

# **MURDER MYSTERY THEATRE** October 8, 2005

## *Cast of Characters*

*John Q.--The Treasurer*

*Barbara B.—The Registrar*

*Mark S.—The Recording Secretary*

*Kate M.—The Literature Grapevine Rep*

*Carole D.—The Detective*

*Ken M.—The Dead DCMC*

*(Everyone except for Ken are sitting on chairs and talking: Ken is offstage in the stage right room)*

JOHN: It was a really great idea for Ken to have us all come here for dinner.

BARBARA: Yeah, it sure was. I've had a lot of fun getting to know you guys a little better.

MARK: Who knew what a great cook he was too?

KATE: Yeah, I was surprised. I wonder what's taking him so long with the dessert though?

MARK: He said he was going to send an email real quick, then come back with dessert.

JOHN: Oh, I think I hear him coming back now.

*(Ken enters walking slowly, stumbling, obviously in pain, carrying several items)*

BARBARA: Ken! What's wrong? *(to the others on stage)* Here, put these chairs together so he can lie down.

*(everyone move chairs together and Ken lies down on them)*

MARK: Ken! Are you okay?

*(Ken moans then drops the items he is carrying and dies)*

*(Carole feels Ken's pulse)*

JOHN: Do you feel a pulse, Carole? Is he okay?

CAROLE: Well, I've got good news and bad news. The bad news is that Ken is dead.

KATE: What's the good news?

CAROLE: The good news is I saved a ton of money on my car insurance by switching to Geico.

BARBARA: How can Dwight be dead? He was perfectly fine just 10 minutes ago!

MARK: It must have been a heart attack or something.

CAROLE: Heart attack? I think not. In my expert opinion this is a case ...of murder most foul!

*(dramatic "Dragnet" music)*

JOHN: Murder? What are you talking about, Carole?

KATE: And how did you get that dramatic "Dragnet" music to play right when you said "murder most foul"? That was cool.

CAROLE: To the trained detective eye the clues here are obvious. This man was murdered.

JOHN: Uh, excuse me, but you are **not** a detective, Carole.

CAROLE: No, but I did stay at a Holiday Inn Express last night.

BARBARA: What makes you think this was murder, "Detective" Carole?

CAROLE: As I said, the clues are obvious. *(forcefully)* No one leaves this room, people! Someone here murdered Ken and I intend to find out *(dramatic pause)* whodunit!

*(everyone slowly looks at everyone else while "Who Are You" plays and PowerPoint opening credits roll)*

MARK: You know, to call someone a murderer without proof is a really terrible thing to do, Carole.

CAROLE: I realize that, Mark and that's why I am going to get to the bottom of this.

KATE: You can't solve a murder mystery without any lab equipment.

CAROLE: I agree, but that's why I always bring my crime-solving kit with me for just such a contingency. *(pulls out bag)*

BARBARA: What's in the bag?

CAROLE: *(names items as she pulls them out of bag)* Rubber gloves, my microscope, and of course my hat. *(puts gloves and hat on)* I'm going to collect all the things Ken dropped when he staggered in here. *(she does that and takes them over to the podium)*

JOHN: Can we just end this charade and call the real police?

CAROLE: You seem awful defensive, John. Do you have something to hide?

MARK: Hey, come to think of it, John was the only one besides Ken to leave this room!

KATE: That's right, I had forgotten about that in all the excitement!

JOHN: I just went to the bathroom! I'm completely innocent!

CAROLE: Innocent, huh? Well then maybe you can explain this! *(picks up the cash box Ken had dropped)*

JOHN: Explain what? It's just the district's petty cash box.

CAROLE: Correction: it's the district petty cash box with blood on it!

JOHN: Blood? I...I don't know anything about any blood!

CAROLE: Well, I don't know either but I tell you what I think could have happened. It's becoming very clear in my mind's eye. (*John PowerPoint starts in sync*) Ken goes to get the desserts from the kitchen. When he tries the light switch it won't turn on because earlier you loosened it. Ken then opens the fridge and that's when you strike, John. Thinking that no one would ever check the petty cash box, you bludgeoned him to death with it.

JOHN: Death by cash box? Are you crazy?

MARK: I don't know, maybe she's crazy like a fox. I mean, that box has is pretty heavy. It had all the quarters we collected from selling sodas. If you hit someone in the right spot it could possibly kill him.

JOHN: But he wasn't dead, you all saw him stagger in here!

CAROLE: And that was your first mistake, John. You thought you had killed him, but he was only unconscious. Then, he came to, stumbled in here, and finally died.

MARK: Sounds plausible to me.

JOHN: Well, I must admit, Mrs. Amateur Detective, that could have been what happened, but I used to watch "Murder She Wrote" every week and Angela Lansbury always said that to find a killer you need to discover who has three things: the means, the motive, and the opportunity to commit the crime. Now, the cash box is a stretch as the means, the opportunity I admit was there, but what would be my motive? Ken was my riding dawg!

MARK: Maybe that's just it. Perhaps you were jealous of his Harley Road King. Maybe you thought that after he was dead, his wife Terri wouldn't want it around anymore and you could swoop in and claim it.

JOHN: What are you, Watson to her Sherlock Holmes now, Mark? That is hardly a motive for murder. Hey, Carole why don't you ask your "assistant" here (*points to Mark*) what Ken was doing with his laptop?

CAROLE: What do you mean?

JOHN: Right there on that laptop case Ken dropped there's the initials "M.S". Since Martha Stewart isn't a district officer it kind of narrows it down to whose it is.

CAROLE: That is a very good observation, John. So, how about it, (*exaggerated*) **Mark Strobach**, why would Ken, who has a laptop, need yours?

MARK: Oh, that's nothing. Ken's laptop got the Crosstalk Virus and he had to take it to the Geek Squad at Best Buy to get fixed so I let him borrow mine.

JOHN: A likely story.

MARK: It's the truth! You're just trying to deflect blame on me, you Cold-Blooded Cash Box Killer!

CAROLE: Okay, both of you calm down! (*picks up the case and opens it and looks at the laptop inside*) Wait a minute. There appears to be some sort of black residue on the keyboard. It looks like scorching. Let me take a look at Ken's fingers. (*she does*)Aha! Just as I suspected.

BARBARA: What? What is it?

CAROLE: There's black residue on two of Ken's fingers as well.

KATE: And? What does that mean?

CAROLE: Well, I can't be sure, but here's what I think might have happened. (*Mark PowerPoint starts in sync*) Ken calls Mark and asks to borrow his laptop. Mark seizes the opportunity to install a miniature shocking device which is triggered by tapping a certain key on the keyboard. Ken turns on the computer, starts typing and when he hits that certain key—ZAP!—he gets hit with enough volts to stop his heart and he dies.

MARK: Again you have the same problems you had when you were accusing John. Number one, the man wasn't dead, he stumbled in here and two, I have no motive to murder him either.

CAROLE: Perhaps you misjudged the electrical jolt and it just stunned him until he came here and subsequently suffered a massive heart attack. As for motive, I'm still working on that.

KATE: Motive, huh? Try this one on: remember when Mark wanted to get a district website going but Ken cast the deciding vote against it? Perhaps that's what pushed him over the edge and turned him into the PC Killer!

MARK: That's ridiculous! Hey, I just thought of something. When we were all at the noon meeting today, Kate got Ken a cup of coffee.

KATE: So what are you trying to imply, Mark?

MARK: Well, Ken told me his coffee tasted funny. I thought it was because the group had a new coffee maker, but maybe Kate put something in it!

KATE: Preposterous!

CAROLE: Well, let me see. If I spray some helioglobus on Ken's face I may be able to get a culture which I can then place under my microscope. *(she sprays Ken's face with the water bottle)*

JOHN: Why are you spraying that on his face?

CAROLE: Two reasons. Number one, it's funny and number two, if there is poison present in his system, trace amounts may have secreted through the pores of his face. *(she scrapes his face with a slide and puts it under the microscope)* Yep! Just as I suspected!

MARK: What is it? Botox?

CAROLE: Well, I can't be certain until I perform a full regimen of tests at my home lab, but there appears to be potassium cyanide present.

JOHN: *(interrupting)* Um, did you say you have a home lab?

CAROLE: Of course. Anyway, I think I can form a picture of what may have happened in my mind's eye: (*Kate Power Point starts in sync*) At the meeting today Kate asks Ken if he wants some coffee. When no one is looking she takes out a vial of potassium cyanide and pours it into his coffee. Ken is none the wiser as he drinks the coffee and the poison wreaks havoc on his nervous system and he dies.

KATE: Nice theory, but your timeline is off. I gave Ken that cup of coffee nine hours ago. If it had happened like you said, he would have died hours ago and not stumble in here like he did!

CAROLE: Ah, but you see, therein is the beauty of using potassium cyanide. While the cyanide is lethal, the potassium acts as a blocking agent which slows absorption into the bloodstream for up to 12 hours which leaves you on the hook as a suspect.

KATE: These are just coincidences and wild-eyed theories, Carole.

CAROLE: I beg to differ, Kate; this is science. There is physical evidence linking you, John, and Mark to Ken's death.

BARBARA: Well, there's no physical evidence linking me to this murder so I guess I'm not a suspect.

JOHN: Wait a minute! I just remembered something! I was walking past Ken and Barbara who were talking after a meeting last night and I heard Barbara say something to Ken which might interest you, Carole.

CAROLE: What was it?

JOHN: She said "I'll kill you, Ken. I'll absolutely kill you."

CAROLE: Um, Barbara, did you say that?

BARBARA: Yes I did.

MARK: Case closed!

BARBARA: Not so fast, let me explain.

MARK: What's to explain? You're the killer.

BARBARA: I am not the killer! Ken was bragging about how good he was at ping pong back in high school and he challenged me to a match. When I said I would kill him, I meant I would beat him badly in ping pong, not take his life! We were going to play tomorrow after the district meeting.

CAROLE: Interesting. I don't know if you are just incredibly unlucky or diabolically cunning, Barbara. You are overheard telling a man you'll kill him and the next day he's dead. Curiously though, you are the only one with no physical evidence connecting you to the crime.

KATE: So what happens now, Carole?

DIANA: Now, I need to think. Someone here killed Ken. Of that I am sure. Still, it could be any one of you. *(pauses)* Hmm. My detective skills are extraordinary, but sometimes it helps to get input from others. Luckily, we have an attractive and intelligent audience here today. So, I think it's time to consult the group conscience. *(to the audience)* Okay everybody listen up. On your tables are blank pieces of paper and pencils. Please take one piece of paper and write your first and last name on it. Then, we will send buckets around the room with the name of the suspects on them. If you think a particular suspect killed Ken, place your one piece of paper in the bucket. So, please right now, write your name on a piece of paper, **not the name of the killer, your** name. *(wait a minute)* Okay, is everyone ready? The suspects are John The Treasurer, Barbara The Registrar, Mark The Recording Secretary, and Kate The Literature Grapevine Rep. *(all of the suspects walk around and collect the votes)*

Okay. Now I will review the evidence and give you my conclusion. *(looks over the evidence as "Jeopardy" music plays)*

All right. I have reviewed the evidence, considered the vote of the audience and I have reached a conclusion. After further review, the blood I had seen on the cash box was just ketchup so John the Treasurer is cleared and is not the killer.

The black scorching I noticed on Mark's laptop keyboard that Ken borrowed was not residue from an electrical shock but actually just dirt from Ken's hands so Mark is cleared. He is not the killer.

The substance I collected from Ken's pores was not potassium cyanide, just excess Red Bull he sweated out, so Kate is cleared. That means the killer must be Barbara!

KATE: But how? Why?

CAROLE: The ping pong clue is what tipped me off. I remember seeing a framed magazine cover at Ken's house once during a district officer's meeting. It was a January 1973 edition of Ping Pong Digest and Ken was on the cover. (*Power Point slide Ken Ping Pong*) Barbara must have saw that and panicked after popping off how she could beat Ken or "kill him" as she said. She knew she would probably be beat, suffer irreparable shame, and thus she bumped off her rival before the match could take place.

BARBARA: Okay I admit it! I did it! But not because I was afraid he was going to beat me in ping pong. What kind of monster do you think I am? I had a good reason for killing Ken: I wanted to be DCMC! I mean, the thrill of chairing the district meeting, having a briefcase, and tapping that gavel. I wanted the title "District Committee Member Chair". It was so much more prestigious than just Registrar.

JOHN: You are a sick, pathetic woman, Barbara. You miss the whole point of service in AA. Titles in AA don't bring glory or honor; they just describe what we do!

BARBARA: Oh.

CAROLE: Well, that explains the why, but how did you do it?

BARBARA: That shows that you should keep your day job "detective". It was ridiculously simple. Actually, it was a slip of the tongue by you Carole that gave me the idea. I had been plotting this murder for months but couldn't think of a way to do it. Then you mentioned three weeks ago in passing that Ken had told you he was deathly allergic to peanuts. So I simply rubbed the dessert dishes that Ken was going to get for everyone with a coat of peanut oil and the rest as they say is history.

CAROLE: Wow, that certainly was a foolproof plan Barbara. Except for one thing...

*(Ken suddenly rises)*

BARBARA: He...he's alive?

JOHN: HE'S ARISEN! HALLELUJAH! KEN IS ARISEN!

DIANA: Calm down before you start a new religion, John. He was never dead. You see, this whole thing was a setup.

KATE: Will somebody please tell me what the heck is going on here?

CAROLE: Gladly. A few weeks ago, Barbara and I were at my house because we were going to go to a meeting. She looked incredibly tired so I asked her if she wanted to take a quick nap. She said if I would wake her up in ten minutes she'd feel great. Well, when I came back to wake her up I learned that Barbara talks in her sleep. She inadvertently revealed how much she hated Ken and wanted him dead and even talked about how she fantasized about ways to do it. I contacted Ken and we concocted this scenario to see if Barbara was serious.

BARBARA: Aha! But if he's *not* deathly allergic to peanuts then I'm off the hook!

CAROLE: Unfortunately for you, Barbara that part was true. And since you knew that, it constitutes attempted murder. In case you were thinking that you can say there's no proof, we have you on security videotape putting the peanut oil on the plates. *(Barbara Power Point)* Ken of course, never touched those plates.

BARBARA: Rats! I would've gotten away with it if it hadn't been for this meddling wannabe detective.

CAROLE: Take her away!

*(John, Mark, and Kate lead her off stage)*

CAROLE: The audience did a great job in figuring out this whodunit. To show my appreciation I'll pick a name out of those who voted for Barbara and give them a prize. *(she pulls out a name)* And the winner is \_\_\_\_\_ . *(gives prize to winner)*

Well done Ken. Do you have anything you want to say?

KEN: Yes. *(pulls out gavel)* This meeting is now adjourned!

*(Barbara runs back in)*

BARBARA: I want that gavel!

*(End Power Point credits)*

THE END