

EXCERPT FROM "There's no 'I' in 'Ducks'"

SETTING: A room in a seedy lodgings house.

TIME PERIOD: Contemporary

CHARACTERS, in order of appearance

POLICEMAN A man. Local accent, depending on where the play is performed.

DETECTIVE A woman. The policeman's superior. A tough lady, in the mode of TV drama detectives. Australian accent.

(Excerpt)

The action till now: The policeman has called in his superior to examine the case of a dead-body behind a sofa. They have been discussing the likely circumstances of the victim's death. (The dialogue of this play is built by the liberal use of ninety-one cliches, mainly of business-speak)

POLICEMAN The money was probably delivered in an envelope. A plain brown envelope. Do you think he was under duress?

DETECTIVE You mean they made him a value-added proposition he couldn't refuse?

POLICEMAN (*Looking at the body*) And all he wanted was to spend more time with his family.

DETECTIVE We're on the same page. Go to the next level. Look for clues.

POLICEMAN (*Squatting down to look closely at the legs*) Clean-cut wounds. Possibly made by a sword. No blood-stained footprints. What's this! Caterpillar tyre tracks! And (*picking it up*) a paper label that says "Made in Japan". My guess is he was attacked by a sword-wielding robot.

DETECTIVE A hi-tec murder then.

POLICEMAN Very (*makes quotes signs*) "bleeding edge", you might say.

DETECTIVE Why reinvent the wheel?

POLICEMAN So, he comes here for his money. And instead he gets murdered. (*Profoundly, to the audience*) For him, that's a real game-changer.

DETECTIVE A lose-lose situation.

POLICEMAN I bet he'd like to hit the reset button. At the end of the day, what have we got?

DETECTIVE A body.

POLICEMAN A dead body.

DETECTIVE It is what it is.

POLICEMAN Any idea who's behind it?

DETECTIVE The usual suspects.

POLICEMAN Will they talk?

DETECTIVE I can be very persuasive.

POLICEMAN How?

DETECTIVE I go in disguise to chat them up in a bar. I leverage my femininity to give them the thirty-thousand-foot view.

POLICEMAN Pardon?

DETECTIVE I wear a low-cut dress.

POLICEMAN You don't beat around the bush, do you? Drawing them in with the low-hanging fruit.

What happens next: The string of cliches continues till the end of this short, 10-minute play.