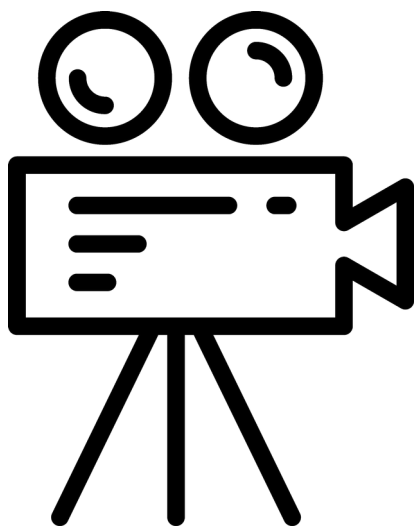


MURDER ON TELEVISION

by Josh Nichols



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This murder mystery can be adapted to various settings but was originally written as a dinner theatre with some interaction by audience members.

Professionals and amateurs are hereby warned that this script is subject to a royalty.

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2025

CAST OF CHARACTERS

This particular show is very flexible. All roles may be played by any gender and ages are not critical. As the fictional television show is 10 years old you would suspect those particular characters would be at least in their 30s. If that is a problem some dialog could be adjusted to change the age of the show. Pronouns are assigned to characters and used throughout the script but can be modified after casting is completed.

ALEX PETERS: An arrogant, self-assured, British actor who believes he's the best in the business. He thrives on praise and dismisses others, refusing to accept any criticism. (*playing the fictional character Detective Alex Anderson M.D.*)

JORDAN WILLIAMS : A quirky, germophobic, and compulsive actor who is awkward and nervous off-camera but becomes confident and composed when acting. (*playing the fictional character Detective Casey Brown M.D.*)

QUINN TAYLOR*: A last-minute replacement for the season finale's villain after the original actor dropped out. New to the set, they haven't met the cast or crew yet, quickly arranged by the casting director. (supposed to be playing the fictional character Riley Smith)

BRYCE MILLER:** An obsessive fan who sneaks onto the set, pretending to be the newly cast villain. They are obsessed with the show and especially Alex.. (pretending to be Quinn Taylor and playing the fictional character Riley Smith)

AVERY JACKSON: The show's creator and protective director. He balances being stern with appeasing demanding actors, all while trying to secure a renewal for the show.

MORGAN WILSON: An ex-detective serving as a long-time consultant on the show. Frustrated by its lack of realism and annoyed by its continued success, he's only sticking around for the paycheck.

SAGE MOORE: A smooth-talking talent agent with the charm of a used car salesperson. Always knows what to say but juggles conflicting deals behind the scenes.

VOLUNTEER:** An unsuspecting audience member who, by chance, gets pulled into the show and unwittingly becomes part of the process.

* In the program, these two characters can be listed as EXTRA #1 and EXTRA #2 to hide who they are playing. This will allow mystery around who is actually Quinn until the end of Act I.

***In the script, the lines and references to this character will be listed as "BRYCE" though they start by pretending to be QUINN TAYLOR.*

***This person should NOT be a random person. This will be an audience plant that pretends to be a real audience member. This person could be given a fictitious name but if the individual is known in the community, it would be best to use their real name so the audience doesn't suspect they are part of the show. The program would not include their name to hide this fact. As this is a small role, you could use a different actor each night to preserve the surprise. Throughout the script "VOLUNTEER" will be used for the assigned lines for this individual.*

PRE-SHOW NOTES:

This script was originally performed as a dinner theatre. Prior to the show starting and while the meal was being served, various characters were able to mingle throughout the audience greeting them and welcoming them out of reanimation. Morgan, Sage, and Avery were able to mingle. The others should not.

These interactions were in character and helped in establishing some character traits for the audience. This can be a very entertaining portion of the evening if you choose to implement it.

ACT I

The audience members are special guests of the studio attending an exclusive reading of the Prescriptions Murder's season finale. Depending on how it is executed or advertised, some audience members may come dressed as television characters. During the Director's opening lines, he could acknowledge these individuals by calling them out for some audience interaction. He could use local names as "celebrities" joining for the evening or call out anyone dressed as fictional television characters. This is entirely optional.

AVERY enters, getting the audience's attention.

AVERY: Hello, hello, hello! Hello everyone! Thank you all for being here. Is everyone excited?! As you may know, if you read the credits, I am Avery Jackson, creator and director of a little show I like to call... *Prescription Justice!* (*elicits applause*)

It's not often that our fans are given the opportunity to sit in on a reading but in celebration of the show's 10th season, we're breaking all the rules!

Our little show started 10 years ago. People scoffed at the plot initially. Two medical doctors leave their practices to become detectives, what a wacky concept, am I right?! Well, 239 episodes later, who's laughing now? (*starts to clap and tries to get the audience to join in*) Am I right?! Well, we're so excited to shoot this 240th episode and bring this season to a close. We're up for a renewal and if ratings are good, and there isn't some major catastrophe, we could be in for another guaranteed 5 seasons of *Prescription Justice*. (*trying to get the audience motivated*) That's right, I said FIVE seasons! Exciting, right?! There's so much justice left to be prescribed!

Now, you've all signed Non-Disclosure-Agreements tonight and we do that as a precaution as we don't want anything from our season finale to leak out. You can't talk about the episode or anything else you see here tonight. Well, unless you're subpoenaed, I guess! (*laughs*). Don't spoil the show people, (*clapping to each word to emphasis*) honor your NDA!

Are you ready to meet some of the cast and crew?! I couldn't hear you... are you ready?! Not many people realize how much effort goes into a show like this. We wanted our show to be realistic from day one. Soooooo, we hired someone to consult with us. He was in law enforcement, but we lured him away to add authenticity to our production. Please welcome Morgan Wilson!

MORGAN walks out nonchalantly, clearly not motivated to be there.

AVERY: Okay! Joining us for the finale is a relatively unknown player who we all just met backstage. We had initially booked a bigger named celebrity who shall remain nameless. They dropped out of production at the last minute. Boo! Am I right?! Our casting director swooped in to refill the role and assured me they will fit right in with the *Prescription Justice* family. Who'd drop out of our hit show at the last minute like that? Thanks *<Insert a known celebrity or a locally known individual>..* (*laughing and being catty*) Oops! Did I say that outloud? NDAs people! You signed NDAs! Any who, let's meet them shall we! Playing a mischievous and downright evil Riley Smith please welcome Quinn Taylor!

BRYCE enters pretending to be QUINN. Waves at the fans, shakes hands, etc.

AVERY: And now for the stars you really came to see! Playing Detective Casey Brown M.D. The one, the only, Jordan Williams!

JORDAN enters very stiffly carrying a satchel. He begrudgingly goes to a couple audience members and shakes hands with a disgusted face. He uses wipes to clean his hands each time.

AVERY: And his partner in crime or should I say, “fighting crime?”
Playing Detective Alex Anderson M.D the brilliantly talented Alex Peters!

ALEX enters knowing his fame. His chest puffed and he puts his hand to his heart accepting the adoration. He doesn't approach anyone and barely looks them in the eye while soaking up their praise.

AVERY: Is everyone here ready for the season finale?! I couldn't hear you. Are you ready?! Okay let's get started. (*referencing the script*) It's a brisk morning, the sun has barely risen and Detective Alex Anderson M.D. stands over a corpse. Detective Casey Brown M.D. arrives on scene. And... action!

NOTE: Throughout the script, *** is used after the characters name to help distinguish when they are using their fictional character's persona.

The actors are conducting a reading so they don't have to be moving much but can also act things out as they wish. They can make gestures or walk around but the blocking is loose.

ALEX*:** Thanks for coming so quickly.

JORDAN*:** I've swapped my white coat for a badge, but I'm still on call. What do we have, Dr. Anderson?

ALEX*:** It's hard to tell. I've told you a thousand times, you can call me Alex.

JORDAN*:** Sorry, Alex. It's gruesome.

ALEX*:** As a former orthopedic surgeon, I noticed a few things. You see these marks around the ankles?

JORDAN*:** Oh yes, yes I see.

ALEX*:** And what do you see below that?

JORDAN*:** Nothing.

ALEX*:** Exactly

JORDAN*:** But what does it mean?

ALEX*:** It appears that the feet... were removed.

JORDAN*:** My God...

ALEX*:** No, no... I'm just a man. Look closely at the heart. You see that knife sticking out of it? It likely contributed to the victims death.

JORDAN*:** I think you're right but I didn't know you were also a heart surgeon.

ALEX*:** That was a long, long time ago... I don't want to talk about it.

JORDAN*:** Alex, I'm sorry, I didn't mean to....

ALEX*:** (*snapping*) I said I don't want to talk about it! (*calming down*) Look, it's a complex case but no mystery is too complex for a former surgeon.

JORDAN*:** You're right.

ALEX*:** A scalpel is sharp but a mind is sharper.

JORDAN*:** And yours is the sharpest.

ALEX*:** Diagnosing the truth, one clue at a time... (*breaking character*) Oh come on. What the hell?

AVERY: What's the matter?

ALEX: Really? Are we quadrupling down on the medical references? It's getting to be a bit ridiculous.

AVERY: It's just a light sprinkling throughout.

ALEX: Are you kidding me? (*looks back in script*) Let's see here... "The body may be cold, but the trail isn't." What else? "The pulse of the case is in the clues."... One more shall we? (*really emphasizing the ridiculousness*) "The crime scene's oxygen levels are low—we need to ventilate these clues."

AVERY: Look, we'll adjust some things before we shoot. Sometimes you have to throw things at the wall to see what sticks.

ALEX: Well, it stuck and it stinks.

MORGAN: I'd have to agree. I mean the whole "doctors turned cops" thing was already a stretch, but you don't have to be so heavy-handed with it.

AVERY: What do you mean the whole “doctors turned cops” thing? It’s the entire show! We’ve done this for ten years! Did you suddenly grow an opinion?

MORGAN: Hey, a paycheck is a paycheck but seriously the scripts keep getting more ridiculous every year.

AVERY: They are not ridiculous!

JORDAN: Weeeeeelll...

AVERY: What? You too?!

JORDAN: I mean, sometimes the plots are a little... I don’t know. “Out there?”

AVERY: Like what?

JORDAN: Well, like the time Dr. Anderson had his evil twin show up.

BRYCE: Oh, I loved Alex’s twin! Twice the Alex!

ALEX: What a joy to play both the Jekyll and Hyde of a broken man.

BRYCE: It was brilliant! And then we found out Alex had a triplet!

MORGAN: Yes, an even “evil-er” sibling.

JORDAN: I also question my character sometimes. Like where did he learn to defuse bombs... and under water no less?

ALEX: I guess there were a few times that I questioned some episodes.

AVERY: Et tu, Brute?

ALEX: Well, the episode where my character was struggling with performing surgery in the helicopter over the mountain range above the village on fire while the extremists shot rockets at it... well in that scene Detective Brown was giving my character advice. It's wildly unrealistic that he has a better breadth of knowledge and experience than Dr. Alex Anderson M.D.

BRYCE: I thought the same thing!

MORGAN: That? That's the part of the episode you found ridiculous? Not the rockets chasing a helicopter during an impromptu surgery over a flaming village?

AVERY: Why are you being so negative?

MORGAN: Look, I started consulting on the side just for fun. Once things took off, I left my job because this gig paid more. It was always about the paycheck. Now the paycheck is just larger. I come in, I tell you what cops would really do, you ignore me, add some bullshit hospital puns and cut me a check.

AVERY: It's always about money with you consultants.

MORGAN: I mean... it is a... "job." Those usually come with paychecks. I guess it wasn't only about the money. I thought this should could really be a way to give people a look inside the real life of law enforcement. Now it's just a soap opera with a better time slot. I mean, when you're on the force you have the fear that you might one day get shot. If I have to sit through one more episode of this drivel, I might put a bullet in my own head.

AVERY: You're being absurd! If you don't want this job maybe I can relieve you of that fat paycheck of yours!

MORGAN: Is that a threat? I could redirect that bullet to someone who runs their mouth too much.

BRYCE: Oooh shit! This is getting good!

AVERY: Okay, that's enough. I think we need to take a little break so everyone can cool down and reflect on how thankful they are for this stupid, over-the-top, ridiculous show which is paying for their houses and cars and vacations. We'll be back in ten people!
(claps and starts to exit angrily)

MORGAN: *(apathetic)* No...Avery...stop... come back.

AVERY: *(in a loud high pitched voice)* I said we'll be back in ten!

MORGAN: *(yelling after him)* Oh, come on Avery, come back!
Apparently, I'm in the minority, the show is a hit. What do I know?

AVERY exits.

ALEX: You better go after him, that's your payday. That's all our paydays.

MORGAN: I don't think it's worth it anymore. I can't wait for this ridiculous show to end.

BRYCE: If you don't like it you can quit, can't you?

JORDAN: That's right, your contract clearly states that either party can terminate the consulting agreement within 30 days for any reason if a notice is provided in writing.

MORGAN: How do you know what's in my contract?

JORDAN: I get bored. I read.

MORGAN: It doesn't matter, my body won't allow me to reject all of those zeros.

ALEX: Whatever happened to art for art's sake? So much greed and corruption. I live for an audience... for the applause.

MORGAN: Not a lot of that on TV you schmuck.

BRYCE: Hey, there's no need for that!

JORDAN: Well, if money's an issue you could hope for a renewal and hardball renegotiation. The only other way is with the sudden halting of production or extreme circumstances. Unfortunately, that doesn't apply to consultants. If you were an actor, you'd be able to collect insurance money if the show was unexpectedly shut down.

MORGAN: Lucky me... Maybe I need a better agent to get contracts like that.

JORDAN: I mean, contracts are part of it. If you lose work to a shutdown but you aren't insured, you could always sue. We are a litigious country. There's good money in lawsuits.

MORGAN: Look, I don't know a damned thing about insurance.

JORDAN: You could also just suck it up and collect the zeros as you already said.

ALEX: (*to MORGAN*) Would you please just go talk to Avery!?

MORGAN: Alright, alright! I'm going!

MORGAN exits.

JORDAN: Why do you want him to save the show so badly? Isn't this sort of acting beneath you?

ALEX: Yes! But, alas, I'm stuck in the confines of the prison I have built for myself. I brought Detective Alex Anderson M.D. to life and dammit if the world doesn't love him.

BRYCE: Just hearing the name gives me chills.

ALEX: What? Detective Alex Anderson M.D.?

BRYCE: *(shivering with delight)* Ohhhhhhhh...

JORDAN: Are you a fan?

BRYCE: Alex is incredible, a force of nature. He's done more for the world than most people will dream of. He's an inspiration to so many people.

ALEX: Oh, well. Thank you. I know it but it's good to hear it out loud occasionally.

BRYCE: Your voice is so different in person.

ALEX: Blast! It's all this yelling; it's taken its toll on my voice. I must go drink some tea. *(starts to exit)*

JORDAN: *(to BRYCE)* Well, welcome again to the team. Are you excited...

ALEX exits during the next line..

BRYCE: (*cuts him off*) Not now! (*yelling after Alex and chasing him to the exit*) Alex! Let me help! I can make you tea. What kind do you like?!

BRYCE exits. SAGE enters from a different door during the next line.

JORDAN: Okie dokie... I'll... just wait here, I guess.

SAGE: Well, hello my little superstar!

JORDAN: Oh, hey.

SAGE: "Oh, hey" is that how you treat your agent? Huh? Baby, honey, snookums, my favorite client. You better get ready to pucker up as I've been playing hardball with the execs. After the ratings pour in for the finale and they decide to renew the show, which is looking good, you are going to get a sweet, sweet deal.

JORDAN: Oh, yea?

SAGE: (*mocking*) "Oh, yea?" What the hell is wrong with you? You didn't get enough sleep or what?

JORDAN: No, I'm fine it's just...

SAGE: (*interrupting*) Look, you are going to be the highest paid actor in television. I said if they don't flip you to the top credit and give you at least 20% more than Alex then you might just have to take your talent elsewhere.

JORDAN: Well, I'm not sure...

SAGE: (*interrupting*) They were trembling in their shoes. You should have seen the look on their faces! I said, if you don't start appreciating my client he's going to quit!

JORDAN: I want to quit!

SAGE: Oh, come on! Not this again! You say this all the time. (*imitating whining*) I'm stressed, I have an upset tummy, I have anxiety, I have food allergies, I'm depressed, I wash my hands 20 times a day because the germs are going to get me.

JORDAN: Hey, stop making fun of me. I know I've got some issues.

SAGE: (*calm but patronizing*) Honey, honey, I know... they're as real as Santa Clause and Christmas is coming in the form of a huge payout sooooo my little sweetie... (*sternly*) get your shit together.

JORDAN: It's too much stress, the lines and all the people and the touching. Ten years is a nice round number to end on.

SAGE: Are you insane? You're filthy rich from this show, and thus, I'm a percentage of filthy rich. They want to renew it for five seasons, that's unheard of! And it can't be that bad for you, you've done it for ten years!

JORDAN: It wasn't so bad at the start before everything blew up and it became a hit. Why can't we just have virtual meetings for these things? Before we came out, Alex was eating a powdered, jelly filled donut. He got powder all over the table.

SAGE: Sounds like a typical Tuesday night (*sniffs and rubs nose*).

JORDAN: Good thing I bring my cleaning supplies. And I look down and there is a glob of jelly on my script!

SAGE: Don't you still laminate your script?

JORDAN: Of course I do?!

SAGE: Then just wipe it off.

JORDAN: The lamination is to protect it from airborne particles not globs of goop! And THAT is why I always bring a backup script! Ugh, I just hate this! Each year it's more interviews in musty studios, more extras on set, more fans with *(starts to breathe heavier as he's talking and start to hyperventilate)* bacteria-covered photos of me trying to get me to sign it with a marker they've likely been chewing on after not washing their hands in some sleazy restroom with puddles of urine on the floor. Puddles so big that cockroaches drowned in them. *(hunch over hyperventilating)* I think I might puke. *(making a dry heave noise)*

SAGE: Maybe you should go to the bathroom.

JORDAN: Oh god not the bathroom! Have you been listening to me?!

SAGE: To be honest, not really.

ALEX returns holding a cup of tea and SAGE pushes JORDAN out of the room quickly.

SAGE: Okay, there you go, the bathrooms down that way.

ALEX: *(looking around to see if anyone from the show is in the room)* Sage, why are you here?

SAGE: "Why are you here?" Is that how you treat your agent? Huh? Baby, honey, snookums, my favorite client. You better get ready to pucker up as I've been playing hardball with the execs. After the ratings pour in for the finale and they decide to renew the

show, which is looking good, you are going to get a sweet, sweet deal.

ALEX: You can't be here. I don't want people to know I have a new agent.

SAGE: Oh, that hurts. Are you embarrassed of me? Look, nobody has to know I'm here for you. I'm always hanging around these things and I represent many clients.

ALEX: I can see that. It looks like you're still working with Jordan. How good of a deal can you get me if you're working with him too.

SAGE: I was just telling him that I only represent the best talent and his star is falling. Did you see him? He didn't take it very well. I thought he was going to puke. It was some tough love.

ALEX: I don't really care about...

SAGE: (*interrupting*) Look, you are going to be the highest paid actor in television. And I told them if they don't keep you as the top credit and give you at least 20% more than Jordan then you might just have to take your talent elsewhere.

ALEX: Wait, they were considering giving him the first credit? Do they forget who I am? My talent?! My training?! And they want to take my top billing!

SAGE: Not on my watch they aren't. They were trembling in their shoes. You should have seen the look on their faces! I said, if you don't start appreciating my client he's going to quit!

BRYCE bursts in holding a cup of tea.

ALEX: What did they say?!

BRYCE: There you are! I have tea for you!

ALEX: *(startled)* This is nobody! Nothing to me!

SAGE: Subtle.

ALEX: *(dismissive to Bryce)* Why are you here, you've already given me tea.

BRYCE: *(approaching and swapping them out)* Yes, yes but that'll be cold by now. You need fresh warm liquids to soothe your throat. *(says in a jesting way)* You'd think a doctor turned detective would know that *(turns away from Alex and lick the cup from bottom to top slowly and creepily. He then turns back abruptly)*. Now come with me! I've blocked off the restroom and have all the faucets going on full hot water. It's an impromptu steam room and a couple minutes in there will make you feel as good as new. *(pulls ALEX towards the exit)*

ALEX: Well, that does sound quite nice.

BRYCE: Just a couple minutes will do. Now sip that tea before it gets cold. I added some honey as well.

ALEX: *(sniffing)* is that rosemary?

BRYCE: That's a home remedy! I can't tell you my secret ingredients! Now come and take your medicine!

Both exit. As they are exiting AVERY is entering a different door and notices SAGE.

AVERY: How'd you get here so quick?

SAGE: “How’d you get here so quick?” Is that how you treat your agent? Huh? Baby, honey, snookums, my favorite director.

AVERY: You’re not my agent.

SAGE: Sorry, your favorite “secret” agent. I do love all of this sneaking around and being an informant.

AVERY: (*nervously approaching hiding his words*) Look, I’m paying you on the “down low.” I don’t want this to become a big thing.

SAGE: Everybody’s treating me like I’m some side piece they’re hiding from their spouse. I should be so lucky.

AVERY: So, what’s the news?

SAGE: Well, as typical, Jordan is playing up his afflictions. Claims he’s going to quit.

AVERY: Dammit, again?

SAGE: I wouldn’t worry, I’ve got the studio all but hooked on a renewal. You deliver a golden finale, and we’ll all get a golden shower of money.

AVERY: I don’t think you want to say it that way.

SAGE: I know what I said.

AVERY: (*dismissive*) Look, Jordan’s not my biggest concern right now. If this thing gets shut down, I’ve got nothing! Nobody is going to hire me! I’m a one trick pony and if this ends, I’m off to the glue factory!

SAGE: Sounds about right.

AVERY: What?! You think I'm a one trick pony?

SAGE: Listen babe, you can be whatever you put your mind to even if that's being a tiny horse or whatever the hell you're talking about. *(clearly sarcastic)* Just believe in your dreams and look inside your heart or whatever to find the answer. Live your best life, speak your truth, additional motivational things...

AVERY: Really, you think so? Wow, thanks. I needed that. Oh, what were you talking to Alex about?

SAGE: *(covering)* I wasn't talking to Alex.

AVERY: You clearly were.

SAGE: *(covering)* Nope.

AVERY: Are you hiding something from me?!

JORDAN and MORGAN start to enter. JORDAN proceeds to be cleaning random things around the room with a bottle and rag. He is wearing large rubber gloves and a face mask.

SAGE: I'm not hiding nothing. Look, my little pony, I think you've been sniffing too much of your own glue...

AVERY: I'm not a one-trick pony!

SAGE whinnies like a horse to mock him.

AVERY: (*noticing people entering and interrupting to cover*) You're back! (*to MORGAN*) Look, I'm sorry. Emotions are running high with so much riding on this episode. Can we just put it behind us?

MORGAN: Sure. Let's just get this thing rolling.

SAGE: (*noticing JORDAN*) Oh hell, he's in maid mode.

AVERY: Can we not get through a single read-through without him cleaning. What the hell happened?

MORGAN: Well, I found him outside the bathroom picking lint off chairs. Now he's noticed spots on shiny surfaces... we're definitely getting the deposit back on this place.

AVERY: Why's he wearing knee pads?

MORGAN: Oh, Alex passed by and knocked over a potted plant and he started picking up pieces of dirt off the carpet with tweezers. I guess he didn't want to get his pants dirty.

BRYCE and ALEX enter.

ALEX: (*annoyed*) Are we ready yet?

AVERY: Just waiting on you.

ALEX: The king is never late. He arrives exactly when he intends to.

BRYCE: The king?! Where does he get this stuff? So clever!

ALEX: You know, I'm glad that washed up has-been dropped out of this episode. Quilt here is a breath of fresh air.

MORGAN: It's Quinn.

ALEX: Yes, whatever.

ALEX takes focus while JORDAN continues to clean. The others watch.

AVERY: Okay, where were we? Right, we'll skip over the clever dialog that halted things in the first place. Okay, let's just skip to the last line on the next page.

ALEX: *(moves into position)* Alright, here we go.

Alex takes a moment of silence apparently getting into character he then begins a series of chants and slowly his voice changes closer to his character.

ALEX: *(quickly)* Nickels, dimes, pennies, quarters. Nickels, dimes, *(slower and closer to character)* pennies, quarters. *(in character's voice)* Nickels, dimes... *(yells loudly and in a higher pitch, all other characters have a visible jump as he yells)* HAAAAAA!! *(clears throat and then begins)*

ALEX*:** This case was just the first symptom of something *(yells abruptly and loudly and in a higher pitch supposedly still prepping his voice. All other characters have a visible jump as he yells)* HAAAAAA!! *(clears throat once more)*. This case was just the first symptom of something far worse... and trust me, the disease has only begun to spread.

ALEX acts out the scene as AVERY describes it. He mimes motions, punches the wall, puts on rubber gloves, looks at his phone to view the email, etc.

AVERY: And crossfade transition, cue up dramatic music. We see a montage of murders, each one just like the last. A single corpse,

no feet, knife through the heart. Detective Alex Anderson M.D. and Detective Casey Brown M.D. examine the bodies one after another. Alex walks away from a corpse and punches the wall in anger. Cut to Casey stitching Alex's hand. Cut to Casey's face sobbing, cut to a bag of morphine, cut and zoom to his face, cut to bag, cut to face. We cut back to Alex. A new email notification appears. From "unknown." Subject "Oops." Alex opens the email and it shows just an address. We cut back to the morphine bag... the camera zooms out slowly revealing its hanging up. Cut back to Alex putting on rubber gloves and then getting into his car. Cut back to the IV bag. The camera follows the tube down to the IV in Casey's arm as he lies passed out in bed. We cut back to Alex driving while on his cell phone. Cut back to Casey in a puddle of his own drool and sweat, the camera pans to his phone on the table ringing while he is unresponsive. As the music fades we see Alex's car is parking at an abandoned building... and action.

ALEX*:** Hey Casey, I know it's late, but I received a weird email. It said "Oops" and led me to 573 Wallaburton Rd. It's out in the middle of nowhere and it's pitch black out.

AVERY: *(takes out a flashlight and shines it around)* He takes out a flashlight and turns it on as he walks toward the abandoned building alone.

ALEX*:** This is the part of the horror movie where you'd yell at the television, "Don't go in there!" But I've got a hunch there's something important in here. When the clues are unclear, I operate on instinct.

AVERY: We cut to him inside shining a light down on another corpse.

ALEX: *(breaking momentarily in a loud whisper to BRYCE)* Pssst! Pssst! Queef! Queef, that's you!

BRYCE runs over lays on the ground and hold the knife handle to his chest.

AVERY: He squats down near the body and starts scanning it with the flashlight.

ALEX*:** Not another one. Feet gone. No damage on the legs, thighs, stomach. And, you guessed it, a knife in the heart. Hmmm, that doesn't look right.

AVERY: He already put on rubber gloves when he left the house. He grabs the handle of the knife and pulls it.

ALEX picks up the blade handle and looks at it.

AVERY: Unexpectedly, there is no blade. He brings it closer to his face and sniffs.

ALEX*:** Is that... ketchup?

ALEX takes out a ketchup packet, opens it with his teeth, puts a dab on the knife handle and then sniffs.

AVERY: Just then the corpse rises up and his hand shoves a needle in Alex's neck. Alex falls over and fades in and out of consciousness. He wakes eventually with the corpse looming over him.

BRYCE stands up and simulates stabbing ALEX in the neck.

BRYCE*:** *(loudly)* Was I supposed to be a dead body? It must have been a mix-up. Oops. *(laughs maniacally)*

ALEX falls to the ground. He stands up again as AVERY describes the next scene.

AVERY: Fade to black. A bright flash and lens flare as Alex opens his eyes. He's tied to a chair. There's a gag in his mouth and he is disoriented. He can see a figure appear...

ALEX: (*breaking character*) Stop!

JORDAN: (*approaches him with his rag in hand*) That's not the line.

ALEX: I know it's not the line; I mean we're stopping for a moment.

MORGAN: Oh, not again. What now?

ALEX: I don't need to explain myself to you. I do my best work in the moment, in real scenarios, with real props. If I'm going to be sitting, bound and gagged in this scene then I need to be sitting, bound and gagged to experience the full range of that... experience.

MORGAN: Well, I'm glad that you didn't need to explain yourself. So, you need to be bound and gagged in a chair to "act" like you are bound and gagged in a chair? Doesn't that sort of take the acting out of the... acting?

ALEX: Ha! As if you'd know the first thing about the craft of acting!

BRYCE: Listen to the man! How do you expect him to perform without the tools he needs?

ALEX: Thank you Quillbur.

MORGAN: It's Quinn.

ALEX: Yes, whatever.

JORDAN: (*going to grab a chair*) Here, I'll get you a chair.

ALEX: Just stop. Do you see those chairs? Stiff, planks of unartistic matter. I need something with range so that I can emote!

BRYCE: What kind of operation are you running here? These are basic requests!

ALEX: You're damned right Quasimodo.

MORGAN: (*referring to ALEX*) He can't be that dumb, can he? He has to be joking, right?

AVERY: (*had already been on his way to get the items*) Sorry, sorry! I got your request for this scene, and it slipped my mind. Look, I've got a swivel chair so you have your "range" and a rope that we can bind you with.

ALEX: Where's my gag?

AVERY: (*looking around*) I've got the gag. I've got the gag? I had the gag! It was on the list. I got it, I swear!

SAGE: I've got an extra gag in my car if you need to borrow one.

ALEX: I think not! So Avery, is this to be an invisible prop now, eh? (*noticing JORDAN holding the rag he has been cleaning with. He approaches him to take it.*) Jordan, here, give me that rag.

JORDAN: What?

ALEX: The rag you idiot, I'll use it as a gag.

JORDAN: No!

ALEX: What do you mean no? I just need it for the scene.

JORDAN: But it's not for you. It's mine!

ALEX: (*grabs onto the rag and starts a tug of war*) Give it to me.

JORDAN: Stop, it's mine. Are you crazy? I need it.

ALEX takes the rag from him.

ALEX: Ha ha! Victory! (*runs back closer to the chair*)

JORDAN: You're a jerk! Why can't you just be nicer?!

ALEX: Why don't you try to be BETTER! I've carried you for 10 seasons through this mud they call a television drama and I'm exhausted you talentless hack!

JORDAN is clearly hurt and cowering and sniffing.

ALEX: (*annoyed*) Oh stop it. Don't cry!

JORDAN: I'm not crying.

ALEX: Oh here, take back your stupid rag! (*motions with the rag*).

JORDAN: No, no, no! It's ruined now, it's got your germs all over it. (*starts breathing heavily*).

ALEX: You've got to be kidding me.

SAGE: I smell nuts.

AVERY: Why are you so crude?

SAGE: Not those nuts, nuts for eating.

BRYCE: Well, that's random.

SAGE: Is there a nut vendor here?

JORDAN: *(still breathing heavily)* Nuts?! Oh no! Oh no!

SAGE: Hey, I'm hungry, I got here too late to grab a plate.

JORDAN: Who has nuts?! I'm ALLERGIC to nuts people! We've been through this!

ALEX: That's it! I need a break!

MORGAN: You've got to be kidding me!

AVERY: Come on, let's just move things along here as we've got a lot of ground to cover.

ALEX: I said I need a break. Don't test me you nitwit! I'll be back in as soon as I've composed myself. *(throws down rag, rope, and script as he exits)*

BRYCE: I'll come with you!

ALEX: Not this time Quagmire. I need to be alone!

BRYCE: *(longingly as ALEX leaves)* I'll wait for you!

MORGAN: Avery! Quit letting him push you around! Put your foot down!

AVERY: (*AVERY starts confronting ALEX as MORGAN directs him*) Look, I've got to put my foot down here.

MORGAN: (*feeding him lines in a stage whisper*) You're being an asshole!

AVERY: (*to ALEX*) You're being... (*turns back to MORGAN*) I can't say that!

MORGAN: Do it!

AVERY: (*to ALEX*) You're being an... an A-hole!

ALEX: Excuse me?!

AVERY: A-hole! A... whole... lot of time went into this show so... so... so...

MORGAN: Shape up or...

AVERY: Shape up or...

MORGAN: You're fired!

AVERY: (*to MORGAN*) I can't do that! That's the networks decision!

MORGAN: (*directed to AVERY*) You're useless!

AVERY: (*assertively to ALEX*) You're useless!

MORGAN: Well don't say that!

ALEX: I will take as long as I want. Do you forget that I am the king? PEASANT!

ALEX exits.

AVERY: *(after ALEX has left... trying to act tough and yelling)* Oh yea! Well, if you don't come back in five minutes, then maybe... maybe we'll wait ten! But probably not longer! We'll see I guess...

MORGAN: I've really had about enough of him. Can we just keep going?

AVERY: We can't do it without him.

MORGAN: Why not? He's so perfect he doesn't need the practice, let's just move this along so we can all go home. You fill in for him. Just read his lines.

AVERY: I can't do that! I'm not an actor! *(discouraged but getting an idea as he notices the audience)* Oh, oh, oh! What an opportunity! We have these fine people here. Would someone here like to fill in as Alex? This is a great chance for you to see what it's like to be a star. Anyone?

AVERY walks about considering audience members and eventually selects the VOLUNTEER.

AVERY: *(pointing)* You!

VOLUNTEER: *(protesting)* No, no, no. Not me. *(points to another audience member or encourages someone else to help out).*

AVERY: Oh, come one! *(to others in the audience)* Come on everyone, give him a little encouragement.

The VOLUNTEER is still protesting a bit but reluctantly stands up. AVERY encourages the audience to applaud and encourage him. VOLUNTEER follows AVERY to the

other actors. The rope and rag are removed and stored to be retrieved later. The rag will be switched so a "clean" gag can be used for the volunteer.

AVERY: Alrighty, let's get this show going. Now... oh what's your name?

VOLUNTEER: <NAME>

AVERY: Okay, <NAME> you are going to fill in for Alex. You'll have a few lines and then we'll play out the scene where you have been bound by the evil, devious Riley Smith. Now, let's take the first line to see what we are working with, just be loud so everyone can hear you.

AVERY hands the VOLUNTEER the script and indicates a starting point). VOLUNTEER should appear to be a real audience member who was not expecting to be participating in this way. They are reading these words for the first time so it's okay for them to fumble a bit, turn a page, or read an incorrect line. Any mistakes should sound natural and not forced. During our performances we had a different prepared volunteer each night, though you could have a single volunteer for the whole run. The actor playing AVERY would change up the directions and attempt to throw off the volunteer to keep them from sounding rehearsed or be too obvious they were a plant.

VOLUNTEER: Ummm... okay, here we go. *(still speaking with their own voice but maybe a bit louder and stiff as if auditioning badly)* This case was just the first symptom of something far worse... and trust me, the disease has only begun to spread.

AVERY is sort of rude in his notes indicating the volunteer is not very talented. We want the audience to be

uncomfortable on behalf of the volunteer and happy they were not chosen.

AVERY: Wow... that was... you reading words from a page. Okay... let's try again but maybe you could... act... as though you care? I mean just a little, maybe?

VOLUNTEER: *(attempting again)* This case was just the first symptom of something far worse... and trust me, the disease has only begun to spread.

AVERY: *(groans)* Yea, let's just move on. And crossfade, bodies, morphine, email, abandoned building... and action! *(waits a second and addresses the VOLUNTEER)* That's you.

VOLUNTEER: *(not quite sure of his place as direction was skipped)* Uh... sorry.. Ummm... Okay um... *(asking if he's found the correct line)* "Casey I know It's late?"

AVERY: Yes.

VOLUNTEER: Casey, I know it's late, but I received a weird email. It said "Oops" and led me to 573 Wallaburton Rd. It's out in the middle of nowhere and it's pitch black out.

AVERY: Okay, a small change. It's not you... well I mean it is you but also, I've never really liked that last line. Let's change it from "It's out in the middle of nowhere and it's pitch black out" to "It's out in the middle of nowhere and danger is afoot!" You get it? See, it's foreshadowing because the bodies have missing feet. Okay so take just that last line with the changes.

VOLUNTEER: It's out in the middle of nowhere and... danger is afoot.

AVERY: I mean this is partially on me... I did select you for this. Let's just move on. He takes out a flashlight and turns it on as he walks toward the abandoned building alone.

VOLUNTEER: This is the part of the horror movie where you'd yell...

AVERY: (*cuts them off*) Whoa, whoa, whoa. Look this is primetime network television. Let's keep it clean. It's Horr-OR movie not "whore" movie.

VOLUNTEER: This is the part of the (*over emphasizing "horror"*) horror movie where you'd yell at the television, "Don't go in there!" But I've got a hunch there's something important in here. When the clues are unclear, I operate on instinct.

AVERY: We cut to him inside shining a light down on another corpse. He squats down near the body and starts scanning it with the flashlight.

VOLUNTEER: Not another one. Feet gone...

AVERY: (*interrupting*) See! Feet gone! "Danger is afoot"... foreshadowing. Take it again.

VOLUNTEER: Not another one. Feet gone. No damage on the legs, thighs, stomach. And, you guessed it, a knife in the heart. Hmmm, that doesn't look right.

AVERY: He grabs the knife with it. Unexpectedly, there is no blade. He brings it closer to his face and sniffs.

VOLUNTEER: Is that... ketchup?

AVERY: Just then the corpse rises up and his hand shoves a needle in Alex's neck. Alex falls over and fades in and out of consciousness. He wakes eventually with the corpse looming over him.

BRYCE*:** Was I supposed to be a dead body? It must have been a mix-up. Oops.

AVERY: Fade to black. A bright flash and lens flare as Alex opens his eyes. He's tied to a chair. There's a gag in his mouth and he is disoriented. *(to VOLUNTEER)* Okay, Quinn, please take the script <INSERT NAME'S> script. Okay, <NAME> please have a seat *(indicates the chair on wheels)*.

VOLUNTEER sits.

AVERY: *(approaches with the rope)* Okay and we'll tie your hands with the rope *(continues explaining as he ties)*. So, I'll give you direction as Quinn delivers his lines. Just do what feels natural. Do what you feel you would do if you were bound and gagged. Oh gagged! *(goes back to get the "clean" gag and shoves it in VOLUNTEERS mouth)*. Okay, okay *(reads script)* He can see a figure appear standing before him. And... action!

After some time, AVERY can begin scratching the hand that touched the rag. As the scenes progress the scratching can increase.

BRYCE*:** Wakey wakey detective. Or should I say, Doctor Detective.

AVERY: *(to VOLUNTEER)* Try to speak to him but you can't because of the gag.

VOLUNTEER: *(mumbles expressively)*

BRYCE*:** I bet you're wondering who I am. You may not recognize me on these prosthetic feet. Well let me refresh your memory. A patient lays in a bed just waking up from surgery. You Dr. Anderson stand before me asking how I'm feeling. "I can't feel my feet," I say. You chuckle and respond "I should hope not, we amputated them." (*imitates the doctor's chuckle and keeps laughing louder and more maniacally*).

AVERY: Riley slaps Alex. Again! Again! Again! Alex is shaken and woozy from the hits.

BRYCE*:** (*says the words*) Slap! Slap!

VOLUNTEER apparently follows the actions but is in fact having side effects of the poison.

AVERY: (*to VOLUNTEER*) Very good <NAME>, you're picking up this acting thing quickly.

BRYCE*:** (*says the words*) Slap! Slap!

VOLUNTEER thrashes again and afterwards continues to be woozy as the poison would start to take affect.

BRYCE*:** I pleaded with you, "Why? Why would you take my feet doctor?!" And you said "As your orthopedic surgeon, Mr. Smith, I could see no other option to address the chronic pain in your feet." Isn't that just wonderful! Except... I had a heart condition! I was recommended to you... a HEART surgeon! What kind of maniac is a foot and heart surgeon!

VOLUNTEER starts panicking and begins to struggle to get out of his bindings and tries to speak.

AVERY: <NAME> simply brilliant! You might just end up being in season 11!

BRYCE*:** And when I pointed out the error you said “It must have been a mix-up. Oops.” Well doctor, it’s my time to operate on you, let’s start with the heart.

AVERY: He brandishes a knife, approaches and stabs him in the leg!

BRYCE approaches the VOLUNTEER and imitates stabbing with each line. The VOLUNTEER in his last gasps tries to get someone to help him. This coincides with the lines about being stabbed.

BRYCE*:** Oops, was that not your heart? It must have been a mix-up.

AVERY: He stabs him in the arm!

BRYCE*:** Oops!

AVERY: He stabs him in the abdomen!

BRYCE*:** Oops! (*maniacally laughs*)

AVERY: Alex starts to lose blood and eventually consciousness.

VOLUNTEER slowly starts to slump and is eventually motionless.

AVERY: Aaaaand scene! Ladies and gentlemen a big round of applause for <VOLUNTEER’S NAME> (*starts to clap and encourages the audience to do so*).

ALEX bursts in dramatically, sweating, stumbling, murmuring and scratching the hand that touched the rag.

ALEX: (*wailing*) Something isn't right, I feel weak, my hand burns like the fires of hell!"

BRYCE: (*runs to him to help*) Oh my god! What happened?!

ALEX: I've taken ill!

SAGE: (*can't let the joke go by*) Someone should call a doctor! (*giggles a bit*) What? Too soon?

Meanwhile, MORGAN notices the VOLUNTEER isn't responsive.

BRYCE: (*to ALEX*) Has this happened before?!

AVERY: No! And he's got a clean bill of health, we just had to run physicals ahead of the potential contract renewals.

MORGAN checks the pulse of the VOLUNTEER.

MORGAN: Hey, guys, I think we have a problem.

BRYCE: Well, of course, do you see Alex?! He needs help!

MORGAN: Not him, our volunteer. He's... dead.

SAGE: What do you mean he's dead?

MORGAN: What else could I mean? He's dead! Don't you know what dead means?

AVERY: He's not dead! He's only passed out. In the scene, Riley's forceful blows knock him unconscious. He awakens in the next scene.

MORGAN: Could you shut up about your stupid show. He's actually dead, no pulse, gonzo, DEAD!

ALL: *(say the word)* GASP!

JORDAN: Oh, that's going to leave a mess!

ALEX: I think I'm going to faint!

SAGE: *(says looking for a laugh)* Somebody call a doctor!

Everyone scowls and groans at SAGE.

SAGE: What? Comedy is about timing. I was just trying again.

BRYCE: I'll go get you some more tea!

BRYCE rushes out.

ALEX: *(yells after him)* Thank you dear Quaalude.

MORGAN: The name is Quinn! Quinn! QUINN!

The real QUINN bursts in.

QUINN: I'm here! I'm here!

AVERY: Who the hell are you?

QUINN: I'm Quinn Taylor. I'm here! I'm ready to tie someone up and torture them!

JORDAN: Well, the plot just got a lot more interesting.

MORGAN: What do you mean you are Quinn?

SAGE: *(snarky paying back for the previous comment)* What else could he mean? He's Quinn! Don't you know what Quinn means? Ha! *(laughs)*

QUINN: I'm so sorry I'm late! Traffic can be murder in this city.

AVERY: I give up.

QUINN: What are you all looking at? If looks could kill!

MORGAN: Just tell me one more time your name and why you're here?

QUINN: I'm Quinn Taylor, I'm the replacement for the Riley Smith character. Weren't you expecting me.

JORDAN: Not anymore.

BRYCE burst back in frantic. He is crying and yelling.

BRYCE: Alex! They didn't have anymore tea. I tried Alex!! I tried!

ALEX: I'm fine don't worry about me. I think we have bigger problems. *(points to QUINN)*

BRYCE is still frantic and then notices a new person in the room. His demeanor changes completely and he approaches QUINN completely normally and pleasant.

BRYCE: I'm sorry, things are so crazy around here. I'm Quinn Taylor, and you are?

QUINN: Um...I guess now I don't know?

SAGE: He's lost his memory, somebody call..

MORGAN: If you say “call a doctor” one more time, you’ll need one!

SAGE: Tough crowd...

MORGAN: (to *BRYCE*) His name is Quinn Taylor, he’s claiming to be you.

BRYCE: But I’m me!

QUINN: Well, I’m me too!

BRYCE: But you aren’t me!

QUINN: I know I’m not you! I’m me, you’re you except you shouldn’t be me because me is me!

MORGAN: Cut the bullshit! Who is Quinn Taylor?

BRYCE: Me!

QUINN: Me!

JORDAN: People can have the same names. You have to be more specific. Which one of you is the Quinn Taylor hired by the studio to play the Riley Smith character.

BRYCE: Me!

QUINN: Me!

ALEX: Bravo, that worked so much better.

QUINN: I can prove it! I know the lines! (*changing into his character’s voice*) Was I supposed to be a dead body? It must have been a mixup! Oops!!

AVERY: We've already done that scene. Quinn already did those lines.

QUINN: I wasn't even here!

BRYCE: It was me. I'm Quinn!

QUINN: (*approaches angrily*) If you keep pretending to be me, I'm going to find out your real name from your headstone!

JORDAN: Woah, woah, woah! Enough, we don't need another dead body. I'm already worried about the cleanup on the first.

QUINN: Dead body?!

MORGAN: Our volunteer from tonight is dead.

SAGE: (*to QUINN*) This wasn't in the script was it sweetheart?

BRYCE: Nope!

QUINN: Nope!

MORGAN: Alright, knock it off! We can't deal with this right now. Someone is dead!

JORDAN: Well, technically it could be important. I mean a person wanders onto the set claiming to be someone else. One of them could have infiltrated the set to try to kill someone.

ALEX: How can you know it's murder? We don't even know how he died.

MORGAN: Well, that's not entirely true.

AVERY: (*approaches the body*) Look can we at least get him out of here. He doesn't deserve to be on display with a gag in his mouth (*reaches to remove the rag*).

MORGAN: (*verbally stops him*) Don't touch that!

AVERY: (*annoyed*) What's wrong now?

MORGAN: Step away!

MORGAN walks over removes a plastic baggy and tong/tweezers from his pocket and removes the rag and slips it in the bag.

ALEX: What are you doing?

MORGAN: Collecting evidence.

JORDAN: Why do you have those? You're not a cop anymore.

MORGAN: Old habits die hard.

SAGE: Oh, this is cute.

MORGAN: What?

SAGE: You're always complaining about how ridiculous the show is and now you're "collecting evidence." Oh, oh! Say, "I'm saving the world one evidence baggy at a time."

JORDAN: Really, this is a job for the actual police.

SAGE: Are you insane? If the cops come in here right now this is going to become a spectacle. If it becomes a spectacle there's no

way they are going to renew the show. I bet that would make you happy you sniffing little dweeb.

JORDAN: Hey, that's not very nice!

AVERY: He's right! They'll shut us down. Maybe... maybe we can figure it out.

SAGE: Bingo! We get the facts, spin the optics and deposit the thinnest silver lining right into the bank.

ALEX: So snide.

SAGE: Do you want to lose your cash cow, huh Shakespeare?

ALEX: How do we know there is a killer? This person could have had a heart condition.

MORGAN: Two words (*leaves long spaces*)... Itchy... Nuts...

SAGE: (*giggling at the word*) Ha...huh huh huh...

AVERY: Morgan, have you been drinking?

MORGAN: Not "itchy nuts!" Itchy... period... nuts... period.

SAGE: (*giggling at the word*) Ha...huh huh huh...

MORGAN: (*to SAGE*) Shut up you idiot. Remember when you asked about a nut vendor.

SAGE: Yea, so?

MORGAN: Why did you ask that?

SAGE: Because I was starving, and I smelled nuts.

MORGAN: Did anyone else smell nuts?

BRYCE: I guess I smelled nuts too.

QUINN: You're nuts!

BRYCE: (*coy*) No, I'm not!

QUINN: Yes, you are!

BRYCE: (*upset*) No, I'm not!

QUINN: Shut up Quinn!

BRYCE: Ha! I'm Quinn! I win!

The two start to verbally squabble.

MORGAN: Enough! The nut smell is important to why he died.

JORDAN: I knew it!! There were nuts around here! He ate nuts, he's allergic to nuts, the nuts killed him! (*starts hyperventilating*)

MORGAN: It's not nuts!

SAGE: Seems like deez.

MORGAN: Deez what?

SAGE: Deez nuts! Ha! Got em'

MORGAN: I really don't like you! Its hydrogen cyanide!

QUINN: (*sarcastically*) Yep. That makes sense.

BRYCE: Shut up Quinn!

QUINN: Ha! I'm Quinn!

MORGAN: Stop! Hydrogen cyanide can smell like almonds to some people. That alone isn't enough to identify it. But if it comes into contact with skin, it can cause a rash and make you itchy. Avery and Alex, the two of you have been scratching your hands for a while now. It's cyanide rash. Avery, you touched the rag only for a short time before putting it in the volunteer's mouth but still you're itching. Alex is having more severe reactions because his skin was exposed to it longer.

JORDAN: It's a good thing I was wearing gloves!

BRYCE: Oh my god! You're the killer, you tried to kill Alex! You bastard!

JORDAN: What? No! I didn't do anything.

MORGAN: Innocent until proven guilty people. This isn't *Prescription Justice* where you just get to make shit up and send people to jail in a span of 45 minutes. Jordan, I'll need your cleaning bottle though. I suspect it contains more poison.

JORDAN: (*disgusted*) Oh...oh... oh... oh... (*pulls out the bottle with two fingertips and hands it to MORGAN*)

MORGAN: I agree with Sage. I think we need to keep this quiet.

SAGE: Alright! High five! (*raises hand up high*)

MORGAN: Not for the optics! Whoever did this could panic if the cops show up. They could kill again. Let's keep this quiet.

QUINN: Well, couldn't the killer just walk out?

MORGAN: If someone leaves, they reveal themselves as the killer and we'll catch them in less than ten minutes. They won't get far, and we'll know without a doubt they're guilty if they flee. I need to do a bit of investigating. I'm going to look around a bit and I'll be questioning each of you separately.

BRYCE: Why separately? **QUINN:** Why separately?

MORGAN: (*annoyed*) So you can't coordinate your answer...

BRYCE: Makes sense? **QUINN:** Makes sense?

They both give each other a glare.

MORGAN: I really, really, really HATE this job! Alright let's get him out of here. Just put him in the back for now. Come on Alex. Avery. Give me a hand.

BRYCE: Are you insane! He's in no condition to move a body. He needs to rest.

ALEX: You are so thoughtful, Quinn.

QUINN: What?

ALEX: Not you! I bet you did this, didn't you? Some sort of fanatic that snuck on set and is trying to cover it up with this facade!

BRYCE: (*to ALEX*) Come on, let's get you somewhere quiet... and alone... so you can... rest.

BRYCE leads ALEX out.

QUINN: (*waits for them to exit*) Anyone getting murder vibes from that one? Maybe we'll find Alex "quietly resting alone" with his throat slit. Okay, I guess let's get the body out of here.

MORGAN: Not you, we don't know who you are just yet.

QUINN: I'm Quinn!

BRYCE: (*opens up the door or yells offstage*) I'm Quinn! (*slams door*)

QUINN: This is ridiculous! What am I going to do? Kill him again?

JORDAN: He has a point.

MORGAN: Oh, yea wise-guy? Why don't you help him then?

JORDAN: No, no, no, it's a body! It's covered in germs and fluids and... death!

MORGAN: You're wearing gloves! Do it!

JORDAN and QUINN start to remove the body of the VOLUNTEER. There can be various ad libbing as the body is leaving. The two exit with the victim on the chair.

SAGE: Well, I have to make a few calls and cancel some appointments due to the "delay."

SAGE Starts to exit.

MORGAN: Well, thanks so much for the help, really nice of you to chip in.

SAGE: Do you want me to miss the appointments and raise suspicion?

MORGAN: (*annoyed*) Go!

SAGE: Oh, Avery, could I have a word with you please.

AVERY: (*covering their connection*) What? No! Maybe... sure! Ha!

SAGE exits and AVERY rushes to follow.

AVERY: (*on his way out*) Yea! Ha ha, meetings! Am I right?

AVERY exits. MORGAN is left alone.

MORGAN: (*to himself and rubbing*) Okay Morgan, what the hell happened. Think. Think. Think.

BRYCE bursts in.

BRYCE: I'm baaaaaaaack!

MORGAN: Oh goodie. How's Alex?

BRYCE: I just put him in a quiet room with the lights out so he can rest.

MORGAN: (*not paying much attention*) That's nice of you.

BRYCE: It's the least I can do, I'm Alex's biggest fan!

MORGAN: (*still not really paying attention*) Oh really?

BRYCE: Yes, for years! I'm so worried about his hand. Poor Alex... what if he can never perform surgery again?

MORGAN: (*perks up and turns to BRYCE*) You think it's that bad?

BRYCE: Well, I sure hope not. I mean, I know he's a detective now, but you've seen him pick up the scalpel in times of need. Alex is a good man.

MORGAN: Alex Peters.

BRYCE: Who's that?

MORGAN: Oh, I'm sorry, I mixed them up for a second. Alex Peters is an actor.

BRYCE: Never heard of him.

MORGAN: (*starting to back up away to the exit*) Well, I will pray for a speedy recovery of Detective Alex Anderson M.D.

BRYCE: Awwww, that's very sweet of you. Thank you!

MORGAN: I think... I think I just might go see how he's doing. Just make sure he's breathing... I mean... sleeping quietly.

BRYCE: You should really leave him alone. He's resting.

MORGAN: Just a quick check. Just checking his pulse... condition... (*starts to rush toward the exit*)

BRYCE: (*getting upset*) I said he's resting. Leave him alone! The doctor isn't taking appointments! Leave him alone!

MORGAN exits while BRYCE chases him.

END OF ACT I

INTERMISSION

In a dinner theatre setting the characters were able to return after a few minutes to mingle around and interact with the audience, answer questions and try to throw off suspicion. In our showing, this was a time where dessert was served. We also allowed the audience to make guesses at this time and they were entered into a prize drawing if they made the correct guesses. The winner was announced at the conclusion of the show.

This portion of the evening is not necessary, but the audiences seemed to enjoy interacting with the actors in character and some who were mystery fans would be very inquisitive of the characters and try to figure out who did it.

END OF ACT I SAMPLE

Murder on Television continues in Act II, where the case gets solved.

Request the complete script free at joshnichols.me/murder-mystery-scripts/

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