

*Effie undulates in, crosses to
Thyme and...*

Boss... Boss...

EFFIE

No... No...

THYME

Boss...

EFFIE
(shakes him)

THYME
(in his sleep)
Put down that knife.

Boss...

THYME
(realizing where he is)

Oh... I was having a nightmare. Someone was going to cut off
my...

Cut off your what?

EFFIE

Never mind.

THYME

EFFIE

Well, pull yourself together. There's a woman outside wants to see you.

THYME

Tell her I'm outta town... Tell her I died... Tell her...

Dolores enters just as she did at the beginning of the play.

DOLORES

Mr. Thyme?

They all turn to the audience and freeze as The Narrator pops in.

NARRATOR

Do do do do... Do do do do. Do do do do... Do do do do.

LIGHTS DOWN

THE END