

Series: Suspense
Show: Dead Earnest
Date: Mar 24 1949
Cast:
Announcer 1
Announcer 2 (Hap)
Narrator (Lieutenant S Healy)
Crowd (4)
Officer Abbott
T. Tobey, driver
Doctor
Ambulance driver
Robert Minnelli, age 9-1/2
Tommy Stoner, age 8
Mr. Minnelli (Pop)
"Honest" Jerry Murdoch, used clothing dealer
Henry Prince, coat Buyer
Boarding House Woman
Nurse
Dr. Weldon
Mrs. Prince, Henry's wife
Paine, Hospital orderly
Anthony and
Al, embalmers
Ernest Bowers
Mrs. Bowers
MUSIC:
TWO CHIMES

ANNOUNCER 1:
And now Autolite and its 60,000 dealers and service stations present...

ANNOUNCER 2:
Suspense.

ANNOUNCER 1:
Tonight, Autolite brings you "Dead Earnest," one of the most famous of Suspense plays.
Originally produced and directed by Anton M. Leider.

MUSIC:
KETTLEDRAW.

ANNOUNCER 1:
Friends, officially Spring has sprung, and you'll want a Spring pep for your winter-weary car. That means when you replace old narrow gap spark plugs with wide gap Autolite resistor spark plugs, your car will idle smoother, give you better performance on leaner gas mixtures. Save gas dollars. Yes, you actually can tell the difference in your car. Autolite regular type spark plugs have long been standard factory equipment on many leading makes of cars and trucks. And now six - that's right, six - of these leading makers of cars and trucks have switched to Autolite resistor type spark plugs for factory installation on their new 1949 models. The new Autolite resistor spark plugs are the spark plugs of today - and the future. Remember: you're right with Autolite. And now Autolite brings you a tale well calculated to keep you in...

MUSIC:

CHIMES.

ANNOUNCER 2:
Suspense.

MUSIC:
CHIMES OUT.

HEALY:
Accident report. To Police Inspector Blandin from Lieutenant S. Healy. Place: 15th Street and Fourth Avenue. Time: 2:45 p.m. March 11. Remarks; Ernest Bowers, age 34, was crossing the intersection as the signal light changed from green to red. A car driven by a Theodore Tobey made a legal right turn from 15th Street into Fourth Avenue.

SOUND:
CAR TURNING, BRAKES SCREECHING.

CROWD 1:
He hit him!

CROWD 2:
What a mess. Hey, look at all them tire marks.

CROWD 3:
Hey the guy's out cold.

CROWD 4:
He's bleeding!

CROWD reactions, frightened excitement, continues under..

ABBOTT:
(coming on) Hey come on now, clear the way! All right now, stand back. Come on, let's have a look.

TOBEY:
Is he hurt bad? I didn't see him, honest. I didn't. I had the right of way.

ABBOTT:
Yeah, he's passed out. (To Crowd) One of you people call for an ambulance. Yeah, you there. Hey! Move back! Move back!

TOBEY:
Here, he's bleeding. I'll prop up his head.

ABBOTT:
Yeah, here use his jacket.

TOBEY:
I'll hold him. (Struggles) Golly, he's limp. He feels just like he's dead.

MUSIC:
DRAMATIC CHORD, THEN BRIDGE.

HEALY:
Yes, Ernest Bowers felt like he was dead. Ernest Bowers suffered from catalepsy, a strange disease. He carried at all times a note in his inside jacket pocket stating that

he was a cataleptic, and in the event of seeming death his wife should immediately be notified, or his doctor, in the event that his wife was unavailable. The letter also requested that no autopsy or embalming should be performed on his body for 72 hours, although in his particular case the duration of the attacks was usually four hours or less. Ernest Bowers also wore a sterling silver bracelet with an inscription, reading: Do not embalm me. I am not dead.

Catalepsy is a disease of the nerves and mind. The physical conditions of the cataleptic when he is under a spell closely resemble death in all aspects, including the primary stages of rigor mortis. Officer Abbott was on the scene of the accident. He administered aid to the injured man before making out his report.

CROWD under.

ABBOTT:

(Effort) Ah, there. That ought to stop the bleeding. Looks like just a cut on his forehead when he hit the ground. Nothin' much. Now, uh. What's your name?

TOBEY:

Tobey, Theodore Tobey. Here's my license.

SOUND:

RUNNING FEET

ABBOTT:

Hey hey hey hey! (Hollers) Hey you kids! (Back) What did those kids do?

CROWD 1:

They picked up something, off the street.

ABBOTT:

Huh?

SOUND:

SIREN ARRIVING.

TOBEY:

Oh, here, here it comes. I hope he's all right. Ooh, he doesn't look like he's breathing.

CROWD rumbling.

ABBOTT:

I told you to get back. Get back!

SOUND:

SIREN STOPS. AMBULANCE DOORS OPEN.

ABBOTT:

Come on! I'm glad you're here, Doc. He's out cold.

DOC:

Okay. (Pause.) Huh, I'll say he's out cold.

AMB DRIVER:

Let's get him awake.

DOC:
He's dead.

AMB DRIVER:
Well, anyway, it didn't happen in our wagon.

DOC:
Okay, we'll take him away. Keep 'em back, will you, Officer?

ABBOTT:
Yeah, keep 'em back. Clear out of there! Come on! The show's over.

AMB DRIVER:
Third one today.

SOUND:
GURNEY INTO AMBULANCE, DOOR CLOSES.

DOC:
There. Yeah. Let's go.

AMB DRIVER:
Yeah. Whose coat was that he was layin' on?

DOC:
I dunno.

AMB DRIVER:
Did you pick it up?

DOC:
No. Hey, Officer, where's the coat?

ABBOTT:
(Confused) What? Huh? Gosh, it's gone!

DOC:
Okay. Never mind. Let's go, Frank.

SOUND:
SIREN PULLS AWAY.

MUSIC:
DRAMATIC BRIDGE.

HEALY:
Ernest Bowers had lost the identification of his condition. The letter was in the inside pocket of his jacket. The silver chain he wore on his left wrist had snapped and fallen to the pavement. Two youngsters pick up the chain: Robert Minelli, age nine and one-half, Tommy Stoner, eight.

ROBERT:
Well pull in around the back of the shack [??]

TOM:
Boy, it sure is a nice chain. Hey, there's writin' on it.

ROB:
Maybe it's the guy's name.

TOM:
[??]

ROB:
Nothin', just one little clump.

TOM:
What's it say?

ROB:
Wait a second, we'll be out of the alley.

TOM:
What's it say?

ROB:
Wait a second, willya? It says, Do not em, emb... Do not somethin' me. I'm not dead.
It's screwy.

TOM:
What we gonna do with it?

ROB:
Sell it, dopey. We can buy some baseballs and stuff.

TOM:
Yeah but when we try to sell it they're gonna ask us where we got it. What do we tell
'em?

ROB:
Nothin'. Use your head. Know what we'll do?

TOM:
What?

ROB:
We'll use pop's welding torch. We'll melt it down.

TOM:
He told us not to use it.

ROB:
Pop ain't here, is he?

TOM:
Well, no.

ROB:
Well come on!

SOUND:
FOOTSTEPS.

TOM:

There it is!

ROB:
Yeah, put it on that grid.

TOM:
Okay?

ROB:
Yeah.

TOM:
Be careful.

POP:
Hey, what're you kids doin'?

ROB:
Well, uh, hello, Pop.

TOM:
Hello, Mr. Minnelli.

ROB:
We didn't do nothin'.

POP:
Nothin', huh? I thought I told you kids not to go near that torch!

ROB:
Well, we wanna melt this down.

POP:
Gimme that! (Pause) What's this all about?

ROB:
We found this chain, Poppa, and we want to melt it down and sell it.

POP:
Whose is it?

ROB:
We don't know, do we, Tommy?

TOM:
No, no we don't.

ROB:
There's nothin' wrong, Pop. We just found it. It's ours.

POP:
(Reading) Do not , uh, uh, emballum me. I am not dead. What's that?

ROB:
It's screwy.

POP:

Where did you find it?

ROB:

In the street. Honest, Pop, it's nothing'.

POP:

Come on, get outta here.

ROB:

How about meltin' it down, Pop? We can sell it and buy some baseballs.

POP:

Mmm. All right. Keep back.

SOUND:

ACETYLENE TORCH FIRED UP.

MUSIC:

DRAMATIC

HEALY:

They melted it and took it to a gold and silver dealer. They sold the metal obtained for a dollar thirty. One dollar and thirty cents. But the coat - the coat was the principal thing. In the coat, in the inside pocket was the letter. The information about Ernest Bowers' condition was in that letter: the instructions that could save his life. The coat was picked up from the street by "Honest" Jerry Murdoch. There's a big sign near the corner of 15th street. It says, Honest Jerry Murdoch Swap Shop. He brought the coat into his store, rummaged around on his shelves till he found some cleaning fluid and then started to clean the bloodstains.

SOUND:

FOOTSTEPS.

HENRY:

I'm looking for a sports jacket.

JERRY:

(off) Just a moment. (back) What kind?

HENRY:

Conservative.

JERRY:

Oh, okay. Would you come over here, please?

HENRY:

Yeah, something on that order.

JERRY:

Pick out what you want. Ah, how much you wanna spend?

HENRY:

'Bout five bucks.

JERRY:

These cost more.

HENRY:
How much?

JERRY:
From eight to twelve.

HENRY:
They don't look so hot for eight bucks.

JERRY:
From eight to twelve. Say, wait a minute, wait a minute. I'm just puttin' a new one in stock. Over here, by the counter.

SOUND:
FOOTSTEPS.

HENRY:
Yeah, that looks all right. What size is it?

JERRY:
I dunno. Here, try it on.

HENRY:
Okay.

JERRY:
Hmm?

HENRY:
Yeah. Feels all right. Kinda stiff and XX, you know.

JERRY:
That's 'cause it's almost new. You'll break it in.

HENRY:
Feels like cardboard or somethin'.

JERRY:
You want it? Five dollars.

HENRY:
Okay.

JERRY:
There might be a couple stains on it I didn't have time to take out. Use some cleaner on it, or bring it to the tailor's. It'll be better than new.

HENRY:
Yeah. Here's the five.

MUSIC:
BRIDGE

HEALY:
Ernest Bowers was brought to the receiving room at Bennett General Hospital. Various routine tests were made. The time, 4:10. If Mr. Bowers were going to awaken, it would probably be 6:45. Dr. Weldon made his report. He wrote it down while he was standing by

the telephone switchboard.

SOUND:
PHONE RING.

WOMAN:
Yes?

NURSE:
This is the Bennett General Hospital. Is there anyone by the name of Bowers at home?
Bowers? B-O-W-E-R-S?

WOMAN:
No. Nobody home.

NURSE:
Is Mr. Bowers married?

WOMAN:
I hope so. If he ain't, he's been livin' in sin.

NURSE:
Where can I reach her? There's been an accident.

WOMAN:
(not helpful) I don't know. She's out.

NURSE:
Will you tell her to call the Bennett General Hospital?

WOMAN:
Yeah, all right. What happened?

NURSE:
Mister Bowers is dead.

SOUND:
HANGUP.

DR. WELDON:
Can't reach her, huh?

NURSE:
No.

DR. WELDON:
Well, I'd like to do an autopsy.

NURSE:
Yeah. What'll I tell the wife when she calls?

DR. WELDON:
Well, if it's pretty soon I'll talk to her. We still have those tests to go through.
Then I'm off. If it's more than an hour he'll probably be on his way to the morgue.

MUSIC:
STING

HEALY:

At that moment, then 4:22 in the afternoon. At that moment, if anyone had been in receiving room B at Bennett General Hospital, where the body of Ernest Bowers lay on the patient carriage they would have seen a fly crawl slowly across the face of the dead man. And they would have seen his nose ... twitch.

MUSIC:

STING, THEN DRAMATIC BRIDGE.

ANNOUNCER 1:

For Suspense, Autolite is bringing you radio's outstanding theater of thrills - Suspense.

HAP:

(stuffy) Here it is the first day of Spring and I've got a cold in my head.

ANNOUNCER 1:

Well, Hap, you should get outdoors, you need a change...

HAP:

Yeah.

ANNOUNCER 1:

.. the way a car with those wornout plugs needs wide gap Autolite resistor spark plugs.

HAP:

I don't...

ANNOUNCER 1:

For your winter-weary car, replace those old narrow gap plugs with Autolite Resistor spark plugs. Your car idles smoother, gives better performance on leaner gas mixtures, actually saves gas dollars. And what's more, Autolite wide gap resistor spark plugs also cut down interference with radio and television reception.

HAP:

I gotta get rid of this cold.

ANNOUNCER 1:

We should all get rid of winter ills. Get rid of old narrow-gap spark plugs. Everybody should install a set of wide gap Autolite resistor spark plugs.

HAP:

Everybody can cure somebody else's cold.

ANNOUNCER 1:

Ah, but only Autolite offers smart car and truck owners everywhere the sensational advantages of resistor type spark plugs. They're ignition-engineered to meet the highest standards of automotive engineers. Remember, folks: you're always right, with Autolite.

MUSIC:

BRIDGE

ANNOUNCER 2:

And now Autolite brings back to our SOUND: stage - "Dead Earnest." A tale well-calculated to keep you in...

MUSIC:
STING

ANNOUNCER 1:
Suspense!

HEALY:
Accident report continues. Henry Prince had within his power the opportunity to save the life of Ernest Bowers. He had purchased the coat in which was the letter which could save him. When he left the second hand store he stopped to chat with some friends, made some purchases at the grocery store, and started home. The time: a few minutes after five. He lived about two blocks from the scene of the accident. His wife was waiting for him.

HENRY:
Well, how do you like it for five bucks?

MRS.P:
Yeah, yeah. Looks all right. What's that - a spot?

HENRY:
Where?

MRS.P:
Take it off for a second. I wonder what it is.

HENRY:
He said there were a couple of spots. Cleaner'll take them out.

MRS.P:
You know, it looks like... What's this here in the pocket?

HENRY:
I dunno.

MRS.P:
(Reading) To whom it may concern: Please open and read.

HENRY:
That's what must've felt stiff.

MRS.P:
(continues reading) This note is carried on my person wherever I go. It is to advise responsible parties that I am a cataleptic and if it appears that I am dead, I am not.

HENRY:
What's that?

MRS.P:
(Reading) And that my body is not to be molested for a period of 72 hours, neither by autopsy or embalming, although the maximum periods of my attacks usually do not exceed four hours. Please telephone my wife, Mrs. Margaret Bowers at Fulton 7 7327. This is a boarding house, address 841-1/2 West 25th Street. If she's not there, please try Axminister 4-4322. This is the number of Dr. Benton. Of vital importance, this may mean my life. Thanks you, Ernest Bowers.

HENRY:

That's a funny one.

MRS.P:

Where'd you get the coat, honey?

HENRY:

Honest Jerry Murdoch's.

MRS.P:

Wonder what we should do?

HENRY:

Nuttin'. Probably been forgotten already. Somebody sold him the coat and forgot to take the letter out.

MRS.P:

Doesn't SOUND: like something somebody would forget.

HENRY:

Ah, the devil with it.

MRS.P:

Might be important. Look, Henry, look at those spots. Might be blood.

HENRY:

Nah, too dark.

MRS.P:

That's the color blood turns. I'm gonna telephone that number.

SOUND:

FOOTSTEPS, PHONE PICK UP AND DIAL.

HENRY:

Go ahead, I think you're wasting your time.

SOUND:

DIALING, RINGS.

WOMAN:

(Answers): Hello?

MRS.P:

I'd like to talk to Mrs., uh, Bowers.

WOMAN:

She ain't in.

MRS.P:

Well how do you know, you didn't even call...

WOMAN:

I know. She went out. And you ain't the first to call her.

MRS.P:

Who else wanted to get in touch with her?

WOMAN:

Oh, somebody. I don't know who.

MRS.P:

Oh, well, thank you.

SOUND:

HANGUP.

HENRY:

See, I told you. You're wasting your time.

MRS.P:

I have the strangest feeling, Henry. Must be a terrible position to be in to have everyone thinkin' you're dead when you ain't. You're helpless about it.

HENRY:

Well, go ahead, go ahead. I can see I'm not gonna win this time either.

SOUND:

PHONE DIAL. BUSY SIGNAL.

MRS.P:

Oh, it's busy.

HENRY:

How 'bout some dinner?

MRS.P:

Oh, it's cooking. I just can't get it out of my head. That guy, whoever he is, just lying there and people thinking him dead when he ain't. They'd be doing things to him, like embalming.

HENRY:

They do that at the Morgue, preparing the body for burial. I thin they take all the blood out of his veins.

MRS.P:

That would kill him if he wasn't already dead.

HENRY:

Couldn't kill him no deader.

MRS.P:

Henry, I'm gonna find out about that coat. Where's this place you bought it?

HENRY:

Now wait a minute, Frances. I put in a good day's work. I'm tired. I don't want to go running around the city I don't even know about...

MRS.P:

Then I'll go myself.

HENRY:

How about me at home here, while you go out? I wanna eat. I'm hungry.

MRS.P:

Dinner won't be ready for another fifteen minutes anyway. Now where is the place?

HENRY:

All right, I'll go with you.

MUSIC:

BRIDGE

HENRY:

He ain't here. Locked up.

MRS.P:

What's that sign say, ten minutes?

HENRY:

Yeah, guys like this put those signs up if they're going away for an hour.

MRS.P:

We'll wait a few minutes.

HENRY:

Come on, Frances...

MRS.P:

You wait here. I'm going in the cigar store and make a call.

HENRY:

When you make up your mind, nuthin' can change it. Unless it's an invitation to a poker game.

MRS.P:

(Sour laugh) Huh, huh, very very funny. Look, you wait here.

SOUND:

FOOTSTEPS, DOOR OPENS, CLOSES, INSIDE FOOTSTEPS, PHONE PICKUP, DROP NICKEL, DIAL, PHONE RINGS.

WOMAN:

(Answers) Hello?

MRS.P:

Is Mrs. Bowers in?

WOMAN:

(snappish): No.

MRS.P:

Mr. Bowers?

WOMAN::

No. He's dead.

MRS.P:

He is?

WOMAN:

That's what they tell me.

SOUND:
PHONE HANGUP

MRS.P:
Well, wait a minute. Oh, darn it.

SOUND:
NICKEL DROP, DIALING. PHONE RINGS.

WOMAN:
Hello?

MRS.P:
Look, I just spoke to you. Will you...

WOMAN:
You're botherin' me, lady, I got a meal set up on the table and I can't be answerin' a million questions.

MRS.P:
But all I want to know is when did Mr. Bowers die?

WOMAN:
How should I know? Ask Mrs. Bowers. She'll be home soon.

MRS.P:
Thanks.

SOUND:
PHONE HANGUP.

SOUND:
NICKEL DROP, DIALING. BUSY SIGNAL.

MRS.P:
Darn, that doctor's line...

SOUND:
FOOTSTEPS, DOOR, OPENS AND CLOSES.

HENRY:
Well?

MRS.P:
No luck. Same as before. Mr. Bowers is dead. I found that out.

HENRY:
See? I told you.

MRS.P:
(Excited) What about the letter, then? What if he ain't dead? What if they only think he's dead?

HENRY:
Well what do you want to do - wait here all night?

MRS.P:

Umm, no, but we ought to wait a little while. Maybe we can find out where he lives.

HENRY:

We gonna go traipsin' around the whole city?

MRS.P:

If I have to.

HENRY:

Well then what of me, then?

MRS.P:

Well, do as you please.

HENRY:

I'll be home. If you think more of some crazy letter than feeding your husband then that's all.

MRS.P:

Whaddayou mean that's all?

HENRY:

Just what I said - that's all!

MRS.P:

You know the trouble with you is you don't have no imagination.

HENRY:

No. I'm just a home-lovin' guy that's all. I don't go stickin' my nose where it don't belong.

MRS.P:

Well, go on home then. I'll find out about it.

HENRY:

Ah, women!

MUSIC:

BRIDGE.

HEALY:

A different turn of speech. Another question. If the boarding house woman were more cooperative, if she knew the facts of the case, and took an interest in the death of Ernest Bowers, ... if, if if. At the hospital meanwhile events were pursuing their normal course.

DR. WELDON:

Couldn't reach anybody, eh?

NURSE:

No, doctor. I tried just a few minutes ago. That boarding house woman snapped my head off.

DR. WELDON:

Well, we're finished with the tests. Sure wish we could do that autopsy. Maybe later after he's gone to the morgue.

NURSE:
Want me to try again?

DR. WELDON:
Hmm? Ah, no. Uh, get me the orderly room.

NURSE:
Okay. Use that one there.

SOUND:
PHONE LIFTED.

DR. WELDON:
Hello, Paine?

PAINE:
Yeah.

DR. WELDON:
This is Dr. Weldon. There's a delivery for you, go to the morgue.

PAINE:
Now?

DR. WELDON:
Yeah.

PAINE:
I ain't had nuthin' to eat since...

DR. WELDON:
Yeah, since lunch. Go on now, Paine, down to the receiving room. The papers are there too.

PAINE:
Why can't it wait a few minutes?

DR. WELDON:
It's gotta go now. They want to start embalming so they can go home.

PAINE:
How about sending one of the other boys?

DR. WELDON:
Oh, I don't care. Just as long as he gets there.

PAINE:
Okay.

NURSE:
Want me to keep trying to reach his house?

DR. WELDON:
Nah, the rush is off. Any time now. Going to the morgue. Tell you what. You can wait till his wife calls here. She should be home pretty soon I guess. I'll be here all evening. I want to talk to her.

NURSE:
All right, doctor.

DR. WELDON:
Oh, uh, don't get your wires crossed.

MUSIC:
BRIDGE.

MRS.P:
(distraught) Oh, dear! (changes to joy as she sees him) Oh, Mr. Murdoch!

JERRY:
Yes?

MRS.P:
Oh, I'm glad you came back.

SOUND:
BELL ON STORE DOOR.

JERRY:
Come in. What can I do for you?

MRS.P:
(deep breath) You sold my husband a jacket - a sports jacket - this afternoon.

JERRY:
Did I? What kind?

MRS.P:
Light blue one. Had a few stains on it.

JERRY:
Sorry, can't take back anything once it's sold.

MRS.P:
Oh, no no no. I don't want to give it back. Where'd you get it, Mr. Murdoch?

JERRY:
I don't even know which one you're talkin' about. I got lots..

MRS.P:
It must have been a few hours ago. Blue, with thin red boxes.

JERRY:
Oh, that one. What about it?

MRS.P:
Where'd you get it?

JERRY:
Whatta you want to know for?

MRS.P:
'Cause there was a letter in it. An important letter.

JERRY:

I dunno. How can I remember where I got it?

MRS.P:

Long ago, was it long ago?

JERRY:

I don't see where it's any of your business where I got it.

MRS.P:

(almost crying) It may be important. I've been trying to reach the numbers but the doctor's number is always busy and the wife she's not home and ...

JERRY:

I don't know where you're talkin' about. Now please, I'm busy. I got lots to do here.

MRS.P:

But you gotta tell me. Look, tell me just one thing. Did you have the jacket here a long time?

JERRY:

Well, I don't...

MRS.P:

Please. It's very important.

JERRY:

Well, no. No. I just got it in this afternoon.

MRS.P:

Oh. Where'd you get it?

JERRY:

You said just one question. You asked it and I answered it. That's all.

MRS.P:

There was blood on it.

JERRY:

That I can't help. Now will you excuse me?

MRS.P:

Look, look, you must tell me.

JERRY:

(Irate) I don't have to tell nobody nuttin'.

MRS.P:

Look, I may be all wrong. I'm probably just crazy about this but if that man's alive and they do anything to him I'll never be able to get over it. I'll never be able to live with myself.

JERRY:

This whole thing sounds crazy to me.

MRS.P:

The letter on the inside of that jacket. It said that Ernest Bowers was a cataleptic.

JERRY:

What's that - he goes into fits?

MRS.P:

No no no. A cataleptic. You know, someone who looks like he's dead at times but he isn't. He goes into a spell and he looks like he's dead. But sometimes you know they take dead bodies to the morgue and they embalm 'em. That means they take all the blood out of their veins. This fellow Bower he's a cataleptic - I don't know if he's dead or alive or even if he's worrying about this letter -- but I've got to find out.

JERRY:

Well, there was, uh...

MRS.P:

What?

JERRY:

... an accident before.

MRS.P:

Where? Who was in it?

JERRY:

I don't know. Believe me. Hey, Lady I didn't know anything about all this. Do you think this guy was taken away in an ambulance to be one of those, uh, cataleptics?

MRS.P:

That coat - was it his?

JERRY:

Yeah, lady, yeah. But it was left there on the street - they went away and left it.

MRS.P:

Who?

JERRY:

The ambulance.

MRS.P:

What ambulance?

JERRY:

I dunno. The cop was there on the corner, he told someone to call an ambulance and they came and took away the man.

MRS.P:

A cop! I saw a cop outside while I was waiting for you. Is it the same cop?

JERRY:

Yeah.

SOUND:

FOOTSTEPS RUNNING CONTINUES UNDER.

JERRY:

Look, lady, you got to protect me. I ain't done anything wrong. I didn't know anything like this would happen. I would never have taken the coat if...

SOUND:

DOOR OPEN FOOTSTEPS STOP.

MRS.P:

Officer! Officer!

MUSIC:

DRAMATIC BRIDGE.

HEALY:

Ernest Bowers lay on a slab in the morgue. If he were alive, probabilities were that he would regain consciousness before 6:45. And the two embalmers on duty at the time had decided to get a bite to eat. When the phone rang, Anthony answered.

ANTHONY:

Well we're goin' out to eat. (Pause) Yeah, I know another one just came in. We got it here. (Pause) Well, what's the rush? No, no, we just want to get a cup of coffee and then we'll get on. (Pause) Look, is it our fault if one comes in just when we want to get a cu...(Pause) What's that? We can go home after? Well, yeah, that puts a different complexion on it. Yeah, okay, yeah.

SOUND:

PHONE HANGUP

ANTHONY:

What time is it, Al?

AL:

Six-thirty.

ANTHONY:

Doc says if we embalm this one now we can go home.

AL:

Let's start in then. I'm hungry.

ANTHONY:

O-kay.

AL:

I'll start the motor.

SOUND:

BLOOD DRAIN MOTOR. CONTINUES UNDER.

ANTHONY:

A young guy, ain't he?

AL:

Yeah. I was speakin' to the wife about that yesterday.

ANTHONY:

Get the injector.

AL:
Yeah. And she was saying more and more people die, older and older.

ANTHONY:
Here. Looks like we can open through the neck.

AL:
Gimme a piece of that gauze...

ANTHONY:
Here.

AL:
I says to her, she oughta be around this place more. We get 'em all ages.

ANTHONY:
You want me to do it?

AL:
Nah. Nah. You get the injector in.

ANTHONY:
Hey, look at him. You'd never think such a little thing like his heart stops beating could make him dead and not alive.

AL:
Hold it steady, willya?

ANTHONY:
Yeah.

AL:
Ready?

ANTHONY:
Just a second. (Pause) Okay.

AL:
All right. Here we go. Oh!

ANTHONY:
What's the matter?

AL:
My glasses... they're cloudin' up.

ANTHONY:
Well take 'em off.

AL:
Nah, nah. I'll just clean 'em.

ANTHONY:
What'd the wife say to that?

AL:
Huh? Oh, uh, about all ages?

ANTHONY:

Yeah.

AL:

She didn't have nuthin' to say. Except that most of the guys we deal with probably come to a violent end.

ANTHONY:

Yeah, well there's sumpin' in 'at.

AL:

Okay. Got 'em clean. Here we go...

ANTHONY:

What's the matter?

AL:

They've steamed up again. Every time I bend over near... I wonder.

ANTHONY:

What?

AL:

I wonder if... must be my imagination.

ANTHONY:

What?

AL:

I coulda sworn this guy was... breathin' on my glasses.

ANTHONY:

Well, is he?

AL:

(chuckles) How could he?

ANTHONY:

Well come on then let's go, it's quarter to seven already.

AL:

Yeah, yeah.

SOUND:

(OFF) PHONE RINGS. CONTINUES.

ANTHONY:

I'll get the phone.

AL:

Let's get this started first.

ANTHONY:

Okay. We'll just ... Al! (mumbles, disconcerted)

AL:

What's the matter with ya?

ANTHONY:

I, uh, I, I thought I just saw this guy's hand twitch.

AL:

Don't be stupid.

ANTHONY:

Got me scared. Let's wait a second. I'll get the phone.

AL:

It'll probably be another job and we'll never get outta here. Let it ring.

ANTHONY:

But the Doc said we could go home after if..

SOUND:

PHONE RING STOPS.

ANTHONY:

All right. All right. Come on, come on. Let's get this thing over with, Al...

Okay, give me the knife again. I will.

AL:

(whispers) Tony.

ANTHONY:

Yeah?

AL:

Look. Looka here. I'm bent over like this. I ain't gonna move. My glasses are full of steam again.

ANTHONY:

Hooo-oly! Is he alive?

SOUND:

PHONE RING CONTINUES.

AL:

Look at me! Look at me! I'm shakin' all over.

ANTHONY:

Look at him, Al. Look at his lips. Listen...

AL:

(shouts) Shut off that motor!

BOWERS:

(Tries to speak.)

MUSIC:

DRAMATIC BRIDGE.

HEALY:

Apparently the life of Ernest Bowers was worth one dollar and thirty cents in a silver bracelet to the boys who ran away with it. And five dollars for a bloodstained jacket to "Honest" Jerry Murdoch. Their petty thefts brought a man to the brink of death. And there's just one more episode which I suppose doesn't belong in an accident report but I'd like to include. After regaining full consciousness, Ernest Bowers put in a telephone call from the morgue.

SOUND:
PHONE RING, PICKUP.

WOMAN:
Hello.

BOWERS:
Mrs. Brawley, is Mrs. Bowers in?

WOMAN:
I don't know. I'll see. (Off) Josie, see if Mrs. Bowers is home. (Back) Who is it?

BOWERS:
Well, this is Mr. Bowers.

WOMAN:
Who? Mr. Bowers? Well they told me you were dead. The hospital called and said...

BOWERS:
(laughs) I know, Mrs. Brawley. But they (gulp) made a mistake.

WOMAN:
Oh. (Pause) Well, here she is.

MRS. B:
Hello, Ernest? (miffed) Where are you?

BOWERS:
Well, darling, it's quite a long story. You see...

MRS. B:
Never mind. You get right home, hear? Dinner's gettin' ice cold.

MUSIC:
CONCLUSION.

ANNOUNCER 1:
Thank you for a great Suspense show.

HAP:
(Sniffle) I still got this cold in my head, Harlow.

ANNOUNCER 1:
Well, Hap, why don't you swap it in for something useful?

HAP:
I'd like to.

ANNOUNCER 1:
The way folks are swapping winter chills for springtime thrills by replacing old narrow-

gap spark plugs with wide gap Autolite resistor spark plugs. Autolite resistor spark plugs are made by Autolite men who make over 400 products for cars, trucks, airplanes and boats in 28 Autolite plants from coast to coast. And Autolite also makes complete electrical systems for many makes of America's finest cars. Batteries, spark plugs, generators, starting motors, coils, distributors. All ignition-engineered to fit together perfectly, work together perfectly because they're a perfect team. So folks, don't accept electrical parts that are supposed to be as good. Ask for and insist on Autolite, the original factory part, at your neighborhood service station, car dealer, garage or repair shop. Remember: you're always right - with Autolite.

MUSIC:

THEME AND OUT.

ANNOUNCER 1:

Tonight's Suspense play was written by Selig Lester and Mervyn Gerard.