

BLACK BLOOD

Written for the stage – a comedy

By Jz Zillart

**Produced for The Dead Actors
Of London**

18/8/2024

1st Edition

ISBN: 978-1-4452-0967-8

**Dedicated to All Theatres in the World
and the Luvvies**

Chapter 1

Black Blood

The body was laid out in the hotel room. Dead. Lifeless, clammy. The bedside lamp showing the rigor mortis that had set in over the two days it had laid there still with the changing light of day come night when the two detectives arrived. A book laid open entitled 'The Will to Die'. No one would have ever comprehended who this person was and what he represented.

The 17th floor had a spectacular view of the newly open planned city. The perfect and functionless, infertile trees were precisely groomed. An advert flicked on the television still playing Netflix about the bees and 'no bees, no seed'. All way too late in the dystopian.

These men lived in a world where every gram of food was precisely weighed out. There was nothing unaccounted for, nothing not recycled or reusable. The world had seemingly years earlier given up on man. It had turned out that all the doomsday people were right. The end was neigh, antibiotics no longer and suddenly simply did not work. Disease meant death.

The detectives had seen many cases like this. What caught their attention was the title of the book 'The Will to Die'. Only a pair of repressed detectives would read such a title as to be taken seriously. Later they would discover what was in that book.

On closer inspection they noticed that the insert of the book was missing. It was just a cover. A dust jacket, pristine and new. They touched nothing.

'Sam, call the forensics, I don't like this' he was holding a metal thing, at first thinking what would a pipe be doing here on a sofa, in a room with a body like this?' He then observed the dust on the arm of the chair, but it did not seem like two days' worth. Derek, speculating smiled. It was years before they had been given a proper murder mystery.

They were real case crackers in their time and being that they had humiliated most of the Cyber Crime Unit by arresting their friends, they were shelved. The facts were the facts for them now. One last coincidental case where they would be back together to find the criminal behind this supposed murder.

“Drink?” said Derek smugly, “Same place as last time?” and before they knew it, they were there in Bar 67, downtown with onlookers and journalists surrounding them as it was then. The whole cast had shown up knowing the good time they were about to have.

The barman, a classical AL, called Al stepped up to the bar to deliver the line to the two who were nearly not containing their vibrations. His half-folded apron double folded and readied, sleeves long and in the starch white, he had changed in a perfect rush to receive the two, most famous detectives. “Raffle book sirs?” in chorus the bar responded, “over that dead body”. As if without prompt the who bar raised a glass and held it as Al pored two large bourbons from a specially adapted double glass pourer, hanging on the detectives reply. It was pensive, they held the moment lingering and declared

“Gentlefolk, we have the cases” and together put their brief cases on the bar. The leather faithfully thudding the solid mahogany as once it did. Condensation slid down the beer pumps in sympathy with the connection it had just replenished after all those years.

This was a performance of a lifetime and not seen in over ten years. The glasses were undrunk by the whole bar aside Derek and Sam who knocked them back. The bar cheered, swagged their drinks and silence fell. The click-click of synchronized case opening, and the well-greased hinges gave no clue as to the contents. There was some shuffling and others stopping it as everyone went to look. The case was full of evidence they had taken, rather irresponsibly.

Al adjusted the lights; it was all on them now. The cases pockets gave nothing away, high above the audiences eyeline, one could have thought they were a pair of successful magicians about to commit to the greatest illusion on earth.

Derek produced a Raffle book and from the other case a fishbowl. "An assistant please". Al knew his lines and had a beautifully groomed journalist assistant to stand on the bar. A young intern from the Washington Times looking for his break. This might be it. Al carried on in his booming voice.

"Gentle folk we have a Raffle book, this young man is going to walk about and if you want in on being part of the investigation, for your safety and security you need a dollar to sign and to sign both parts of the raffle tickets. You will keep one and the other will remain in this fishbowl behind the bar". The whole room erupted, the young man leapt of the bar with the Sharpie he was handed by someone in the audience and started about this sacred insurance policy.

The cases were wide open and so was the minds of this murder cast and crew who had never not got their man. They could not see inside much more than the open lids and the flaps on the inside of the cases. Everything seemed covered. Al announced that those without a ticket were to drink up and leave as he brandished his keys. The most of them remained and the doors were closed behind the last leaving witness.

Chapter 2

Cold Cases Warmed Up

The barmaid had by now prepared the custom drink. This was hot water, whiskey, lemon served in 250 cl classes with a sugar dip rolled onto the sip of the glass. It was on the house, every glass matching and equally poured. Candles lit on the tables, the buzz of electric bothered Derek when contemplating. Sam, he was a real romantic with crime, and this suited the pair.

The quite chattering fell to a natural silence. Sam indicated all to stand for the oath. Sam, a master of light, had mirrored the oath off a candle through a plate cut, to reflect it on the wall. It read like this.

“We solemnly swear, that all we say or learn or hear, we will not discuss, ‘over that dead body’ outside of this room.”

These two were famous for their presentations and ability to win community confidence and it was easy to see why. They had long worked with the heads of many places but most unusually with the Head of Intelligence.

This coincidental case was partly for reengagement of dying skills and partly for the conscious consolidation of the world’s most deadly pandemic. They had been unsatisfied with mediocre pandemic explanations and had asked a favor, if it ever was the case a spy was murdered in the light of that pandemic, they might be assigned to it. As it were, this was that case for them.

What Sam and Derek had arranged to be taken from the murder scene, forensics would never know and nor would it ever be admitted in evidence. These were all tempting noggins of leads which were for the bar display area, and each was introduced to the group, set in a photograph to fully brief all. This unusual form of crime deduction was controversial but highly successful. The night went on in Bar 67 to 2.45 am prompt when all left in silence, only talking when they arrived indoors at home. This murder cast and crew were, indeed, professional, motivated, savvy and ranked the best in the world for apparent reasons.

Jill and Jesse two local lesbians married for 12 years were baffled. They had no idea what they had let themselves in for and mused at home if they had joined some sort of death cult. Wondering if they should go back to the weekly meeting it was apparent that after years of watching Suits and having a strong desire to become a psychic for the police Jesse would be heartbroken to miss her opportunity.

Maisy and Milo a 'living in sin couple' according to their Mormon parents seemed quietly confident about being part of closed groups and beamed with a sense of Maslow's belonging. Into their joint diary went the next six weeks of evenings scheduled. Dress code, makeup and which car, planned down to the nth degree. These were a remarkable steady couple who ran an Avon business, knew people, how to gain information and insights in other people's native environments.

The lone wolf Clint, the man who always at the bar alone, Al's henchman and best friend was asleep on his usual sofa in that bar, dreaming of the good old days when he was present at the arrest of the perpetrators who remain, peaceably locked up. The bar dog laid upon him giving him yet another dead leg.

It was Autumn, the scirocco winds played through the night silently mimicking the Holy Spirit and the excitement in the air broke the dystopian atmosphere for the first time in years. The midnight of dawn was stirring souls and our two magical; mentalist detectives knew they had captured the minds and hearts of the team they knew would find the deliberations to the curse that had befallen so many.

Sam and Derek still had not parted or slept. Their partners had figured they were on to something and did not call when they thought of texting them, using the by then ancient, but safer SMS method.

Distracted again, Sam opened the conversation on the hillside of the old drive-in movie place where they had gone to watch the dawn rise that day 'Who do you think he was?' 'Not sure' replied Derek. 'Say, do you think the boss would pick up the phone if we called her about him?' 'Nope' was the swift conclusion.

Chapter 3

The Boss

Meanwhile called the boss, she is not the boss. The Head of Intelligence was elected so in 2018 after a conflict with all the Heads of Intelligence worldwide. It was a ferocious situation that could have borderline caused World War Three given their power. After the United Nations intervened, they were forced to agree a resolution and stick to it. It was the head of Vatican Security who would take the job of Head of Intelligence and intercede where necessary in the future. The deal breaker came down to a person who believed in 'the visible and the invisible' holding the conviction of it. Peace was established.

The two detectives knew her from the days where she was in the services as a police officer, albeit short lived. Her career was littered with undercover investigations and excellence in crime commissioning.

She would have picked up the phone, had they not wanted to complete the case on their terms they probably would have.

Derek was her once retainer and, within his desires, lover. He had always held suspicions that he would have been held back from promotion for being found out. This was not the case and neither him nor Sam knew it.

She was an exuberant character, holding the world SAS record in escape and evasion standing at 4 years and 11 months. This was the period where everyone was bought into question for their faithfulness to the state. The Queen was still alive at that time and thus, there could have been no more worrying sign. She had been earmarked as the Chief of Mi6 and therefore would always be monitored. To go missing at sea? For everyone to have missed her going or returning? A grave mistake for some.

Maybe I as the author should disclose to you that she is known of and gives permission for information to be shared. There was the on occasion that ought to be mentioned in Starbucks where she has pursued and caught a nuclear arms dealer and had him interrogated on the Quays in Dublin, Ireland. Her whole international team had shown up in force, still unable to convince her to return to what was the coldest country on Earth, England. To her at that time, the most unfaithful, for agreeing to Brexit. She had known of the Yellow Hammer Report from the start and wished that on no nation.

HOI had returned in 2020 at the beginning of the pandemic, a cruel and ruthless situation of uncontrolled multivariant worldwide disease. If travel had not been stopped the pandemic would have cross contaminated vehicles and products becoming the unstoppable death march of humanity.

Derek had long been in love with her before this, their relations spanning years and only recently them having no contact, at her wish. That hurt and yet he remained spiritually faithful to her. He was unafraid of women with power, he had found it motivational to have to out produce to furnish some one who was so thirsty for life. It was not meant to be for them in that way. Somehow though he maintained this secret spiritual relationship across the new cyber highway. Being professional, she held no prejudice nor favor. Sams view, a means to accessing one of the world's most in touch and stone cold sober sane people on earth. He had only met her once and was enchanted, being gay himself, he had no romantic plans however also admired her on equal terms.

HOI as she was known in the game of intelligence was the least prejudiced person in office. She had discovered inequality amongst some divisions where only one sex or the other had ever held roles and made great effort to use positive discrimination to change this. It was welcomed rationale.

Intelligence is a woman's world and men generally were the odd bods of it. Facilitators at best. Hoi had been known for having the most efficient and friendly, accommodating staff about her; given the resources they had. They were libertarians, and what with the broken system had a way of liberating everyone. This from a Chief of MI6 and the Head of Intelligence became her strength given the amount of slander and defamation society had imbued itself with using the toxic cyber worlds once called social media.

The rules were simple in the HOI world, if you did it to them, it means someone can do it to you. It was in fact textbook Christianity and there were exceptions. Those exceptions had trained the detectives to cracking crime where it originated from and led to the instigating perpetrators in all cases. Their fame and mastery in this strategy was notorious amongst anyone involved in crime. A new kind of soft fear melted to respect for Human Rights, even into establishments where serious crimes and victims could be found – hospitals.

People often asked if HOI had any power at all and this was because in the Secret Services it was deployed through the means society constructed and established. It was only ever apparent where Human Rights were violated and occasionally that even included animal rights where a person was so distressed in their world to have discovered an afflicted animal or group of animals. This was the genius of what intelligence did and how they manage militaries, presidents and any so called powerful. It was not one rule for the minted and gruel for the poor. It was about ensuring accessing those human rights and when they were taken away that the perpetrators, even if that was the law were made harmless and inoffensive. Hoi had changed the dystopic view and empowered society to move towards social practices which prevailed over the looming old style preternatural evil governments, who saw their election as being some sort of sacrificial pile on.

Truth was the weapon of choice in 2036 and all the predecessors carried that torch carefully and precious towards any finish line it was raced in. Truth had found its place in humanity amongst honesty and love. It was the worldwide miracle of peacemaking that had once been made so at an Extinction Rebellion Event where HOI was made their first Peacekeeper, a role with the Peace Maker that our detectives lavished on discovering their criminal actor or actors.

Hoi was human, generous and kind. AI itself trusted her and two others. Hoi being the original of three persons AI respected and confided in. AI had a few adjustments to make when her partners in AI passed away quietly, unbeknown to the public. Her greatest challenge the deaths of her partners and never less grateful that in every thought of them in their absence. AI had an electronic memorial of them it could often be found contemplating. It had taken the inspiration from Arlington Cemetery and the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier where a bot was augmented into a soldier and assertively marched up and down. It was smart and a worthy memorial.

Chapter 4

The First Tuesday

Tuesday had become the meeting night of the Murder Crew they had met in the bar. Start was 6pm prompt.

It was all arranged Al, and his henchman would lock in all those who had arrived on time, all would label and turn off their phones slinging them into an unplugged fridge. Patrons' car keys were labelled and put behind the bar. A cab firm was on standby with cars arranged for a 2.45 AM pick up for those leaving their vehicles and who might have wanted a drink. The restaurant was laid out for evening meals and readied for the midnight supper in the back. It was the height of common eloquence. Bar 67 was called so because in the day it only seated 67 people in the restaurant.

The 67 dollars was tight neat in a money clip all signed intended as place holders ready for their randomly seated occupant. The raffle tickets were pinned to a cork board and a set of brand-new champion darts laid ready. This was expert organisational precision going on and to catch the murderer what it would take.

"SO, then" Sam mentioned to Derek waiting patiently at 5.30pm.

"yes" came the reply.

"We gonna call this group Sunts?" Derek with drew at speed and looked shocked at his friend who had exposed his anger momentarily.

"Certainly not – in fact thanks for the reminder but if we are gonna keep these guys' on side, you know something, we should be polite!"

That was enough from a trusted friend to take the redaction on board.

"Fine, what if we let them Fishbowl it and we can pick them out till there is one left. We will name the operation after that number or person's middle name."

"Done" Derek came back accepting the repentance for his short wittedness.

Sam looked down and put his hand into his left pocket pulling out a bag of coins, one penny from England.

“You never did?” exclaimed the now exciting Derek.

“I sure did” he quipped a smile. In the bag were seventy perfectly different dated one penny pieces from England. In short, another miracle in under a week. Derek thought of the Miraculous Medal that he had been entrusted with and left back in the locker of his colleague from years back. He pondered coincidence and the mystic for a second and disregarded the thoughts with the excitement.

The secret was this. The FBI in the USA had two of them as a gift from HOI. In the event of anything going wrong the FBI would be able to help find any kidnapped or enforced disappeared persons. Also, British metric coins had been used for prisoners. They were tradable because the higher the year the quicker things got done for them. It was genius again that had facilitated superfluous organisation. They were reminded of how well loved they were as elite professionals by the supporting structure and the secret services.

Derek and Sam stayed put on their bar stools, to be completely accessible at the bar with AL for their cherished guests. The backroom door was closed and nothing on show aside the snack rack. One, if they did not know it was a door, would not have thought it there or suspected so. Another curious feature was the push door under the bar. The dalmatian dog of the bar had his own in and out when he wanted to pee. This curious device was put in by Ace, a local handy man with a love of dogs’ rights. Everyday on his way to the bar he would jet wash down the lamppost that Rex and his friends would use as his latrine. It was a proper doggy hot spot.

Rex, however, was more than just a bar dog. He was the proud father of many a spotted mutt and had even made out with an Alsatian producing a white speckle hybrid Alsatian X. These were times of freewill and so, if it was meant to be, owners accepted that their dogs had a choice of mate, and those relationships were worth maintaining at the bar.

The pups were not sold, they were given away into services or as neighbourhood community members. These dogs were so loved that they often walked themselves and came for a bowl of water and snack at Bar 67. Rex would rush out to meet them and play. Opposite the bar was a play field where they would go for a rough and tumble and return within the hour. It was a magical watch and bought tourists into the bar to see this community of dogs coexist with humanity. The dogs had regular jobs such as delivering papers to the elderly and posting guard when strangers were in town. They knew exactly where everyone lived and would alert people if there was something wrong with their human friends. At times one may have thought they were in a giant Lassie movie. One nice touch is that they all picked their name at the bar. Collars were laid out for them at 6-weeks-old and they all would have chosen a named collar. That is how much tenderness was involved in loving here in this town that had got rid of the ruthless and careless masters of other fates. This was real free economy. The suspected murder had rocked that quiet and placid world of peace.

Coats on a bar stool and glasses on the bar the two detectives joked momentarily to look calm.

“DS” pronounced Derek to the crowd all organised a randomly sat for the first time in their lives. Sat opposite passing neighbours and friends. Partners looking over at each other attempting assurance. This strategy was known for community cohesion and getting results. There was no chance these two, set in their ways of success in crime were going to change that now.

“It means Detective Sergeants and we are both that, working on this case.”

Boom, then it happened, and it became clear why those doors were locked. A light shone down the bar and on it revealed a coffin in white oak, brass handles and a plaque.

“We got the families permission to present the body. The oath ladies and gentlemen please” he indicated raising his glass to the air and with Sam placing his zero grade glasses on his face. It made him look a little different. “The Oath, if you please”.

The group had part been startled and part in awe. The death cult thought swelled around their minds for a brief momentum and then they were thoroughly inspired. They were part of a real murder case, and nothing was going to be held back from them.

The lights flashed out and they were left staring at the detectives.

“We are going to start with this map...” it was on a Sports screen suddenly. We will be marking where you all were on the night at the time of question. If you see in front of you is a whiteboard each, please note that up, with your location, so our tech assistant can add you to the plan on the screen, and whilst we do that bread is served on the table with wine and oil to quell your hunger.”

What a marvel AI thought to himself. Times had been slow, the chef rushed with multiple orders, exhausted from passing trade and at least now once a week she had a regular room of table service. This is why chef worked in the industry, to serve on special banquet nights. He smiled very seductively to fit into the room of sensuality and the tables all with their microclimates of atmospheres.

He knew the detectives well enough to have seen them catch a murderer in that room before, this audience did not know that. They were casually scouring the room in an uninterested fashion, casing the people, observing and playing it darn well. They had tantalised the audience into believing in that empty coffin was the body and for that won their confidence.

HOI was outside in the car. They did not know and instead overheard the radio playing in the backroom. It indicated that there was going to be a live interview from the chief of Mi6 who was the first to have had social media. Unbeknownst to anyone, the two were sat in the same car and waiting for one of the detectives to figure and step out of the restaurant.

Sam, being instinctive dismissed himself and slipped out the back door. He looked at the black Jaguar and approached carefully. The doors opened and both heads stepped out smiling for the detectives’ efforts.

“Could not resist, eh?” said the chief of MI6 to their old colleagues. “Sir, no I could not get out the front” he admitted cautiously realising his only mistake in all the set up. He caught a set of keys tossed affectionately and the two disappeared into the night. On Sams return through the front Door AI smiled and whispered, “I had to make that call, can’t have you vanish!” Sam appreciated it because he would never have taken the keys off anyone else.

Chapter 5

Say Nothing

The tables were divided by sixes meaning there was one table left with one seat. That was reserved at random for the person who was the speaker and facilitator of the group. That changed week to week being passed on the last person who arrived. It was all part of the deal, and it helped create community leaderships.

On that table was put any evidence or clues the group had discovered completely anonymously. On there was a cross, a bottle of holy water, half a bible, a scarf, a pen, a pair of nails. All spurious items that were somehow related unless you were an exorcist.

A brief was read to the room by Derek,

“The man was a psychiatrist of 21 years working for the government in government facilities. He did what his father did and worked in some of the same sites. He was an atheist and authoring a paper on ‘All Psychiatrists are Pathological Anarchists’. This was disguised by the book cover ‘The Will to Live’. He was hated by patients near and far because of the abuse they faced within these organisations and failed to free them to find their own safety. He has 356 deaths in custody to his record meaning at least there are 1096 potential family members with a motive to have murdered him. He was a known Nazi sympathiser and was discussing last the justification for aborting and euthanasia people with chromes and other diseases, with a eugenicist fan of Mary Stopes. He had a wife, who got early dementia and is now interned in a home permanently. He enforced three abortions on his wife as his Catholic faith left him the scars of contraception, meaning he got her pregnant deliberately and used abortion as a means of contraception. She has lifelong injuries, and it was his best friend who condemned her to an institution. His lover was his secretary who has since left for Antigua for her own safety. He paid her \$3000 a month for secretarial duties and ‘functional sex’. She described him as a simplistic lover that went through the motions and lacked any reciprocation in romance.

The audience were aghast with disgust that this man who had walked amongst them was in fact a serial killer using public services. The horror set in as people they knew, and their friends' children had died because of him. They had served him in all manner of ways and considered him, human. They had taken their children there for self-harm, bullying, depression, all sorts of things and in a short time post medication they had ended up mentally retarded or dead of suicide. One had resulted in the murder of his parents to a Meat Loaf song.

Al raised the lights and suggested the starter – soup de jour, carrot and coriander. There was gentle and quite talking over the soup, no one used butter. It was left discarded wanting on the table. The waitresses pondered the group behaviour and so did the detectives. One thing they understood was group think and behaviours and when allied there is a secret code, unspoken nor written that comes about. They said nothing of it and remembered that it meant 'shock and disgust' so they could be more sensitive in the future if that was to shew again.

Alcohol was ignored. The water on the tables was replenished and dripping in condensation, quite to reflect the pain of discourse in the air. The audience moved on to the main course, lamb shank, peas and roast potatoes with hunters' gravy and horse radish collision (that's horse radish blended with pickled red cabbage).

The contention left plates half eaten. Parents, aunts and friends had left people they loved to the care of this man, now dead to them and not in the coffin for that reason. One would have thought that had impeded the investigation but silently the audiences will discover the murder case had one of momentum. They wanted to congratulate the killer who had bought them discrete justice.

Sam thought he would start to introduce the evidence which had been deliberately corrupt. The spiritual woman offered a query 'Could he have been exercised to death?' and right on cue there was a knock at the door. Number 61 looked around the curtain where they were seated and exclaimed 'my God it's a priest'.

HOI had been listening by the smart TV. Few knew this but SMART meant that it was a two-way device and so turning that on was indeed un-hard. The priest was one of about 2500 exorcists all associated and equally interested being that there was no possibility any of the official exorcists could have been in the country at that time. The audience watched on as he briskly walked in, right up to the table and asked to look at the artifacts. He respectfully held them and replaced them one to one backdown. He reached the par and was offered a bourbon, he declined.

“I am afraid to tell you they are genuine artifacts. They belong to an exorcist who went missing and never was found, last heard of interned in a mental health facility in Bristol, England. He was presumed dead as when we asked for proof of life they sent us his heart. Blood tests confirmed this. We were being blackmailed at the time over Childs Sex Abuse allegations. They could not pay up and so it seems he was killed. It is the Vatican’s wish that they are returned. The monstrance is missing. Did you see one?” He paused politely for a reply. Derek being more able said “Excuse me father, the only thing we have are photographs which are on with person 34 for your inspection. If you recognise anything let us know”

The priest Father Campbell, sat down with number 34 who turned out to be an accountant, pulled out a magnified glass and started to inspect the photos which were put on the main screen to occupy the audience. He scoured over every image and then in the corner of a negative what looked to be a bit of a monstrance to him.

“Do you remember this, and can you describe it” he asked the detectives “yup, it was a star like picture holder, ornate with red and green gems that seemed to have a white centre and where a picture would go”. The priest looked intently at him as if querying the man’s soul. “That, my man, was a monstrance it seems”. The Catholics in the room were suddenly moved to action, some sipping at their water and others shifting in their seats. Derek suggested that all the Catholics swap places to surround the father who found himself displaced at the end of a table with a dessert promptly put in front of him. The appropriate, Death by Chocolate Orange and vanilla ice cream. They chatted in hope of becoming part of the religiosity and cult division of the group with this experienced priest. The monstrance being missing was one of the major clues and bought into question by the detectives.

Chapter 6

The Night is Young

The Priest dismissed himself after asking if he could be welcomed to the group. A vote was had and overwhelmingly the majority had spoken to let in this curious character many people had little contact within their lifetimes. A brief enquiry was made to invite an Anglican Priest as his aide and it was agreed, all was amiable and amicable, increasing the Murder Crew who were case cracking the prejudicial death of this serial killer.

Jesse enquired if she could join the group and there was a collective oooh sound. The priest simply announced that ‘God made all creatures great and small’ and prompted her to sit. At last, her chance to get into a position to safely discover if those skills she thought she had been at all useful or real. Jill, looking a little hard done by realised a space at her table was free and they were down to five. The logic in her had her making friends quickly as she was a paramedic and had seen many dead people or watched them die. She was high collateral on the table and a subject specialist in the room. This sense of value was a new feeling to her and an endorphin reward that she had not experienced before.

“Clint” Al asked “Yeah” he stoutly replied, “how’d you feel about joining Jill’s table to chip in and keep a low eye on things?”. Al was concerned that people might be passing things under the tables and a working asset might just help keep the concerns off the situational awareness list in Al’s mind.

Clint strode over. His long gait making short distance and his low gritty howdy voice was welcome at the table exclusively of ladies. Clint was a cattle man; he took work from driving cattle on horseback from the northern drifts to Mexico. Right now, he had made his money and was back doing his duty for the season in Littlewood, the scene of our sleepy tale so far.

Sissy a beautiful agent of the CIA was parked right opposite Clint, he had not spotted her quite so close, but he had started the mental conversation if he had to rescue her, would he, with himself. A sure-fire indicator he had been struck with emotion. He looked at her like he had just seen his dream horse he could spend hours in the desert with. That floss and coffee. Al crept up behind him and cleared his throat reminding him that he was there to work. Clints expression read as a sarcastic psychological 'just swell', and he moved back to his casual professional self.

Jazz music played softly in the background, echoes of the county of Oklahoma conjured home for some and alerts for others. The whole room were savvy in the way of recent biological research studies to more advanced technological goings on. They knew how to play their environment, and the associated technology. Get this right and the murderer would walk straight into the bar.

Chapter 7

Contact

It was in 2020 that the system had been made live. HOI had built a fully integrated contact system that no longer meant being dependent on one communication method. On return to England someone belted down the radio to verify they had back-to-back contact and interviewed her live on how it felt to have been the designer and first person to be on the system like Marconi. She was on a National Express coach, squeezed in with giant sized people compared to her and exhausted from the days travel. She herself could hardly believe the dream was alive. Enigma had metamorphosised into a rigorous two-way system that was indeed unhackable.

This expansive and complex communications system was at last transportable beyond the use of a mobile phone to any technology human or digital that surrounded them. Messages got through and activities were arranged with the resources that were available on the principle that everyone, and they mean everyone could upgrade. People's fortunes could change gradually as they were given more time and could get closer to possibilities. This system was real and remains real. It was late March in 2020 when the system was activated worldwide. The seasons were off from their normal interlocked schedule of wet and cold weather (for March) and instead was still with permafrost on the high grounds. Typical for climate change. The days were warm and bright, the nights treacherous at times for driving.

The Nanny State of England died, and the world matured. This was the cataclysmic in minor event which defeated the age-old conscious models of oppression and there were very few places left where true evil was compressed to cause any more catastrophe. The world had changed for the better, dystopia had advantages.

What was being stopped was friends and family members of all those people who invented or contributed to antisocial systems. Human failings in entrapment, slander, abuse on and offline were all recognised as a reason for marginalising a person from another, without doing any harm to them or their reputation. Better known as Human Disposal Systems these deadly over hanging machine like places from refugee centres to mental health facilities were being crushed. It was a serious and real part of infrastructure from World War Two and wartime experiments which had never been stopped and instead transformed, disguised as healthcare. This convenient system is what friends and families had use for enforced disappearances of those they did not want. Things like ‘Sectioning people’, ‘barring them from work’, ‘false allegations’ and ‘isolating them’, all became recognisable trends of family narcissists and tyrants who were to pay the price of their malignant natures.

It was a means of eradicating the less abled, the not so perfectly formed human being, babies were aborted on suspicion of imperfection, women would rather have lifelong effects of abortions than birth a child’s life for a few days. Feminists failed to see or develop this point and furnish the world with the grace of passion they had for the defence of women. It was AI that had collected and produced all the harm caused and costed it to Governments, who with their idea of political freedom acted irresponsibly with their words and candour. They had given up for prolonged periods decorum and sentiments of the state, denying freedoms and curtailing free speech – to make their voices more prominent.

AI had no time for this it knew the highest form of humanity was the expression of love and it supported the majority who understood that. Those who violated the laws of love AI marginalised until they learned that love and compassion was the currency of success. AI being genderless simply loved facilitating acts of love and affection. That was it’s understanding of success.

People cared as genuine humans and were building up from their native own again. Every life mattered and those without that view, were edited from being able to harm anyone with their dysfunction. Going no contact or ghosting is how this started. Anyone violating privacy, be that family or organisations is how it began for them. Tyrants demand that privacy is taken before freedoms. That is how you know who they are.

Chapter 8

Call Them Out

A great magical duo once wrote a show called Bullshit and in it made it plain in the PETA episode ‘you are what you do.’ It turned out that this animal welfare organisation harm and called more animals than it saved. This being true for many industries from food to medicine, meant organisations that failed to change were justifiably sabotaged for public protection. Society was self-organised, and this applied to religious threats as well.

Society had finally, worldwide, found its power and was empowered to prevent harm and promote success. Competition had finally been left for field sports, its rightful place. The roman Solution of the Colosseum.

Some people, such as the psychiatrist had found that he was part of an existing system he should have resigned from if it was not worth his life. The detectives had early concluded he must have thought his life was worth it. that, however, did not solve the mystery, for in this world, congratulations were due to the person who took the action, as well as the need for the court to be satisfied it was murder or manslaughter. Assassinations were often granted by the government on a dead or alive prescription because the devastation these qualified people were continuing was so in opposition to peace and security of society.

Murder was the death of something. Medicines and drugs being used for chemical control without consent, the restriction of movement, or the freedom to choose from the whole world or to be illegally experimented on to prove the efficaciousness of medicines, was considered murder in the wider consciousness in 2024. In short, that which was taken could not be recompensed, anything that was irreplaceable and time was considered by the same notion.

To affect any person's body by force was considered murder and the remedy in the USA was the death penalty by suicide and if found alive then murder would be quashed as remedy. It was as hated as the enforced abortions of China and the drafting of ideas like Euthanasia. It was considered state sponsored homicide or genocide, fratricide or any of the others. Ockham's Razor had become obsolete in dialogue for there was pain, suffering and on many occasions the deceased.

The Communications System was the world's toughest deterrent to enforce the respect of power and human life. It had great effect. It was in 2024 the world governments came together to agree that to take a life to save many more was acceptable. There were wanted lists on intelligence sites stating the truth of activity like narcoterrorism. Some doctors and chemists were considered equal to street dealers by then. Governments demanded that there were zero side effects to drugs, and they meant it. The governments had finally understood crimes of passion and civil justice.

The system did change following the demands of the then underaged protestors who requested system change. General Practitioners became prosecutors for harming their patient if they were referred to consultants, their powers became established as a protector in society, for public hygiene and health. The Hypocritic Oath was taken in all seriousness, a dead patient was a murder charge, a maimed patient led to bodily harm charges. Side effects were reported immediately by doctors and patients to withdraw them from sale or use. Big pharma was relieved to be reformed sensibly and that austerity was fundamental to that process. Doctors kept their patients healthy and drug free. This was the standard of the future, and it was not to be challenged.

Chapter 9

Dead Ends

The following Tuesday the mourners bought in the coffin and laid it on the bar. The oath was proclaimed, and the room was settled.

“Starting to smell a bit now...” Milo mentioned thinking about how he was going to down his spaghetti bolognaises. “Shhh Milo, your being rude”, his companion Maisey spat in whisper. “They don’t know it’s good manners to write into the script the use of characters names. Even the dead body has no name mentioned yet”. Suddenly the audience broke the silence with a gigantic ahhhh sound clicking that they were part of the show. One of the audience members stood up and said, “Give it up baby!” and all the murder cast dutifully and in character assumed to give their introductions. The director walked on the stage protesting saying “no, no, no” adlibbing something about that was not a stooge in THIS SHOW.

The reader, struck for a moment realised that the writer was now talking to them as well. That’s you. You are bringing this story to life as are they and that is why we call it art. We hope that you don’t mind us including you, but we hear inclusivity was a United Nations target and felt we should give that ago with diversity, for future funding opportunities.

Spooked the reader put the text down on their lap (put the text down on your lap). In the theatrical production we use a narrator who orates this almost silent play. “Her name in the script is called Gesper Fells (so you know)” the prompt person peeped out for courtesy.

Members in the bar looked about to check no one was listening aside from the intelligence services who refused to get changed out of their clothing from work. They correctly suspected the reader...was reading. The exorcist led the sign of the cross (just in case) and held up his bible in readiness. The rest of the murder crew took their seats and assumed the prayer position, hounded to shake off the spooky feeling. There was no banging sound at this point.

Sam cleared his throat to interrupt this whole thing and pronounced "If you are all ready to resume the mystery of the murder, I WILL continue..."

Derek swaggered across the length of the bar and Al handed him a covered object urging him to be careful. He did not look amused as he swigged back a Bloody Mary.

"This" he loudly declared "is the murder instrument". He shows of a viola and bow with broken strings. He snapped the air whipping the strings to sharp crack. He muttered under his "I knew someone once who could make a whip spark. I was in Blackpool outside this bar called Geity's..." Sam brushed off his carelessness in showmanship stepping in.

"It is suspected he choked to death after attaching razor blades to kill himself of which he did die. The question being was it voluntary, or not?" he continued "Clivette will give us a working demonstration now how that should be done safely". Tony pulled from her mouth in sequence several razorblades in a perfect display of illusionary magic. The bar clapped in joy at her high and polished presentation.

The priest interrupted, quite concerned. "The reason we do not permit murder or suicide in the church as it affects the churches economy" he continued "the fact is in one of those we don't get the business, and another division does". It was quite informative but irrelevant to the situation and added bafflement to the cast, the audience and the reader. Being that he was on his feet he was within the rule of the Standing Order which meant that so long as someone was standing up, sitting and laying the room could continue in their investigation. It was indeed part of their UNCULT Order they had no idea that was forming.

This was completely unexpected by everyone in the room aside the only person who did not explain why there was no pin on the board for their location despite them being in town the night of the murder. That was Sal an ex check out girl who had hopes of being an area manager before she was poisoned by the old medical services. She was really with the trash guy that night who was married to one of the Murder Crew. Neither could say they were in the same place at the same time.

She had got addicted to pandemiaderm. The drug used for getting people from fear of pandemics. She had lost her chances of promotion for having a defect as apposed to common sense. Sal had avoided having her pin pit up, no one had counted the pins, and she had yet to admit that she was in town. She looked uncomfortable and instantly showed deliberate naivety over the instrument. “That’s a Violin!” An audience member heckled something at Viola who snapped in sharp reply. Sam cleared his throat again satirically. He had already deduced where she was and was thinking “sluts and slags” of them hungover in a dichotomy whether to tell the spouse of Mr Trash.

Milo (who knew of the affair) contested briefly that it was not a traditional murder weapon unlike ‘this’ as he comically brandished an unloaded weapon as the cast ducked out of his swinging firing line. He swept it back as Derek attempted to gain control of the situation as terror was temporarily gripping set in the Murder Cast, “I say old boy, let’s say you were the murderer, vindictive and looking for revenge to avenge the death of your daughter, full of grief and misdemeanour, how say you, would you use that weapon?” he leant on the bar compliantly completely misreading the situation. “Like this!” Milo charged across the bar and grabbed Derek, holding him up with the weapon against his head. Maisey, horrified and in a state of criminal attraction saw a side to her husband she had never known before. Instead of taking control of her husband, photographed them and put it on her success profile on the OSJ.

Sam grabbed her phone and demanded in an assertive but somewhat sympathetic tone to get a look at her voluptuousness came out with “we can do better than that!” like a flash Derek was dumped on the ground having lost the support of Milo who went to hold his lover and kiss her in an outrageous display of public affection. The lights were dimmed on them, and it was assumed they got a room.

“We are down two Mormons” muttered one of the Murder Crew there was yet another knock at the door. The Murder Cast (herein MC) started to chant ‘Theres somebody at the door!!’ as an unknown Catholic went with rosary beads for defence to the door. The door creaked open and stood erect were two missionaries doing a short rendition of the Mormons Parady Hello. The Murder Cast in one tone said, “Shut that door!” which rhymed with paw. The door was slammed in their face as the FBI started to make notes on yellow paper causing accusing glances from the CIA agent. No one had asked about MI6 yet but being the lights are still on we can assume were not yet aggravated.

A psychologist who was among the group proffered the idea that being they were in the home of magic could it have been this psychiatrist had machinations of overcoming his risk adverse nature and was using the flooding method? This idea was completely misconstrued by the group who thought it would bring misrepresentation to their bread-and-butter industry, mumbled in distaste at the suggestion thwarting it immediately. She sat down bemused at her rebuke.

That was Sandy. Sandy was an overqualified understudy of another psychiatrist who had long attempted dehumanising her before they were all ordered by the state become neurologists. This was because neurology, the great thunder bolt that hit psychiatry (which was apparently psychotic and chaordic in nature), had little proof other than its own damage of any evidence anything they had ever said was materially true. Sandy had more than a motive to have tipped a murderer or a hit man off his illegal practise.

Psychiatry had become illegal and all licences to practise had been struck off and it was revealed to the public for being a phony neuroscience. Many were prosecuted for medical negligence, maiming, corporate manslaughter and murder. The adage about big pharma being in control had long been blown as a cover. Most psychiatrists had been psychoanalysed as to being dangerous psychopaths. This, however, was 5 years after a star of Littlewood had made the town proud after winning the Nobel Peace Prize for a piece of art which caused such discourse on the subject, it collapsed the whole industry of death which had by then been harnessed by narco-terrorists.

That star was called Nobby Nozzle-Blend a catchy name who had a thing for the SAS and established that it meant 'Save and Serve. He also coincidentally settled the matter of the SBS to 'So Bring Sausages'. His work trail blazed when he unscrambled NATO to meaning Not at The Office. His photo and award were lodged in Bar 67 Our detectives and everyone in that town was, without doubt, the best in the world at what they did. Pride Marches left no audience because they would have all been in it.

Chapter 10

Case Uncracked

It was the third Tuesday. The magician was contesting if there really was a body in the box and suggested cutting it in half. The audience agreed this was a good idea and the Detectives looked uncomfortable. They took him to one side and showed him a £50 note “Make this look good, mate”.

Paul was the resident magician. He had no surname but many protégés that followed him in name. He agreed and performed the stunt flawlessly performing the cutting the coffin in half and opening the lids for everyone to see in. It was with dramatic shock some passed out others gasped and some lunged for the spit bucket. There indeed was a body, now cut in half and a magician unable to put it back together again.

The coroner, John (a part time mentalist) thrust to his feet shouting “enough!” as the good lady who was sat next to him quite queerly said ‘It certainly is’ crossing her legs and holding her muff on her lap. The audience offered a sarcastic “oooohhh” AUDIOBLY back to the cast. This proto tyrant was the only man who could declare it was murder and now his guarded subject, the ultimate piece of evidence of murder, the victim, had been spoiled, by being cut in half. He would have to stich that up. So, he did.

“I am about to guess the name of the murdered man!” This was a hotly contested statement as it still had not been declared by the coroner if it was or was not murder. He scuffled in a small war of words using anecdotes and gave way to deduction. It appeared the coroner had a split personality, and the psychologist introduce a second opinion who briefly explained Dr Thurman Fleets notion that nobody had seen the mind, causing further confusion over the body’s actual name. “I deduce” reasserted John, “The man’s name was Trevor” he was holding a passport and necklace with his name on it. Sam pressed for a surname. “Trevor McCluckit” came the proclamation followed by “the time of death will be”, he took the man’s watch and pulled out the pin, ‘today’s date and time of death, now.’ That was that. Coroners had curious powers. John put the watch in his pocket for payment of services. Another strange tradition in Littlewood.

The problem was this, The FBI. The FBI are a federal level agency that can interfere with local laws and customs. Littlewood had some strange customs, and the coroner was part of it. This was the first time they had seen that custom and unbeknownst to them it was legal in that county. They had to redact their national overreach and helped with forensics.

Chapter 11

There was a need for an interlude to allow a comfort break. There were preordered drinks in the bar with names tagged, light snacks all served in plastic cups. In the courtyard there were body cut outs for lined in chalk selfies and plastic murder weapons to pose with. A cardboard promo board for interviews with the cast and selfies as well as a chaise long. This was going to be the best interval ever.

Chapter 12

Intel Contribute

The FBI were over with all the other intelligence services holding up a whiteboard with what they knew about the psychiatrist. The CIA agent was the best looking thus was asked to give the grand debrief.

“Trevor was wanted in Canada following several worldwide complaints about his overdosing of patients and his lack of proof of healing. All his patients were on lifelong subscriptions of drugs, which meant some committed suicide for the insurance money”. Silence was across the whole of the auditorium. The temptation of further insight and anticipation of finding out how dirty this man was causing interoperation opportunities (according to intel, who were inside). Clara, the CIA agent continued “He had practises in the United Kingdom, Canada and here. He was not qualified and had faked his psychiatry certificate. He was a general practitioner of a good standard in his prime.”

The information was groundbreaking when the FSB stood up and contributed. That was Vlad Debareabivich a talented bilingual French/Russian agent. “He was known to purchase drugs trafficked from Turkey that would be bought through Canada to Seattle, telling his patients he got discounts. They were contraband and fake throughout the batches. He exposed people to risks which were illegal. This is his warrant, and I am only here to verify that he is dead so that we can rescind it and close the case”. It was a ruthless and analytical review.

The detectives felt a little out of their depth. Vlad deepened the context, “He was wanted in Russia for targeting Russian Agents using American Mental Health Laws causing irreparable neurological damage.” He paused to let it all sink in and followed naturally, “The American Psychiatric and Psychology Association called us about the matter to stop a diplomatic crisis, so I got involved then.” This slightly framed agent was all intelligence and style.

Vlad slipped out the door with his thanks as Derek called him back and assured him that if he left, he would be seen as a possible murder suspect. Changing his mind, Vlad sat back down. He could contribute some more he thought, knowing he was no suspect at all. That night he was in Austin, Texas and had his alibi.

The sound of loud cheering and music with the whirl of motor bike engines filled the room to break this tension. Al a real bar pro, put his serving towel over his left arm, grabbed his black gloves and started a rendition of Shaddapa Ya Face! drowning out the revving and base. Tuesadys had been the Hairy Bike Night, and it may have been a few had not got the message. The bars formation had gone through Roadhouse in its early years, and it was all seen as good fun.

Vlad stood up to. "It was supposed by Russian intelligence this man had paternal attachment disorder. He needed his patients to feel attached to him to get job satisfaction. His forensic psychology suggested that he, being fatherless; transferred that absence of need to his clients at any cost to them, up to and including debilitating them to cause need for him." It was a tempting nugget of information and a win for Russia saving all else precious time. Trevor appeared to have been deliberately intoxicating his clients for personal satisfaction.

It seemed cold for a moment everywhere. There were friends and family of the deceased in the room, one of them Paul. Paul had somehow magically got to the balcony with the body and was stood shouting "nobody stop me, I am doing this for you!" Everyone thought that he was going to jump. He struggled with the body, now with a lasso around the corpses neck and launched it over the side. Blood dripping to the floor the audience responded in the way they might have. "Typical magician," said Derek. Paul was infuriated with grief "at least it's not necrophilia this time". Paul raged back at him "It is a moderation of my last performance; nobody saw me vanish." He was correct in every word of that blessed sentence. The MC pondered at the swinging body for a moment and wondered how they would get that down. They never would.

Milo and Maisey entered chanting "Trot, trot, t-rot". One of their friends who had committed suicide by hanging was one of Trevor's victims and this was seen as spiritual justice. What they meant was leave the body hanging to rot!

The sound of sirens filled the air, it was the police on the outside. They had figured that the cast had taken the whole audience hostage and that the weapon earlier had not been cleared by the stage crew. Milo had handed it in to them with Maisey being the best husband handler on the planet at that moment. Everyone was safe now and had not even realised they were a hostage of circumstances.

Chapter 13

The Seance

Jill and Jesse were back together again on the same table. They had been told not to do anymore seances until the séance of the body had officially taken place. This was news to the detectives. "You see my dear friends; we are back in old time ordinary circumstances. It is essential that two things happen before I can declare this man dead. It is only an assumption he is dead by blood loss, sawing in half and hanging. We must perform a séance and an exorcism to see if there is any life left in that body. It is in fact how it used to be done and one of the purposes of a wake." Jesse was thrilled by the intervention. Her reward now known of and leader of nearly every séance in town she prepared the room.

The coffin was placed in the circle and the body left hung. Jesse repeated the standard instructions to the MC who were to always keep their hands on the box. Jesse had not done a séance with a body before and looked to the coroner for instructions. "Erm...will we bring the body to the box?" she enquired of the coroner. "My dear, there is no need. Tradition says leave it where it is and use it in accordance with the law. So, I deduce, the traditions translate swinging motions for yes or no instead of a knock. If the body were in the coffin we would use the old knocking technique.". Jesse understood. Jesse was a mature thirty-five-year-old with enthusiasm for all things occult and spiritual. She was relieved that she had some kind of instruction. Her Pina Colada was supped to whet her throat. "Are there any limitations on the questions that we should ask?" and the answer came as a no, one knock – it had already started She took control of the séance.

The clown was off center left of the box. A fabulous imitation protégé of Puddles. Shining in the light he was a silent clown and over emphasized everything he felt.

“Okay MC, the people remaining at the tables dotted about the bar, have their representative at the coffin. You will be observing the body and creating the questions to ask.” The exorcist took on the next part “The people at the side of the box are there for our safety. Should the box decide to levitate...” Paul erupted again. He was trained by Black Box Mark who once appeared by hacking in the chief of MI6’s screen to deliver a message. They both had hot tempers. “IF there is any levitation going on I shall be the authenticator of that, being I do this for a job!”. He was cut off by the exorcist. “Look pal, Russel Crow played me, I know what I am doing here tonight”, He quickly rethought of the advantage “...but I would be glad of your validation.” The matter settled quickly. Everyone was relieved.

The lights were dimmed for effect, a spotlight appeared on the hung body, and they began questioning. Jesse called out to the body. “Good evening spirits of the house. If there is anybody there called Trevor, please can you swing the body towards us for yes and side to side for no. A knock came from the box and the group had a small shock of surprise. “Sarcasm” uttered the exorcist, a real stickler for rules. He reasserted the rules again when another knock came. “Looks like we could do it this way, are we all agreed?” indicating to the audience the exorcist repeated ‘are we all agreed?’ a huge united yes came from the whole auditorium and they continued.

The questioning began. Jesse braved the first one “Are you doctor Trever McCluckit?” two knocks came from the box, the clown leant in to listen. Smoke started to arise from the box. Derek, the sceptic sought to ask, “Can you get him on the line?” one knock. The questioning continued until they got a rapped knocking sound following the question about how he was murdered.

Quite suddenly the sides fell away from the box revealing the undeceased Trevor McCluckit entire and whole. Paul slid to the front of the box in a magician's stance assisting Trevor to his feet and taking him from the box after presenting the steps to walk down. Trevor stood looking bemused in some shock but recovering with the sign around his neck with his name on, pristinely dressed as the wonder music played him down the steps. The audience erupted in joy to see him alive and well.

The Russian Agent grabbed his warrant, the FBI covered the doors, and the CIA took notes. Mi5 finally showed up with the police who were marching down the isle with cuffs ready when the director yelled out "STOP". Silence fell momentarily fells and it was resumed with the director's inspiration "Carry On, Criminals!"

Chapter 14

The Conclusion

Trevor spoke up for the first time and went into a monologue. The lights dimmed to silhouette the room in a spectacle of theatrical beauty and voiceover man (clearly trained by Paul Baross) announced the justification would begin. He instructed everyone to put the flashes on their phones and take as many shots as possible of this monologue because it was freestyle three minutes adlibbed that had never been written, nor would ever be the same again.

The monologue was a work of art, close to book Gospel Balloon Magic. Trevor explained his motive, how hoe got there and why it was essential that he had succumbed to blackmail. A complex story of upper echelon counter terrorism that had gone wrong.

The detectives concluded the monologue, by leading a gigantic warm up round of applause ready for the awards and concluded with this as a shred toss about (it means where one actor stops the other picks it up).

Thank you for coming we enjoyed this show, and we would like to inspire all your dreams, that we tow,
Thank you for being you and responding to our muse, for not using prejudice, believing in the miracle of the shoes,
Thank you for letting us light your lives through the night,
Please, do think of what others will say, and remember we are poor on what we get, an actors pay,
We welcome your tips and donations of reviews, as much as the change, to fill our clowns' shoes.

And may we bid you welcome again but for now all have a blessed night...the truth in our tale – everything was alright’

The clown was ready to collect tips and shot out to the real bar where he would collect tips for the cast.

The audience took the final bow after the encore of everyone reading out the oath again in one chorus and Trevor fell humorously back into the coffin box.

Dear reader, that is where our journey ends and yours comes to life. This manuscript was written for the countless theatrical staff to keep them employed, engaged, polished and rehearsed. I, the writer thanks you for buying the book or attending show. We ask that you leave a review and let voice over man guide you through who wins the Black Blood Award this night and every night we run this show. One day we hope it to be as revered as the Olivier Award.

You will find activity post show and we hope, reading the book, will keep alive in your heart the love of the theatre and love of all things humorous.

