

# Why Shoot Your Husband?

A ten minute play in six acts

by James Kent

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**Why Shoot Your Husband?**  
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Act One

Maggs

You might as well ask why not? Anyway..... He was out of town.

Phillips

I see. For how long...?

Maggs

Seven years.

Phillips

Seven—

Maggs

—and three months. Look. This isn't going to go back and forth, is it?

Phillips

Isn't it?

Maggs

I can't stand that kind of dialogue. You're always on me.

Phillips

(glancing at his laptop)

On you? Might be on to you. I don't even know you, Mrs—

Maggs

Phillips.

Phillips

Phillips is *my* last name.

Maggs

You can't make it up. That's life for you. You're Mr Phillips? Or just Phillips, *here*.

Phillips

You're Marge Phillips. Marjorie.

Maggs

If that's what it says. I go by Maggs. Rhymes with hags. And bags. I'm permanently underslept. That may be more than you wanted to know. How long is this to be?

Phillips

Ten minutes.

Maggs

I thought murder was an important crime.

Phillips

All crime is important. Ten minutes is all I have.

Maggs

Ten minutes. With that ... thing.

Phillips

Would you like me to shut down my computer?

Maggs

I want everyone to shut down. I want every computer to shut down.

Phillips

(closing the lid)

Are you sure?

Maggs

Of what? Yes. Shut down. Why not? Do I sound like a terrorist? How do you know Andy was my husband? Did you find that information on your computer?

Phillips

As a matter of fact. Tell me. Why did you refuse a lawyer?

Maggs

Do you have a cigarette? Then it must be true.

Phillips

No.

Maggs

Know what?

Phillips

Not as in knowledge. My computer. No as in 'no.' A cigarette.

Maggs

It's alright. I haven't ever smoked a cigarette. It just seemed the right thing to do.

Phillips

What were you doing the night your husband was shot?

Maggs

I was ... using my computer. On the Internet. Submitting my plays.

Phillips

You're a playwright.

Maggs

No. At least no one has ever called me that. I've never been produced. I don't like theatre. Too theatrical. Well? C'mon. The next back-and-forth thing. What is it?

Phillips

This isn't an interview. It's interrogation.

Maggs

Are you telling me I should take this more seriously? Or you more seriously?

Phillips

You asked a question. I thought you didn't want banter.

Maggs

I think we need a monologue right about here. Tell me exactly what I did on the evening my 'husband' was shot dead.

Phillips

Alright.

Maggs

Well....?

Phillips

I need my computer.

Maggs

Oh for God's sake! Go ahead. Is it where you store your scenarios? Have they matched any of the accused? Is it a Word document?

Phillips

(opening his laptop)

It's a template. Yes. Here you are. On the night of April 14<sup>th</sup>—

Maggs

I was doing my taxes.

Phillips

You said you were writing a play.

Maggs

You should pay more attention to words. I said *submitting* my plays. You're the one writing this play. Go ahead. Let's hear it.

Phillips

He was driving a Jaguar. Like the one in Morse. It's a public television series. It *was*. You don't watch television, do you? I didn't think so. Anyway. At approximately 9:34—

Maggs

That's an approximated time?

Phillips

Let me finish.

Maggs

I wouldn't want to interfere with your workshop version. I'll be dramaturge later.

Phillips

I would ask what that means – but we're running late. The car came up the drive. He got out. And fell face down in the gravel. There was a neat bullet hole through his forehead, also your kitchen window and, sorry to say, through the old Jag windscreen.

Maggs

It sounds cursory. Made up. Phillips, you didn't even know our names were the same.

Phillips

Proving....?

Maggs

You're not much at research. Would you say? I didn't call my lawyer because he's an idiot. He's also corrupt. He gets away with things. It's the only way he can make what he calls 'money.' He captures fees. You don't have to be clever to be lucky. Evil will do.

Phillips

Why the divorce? From Andrew.... Um.

Maggs

PHILLIPS!

Phillips

It's ... sorry ... this thing with templates. I knew that.

Maggs

I'm interested in long stories told short. Divorce. While I was quietly falling apart Andy had just found himself. Was that over-sharing?

Phillips

Hardly.

Maggs

Being succinct is usually over-sharing.

Phillips

We'll move on.

Maggs

Succinct. This is just another case, isn't it? My lawyer would share your view.

Phillips

Is *his* last name Phillips?

Maggs

Goldfarb. I hope that didn't sound anti-Semitic.

Phillips

Just everything you said before about him sounded anti-Semitic. Not really. Could! In retrospect. You should be more careful with words. What you were just saying to me.

Maggs

That's not what I said to you. Why am I here? Am I losing the thread? Or did you veer off-script for a moment? Are you a real detective? Or just another bot with tats?

## Act Two

Light goes to half then fades. Golden light cross fades up. Bird song. They wear Panama hats.

Maggs

I love sunrise. It is the lark!

Phillips

No, it is the nightingale. Were all the Bard's plays dreams? Is this your dream or mine?

Maggs

Hard to say, Phillips.

Phillips

Right. We're both so boring—

Maggs

That we fell asleep.

The golden light is quickly fading. Gulls squawk then fade.

Phillips

What was the point of this?

Maggs

Just another day. Condensed. Very Warhol. You haven't much time, remember?

Phillips

The magic of the theatre?

Maggs

Andrew was left with just his theatre blog. His last factual book turned out to be fiction.

Phillips

Thank you, Marjorie, for this moment.

Light fades to black.

### Act Three Complete Darkness

Phillips

Who are we now?

Maggs

I don't know yet.