

A Study of Murder
By
Todd Charron
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For live-presentation

A Detective arrives at a mansion to investigate a disappearance.

(M.) Detective Morgan, Michael Hutchinson

(G.) George, Glenn, Guy

(S.) Susan, Samantha, Stephanie

(DETECTIVE MORGAN STANDS IN THE MIDDLE OF A STUDY IN A LARGE MANSION.)

M: **(TO AUDIENCE. EVERYTIME MORGAN SPEAKS TO THE AUDIENCE A SPOTLIGHT IS ON HIM.)** So, I get this call. **(GEORGE ENTERS.)** This stuffy English guy says...

G: Mr. Morgan...

M: I've got this piece of business for you.

G: Mr. Morgan...

M: It appears as if Michael Hutchinson has gone missing, and we would like you...

G: Mr. Morgan.

M: That's me. To find out if anything has happened to the missing Michael Hutchinson. So, a long car ride and a lot of back story later, brings me here. **(TURNS AND RUNS RIGHT INTO GEORGE WHO HAS BEEN WAITING FOR HIS ATTENTION.)**

G: Mr. Morgan!

M: Ah! Uh, yes, hello...

G: Mrs. Hutchinson has been waiting for you.

M: **(TO AUDIENCE.)** This must be the guy I spoke to on the phone. His name's George. He's even more stuffy in person!

G: Mr. Morgan, when you're through talking to yourself, feel free to sit down. I will get Mrs. Hutchinson presently. **(GEORGE EXITS).**

M: **(SHUDDERS).** Well, apparently they don't pay him to be warm and cheery. **(SUSAN HUTCHINSON ENTERS.)**

S: Good day, detective.

M: Good day, indeed. **(TO AUDIENCE.)** She sounds a little too cheery to be so distraught, if you ask me.

S: Forgive me for trying to maintain an optimistic disposition. Would you prefer I was a crying mess?

M: Now that you mention it. Yes. Yes, I would.

S: Well, I'll have none of that. You see, a woman in my position has to always be keeping up appearances.

M: **(TO AUDIENCE.)** Even if it means she's killed her husband, and left him bleeding in some gutter, to run off with the Butler!

S: Mr. Morgan! How dare you!

M: **(TO AUDIENCE.)** I really have to watch those soliloquies. Only when I'm alone. Only when I'm alone. **(GIVES HIMSELF A LIGHT SLAP.)**

S: Mr. Morgan, I am seriously starting to doubt I hired the right man for the job.

M: Mrs. Hutchinson, not only did you hire the right man for the job, you hired the only man for the job.

S: And why is that?

M: Only registered P.I. in a five-hundred-mile radius.

S: So, I really lucked out with you, didn't I?

M: Yes. Yes, you did. But enough about me. Let's talk about you. How are you doing?

S: **(OVERLY DRAMATIC.)** Oh, atrocious, detective. It's not like my Mikey to be gone for so long without calling or anything.

M: How long has he been missing now?

S: Ever since he went to get a hair cut. I told him to switch barber's, but he didn't believe me.

M: And why is that, Mrs. Hutchinson?

S: Oh, please. Susan.

M: All right, Mrs. Hutchinson.

S: Susan.

M: Yes, Mrs. Hutchinson?

S: Call me Susan.

M: Oh, I thought you wanted to call me Susan.

S: Oh, no, no, no...

M: I thought it an odd request, but, you never know. I've been asked to do weirder...

S: No, no. I'd never think of such a thing.

M: I mean, I may be a detective for hire, but even I have standards...

S: Of course.

M: Though it's never come up before, strangely... Susan... has a nice ring to it... maybe...

S: Mr. Morgan!

M: Right. You were saying...

S: I was...

M: Yes, you were. You were talking about...

S: About...

M: About the Barber?

S: Yes! The barber! He's one of those types, you know...

M: Types?

S: That always talk with their hands, you know?

M: Ah!

S: And though most barber's won't shave you anymore, this one will, for a dollar more...

M: I see...

S: And I'm sure you can just picture the dangers of a man who talks with his hands wielding a razor blade like there's no tomorrow, with my husband sitting helpless in his chair!

M: The danger is obvious. So, have you contacted this barber?

S: Yes, and he says he gave him a hair cut and a shave and sent him on his way.

M: Right. So, you think he's lying and want me to investigate, since it sounds like he may have accidentally killed your husband.

S: Why no! Whatever would give you that idea?

M: Well, it's just that...

S: I'm sure if something's happened to my husband, that poor barber would have nothing to do with it.

M: I see...

S: My, you really are a strange one, aren't you...?

M: I'm sorry, I don't where I would have ever come up with an idea like that...

S: That's better.

M: So, why don't you tell me everything you know...

S: Well, he went to get his hair cut and run some errands... then he just never came back. **(BEGINS TO CRY.)**

M: But the barber had nothing to do with it, right?

S: Yes, that's right.

M: So, how long has he been missing?

S: Almost six days now!

M: This is unusual?

S: Of course it is!

M: And you suspect foul play?

S: Yes.

M: Do you have any suspects?

S: Well...

M: Yes?

S: There is one...

M: Yes?

S: One person...

M: One person?

S: Who?

M: Who what?

S: Is your suspect?

M: I haven't got one yet!

S: Then why did you tell me you had a person?

M: I didn't say that!

S: You most certainly did!

M: No, I didn't! I was asking who your suspect was!

S: You know, I'm starting to get the impression you're not very good at what you do...

M: **(TO AUDIENCE.)** And I'm starting to get the impression she's off her rocker!

S: Mr. Morgan!

M: Oh, right. Sorry...

S: Who exactly is it you keep talking to?

M: Uh, no one. No one at all...

S: So, can we get back to business then?

M: Of course.

S: Good.

M: So, who do you suspect?

S: I suspect none other than Uncle Glenn! **(GLENN ENTERS IN QUITE THE ECCENTRIC OUTFIT.)**

G: How dare you!

S: I dare!

G: No one dares accuse me!

M: Aren't you the Butler?

G: Shut up!

S: I dare!

G: Oh, all right then. **(BEGINS TO EXIT.)**

S: That's better. **(GLENN TURNS BACK.)**

G: Oh, it is not!

S: Will you get out?

G: And why would I do that?

S: **(WHISPERS.)** Because you're not supposed to be on until page ten!

G: Oh. Uh, I'll just be going, now...

S: Yes, it was good to see you again, Uncle Glenn!

G: Always a pleasure...

S: Ta Ta!

G: Farewell!

S: Oh, just go, why don't you?

G: Right. **(EXITS.)**

M: What a strange person?

S: Oh, that's just our crazy Uncle Glenn! **(GLENN ENTERS.)**

G: Now?

S: Get out! Get out!

G: Right. **(EXITS.)**

M: Very strange indeed.

S: Oh, yes. But he's harmless...

M: I thought you just said he had something to do with your husband's disappearance?

S: Oh? Did I say that?

M: Yes!

S: Well, yes. Yes, he did, as a matter of fact.

M: Go on.

S: And, um...

M: Yes?

S: He killed him?

M: He killed him?

S: Yes! That's it! That's definitely it.

M: You're sure now?

S: Absolutely! I remember it all perfectly!

M: Now, why would he do a thing like that?

S: Well, because he's crazy Uncle Glenn!

M: An interesting theory, but last I checked having a nickname like "crazy" doesn't make you a murderer!

S: It doesn't?

M: No. Not last I checked.

S: Could you check again?

M: Sure.

S: Thanks.

M: No.

S: No?

M: Sorry.

S: It's all right.

M: Any other reasons why he might be involved?

S: Well, now that you mention it, I do remember something...

M: What's that, Mrs. Hutchinson?

S: Uncle Glenn can be a petty man. He's notorious for holding grudges, as well.

M: I see.

S: And this one time, just a few days ago, as a matter of fact, Michael was just getting out of the shower, and accidentally used Uncle Glenn's towel.

M: A criminal offense around here, I take it?

S: Hardly. But Uncle Glenn loved that towel like a brother.

M: **(WRITING IN NOTEPAD.)** Loved it like a lover...

S: Like a brother!

M: And makes love to his brother...

S: No, no, no! You've got it all wrong!

M: When something went wrong. Ah, the plot thickens.

S: I give up!

M: Aha! A confession! That didn't take long now, did it? If you'll come with me...

S: I will do no such thing! I hired you, remember?

M: Hmm. I suppose that presents me with a conflict of interest, now doesn't it?

S: I didn't do it! It was Uncle Glenn! **(GLENN ENTERS.)**

G: Now!

S: Not now!

G: Well, too bad. I'm going, anyway!

M: George, is that you?

G: No, it's not George! It's Glenn! Glenn the great!

S: Crazy Uncle Glenn!

G: The same!

M: So, you're not George, right?

G: Who is this man?

S: Glenn, this is Mr. Morgan. I've hired him to either find Michael or find who's responsible for his disappearance.

G: Michael's disappeared?

S: How dare you pretend not to know!

G: I dare!

S: You dare? You know something you're not telling!

G: I know nothing about Mr. Hutchinson being murdered!

S: Murdered?

M: Ah, the plot thickens.

G: What plot?

S: You can say that again.

G: What plot?

S: Oh, God, you need better material.

G: Talk to my agent.

M: Enough of this! If there is a murder, I plan to get to the bottom of this.

S: Finally, he decided to do his job.

M: And if he is alive, which we all better hope he is, I plan on finding him.

G: Bravo, my good man.

M: Shut up, you.

G: Right.

M: Good. Now if anyone has any information that they'd like to share they'd best share it now.

G: Well, I've got a keen eye, and an even better ear, and I've got it on good word that Mrs. Hutchinson off'd her own husband, and had been planning it for weeks!

S: I never!

G: That's a good enough reason to kill anyone.

S: How dare you!

G: I dare! **(GLENN BOLTS OUT THE DOOR WITH SUSAN FOLLOWING AFTER.)**

M: **(TO AUDIENCE.)** Strange. I haven't seen a case like this since the rolling pin massacre of 1989. **(SAMANTHA HUGHES ENTERS IN A REVEALING DRESS.)** If you ask me, they're both guilty of something, though fashion crimes are out of my jurisdiction...

S: **(RUNNING HER HANDS OVER MORGAN.)** So, I hear you're the man investigating Michael's disappearance. And what a man you are!

M: Susan! Mrs. Hutchinson! This is totally uncalled for! You're a married woman!

S: Susan? Oh, she didn't tell you, did she?

M: Tell me what?

S: I'm Susan's sister, Samantha.

M: Ah, I see. My mistake, I missed the... obvious differences between you two...

S: A bright one, are we?

M: Graduated top of my class, actually.

S: That must be hard to do in a class of one...

M: Perhaps we should get down to business, then...

S: Business? No, no, no, business isn't very fun at all. Maybe you just need to relax a little. **(SAMANTHA BEGINS TO TAKE OFF MORGAN'S JACKET.)**

M: **(TENSES UP.)** Very relaxed indeed. No need for more relaxing, thank you very much.

S: You sure?

M: Quite.

S: You sure do look awfully tense...

M: It's a natural state for me.

S: Somehow, I don't believe that. Why don't you give me a try?

M: **(BACKING AWAY.)** No thanks. I'll be ok. See? Fine now. No stress at all...

S: Fine. Whatever.

M: Now. What is your relationship to Mr. Michael Hutchinson?

S: He's my sister's husband.

M: You two do look a lot a like, you know that?

S: We've been told.

M: And you live here with them in this house?

S: It's a big house. When I lost my job, Michael insisted I stay until I got back on my feet again.

M: (TO AUDIENCE.) Or off them again.

S: How dare you?

M: I dare?

S: You're so like Michael, you know that? Pig. (SLAPS HIM.)

M: Wrong answer?

S: Definitely.

M: Can I try again?

S: No.

M: Right. Back to business.

S: Yes, business.

M: When did you last see Mr. Hutchinson?

S: Well, it would've been about six days ago.

M: Six days. You're sure?

S: Absolutely.

M: Because you said about six days.

S: Yes.

M: So, was it about six days or six days?

S: Like I said, six days. It was exactly six days.

M: Now you're sure now? That's the third story I've gotten from you.

S: Whatever do you mean?

M: Well, first it was about six days. Then it was six days. Then exactly six days. Now, it can't be all three, now, can it?

S: Fine. It was exactly three days.

M: You're sure?

S: Yes.

M: Last chance.

S: Yes, Mr. Morgan.

M: Cuz I'm going to write this in this little book of mine...

S: Good for you, Mr. Morgan.

M: And I don't have an eraser...

S: A truly lamentable tragedy, Mr. Morgan.

M: So, it's going to be very hard to change. I just though I'd let you know that.

S: Thank you, Mr. Morgan.

M: Good. So, exactly six days ago you saw Mr. Michael Hutchinson?

S: Yes.

M: What was he doing?

S: His hair.

M: You saw him six days ago and he was doing his hair?

S: Yes.

M: Right before he was going to get his haircut?

S: Yes.

M: And what were you doing?

S: His hair... er... I mean, my hair...

M: You were doing your hair?

S: Yes.

M: You know I find that odd...

S: What? You find it odd that even though there are four separate bathrooms, plus one in each bedroom, that he and I were in the same bathroom together, at the same time?

M: Actually, no. I hadn't thought of that at all... but a good point. I'll have to remember that. **(WRITES IT DOWN.)**

S: Then what did you find odd?

M: Well, what really struck me as odd, is that a man about to go and get his haircut is spending time in the bathroom fixing his hair.

S: Well, obviously, you're not a woman Mr. Morgan.

M: I thought it was pretty obvious Mr. Hutchinson wasn't, either.

S: So, what are you suggesting?

M: Perhaps Mr. Hutchinson wasn't going to get his haircut?

S: Then where do you suggest he might be going?

M: I'm not quite sure yet.

S: Oh?

M: Where did Mr. Hutchinson usually go when he went out? Any places the wife might not know about?

S: Are you trying to suggest I would know things his wife wouldn't?

M: **(TO AUDIENCE.)** A bright one, isn't she?

S: **(SLAPS HIM.)** How dare you!

M: **(COWERS.)** I dare?

S: **(SLAPS HIM AGAIN.)** Pig! **(EXITS.)**

M: Hey! It works for everyone else around here! **(GEORGE ENTERS.)**

G: Not having much luck, sir?

M: Glenn, good to see you. Nice to see you've toned down the garments a bit.

G: My name is George, sir.

M: George. Right. My mistake.

G: Yes indeed, sir.

M: Look, George, I'm going to level with you.

G: If you insist, sir. **(LOWERS HEAD TO BE HIT.)**

M: Level with you George, not level you!

G: Thank you, sir. **(RAISES HEAD.)**

M: Is everybody here into the S&M thing, or is it just me?

G: Hopefully only you, sir.

M: **(PAUSES.)** No! That's not what I meant!

G: Of course not, sir. If you'll excuse me, I'll just go fetch you a pair of handcuffs. **(BEGINS TO EXIT.)**

M: No, no, no, no, no, no, no, no, no, no! You're not going anywhere. You see I've got some questions for you.

G: Yes, sir.

M: And you're going to sit here and answer them.

G: Of course, sir.

M: You got that!

G: Yes, sir.

M: Good. Now, this is the way things should be working around here. Six days ago, George...

G: Yes?

M: Was the last time you saw Michael Hutchinson. Correct?

G: Yes, sir.

M: Good.

G: Is it, sir?

M: Well, yes... er... no... wait a minute...

G: Take two, sir.

M: Yes. Yes, it is good that you haven't seen him, because that means you're in the same boat as everyone else. However, it is not good in the sense that he was been missing for six days. You got that?

G: Beautifully put sir.

M: Thank you.

G: You're welcome.

M: Now, can you be of any help to me?

G: Probably not, sir.

M: I should've guessed.

G: I'm sorry, sir.

M: Wait a second... what do you know about Samantha?

G: Ms. Hughes?

M: Yes.

G: I really don't think it's my place to say...

M: Come on, George. Cut me a break here.

G: A break, sir?

M: I want to find Mr. Hutchinson, and you want me to find him.

G: Of course, sir.

M: Help me out here. It's just you and me; this isn't going to get out anywhere...

G: Well, sir, Ms. Hughes has a bit of a reputation...

M: Really? And what reputation is that?

G: You may have noticed she's very skilled when it comes to dealing with men?

M: What's that supposed to mean?

G: Oh. Nothing you can't handle, sir.

M: Right.

G: Right, indeed, sir.

M: And what about Mr. Hutchinson? Could he handle her?

G: Perhaps, that and more.

M: What is that supposed to mean?

G: Samantha has habits she can't afford on her own...

M: Now, this is news. This is the kind of stuff I need to know. Tell me more...

G: Well, she gave Mr. Hutchinson an offer he couldn't refuse... **(SUSAN ENTERS.)**

S: George! How dare you talk about Samantha like that!

M: I dare! **(PAUSE. SUSAN LOOKS AT GEORGE WHO THEN SLAPS MORGAN.)**

G: I'm sorry, Madame.

M: What the hell are you apologizing to her for? You slapped me! **(SUSAN SLAPS MORGAN.)**

S: And you! Quit encouraging him!

M: Okay. You know, I'm really starting to get the hint that nobody here wants Mr. Hutchinson found. So, if you'll excuse me, I'll be on my way...

S: Well, of course, I want my husband found!

M: Then, will you people please let me do my job?

S: **(TO GEORGE.)** I wonder what's gotten into him?

G: A totally unpleasant person, Madame.

M: Now. Can I get some sort of roster of all the people crawling around this place, or what? I show up here, I see two people. Now I'm up to four.

S: What are you saying?

M: Maybe, people just appear and disappear at will.

S: You're mad!

M: You're right. I'm totally pissed off!

G: No manners...

M: I know, and you know, people don't just appear and disappear at will. So, is there anyone else I need to be acquainted with?

S: Well, I suppose there's Guy in the guesthouse...

M: Great. Good. This is good. So, there's a guy in the guesthouse. What's his name?

G: Guy...

S: Guy in the guesthouse?

M: Guy in the guesthouse?

S: Yes.

M: This is what you call him?

G: Yes!

M: Did Michael not tell you his name?

S: No. It's...

M: Does he not introduce people he brings home at night?

G: You've got it all wrong...

M: What is he? Is he the house pet nobody loves? For the love of God would somebody please just tell me the poor bastard's name?

S: His name is Guy!

M: Oh. **(PAUSE.)** Well, that wasn't so hard now, was it?

S: Imbecile...

M: I heard that. Now, would somebody please bring this "Guy" to me so I can have a little chat with him. Do you think we can do that?

G: I'll go.

S: I'll join you. Better than being with this lunatic...

M: You know, I'm really starting to feel unappreciated here... **(SUSAN AND GEORGE EXIT.)** What is with some people? I come here to help them out, and all

I get is treated like crap. I've got half a mind to... **(THERE IS A KNOCK AT THE DOOR.)** Come in. **(STEPHANIE ENTERS.)**

S: Hello.

M: Oh, hi, Samantha... **(STEPHANIE SLAPS HIM.)** What the hell was that for? **(SHE SLAPS HIM AGAIN.)** Ow! Quit it!

S: Not Samantha!

M: What was the second one for then?

S: You shouldn't use that kind of language around children.

M: I hate to break it to you, but there are no kids around here that I can see... **(SHE SLAPS HIM AGAIN.)**

S: I am!

M: Uh, right. You know I'm really getting tired of this whole face slapping thing. So, if you've got some news for me, spill it. I'm not much in a mood for this kind of small talk.

S: Stephanie doesn't do small talk.

M: So, you've got something you want to get off your chest. Right?

S: Stephanie's seen something she don't like.

M: And what's that, Stephanie?

S: Stephanie saw Samantha and Mr. Hutchinson together. But I wasn't the only one...

M: Who else saw?

S: So, I went to tell my daddy.

M: Who's your daddy?

S: My daddy.

M: What's his name?

S: Daddy.

M: **(TO AUDIENCE.)** They start young, don't they? **(STEPHANIE SLAPS HIM.)** Real young... So, Stephanie, what's your daddy's first name?

S: Glenn!

M: And you said somebody else saw them together, too. Right?

S: Yes!

M: Was that Glenn?

S: Nopers.

M: Then, who was it?

S: Mrs. Hutchinson.

M: Mrs. Hutchinson?

S: Uh-huh.

M: Are you sure?

S: Uh-huh. She was all mad and stuff.

M: Did she see you?

S: Nopers. I hid real good.

M: And what did your daddy say when you told him?

S: He said not to tell nobody, and that to forget all about it cuz he was gonna make it all better.

M: Did he?

S: Yup.

M: **(TO AUDIENCE.)** So, now what do you think? **(STEPHANIE CHANGES INTO SUSAN IN THE BACKGROUND.)** We've got the jealous wife, the blackmailed sister, the crazy Uncle "protecting" his daughter... this goes much deeper than I thought. **(TURNS BACK AROUND.)** Ah!

S: Hello, Mr. Morgan.

M: Where'd you come from?

S: Oh, I... just slipped in...

M: Where's Stephanie?

S: Stephanie who?

M: Glenn's daughter?

S: I have no idea what you're talking about.

M: You know, she looked a lot older than a child, but she said she wasn't. She also looked a lot like you and Samantha, but she's related to Glenn.

S: What's your point?

M: My point is you, Stephanie and Samantha, all look amazingly similar, and look about the same age...

S: How dare you!

M: I... think... I dare? **(SUSAN SLAPS HIM. TO AUDIENCE.)** You know, you'd think I'd be used to this by now... **(SUSAN HAS NOW CHANGED INTO SAMANTHA.)**

S: Darling what happened to your face?

M: Susan? **(SHE SLAPS HIM.)** Stephanie? **(SHE SLAPS HIM AGAIN.)** Samantha! **(SHE MOVES TO SLAP HIM, BUT DOESN'T.)**

S: Why must you always be such a pig to me?

M: Believe me, you're not the only one.

S: Somehow, that doesn't make me feel any better.

M: It wasn't meant to. Now, I'm going to be blunt here.

S: Yes?

M: And I don't want you to slap me...

S: Fine.

M: As a matter of fact, promise me you won't slap me.

S: That, I can't promise...

M: Promise?

S: No.

M: Just this once?

S: Okay. Fine.

M: Fine, what?

S: Fine, I'll do it.

M: Do what?

S: Slap you.

M: No, no, no.

S: Yes, yes, yes.

M: I'm afraid you're not following.

S: I follow perfectly...

M: Let's try it this way. Repeat after me...

S: Repeat after me.

M: Very good. Now, repeat this: I, Samantha, promise not to slap the very nice Mr. Morgan when he's addressing me.

S: I, Samantha, promise not to slap the very nice Mr. Morgan when he's addressing me.

M: Good. Now, you had an affair with Mr. Hutchinson. Is that correct?

S: Yes.

M: Good. I'm starting to like this whole honesty and non-violence thing we've got going on. Now, Mrs. Hutchinson caught you two, didn't she?

S: Yes.

M: Furthermore, Mr. Hutchinson was blackmailing you for sex, wasn't he?

S: Yes!

M: And it got to the point where you just couldn't stand it anymore. So you snapped, and killed him!

S: Are you through addressing me?

M: Yes.

S: **(SHE SLAPS HIM.)** Bastard! If there's anyone who deserves to be killed around here, it's you!

M: What happened to your promise?

S: Well, it's like you said. I promised not to slap you while you were addressing me.

M: Exactly!

S: You said you were finished addressing me, so now I can hit you as much as I want!
(SHE ATTACKS HIM.)

M: Stop that! **(THEY CONTINUE TO FIGHT AS GUY ENTERS.)**

G: Am I interrupting something?

M: George!

G: No?

M: Glenn!

G: Guy? I'm interrupting...

M: **(AS THEY STOP FIGHTING.)** Uh, no. Not at all.

G: I can come back, if you want...

M: No, no. Stay...

G: I'll just go...

M: Stay! Please! Please stay!

S: How about you give us five minutes? I don't think he'll last that long.

M: Don't listen to her. She'll try and kill me.

S: Oh, please, what do you think I am? A murderer?

M: Quite frankly, yes!

S: Wimp! Grow some backbone!

M: Shush, you. There's business to be attended to.

S: Men. Always thinking business...

M: There's something wrong with that statement, though at this time I just can't seem to place it...

S: You work on that, private dick.

M: So, Guy... you live in the guesthouse. Correct?

G: That's correct.

M: Now, can you see people as they come and go from the house?

G: For the most part, yes.

M: Did you see Mr. Hutchinson leave his house six days ago to go get his hair cut?
(SAMANTHA CHANGES INTO SUSAN.)

G: Yes. But...

M: But what?

G: Well, he usually heads east after leaving the house, but this time he went west...

M: He went west?

G: Yes.

M: What's west?

G: I don't know. Shops, small stuff. Nothing really important...

M: And why do you think he headed west?

G: I haven't the slightest clue.

S: I'll tell you what's west?

M: Let me guess. Susan, right?

S: Who else would it be?

M: Samantha?

S: Hardly.

M: Stephanie?

S: I'm insulted.

M: Don't hit me.

S: I wouldn't think of it... yet... (GUY CHANGES INTO GLENN.)

M: So what do you have to say for yourself?

S: Me?

M: Yes, you.

S: Are you sure you're not thinking of someone else?

M: Well, gee, who else would I be thinking of?

S: Maybe Samantha? You seem to have an eye for her...

M: Trying to keep my eye on her every minute, now that you mention it...

S: Or little sweet and innocent Stephanie?

M: Much too young for you, right?

S: Of course. But don't get me wrong, I'm not that old...

M: I'd never say that...

S: Of course, you wouldn't...

M: You'd slap me...

S: I would.

M: Well, I'm glad we know where we all stand. Except for you Guy...

S: Uh, Mr. Morgan. Guy's not here anymore.

M: Of course not. I didn't see a door open or shut. So, obviously, fifty people must've have flooded in and out during our little discussion...

S: Well, perhaps if you paid a little more attention you'd know what was going on...

M: Perhaps.

S: And, perhaps, you'd have a clue where my husband is!

G: Or my daughter!

S: Don't forget my sister!

M: Oh, but you're still leaving out the key player in all this.

G: And who might that be?

M: Why, George, of course!

S: George?

M: Yes, George, the butler...

G: What makes him so important?

M: Well, everyone knows that in a murder mystery the butler always did it.

S: Of course!

G: Why didn't I think of that?

M: Because you didn't go through 3 months of intensive P.I. training.

S: I see you've earned every bit of your reputation...

M: As only a good P.I. can do.

G: So, the case is solved and we can leave?

M: Not just yet, you can't.

S: Why not?

M: Well, we don't have a criminal in custody.

G: This is true.

M: Furthermore, he's not even in this room to defend himself.

S: True enough. He must be on the run! **(GLENN STEPS INTO A CLOSET.)**

M: And most important of all... we still don't know what happened to Mr. Hutchinson?

S: Oh how tragic...

M: You know, if this were a murder mystery, I'm guessing the audience would be right pissed about now.

S: Audience?

M: No killer, no body. I'd be asking for my money back...

S: This is no trite theatre production!

M: So you keep saying...

S: It's the truth!

M: The funny thing is, though, I have a feeling I can find our butler friend. Perhaps, he'll even give us his side of the story! **(OPENS CLOSET DOOR TO REVEAL GEORGE WITH PART OF GLENN AND GUY'S COSTUMES ON.)**

G: How dare...?

M: Don't you even think of saying that!

G: Right. **(EXITS CLOSET.)**

M: If you're entertaining any ideas of hitting me, you can shove them right up your ass!

S: Well. I never!

M: Well. There's a first for everything, honey.

S: How rude!

M: I have had just about enough of this! Glenn!

S: He's not here...

M: Guy!

S: Nope...

M: George then! If you're anyone besides George, Glenn, or Guy, I'll kill you right here on the spot on general principles.

G: Sir, are you having some kind of identity crisis?

M: Me?

G: Yes. You seem awfully distraught...

M: I'm distraught?

S: I think he's gone crazy.

M: Crazy? You think this is crazy?

G: You do seem to be exhibiting all the symptoms...

M: What? Are you a doctor, now?

G: No, of course not. You're right.

M: Don't you patronize me. Aren't you the one they call crazy?

G: Me sir? I am just the butler...

S: And the butler did it! Don't forget that!

M: Oh, no. I haven't forgotten that, either.

S: Good. Good.

M: So, mister butler guy. What's your story?

G: My story, sir?

M: Yes, your story.

G: I'm afraid I'm not quite following you.

M: Okay. I've been following the two, three, six, eight, ten or however many of you there are, for the whole night, and you're going to tell me you're not following me?

G: Yes, sir.

M: That's great. That's just great...

S: I'm glad you find this so amusing...

M: Oh, absolutely.

S: Do let us in on the joke, Mr. Morgan?

M: I came here like a good P.I. taking a good case, and earning a good paycheck.

S: We expected someone who would do a good job in return.

M: That you got. Never doubt that. However, I'm learning more and more to doubt my clientele.

S: What are you suggesting?

M: Nothing.

S: Really?

M: No, I'm lying.

S: You're too complex...

M: So, George. Tell me when was the last time you saw Mr. Hutchinson?

G: I'd have to say it was about six days ago, sir.

M: Exactly?

G: Yes. Exactly, sir.

M: That's good that you're exact.

G: Why is that, sir?

M: Because I'm taking notes, and a man in my position cannot afford to not be exact!

G: A wise choice, sir.

M: So, six days ago you saw Mr. Hutchinson doing what?

G: Leaving the house, sir.

M: And if you were to speculate on his destination, what would you say it was?

G: I had heard rumours that he was going to get his haircut.

M: Did you see him walk down the path?

G: No, I did not, sir.

M: So, then you don't know for a fact that he went to get a haircut.

G: This is true.

M: Mrs. Hutchinson? Susan, if I may?

S: You may not any more!

M: Mrs. Hutchinson it is, then.

S: Much better.

M: Can you tell me for sure that he went directly to the barber shop to get his hair cut?

S: Yes.

M: You're positive?

S: Yes.

M: In the book it goes...

S: Is that important?

M: I think it is.

S: Why is that?

M: It's very important because Guy, the man in the guesthouse, seems to think he went in the opposite direction.

S: That's ridiculous.

M: Are you calling him a liar?

S: Are you suggesting I am?

M: I'm suggesting maybe... you killed him!

S: How dare you! **(MORGAN PULLS OUT A GUN.)**

M: I dare!

S: I'm shocked, Mr. Morgan!

M: You might be. Shocked, upset, angry, and perhaps even ready to slap me...

S: Just give me the chance!

M: Well, it doesn't matter what you feel, or what you would do if you had the chance...

G: Why don't you just calm down.

M: It doesn't matter, because I have the gun. And with this gun, I now make the rules.

G: You really have gone insane!

M: And rule number one rule is the guy with the gun is not insane! You got that?

G: Yes...

M: Good.

G: Very.

M: You see. We're already starting to work together a whole lot better now.

S: One big happy family...

M: That's it. **(GEORGE TRIES TO GRAB THE GUN.)**

S: George! Grab it!

M: (HITS GEORGE.) What are you trying to do George?

S: Leave him alone!

M: (MOCKINGLY.) Leave him alone.

S: I mean it!

M: I don't see what the problem is here?

S: You're a prick!

M: I'm just trying to sort things out here, and George wants to mess with my system!

S: Stop!

M: And you don't mess with my system! (MORGAN KICKS GEORGE.)

S: Please, stop!

M: Now George, if you could kindly act like a man, and get up.

G: What would you know about being a man? You're nothing without your gun...

M: A nice ploy, George. I applaud you. I really do. But my machismo's not fragile enough to fall for it.

G: Coward.

M: Besides, shouldn't you be attending to Mrs. Hutchinson over there? She seems a little distraught?

S: Leave us alone!

M: Funny, I was starting to think the same thing.

G: You've upset the lady.

M: Well, you know, I'm still a little upset myself...

G: If you haven't noticed, Mr. Morgan, no one cares.

M: How rude. I expected better from you.

G: We gave you a job, and this is how you treat us?

M: You gave me a job. This much is true, and believe me it's much appreciated.

G: You have a funny way of showing your appreciation.

M: I was hired to investigate a disappearance, and possibly, a murder.

G: You've proven yourself unworthy of even that menial task!

M: What I got, instead, was to be part of some stuck-up rich family's charade.

G: If there's anyone masquerading around here, it's you.

M: Would you like the taste of my gun in your throat?

G: No, please...

M: Then do me a favour, and shut up!

G: Of course. I'm sorry.

M: So, I deal with Susan here, Samantha, Stephanie, Seymour, George, Glenn, Guy, Gertrude, Gladys and the whole gang...

S: Make him stop...

M: Only to find out that none of them exists!

G: I don't exist? You really have gone mad...

M: No, no, no. You haven't pushed me that far yet. Sure, you two exist. But I haven't the slightest clue who you really are.

G: Who are you, Mr. Morgan? Who is anyone?

M: Don't pull that zen chi crap on me!

G: Zen chi crap?

M: I'm not here to debate philosophy. As a matter of fact I don't know why I'm here.

S: Nor do we!

M: Fine. I'm tired of trying to figure out who you all are, I'm tired of playing the bad guy up here, after the shit you put me through...

G: We did no such thing!

M: I'm leaving. You can find your beloved Mr. Michael Hutchinson on your own. That is, if he exists?

G: Oh, he is very real, Mr. Morgan, believe me.

M: Great! Than I wish you the best of luck finding him. And, Susan?

S: Yes?

M: That cheque of yours better be good, or I'm going to be coming back here to collect my own payment.

S: Get out! Get out! **(MORGAN EXITS.)**

G: What an awful, awful man.

S: Is he gone?

G: Yes. Yes, I think so. Here, let me help you up.

S: Thank you.

G: You've had a long day. Let's just try and put it all behind us. **(MORGAN, NOW MICHAEL HUTCHINSON, ENTERS BEHIND THE TWO.)**

S: Michael!

G: Michael!

S: Thank God you've come back!

M: Yes, sorry I took so long. **(NOTICES HE STILL HAS THE GUN AND QUICKLY STASHES UNDER A PILLOW.)** Took a wrong turn and ended up seeing a barber in the next town over. Had to wait outside here long enough for that psycho to leave. Didn't want to scare him into shooting anyone.

S: Oh, Michael, Stephanie will be so glad to see you again.

G: As will Glenn and I'm sure Samantha as well.

M: I'll be glad to see them all, as well. It's been quite the long week. **(FADE OUT. THE END.)**