

JOGGING CAN BE MURDER: A TEN-MINUTE CRIME DRAMA

By Jerry Rabushka

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SYNOPSIS: Want a part in a TV crime drama? How about all of them? This short play runs through an entire crime show in ten minutes - no commercials! The actress gets to play all the parts: the jogger who discovers the body, the grieving survivors, the tough cops, the annoying lawyer, and a variety of suspects from all walks of life. It's a great opportunity for a talented performer to experiment with a lot of characterizations! Full of humor and twists - you'll never guess who did it, but you'll find out in 10 minutes!

CAST OF CHARACTERS

(1 FEMALE)

DURATION: 10 minutes

AUTHOR NOTES

This play makes use of many of the stock characters of a TV crime drama. One way of playing this up would be to mimic, yet mildly satirize, the familiar characterizations. Because of the many characters in this short play, it's important to make the most of differentiating them through posture, body language and vocal delivery. The main speaker is a "trendy" woman in her mid-20s, living (*or at least jogging*) in Manhattan.

AT RISE: *(Feel free to start this monologue a little out of breath.)*

So I'm jogging down the street like I do every morning... here I go... jog, jog, jog *(Screaming at a motorist.)* move it, you idiot!... jog, jog, jog whew I'm SO out of shape! *(Silly annoying laugh.)* And then I'm arguing with my jogging buddy, "No, Justin Bieber does *not* have a higher voice than Mariah Carey, but it *is* close," and then... *(Sees something horrifying and shrieks.)*

Aaaaaaaahhhh! I'm like "there's a corpse in the dumpster!" *(Explains to audience.)* I'm that jogger in the crime drama that finds the corpse. *(Thinks it's funny.)* I can't go anywhere anymore.

So the cops come and they act like they suspect me, but everybody watching knows better. *(Very official, but suspicious.)* "Ma'am are you sure you have nothing to do with it?"

"I was just out jogging and there it was."

(As officer, packing a lot of suspicion into a little emotion.) "This is the tenth murder you've jogged into this month."

"I guess I need a new route. *(Laughs, then explains to officer, rambling.)* Look, I'm like jogging around discussing the vocal ranges of various pop stars, and yes I know that I should be more out of breath so I shouldn't be able to carry on a conversation but whatever, and then, oh my gosh, it's a corpse! You'd think I'd be used to it by now, but no, of all the bad luck!

"Your luck isn't as bad as hers, ma'am."

The corpse was Judy Cranston, *(With sympathy.)* young, pretty; *(Being very petty.)* didn't help, did it? Let's get her cell phone, which is conveniently lying on top of her, and contains all kinds of threatening texts from Rick Barnhart, her ex-boyfriend.

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(As a cop, looking into the phone.) “Looks like we need to make some calls.”

Now we meet the ex, Rick Barnhart. He’s this gorgeous red headed guy. I mean like wow, like I would put up with SO MUCH just to go out with him, and she dumps him like... *(Reconsiders.)* well at this point, *(Far too amused with herself.)* it looks like he *(Pretends to dump the body and close the lid.)* “dumped” her!

(Pretends to scroll through a phone, happily scandalized.) Look at these texts! “You better come back to me or I’ll tell everyone what you really are.” Or, “I thought you said you couldn’t live without me.”

So the officer questioned up Rick Barnhart, who tried to wiggle out of it. *(As Rick, who is a tough talking mechanic type.)* “I was desperate. I loved her. We had a life togedder. Den...”

(As officer.) “Then what?”

(As Rick, noting that Judy found another man.) “Den she discovers him. Twice my age. Ten times my income. T’ree cars. But kill her? *(Bitter.)* Looks like someone saved me de trouble.”

You *know* Rick didn’t do it, it’s only 10 minutes after the hour and the first guy they pick up is never the killer. *(Knowingly.)* But there’s always Rick’s suspicious friend.

(As the friend, a tough guy who speaks with worse grammar than Rick but likes big words.) “Ricko, we needs ta dump deese [i.e. these] cops and evacuate de premises, de movie’s about ta commence.”

Rick’s like “Gotta catch a movie, Coby don’t like to miss de opening teem [i.e. theme]. *(With disdain.)* Have a nice day.”

“Don’t go on vacation, we’ll have more questions.” That’s the tough lady cop that you always see on TV but never see in real life. Beulah.

Rick is offended. *(With crossed arms and a scowl.)* “Can I go to a movie wit’ Coby? Dat okay witchew?”

Beulah gets offended. *(As Beulah.)* “Your girlfriend’s dead and you want to see a movie.”

(As Rick, again “in your face”.) Ex. Girlfriend. Jerry Hall. Find him. He’s rich. Lives on 52nd street. Has a gun collection. *(Points fingers.)* Bang bang.

Meanwhile, jog jog jog jog... *(Breathing a little hard as if running, but having a conversation with jogging buddy.)* “It’s so sad when a talented star dies a premature death. Richie Valens, Buddy Holley, Patsy Cline...” *(To audience.)* well I should know better than to talk about premature death, because... *(Discovers another body, almost mocking her own surprise.)* Aaaaaahhhh! There’s a corpse in the alley. *(To audience, with same mock surprise.)* It’s Jerry Hall!

(Taking a break in the action.) Can you imagine being the corpse in the crime drama? You lay there and people see you and scream. Not bad for a day’s work.

(Pretends to be an actor’s spouse.) What did you do today, honey?

(As a response.) I laid down in a dumpster and listened to some crazy girl screaming. Made two hundred dollars. Dinner’s on me.

(Back as herself.) So now someone’s offed the first girl and her new boyfriend... *(Makes a funny face that says “oooo foul play!”)*, then bends over to pick something up.) Let’s check his cell phone.

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(Scrolling through.) Oops, his ex wife isn't happy that he has a new girlfriend. Half her age. And a lot prettier. Hmm... is there a trend here? Rich and good looking seem to be a prime criminal motivation.

The wife is an alcoholic well past her prime. *(As Mrs. Hall, weepy, and drinking.)* Good ol' Jerry. Our marriage was dead for years. Suddenly he was happy again. He was losing weight. He was... gone a lot. He was... *(Feels the weight of betrayal.)* seeing Judy Cranston. *(Gets increasingly angry and bitter.)* Then he served me with divorce papers. I guess he's the one who got served. Whoever did it should get a medal.

So we have a bunch of commercials and it's time for the next act. Camera zoom on the cute girl who sits at a desk and looks up computer records. Great hair, needs a love interest. Likes lemonade.

(As the girl, pretending to sip lemonade.) Found out what went on here. Dead girl and Jerry Hall. Weapons. Drugs. Trafficking. Copyright violation.

(As tough cop.) What did they steal?

(As cute girl.) She sampled twelve bars of Frank Ocean during a karaoke contest.

(As cop.) So Rick Barnhart is a suspect?

(As cute girl.) Nope, but look who is. *(Sips more lemonade.)*

Coby Radisson.... Coby. *(Condescending.)* He just wants to go to a movie. *(Arousing suspicious.)* Or... does he?

(As Coby.) Look, I don't got no AC. I'm sweatin' up in my apartment all day, can't stand to smell myself no more. You wanna sniff? Don't like it, huh? So I'm like Ricko, let's access ourselves a movie. *(Sarcastic.)* Dat's a crime now, seein' a movie!

(As tough lady cop.) “No, but murder is. Even in Manhattan.” The tough lady cuffs Coby and reminds him that he killed both Judy and Jerry because they were moving in on his drug territory.

Ricks talks to the cop. “Drugs ain’t Coby. Coby, he don’t do drugs. Too busy buffin’ out at de gymnasium!”

Lawyer comes in. She’s toughly pretty, and she’s pretty tough! Still thinks the Constitution has some validity. “Let Coby walk and we’ll go home honest and early.”

Nope, says the cop.

(As lawyer, annoyingly confident.) “You have no evidence. Nothing that will hold up in court.”

The cop goes for the kill. *(As the cop.)* You know what won’t hold up in court? Your hair!

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