

# **HIT & RUN**

A Short Play

by

**Chris Maybury**

**SchoolPlay Productions Ltd**

15 Inglis Road, Colchester, Essex CO3 3HU

ANONYMOUS  
and  
HIT & RUN

Copyright Chris Maybury 1993

This play is fully protected by copyright.

*It is an infringement of the copyright to give any public performance or reading of this play in its entirety or in the form of excerpts without the prior consent in writing of the copyright owners.*

*No part of this publication may be transmitted, stored in a retrieval system, or reproduced in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, typescript, recording, or otherwise, without the prior permission of the copyright owners.*

All rights are strictly reserved. Any enquiries about performing rights, professional or amateur, should be directed, before rehearsal, to

**SchoolPlay Productions Ltd,  
15 Inglis Road,  
Colchester, Essex CO3 3HU.**

No performance may be given unless a licence has been obtained.

ISBN 978 1 872475 37 0

Printed and published by  
**SchoolPlay Productions Limited,**  
15 Inglis Road,  
Colchester, Essex, CO3 3HU

## PRODUCTION NOTES

*Hit and Run* began as an answer to a plea from a Head Master for a play for young people that was not twee or cavity inducing. I knew he was a Raymond Chandler fanatic, (always know your audience!) so I dreamed this up while lying on the beach in Crete. The idea was to provide material for a "non-Christmas" Christmas play (if you see what I mean).

Of course, having put in the graft of actually writing the play the school in question chickened out and put on something "more traditional". Ah! well, *c'est la vie*.

I had a lot of fun playing with the genre. I had to strike a balance between following the classic pattern of the mystery story and producing something that was accessible to the kids.

I had had the opening scene in mind for months before I found a home for it. In one incarnation Emmet Hugo actually became a participant in the action but this became far too complicated to handle well and besides it smacked far too much of Woody Allen's *Play it Again Sam*.

I aimed the play at years 10 - 12 as I felt that they would have had the necessary exposure to the genre that I have plundered.

I find the juxta-position of realistic and stylised approaches to story telling very satisfying. I'm also a sucker for Dramatic climaxes and happy endings.

*For Bev and Alex.*

C. M.

## CAST

Gwen Taylor	<i>A young woman who has been disabled in a car accident.</i>
Jenny Taylor	<i>A Journalist. Gwen's mother.</i>
Ted Taylor	<i>A Surveyor. Gwen's father.</i>
Pete	<i>Gwen's friend.</i>
Bernie Stoddard	<i>The Editor of "The Clarion".</i>
Sir Saunders Shannon	<i>Owner and Managing Director of Maximum Chemicals.</i>
Meredith	<i>Shannon's Assistant.</i>
The Librarian	<i>In the pay of Maximum Chemicals.</i>
Emmet Hugo	<i>An Imaginary Private Detective.</i>
A Gambler } A Mugger } A Mobster }	<i>All involved in the opening mime sequence.</i>
First Moll	
Second Moll	
Three Police Officers.	

# HIT AND RUN

by Chris Maybury

## ACT 1

*SCENE 1 The stage is in darkness.*

*A smoky High Hat Cymbal swings and sizzles. It is joined by a moody syncopated bass line and a tortured blues Guitar. A single spot light picks up THE GAMBLER. He stands counting his winnings, quite a substantial wad of money and string of pearls. As he holds the pearls up to examine them he drops some cards which have been hidden up his sleeve. Smiling he bends to pick them up. There is an explosion of sound from the Band as THE MUGGER clubs him from behind. The GAMBLER crumples into a heap and the MUGGER helps himself to all the cash and the pearls. As he turns to make good his escape he runs straight into THE MOBSTER who controls all the crime in this neighbourhood. THE MOBSTER, with a snap of his fingers, demands his cut of the take. THE MUGGER reluctantly hands over a significant percentage of his ill gotten gains. THE MOBSTER sees the pearls and demands them as well. THE MUGGER holds them back. THE MOBSTER reaches into his coat as if to a shoulder holster, THE MUGGER gives in and hands over the pearls. He is then dismissed with an imperious snap of the fingers. He leaves unhappily with many a backward glance. He turns and makes as if to attack THE MOBSTER who casually shoots and kills him. Enter two MOLLS. They insinuate themselves towards THE MOBSTER who tantalises them with the string of pearls. Finally he gives the pearls to one MOLL. She is exultant and holds her prize aloft. The other is furious and has to be held back and pushed away by THE MOBSTER. The first MOLL places the pearls around her neck to fasten them. Two hands appear in the spot beam, they belong to the second MOLL who has returned for revenge. She strangles the first MOLL who slumps to the ground after a brief struggle, leaving the second MOLL holding the pearls triumphantly. THE MOBSTER returns. He assesses the situation and demands the pearls back. The second MOLL refuses. As THE MOBSTER advances on her she scrabbles for the gun in her handbag. He in turn reaches for his gun. They both fire at the same time. They mortally wound each other and fall to the ground. Momentarily the MOLL holds up the pearls and watches them glisten in the light, then she dies. Drums and bass guitar continue with their blues lament in an undertone as through and over the carnage steps the*

*fedora and trenchcoat clad form of EMMET HUGO, Private Eye.*

**Emmet:** It was quiet, too quiet for a guy like me. How was a Private Eye supposed to make a living in a 'burg as dead as this, where nothing ever happens?  
*(The spotlight fades and the Curtains close).*

SCENE 2    *The stage apron is empty.*

**Pete:** *(offstage)* That was an outrageous opening Gwen! Really cool and moody.

**Gwen:** *(offstage)* Thanks Pete. It took a long time but I'm pretty pleased with it in general. *(Enter PETE, a young man in his mid to late teens. He is carrying a small folding table and a single folding chair. As he speaks he sets these up as if for a picnic).*

**Pete:** But how come you decided to write a Detective Novel? I'm ready for the drinks now. *(Enter GWEN, a young woman in her late teens. She is using a wheelchair and is skilfully carrying a tray of drinks on her lap).*

**Gwen:** I've read everything in the house, so I started on Dad's collection of Crime Books. After that I was hooked. It seemed natural to have a go myself.  
*(She has set the table with soft drinks and crisps, disdaining any attempt by PETE to help her).* Are you going to sit down, or are you growing? *(PETE sits down).* Help yourself to crisps. *(PETE does so).*

**Pete:** I really liked the opening.

**Gwen:** You've already said that.

**Pete:** *(a bit embarrassed. There is 'chemistry' between these two. PETE is trying too hard)* Yeah! What I mean is I can hardly wait to read the rest of it and find out Whodunnit.

**Gwen:** I was afraid that you might say that.

**Pete:** Why?

**Gwen:** I don't KNOW whodunnit! Or who dun - did what to who-whom. All I've got is the opening pages.

**Pete:** Well I think it's....

**Gwen:** .... great opening. Yes you have said that!

**Pete:** *(defensively)* Well it is, isn't it?

**Gwen:** Yes I think so. Sorry. Let's change the subject shall we? What's school like?

**Pete:** Oh! You know. It's a big building full of Teachers and stuff.

**Gwen:** Idiot! I don't know why I let you come to visit me!

**Pete:** *(simply)* Because I want to.

**Gwen:** Yes I know. You're the only one who comes any more.

**Pete:** It's been a long time since you -- since you --

**Gwen:** *(a little bitterly)* -- were run down by a hit and run driver and ended up in this chair. It's been six months, two weeks, four days, three hours and twenty seven minutes. Not that I dwell on it at all. I suppose the novelty of coming to see me wears pretty thin after a while.

**Pete:** *(taking the outburst in his stride)* When will they let you come back to school?

**Gwen:** Soon I hope. The home tutor comes but it's no fun being in a class of one.

**Pete:** When you come back will you still be....

**Gwen:** I'll probably still be in the chair. Is that a problem?

**Pete:** Not to me.

**Gwen:** *(squeezing his arm)* I know.

*(GWEN'S MUM, JENNY call from offstage).*

**Jenny:** Gwen! It's time to go for physiotherapy!

**Gwen:** *(in mock terror)* Pete! Save me from a fate worse than death!

**Pete:** *(laconically macho)* You know how it is kid. A man's....

**Gwen:** *(interrupting)* Person's.

**Pete:** *(momentarily slipping out of character)* What? Oh! Yeah! *(back into character)* A person's gotta do what a person's gotta do. *(back to himself)* It doesn't sound right that way.

**Gwen:** Seems O.K. to me.

**Jenny:** *(offstage)* Gwen! We're going to be late! When we're done at the physio's we're going to meet your dad at the Clarion and then go on for dinner.

**Gwen:** Coming Mum! *(to PETE)* I'd better go.

**Pete:** That's O.K. See you soon.

**Gwen:** See you!

**Pete:** Keep writing! I want to see how the story turns out!

*(PETE and GWEN exit in opposite directions. The stage darkens. A spot picks up EMMET HUGO. We hear his theme)*

**Emmet:** Yeah! Keep writing. I want to see how it turns out too!

*(BLACKOUT)*

*SCENE 3 The Editor's office at the 'Clarion' the newspaper where JENNY is employed.*

*(We discover JENNY in a heated argument with BERNARD STODDARD, the Editor in Chief).*

**Jenny:** What do you mean you won't let me follow up the Maximum Chemicals story? It's important! It was important six months ago and it's important

now!

**Bernie:** (*placatingly*) I know how you feel Jenny. I just don't feel that this is the right time to follow that one up. That's my editorial decision.

**Jenny:** You don't think I'm up to it do you? Just because I took leave of absence to look after Gwen.

**Bernie:** That has nothing to do with it Jenny.

**Jenny:** Then what has it got to do with?

**Bernie:** Since you left to take care of Gwen things have changed.

**Jenny:** What things?

**Bernie:** Hints, allegations. Nothing provable.

**Jenny:** Hinting at what?

**Bernie:** (*reluctantly*) We think that there may have been a contract out on you.

**Jenny:** (*shocked; in almost a whisper*) A contract? (*BERNIE nods*) But that's great! Maximum have tipped their hand! Inform the Police and publish the story!

**Bernie:** I have informed the Police. They won't, can't act without evidence, real evidence. Not the kind of whispers and unsubstantiated information that we can give them.

**Jenny:** I think that's a cop out. I think you're scared!

**Bernie:** Absolutely! I'm scared witless for you! I don't want you to take this any further for the moment.

**Jenny:** You just want to sweep it under the carpet in the hope that I'll just forget about it! No way Bernie! You know me better than that!

**Bernie:** (*with a resigned sigh*) Yes I know you better than that.

**Jenny:** Then you know what you can do with your softly, softly approach! (*She sweeps off, almost running down GWEN and TED, her Dad, as they enter*).

**Ted:** Jenny! Where are you going?

**Jenny:** (*emitting*) After a story!

**Ted:** But we're all going out for dinner!

**Gwen:** You booked it Mum!

**Jenny:** (*offstage*) Another time! (*Rushing back on she hugs TED and GWEN and then hugs BERNIE as well*) Sorry Bernie! Sorry folks! Maybe Bernie fancies a pizza. See you soon. (*JENNY exits in a state of high excitement*).

**Bernie:** You heard?

**Ted:** Some of it. Is it as serious as it sounds?

**Bernie:** Possibly.

**Gwen:** Is Mum in any danger Dad?

**Ted:** I hope not.

**Gwen:** What are we going to do?

**Ted:** I really don't know love. Being a Quantity Surveyor really doesn't equip you

for this kind of thing.

**Gwen:** She's going to need all the help she can get. (*Lights dim & Curtains close*).

*SCENE 4 The High Hat swings into EMMET'S theme as the spot picks him up.*

**Emmet:** I could tell that the Dame was in trouble. I could see that she WAS trouble. But I knew that if I didn't help her I'd regret it. Maybe not now, but soon and for the rest of my life. In situations like this, when the odds are stacked against you, you need more than a hard head and a strong right arm. You need brains, savvy and know-how. Luckily I have all of these things and plenty more where that came from. Things were gonna be rough but we're gonna be O.K. Emmet Hugo would see to that.

(BLACKOUT)

*SCENE 5 The Pent House Office of SIR SAUNDERS SHANNON, Owner and Managing Director of Maximum Chemicals.*

(*SHANNON is sitting on a sofa cradling a glass as he watches his Assistant, MEREDITH, pace up and down*).

**Meredith:** I tell you it was her sir! She has started snooping around again!

**Shannon:** The Taylor woman? The Journalist? Are you certain?

**Meredith:** Yes, Sir Saunders. I'd stake my reputation on it.

**Shannon:** What reputation?

**Meredith:** (*taken aback*) Why my reputation as chief assistant to you sir.

**Shannon:** Never forget Meredith, whatever reputation you may have is simply reflected glory from a much brighter star, namely myself.

**Meredith:** (*humbly*) Yes Sir, I'm sorry sir. What ARE we going to do Sir Saunders, about the woman I mean.

**Shannon:** For the moment nothing. The trail is six months colder. It will take a monumental effort to uncover anything at all.

**Meredith:** But of she does?

**Shannon:** We have already discussed that option, Meredith, six months ago.

**Meredith:** But the remedy was not effective sir.

**Shannon:** True. But that particular cannot be traced back to me. THAT at least you managed to perform adequately Meredith.

**Meredith:** Thank you Sir Shannon.

**Shannon:** That was not a compliment, merely an acknowledgement that for once you earned your pay. However, should it become necessary to apply the ultimate remedy again I trust that there will be no further mistakes.

**Meredith:** Yes sir, I mean no Sir Saunders,

**Shannon:** No mistakes.

*(He returns to contemplating his drink while MEREDITH looks on nervously. The Lights fade).*

## End of Act I

## ACT II

*SCENE 1 The TAYLORS' living room.*

*(PETE and GWEN are playing cards. TED is sitting and looking through some papers).*

**Pete:** But, what actually is the story that your Mum is working on?

**Gwen:** It's pretty complex. It's all about a housing estate being built on land that was used as a dump for toxic waste.

**Pete:** I thought that wasn't possible. Aren't there licences and stuff for that kind of thing?

**Gwen:** Now, there's the mystery. There's no trace of a licence being issued and no record that the land had ever been used as a dump.

**Pete:** So, it was never a dump. Where's the story?

**Gwen:** A lot of people, especially kids, have been coming down with strange allergies and illnesses. No one can identify the cause.

**Pete:** But your Mum thinks it's the toxic waste.

**Gwen:** Exactly.

**Pete:** How did she come across the information? *(TED gives a diffident little cough).*

**Ted:** Jenny isn't the only hot shot detective in the family.

**Pete:** How did you find out?

**Ted:** Like most real cases of detection it was nothing flashy, just slogging through the records. As you know I'm a surveyor for the Council. *(PETE nods)* One of my jobs is to measure up parcels of land and set prices for potential developers. Another part of my job is to make sure the land is suitable for the purpose the developers want it for. So, a few years ago I was asked to do a

report on the land where the new estate was to be built.

**Gwen:** Now this is the clever bit.

**Pete:** So you found out about the waste in the records.

**Ted:** No, that's just the point, I didn't. (*PETE looks puzzled*).

**Pete:** But, if you didn't... ?

**Ted:** What I found was records of Maximum Chemicals using the site.... but not what for, specifically. I also found records of a haulage firm being contracted to go to the site. I couldn't find out what was being transported because the firm went bust and all their records were destroyed in a fire.

**Pete:** What about soil samples?

**Ted:** I commissioned soil samples and they came back clear. Fair enough. But, I only received photo-copies of the report and something didn't seem quite right.

**Gwen:** So back he went to the records....

**Ted:** Where I discovered a report identical to the one that I had received only it was dated before Maximum started to use the land.

**Gwen:** It was obvious that someone had faked the report!

**Ted:** It seemed likely. So I told my boss.

**Gwen:** Who didn't want to know. I bet he was paid off!

**Ted:** You can't make allegations like that without proof.

**Gwen:** It's an open and shut case!

**Ted:** It's far from that.

**Pete:** What about the builders? Surely they didn't want to build on poisoned land?

**Ted:** Ah! Now there's another interesting nugget of information. Jenny did a little, well actually a lot of checking and discovered that the building company, it's called Hamilton's, can be linked to Maximum Chemicals in a very convoluted way. In various devious ways Maximum own most of the Hamilton's stock. Effectively Maximum control Hamilton's.

**Pete:** Now isn't that a coincidence!

**Gwen:** Isn't it just?

**Pete:** So obviously the next thing is to check on the builders.

**Ted:** That's just what Jenny was going to do when Gwen had her accident. That sort of slowed things down.

**Gwen:** But now she's hot on the trail!

**Pete:** Just like Emmet Hugo!

**Ted:** Who? Oh! Gwen's Detective. He's a bit muscular for me, I prefer Poirot or Miss Marple.

**Gwen:** Mum will get to the bottom of this, one way or the other.

**Ted:** I'm afraid you might be right.

*(The Lights dim. The Curtains close).*

SCENE 2 (EMMET'S theme. He steps into his spotlight).

**Emmet:** Something didn't smell right. It was like a rotten fish in a field of poppies. We had all the stories and none of the facts. I wanted to strong arm the facts out of a few rubes. A couple of hours sweating under the bright lights ought to have done it. She said that we should go looking some place else. "Where?", I said, "The dives, the bars, the speakeasies where the lowlife and scum of the earth hang out?" She said "No, the public library." Sometimes I just don't understand women. *(The spotlight blinks out).*

SCENE 3 *The reading room of the Library.*

*(JENNY is poring over a series of books. A LIBRARIAN sits at her desk in the corner)*

**Jenny:** *(to herself)* Where are they? Where on earth did they go? *(The LIBRARIAN gets up and walks across stage)*

**Jenny:** Excuse me. *(The LIBRARIAN turns)* are all these records completely up to date?

**Librarian:** *(stiffly)* I can assure you that they are.

**Jenny:** It's just that I'm looking for a firm called Hamilton Builders and the records here gave me their telephone number and address but when I tried to ring them I got an out of order signal.

**Librarian:** Perhaps they had not paid their bill.

**Jenny:** So went to the address and there was nothing there. It no longer exists. I just wondered if the records were incomplete or if there could have been a mistake.

**Librarian:** *(very affronted)* I can assure you that all MY records are perfect. Mistakes are made out there, beyond the sanctum of these walls, in the slap dash, make do world. In here all is peace, quiet and perfection.

**Jenny:** So, what you are saying is that reality is at fault, the record is perfect?

**Librarian:** Exactly so! *(She stalks back to her desk and loiters with a ledger).*

**Jenny:** That still doesn't tell me where Hamilton Builders are.

*(Enter GWEN pushed by PETE. GWEN is holding a newspaper clipping).*

**Gwen:** Then look no further for I....

**Pete:** We.

**Gwen:** We, have found them!

**Jenny:** Really! Where?

**Gwen:** In the back numbers of the Clarion.

**Jenny:** Well done! I should have thought of that.

**Pete:** I'm sure you would have done.

**Jenny:** That young man is a born diplomat. Come on! Don't keep me in suspense!

**Gwen:** You can't find Hamilton's in the records anymore because they don't work in Britain anymore.

**Pete:** They've all moved, lock stock and barrel.

**Gwen:** To the middle east.

**Pete:** To Dubai!

**Gwen:** They're building a factory for....

**Gwen / Pete / Jenny:** *(together)* Maximum Chemicals.

**Jenny:** Curiouser and curiouser.

**Gwen:** Another little co-incidence!

**Pete:** There's been a lot of those lately, haven't there?

**Gwen:** More than enough. Come on I need to do some thinking in the real world.

*(They all exit. The LIBRARIAN watches them go then reaches for the telephone on her desk and dials).*

**Librarian:** Hello. Mr. Meredith? She was here, the Taylor woman. No, she got nothing from MY records but listen, the young people with her found something in an old edition of The Clarion. I couldn't hear it all but it was something about Dubai. *(There is an audible click and whirr of a telephone being put down).* Mr. Meredith? Mr Meredith? What is going on?  
*(The Lights dim and the Curtains close).*

#### SCENE 4 SHANNON's Office.

*(Enter MEREDITH clutching a portable telephone).*

**Meredith:** Sir Saunders! Sir Saunders!

**Shannon:** *(entering)* Yes, Meredith?

**Meredith:** I've just received word from my informant at the library....

**Shannon:** And Mrs. Taylor has found out that Hamiltons' are now working for us in Dubai.

**Meredith:** How did you know that?

**Shannon:** Did you really think that I would leave any telephone in my building untapped? *(MEREDITH regards the instrument in his hand as if it were a snake about to bite him)* Oh! Yes! My dear Meredith, I know an awful lot about you! An awful lot!

**Meredith:** What are we going to do?

**Shannon:** The Taylor woman has become an irritant. It is time for her to have an

accident.

**Meredith:** Yes Sir Saunders *(he turns to leave)*

**Shannon:** Oh! And Meredith!

**Meredith:** *(turning back)* Sir?

**Shannon:** Try to make sure they get the right person this time.

*(MEREDITH exits. SHANNON stands implacably as the lights go down on him).*

*SCENE 5 (EMMET'S theme. He steps into the spotlight).*

**Emmet:** We were hot on the trail now. Mr. Big had made a mistake, a big mistake but I was worried. Things were going well, too well. It's at times like this that the back of my neck starts to tingle. We were stirring up a Hornet's nest. It was only a matter of time before someone got stung.

*(Blackout)*

*SCENE 6 The TAYLOR'S living room.*

*(GWEN is alone, She leaves through a magazine but throws it aside impatiently. The door bell rings. GWEN wheels offstage to answer it. We hear the door open).*

**Pete:** *(offstage)* Has anything else happened?

**Gwen:** *(entering)* Not that I've heard. I've been like a cat on hot bricks all day.

**Pete:** Me too. I'm in detention tomorrow for not paying attention in form period.

**Gwen:** Nobody pays attention in form period.

**Pete:** I know. There's the injustice of it. *(We hear the sound of a key in the front door. TED enters).*

**Gwen:** Oh! It's only you!

**Ted:** What a lovely greeting! Whatever happened to "Hello Dad! It's lovely to see you!"

**Gwen:** I'm sorry Dad. It's just that I'm waiting to hear from Mum.

**Ted:** I understand. Hello Pete, fancy a cup of tea?

**Pete:** Yes please Mr. Taylor.

**Ted:** How about you Gwen?

**Gwen:** Could I have a Coke, please Dad?

**Ted:** Coke it is! Won't be a mo'. *(He exits to the kitchen).*

**Pete:** How's the writing going?

**Gwen:** Not bad, I'm using all this with Maximum to help me. (*The telephone rings*).

**Ted:** (*Offstage*) I'll get it!

**Pete:** What, everything?

**Gwen:** Just the good bits. (*Enter TED. He is looking very worried*).

**Ted:** That was the Hospital, there's been an accident.

**Gwen:** Mum!

**Ted:** They want us to go right away.

(*BLACKOUT*)

## End of Act II

## ACT III

*SCENE 1 (EMMET'S theme. He steps into his spotlight).*

**Emmet:** Now I was mad, real mad, I don't like it when the rough stuff comes too close to home. There was going to have to be a reckoning and soon. A showdown. I didn't know how, I didn't know when but a showdown was definitely on the cards. I was beginning to look forward to it.

(*BLACKOUT*)

*SCENE 2 The TAYLORS' living room.*

(*It is empty. We hear a car draw up, doors open and close. The key rattles in the lock.*)

**Jenny:** (*offstage*) Don't fuss! I'll be fine! (*She enters hobbling on crutches, her leg in plaster. She is followed closely by Gwen*).

**Gwen:** Don't be stupid Mum! You've just had a very serious accident! You've got to sit down and take it easy!

**Jenny:** I'm all right! YOU sit down and take it easy!

**Gwen:** (*quietly*) I don't have much choice Mum. (*JENNY throws her crutches to one side and hugs GWEN awkwardly*).

**Jenny:** I'm so sorry love, that was really thoughtless of me.

**Gwen:** (*comforting her Mother*) It's all right Mum. I know, I know. (*Enter TED*

*carrying all of JENNY'S bags).*

**Ted:** I wish you had stayed in Hospital, love. Just to be on the safe side. *(He helps JENNY up and across to a chair).*

**Jenny:** I'm fine honestly. I just want to be with my family. *(The telephone rings).*

**Gwen:** I'll get it. *(She lifts the receiver of the living room telephone)* Hello? Oh! Hi Pete! No we've just got back from the Hospital. No, no just a broken ankle.

**Jenny:** Just!

**Gwen:** Sssh! No not you Pete, Mum. Yeah! some idiot on a motorbike, no he just rode away. Yes, it looks like it runs in the family? Are you coming round later? Right, see you then.

*(We hear PETE put the telephone down - click, whirr, then we hear the sound of another 'phone being put down, - click, whirr - GWEN looks puzzled).* Should it do that?

**Ted:** Do what love?

**Gwen:** The phone, should it ring off twice?

**Jenny:** How do you mean?

**Gwen:** I've just heard Pete put the phone down and I heard another 'phone go down.

**Ted:** Are you sure?

**Gwen:** Absolutely.

**Jenny:** Could it be a crossed line?

**Ted:** Possibly, but not likely.

**Gwen:** *(in almost a whisper)* It's been tapped!

**Ted:** Put the 'phone down Gwen. *(GWEN puts the receiver down. TED follows the cord to the wall and disconnects the telephone).*

**Ted:** Well, that's that for the moment at least.

**Gwen:** How could it happen?

**Jenny:** Any one of a hundred ways. It's very common in industrial espionage.

**Gwen:** But why?

**Ted:** It's fairly obvious now.

**Jenny:** Yes, isn't it though.

**Gwen:** How do you mean?

**Ted:** Come on Sherlock, put the pieces together. Our 'phone is tapped and Mum has an accident. Surely you can't believe the two incidents aren't connected? Someone wants to know what Jenny knows and is determined to make sure that she doesn't find out any more.

**Jenny:** Six months ago I was working on the same story and you were knocked down by a hit and run driver when you were out shopping with me.

**Gwen:** So you're saying that my accident....

**Ted:** Was no accident!

**Jenny:** And it was meant for me. I'm so sorry love.

**Gwen:** Why Mum? You couldn't have known.

**Jenny:** I could have, should have guessed. The question is, what do we do now?

**Ted:** I'm going to pay Sir Saunders Shannon a visit! *(He heads for the door).*

**Jenny:** Ted! don't be silly!

**Ted:** *(turning)* Silly! This Shannon in his ivory tower is messing about with all our lives! Those people living on top of a toxic cesspool, and now he has threatened the lives of the two people that I love more than anything in the whole world I'm going to make him pay! And I'm going to enjoy it!

**Jenny:** You'd never get within a hundred yards of him. At best you'd be arrested for assault. Come on Ted this isn't like you.

**Gwen:** Mum's right Dad. *(TED sags and sits down).*

**Ted:** Of course she's right but it doesn't mean I have to like it.

**Gwen:** I don't suppose there's any point in calling the police is there? *(JENNY shakes her head).*

**Jenny:** All we've got is a lot of co-incidences and unsubstantiated circumstantial evidence. Shannon has got it locked up watertight.

**Ted:** But what if he hadn't? He'd have to plug up the gap wouldn't he?

**Jenny:** How do you mean?

**Ted:** If Shannon thought that there was a leak in his watertight defences he would have to do something about it.

**Gwen:** If we planned it just right we might even get Shannon to incriminate himself.

**Jenny:** I see what you're getting at. Now, if I were to make a 'phone call to Bernie at the Clarion....

*(TED re-connects the 'phone as the Lights dim and the Curtains close).*

*SCENE 3 (EMMET'S theme. He steps into the spotlight).*

**Emmet:** We had a plan. It wasn't much of a plan and it was risky. The Big Man was confident, too confident. I figured an idol that tall might have feet of clay. At least that was what I hoped. If he hadn't we were all in trouble, deep trouble.

*(BLACKOUT)*

SCENE 4 SHANNON's office.

(SHANNON sits looking at papers. He is frowning. There is a diffident knock at his door)

**Shannon:** Get in here Meredith! (MEREDITH enters. He is carrying some papers)

**Meredith:** Sir?

**Shannon:** The job was botched Meredith.

**Meredith:** Yes Sir.

**Shannon:** Again, Meredith!

**Meredith:** (miserably) Yes, Sir Saunders.

**Shannon:** I do not expect shoddy workmanship, it makes me Tetchy. I expect value for money.

**Meredith:** I can assure you that the operative I engaged came very highly recommended Sir.

**Shannon:** So he should for the fee we paid him. And yet the job was botched.

**Meredith:** The woman moved Sir!

**Shannon:** Did you expect her to stand still and allow herself to be run down?

**Meredith:** Perhaps not sir.

**Shannon:** (sneering) Perhaps not! Where is your initiative man?

**Meredith:** I am not employed for my initiative Sir.

**Shannon:** True. Lately I have wondered why I employ you at all. (He points at the papers that MEREDITH is carrying) What's this? More bad news?

**Meredith:** I fear so. These are the transcriptions from the telephone tap that you ordered on the Taylor household.

**Shannon:** So?

**Meredith:** It would appear, from a conversation that Mrs. Taylor had with her editor, that she was able to find a piece of evidence connecting Maximum with the toxic waste dump under the housing estate.

**Shannon:** What! Where?

**Meredith:** In the Library sir.

**Shannon:** I thought you paid the Librarian off?

**Meredith:** So I did sir, but it would appear that she is not as efficient as she seemed. Mrs. Taylor was unable to bring the evidence out of the Library so she hid it in the Encyclopaedia Britannica under 'S' for Shannon. She seemed to find that very amusing. She intends to go back after closing time and retrieve the evidence tonight. She has a contact with the janitorial staff and will be able to gain access.

**Shannon:** Well we have our own contacts, don't we? Whistle up your tame librarian Meredith. It is time we went and did some in depth research.

**Meredith:** We, Sir Saunders?

**Shannon:** That's right Meredith. We, us. If you want a job done properly it's best to do it yourself. I am going to make sure that everything goes to plan, personally!

**Meredith:** Just as you say sir.

**Shannon:** That's right. Just as I say!

*(The Lights dim. The Curtains close).*

SCENE 5 *(EMMET'S theme. He steps into his light).*

**Emmet:** We had set the hook, all we had to do was to see if the fish would take the bait. I was never much good at fishing, I never had the patience. As we sat in that dusty library I had some time to do some thinking. That's never a good idea for a guy in my line of work. The books, the silence and the tension all combined to remind me of the things that were missing from my life, schooling, family and the chance to relax. All I had was the job, a job I do well. So I quit thinking and got on with my job.

*(BLACKOUT)*

SCENE 6 *The Library at night.*

*(The lights are dim. We hear scuffling and argumentative words from offstage).*

**Shannon:** *(offstage)* Come on Meredith! Get a move on! *(He enters carrying a torch).*

**Meredith:** *(entering, also carrying a torch)* Sorry sir, I must I must confess I find this a little eerie.

**Shannon:** Nonsense! You're just a snivelling coward! Where is that Librarian? She's supposed to meet us here. *(The LIBRARIAN suddenly appears from behind a desk. MEREDITH and SHANNON both jump a mile).*

**Librarian:** I am here. I have been here for over half an hour.

**Meredith:** Sorry about that.

**Shannon:** Never apologise, Meredith. It's a sign of weakness.

**Meredith:** Sorry, Sir Saunders.

**Librarian:** Would you mind explaining what we are doing here?

**Meredith:** The Taylor woman has found something to connect Maximum Chemicals to the toxic waste dump under the housing estate.

**Librarian:** Impossible! I removed every reference myself. She could not have

found it here.

**Shannon:** Nevertheless she did. According to information we got from the 'phone tap she hid it under the letter 'S' in the Encyclopaedia Britannica. *(The LIBRARIAN rushes to the shelves and takes down a heavy volume).*

**Librarian:** I don't believe it! The letter 'S' you say? *(She searches through the book and removes an envelope)* Is that it?

**Shannon:** It must be, give it to me. *(The LIBRARIAN hands it over).*

**Meredith:** What is it?

**Shannon:** Who knows? Who cares? It's ashes now. *(He pulls a lighter from his pocket and burns the envelope)* Now there is nothing to connect me with anything illegal, nothing!

*(JENNY hobbles out of the gloom. She is joined by TED, GWEN and PETE. PETE is carrying a cassette recorder).*

**Jenny:** Not quite nothing.

**Shannon:** How did you get in here?

**Gwen:** It's called disabled access.

**Pete:** We got everything on tape.

**Ted:** This is when you throw your hands in the air and say, "It's a fair cop guy".

**Shannon:** Don't be so asinine. I shall deny everything.

**Jenny:** That doesn't matter. Even a sniff of a scandal like this will ruin you. Your stock will go down and the corporate raiders will pick your bones clean. There are names for slime like you Shannon. *(SHANNON suddenly produces a gun from his pocket).*

**Shannon:** Yes, they call us winners! Would it be too passe to say hands up? *(JENNY, TED, PETE and GWEN all raise their hands)* Take the recorder Meredith. *(MEREDITH takes the recorder from PETE).*

**Meredith:** What are you going to do?

**Shannon:** The Taylor family have already been shown to be accident prone. *(He pulls the lighter from his pocket)* I think that they will be caught in an unfortunate fire whilst trespassing in the library, what a terrible tragedy.

**Gwen:** You'll never get away with this!

**Shannon:** Of course I will. That's one of the advantages of being very wealthy.

**Librarian:** You aren't thinking of setting fire to the Library?

**Shannon:** It's as good a place as any.

**Librarian:** But you can't! This is my life!

**Shannon:** Make another life; I paid you enough to finance several. *(The LIBRARIAN strikes the gun from SHANNON'S hand with the ENCYCLOPAEDIA).*

**Librarian:** I won't allow it!

*(TED seizes the opportunity and delivers a perfect right cross to SHANNON'S*

*chin. SHANNON collapses like a felled tree).*

**Ted:** That was for my wife and daughter. *(He rubs his hand)* I enjoyed that!  
*(GWEN has recovered the gun and is holding it on the LIBRARIAN and MEREDITH. They stand with their hands up. SHANNON recovers a little and is thrust over to the other two by TED. PETE takes the cassette player back).*

**Gwen:** If I was like you I would finish you off now. No one would blame me. But I'm not like you. I want you to live with what you have done. I have to.  
*(We hear Police Sirens outside. BERNARD rushes in followed by three Police Officers).*

**Bernie:** Did you get the confession? Did you get the story?

**Jenny:** Whatever happened to, "Are you all right?"

**Bernie:** Don't bother me with technicalities. Give me the story. I can just make the morning edition. *(He rips the cassette from the machine and rushes off).*

**Jenny:** Some things will never change.

**Ted:** So it would seem.

**Pete:** Is that it? Is it all over?

**Gwen:** Barring a court case, a lot of publicity and a load of compensation for the residents of the housing estate. *(She looks down at her chair)* But I don't suppose it will ever really be over.  
*(TED and JENNY each lay a comforting hand on GWEN'S shoulders).*

**Pete:** Would you really have shot them?

**Gwen:** No. But Emmet Hugo would have done.

**Jenny:** Then perhaps it's as well that he wasn't here.

**Gwen:** But he was Mum.

*(The Lights dim and the Curtains close).*

*SCENE 7 (EMMET'S theme. He steps into light).*

**Emmet:** The kid was right, I would have snuffed them out like the lice they are.....  
But, it's better this way, in their world. My world is simpler. All I have to worry about is coming up with a snappy exit line. The city is out there waiting for me. I know the city, I know it's seamy side and it's low life. There are people out there who need me. I'm gonna go where I'm needed. See you around.

*(BLACKOUT)*

**THE END**