

The Blue Lamp

A Farce in Two Acts

By David Barrett

Dramatis Personae

Desk Sergeant Tomkins

WPC Louise Barnham

Cleaner Emily Wetherspoon

Escaped Convict Harry Stephens

Inspector Pickard

Norman/Norma Wilde, a cross-dresser

Evelyn Wilde, Norman's wife

Simon Appleby, Drunk Man

Delivery Man

Workman

Act 1, Green Lane Police Station

The action takes place somewhere in suburbia in the public waiting area of a police station. Stage left there is a long desk, the width of the room, with the sergeant's office behind, segregated from the public by glass panelling. One of the panels is missing and is awaiting replacement. At the upstage end of the office the desk swings up to form a door into the public area. Stage right are three doors: two lead to the male and female toilets and one to the locker-room and staff rest room. There are two doors in the upstage wall: one to the Inspector's office and one is the main entrance from the street. In the sergeant's office there are three telephones, office furniture, a safe, a radio communications set and an intercom connected to the inspector's office. In the public area there are several padded chairs, a filing cabinet, a plant in a pot and several small tables, on one of which is a coffee machine. The curtain opens on Sergeant Tomkins, alone on stage, shuffling papers on the desk.

(The phone rings and Tomkins lifts one receiver.)

TOMKINS Good evening; Green Lane police station; how can I help you?
(The phone continues to ring. Tomkins lifts the second receiver.)
Good, evening, Green Lane.... *(The phone continues to ring. He picks up the last receiver.)*
(In an irritated manner.) Good evening, what do you want?
Oh, I beg your pardon. Green Lane police station; how may I help you, madam? *(Pause)*
I do apologise, how may I help, sir?
Your wife is missing? Gone out into the woods with George? How long ago was this, sir? Three hours ago. And what gives you cause for concern?
(Another telephone rings.)
I'm sorry, sir; would you mind holding the line for a moment?
(He picks up a receiver) Good evening; Green Lane police....
(The ringing continues. In his haste to pick up the third receiver, he knocks the first two onto the floor.)
Good evening; Green Lane police station; how may I help you? *(Pause)*
There's a man doing what? Hiding in your cherry tree and looking into your window. Do you recognize this man? He's your husband? Just a moment, madam, will you hold on please?
(He bends down to continue the other call but picks up the wrong phone.)
Hello! Hello? *(Realising his mistake he throws the phone over his shoulder and it hits him in the back. He takes the first phone now.)*
I'm sorry about that madam – sir! Now, you were telling me about George. *(Pause)* Full name, please? George Clooney? George is very strong, you say, and sometimes your wife can't control him and he gets his own way. Tell me, sir, have you been drinking? Alright, alright, can you please hold a moment?

(He throws the first phone over the other shoulder, replaces the third one on the hook and takes the second phone.)

Sorry for the delay, madam. Now, will you please explain what your husband is doing up a tree. I know you said he's hiding, but who is he hiding from? Alright, whom is he hiding from? From your boyfriend? Your husband is hiding from your boyfriend! Shouldn't it be the other way around? Oh, I see, you live with your boyfriend. I'm sorry but will you hang on a minute. *(Taking the other call again)*

Now sir, your wife is in the woods with George Clooney and he is getting his way with her. Now would this be **the** George Clooney? Oh, I'm the one being ridiculous am I? You're worried about George? I thought you were worried about your wife. He's recovering from an operation? He's been what? He's been neutered? Look, will you hang on a minute, please. *(Muttering to himself, he takes the other phone.)*

Ruddy nutter! Oh, not you, madam, the person on the other phone. Now, about your boyfriend, does he know your husband is up a tree? What? Your boyfriend's up a different tree? Now you've got me confused. Just a moment, please, I need to find out what's happened to George Clooney. *(He throws the phone over his shoulder again and takes the other call.)*

Now sir, you were telling me about George Clooney's operation. He has a weak bladder as well? He lifts his leg all over the house? Do you mean George Clooney is a dog? Of course I did – just making sure. Just one moment please. *(Taking the other phone.)*

But madam, why is your boyfriend up a tree? Hiding from your ex-boyfriend. And where is your ex-boyfriend? Hiding in the bathroom! And who is he hiding from? From you? You've lost me now. I just don't... *(The third telephone rings. Tomkins throw the current one over his shoulder and picks up the third one.)*

(Angrily) Yes, what is it? Oh, I'm sorry, sir, I didn't know it was you. No, I don't normally answer like that, it's just that I'm trying to deal with George Clooney and a woman with a husband and two boyfriends. Oh, never mind! *(Pause)* The new Detective Inspector? Coming tonight? Here? Oh my! Please excuse me for a moment.

(He picks up the other two phones and speaks into both at once.)

Just one moment, I am passing you over to someone who may be able to help you.

(He puts the two receivers together, earpiece to mouthpiece and secures them with parcel tape. He then puts them both in a drawer. Taking the other phone again...)

Sorry about that, sir, I just had to deal with a couple of nutters! Yes, sir, I will make him very welcome. Inspector Pickard, you say? Very well, sir. Goodnight, sir. *(He slams the phone down and mops his brow.)*

Just when I thought we were in for a quiet night.

(He leaps over the desk, taking a short-cut through the missing glass panel, and crosses to a plant pot in the public area. Reaching into the pot, he takes out a bottle and a glass, pours himself a drink and sinks into one

of the padded chairs. The bottle is a mineral water bottle but the liquid is clearly something a lot stronger by his reaction.)
(Louise is heard singing off-stage in the locker room. Tomkins panics, drains his glass and is about to hide it in the plant pot when Louise enters. He quickly conceals glass and bottle behind the coffee machine, but in view of the audience.)

LOUISE Evening Serg!

TOMKINS *(With his back to Louise, he fans his breath to dilute the alcohol fumes.)*
Oh, hello WPC Barnham. You're early.
(Louise looks around the room.)

LOUISE Is there someone here? You never call me WPC Barnham.

TOMKINS Things have become too informal around here lately. I need to tighten up on discipline.

LOUISE In other words, the new inspector is coming soon.

TOMKINS As a matter of fact, yes, he is.
(He crosses to the desk and leaps through the missing window into the office.)

LOUISE Then you'll have to start using the office door, like everyone else.

TOMKINS I'll have to soon anyway. The glass is due to be repaired.

LOUISE Thank goodness for that. Anything to report so far this evening?

TOMKINS It's been very quiet except for a couple of telephone calls – absolute raving lunatics. And – news has come in of an escaped convict seen in our patch; a conman. Non-violent but very clever at deception.

LOUISE Is that all?

TOMKINS Oh, and this. *(He opens the safe and takes out a glittering diamond necklace. Louise gasps.)* Found in the street by a twelve-year-old boy. Forensic are trying to discover whether it is part of a larger haul from that bank robbery last week.

LOUISE Wow, are they real diamonds?

TOMKINS Of course.

LOUISE Can I try it on - just quickly?

TOMKINS Certainly not. It is in our custody for safe keeping.
(He locks it back in the safe.)

LOUISE Well, I think I need a coffee before I start my shift.

TOMKINS I'll get it, Louise, I mean WPC Barnham.
(She starts to cross to the coffee machine but Tomkins leaps over the desk again and tries to pour it for her. The machine is empty, however.)

LOUISE I'll make coffee in the inspector's office – I could do with one myself.
Thank you. I suppose we won't be able to do that once the new man arrives. When does he arrive?

TOMKINS Tonight!

LOUISE My goodness, then I'd better tidy the office. Is Emily in?

TOMKINS Yes, Miss Wetherspoon is cleaning the locker room at present. *(Exits to inspector's office.)*

LOUISE Good, this floor needs mopping.

(She enters the sergeant's office, sees the wires coming out of the drawer, takes the two telephones out, unwinds the tape and replaces them on the receivers with an incredulous look on her face. Enter Emily from the locker room, dressed as a cleaner.)

Ah Emily, there you are.
EMILY Evening, Miss.
LOUISE Emily, do you think you could give this floor a mop, please? The new inspector is coming in later.
EMILY Certainly, Miss. As a matter of fact, it's my next job. *(She fetches her mop and bucket and begins to mop.)*
LOUISE Oh, and be a dear - the coffee machine needs topping up with water.
EMILY Certainly, Miss. I'll do that first.
(She crosses to the coffee machine and sees the bottle of whisky.)
That's a good idea! Saves taking the whole machine out to the kitchen.
(She empties the whole bottle into the machine.)
TOMKINS *(Over the intercom. This makes Emily jump.)* The train for Clapham Junction is about to depart from Platform Three.
EMILY I really wish he wouldn't do that. It always gives me a fright.
TOMKINS Mind the doors! *(Emily jumps again.)*
LOUISE He certainly can't do it when Pickard arrives.
EMILY Who?
LOUISE Inspector Pickard – our new boss.
TOMKINS *(In a Geordie accent)* Would Louise please come to the diary room! Your coffee is ready.
EMILY Now Big Brother wants you.
LOUISE He loves his little games.
EMILY I'll go and get your coffee for you.
LOUISE Thanks, Emily; I need to sort out all these files.
(As Emily exits to the Inspector's office, Louise drops an armful of files and bends down to pick them up.)

Enter Norman Wilde, in female attire. He does not see Louise, who is picking up the files but she is in full view of the audience. Norman rings the bell for attention and stoops to do up his shoe-lace. Louise leaves her files and stands up but sees no-one at the desk. She stoops down again to pick up the files. Norman stands up and rings the bell again. He then turns away from the desk and hitches up his false boobs, just as Louise stands up again. When she notices what Norman is doing she quickly bobs down again to hide. A few seconds later she tentatively rises and looks over the desk. Without turning round Norman impatiently rings the bell repeatedly.

LOUISE Good evening, madam. *(Norman jumps violently in surprise.)*
NORMAN *(In a rather deep imitation of a female voice.)* Oh my goodness, oh my gosh, you gave me quite a start. Where did you come from?
LOUISE I was just picking up these files from the floor. Can I help you?
NORMAN No, I mean, yes! Oh dear!
LOUISE What on earth is the matter?

NORMAN It's that I was hoping to speak to a man.

LOUISE Can't I help you?

NORMAN Oh, very well. You see, my car has been stolen, it's a Rover – and... and my clothes, handbag, house keys and everything.

LOUISE Just a moment. I need to write this down. *(Taking her note-book.)*
Now, your name?

NORMAN Norman...er, I mean Norma Wilde.

LOUISE Address?

NORMAN Yes, it's nice isn't it.... Oh I see; 47 Rowan Crescent.

LOUISE Description of your Rover?

NORMAN How dare you? Oh, I see. It's blue, registration RWP 256F

LOUISE Rowan Crescent isn't far from here. I suggest you walk home and we'll call you if we have any news of your vehicle.

NORMAN Go home? I can't!

LOUISE Can you not get in.

NORMAN No, that's it! I can't get in. I'll just sit here and wait.

LOUISE I'm afraid it may be a very long wait, madam.
(Norman crosses to the padded chairs and sits. Enter Emily with Louise's coffee. She puts it on the desk. Noticing Norman she gives him a strange, unbelieving look.)
Thank you, Emily.
(Emily takes a dustpan and sweeps around the tables, re-arranging magazines and leaflets. Louise picks up a microphone.)
Calling all cars, calling all cars! Please look out for a stolen blue Rover, registration RWP 256F
(Emily gestures to Norman to lift his legs so she can sweep around him. He does so and she notices that they are extremely hairy. She looks askance at Louise then the audience.)

TOMKINS *(Over the intercom)* Would passengers for flight 633 to Morocco please make their way to gate 14.

NORMAN *(This line is delivered first in a male voice then, after a cough, in a female voice.)* What the devil?

EMILY Don't mind that, it's just the sergeant testing the intercom. There's a new detective inspector arriving tonight and everything must be in order for him.

NORMAN A new inspector eh? *(He pours himself a coffee from the machine.)*
What's he like?

EMILY We don't know; none of us has met him yet! *(She looks at his legs again.)*

NORMAN This coffee is delicious. It tastes like a liqueur. Is it a new brand?

EMILY Just cash and carry. Have you ever tried waxing?

NORMAN No, is that a good brand?

EMILY I mean your legs. Have you tried waxing?

NORMAN Have I tried what?

EMILY Waxing! I don't mean to be personal but it leaves you lovely and smooth.
(She puts her leg on the table, lifts her skirt and runs her hands up her leg. Norman stares, open-mouthed.)

NORMAN Men find smooth legs very attractive you know.
Yes, they do – don't they. *(He is so distracted he spills his coffee down his front and on the floor.)*

EMILY Careful, you're spilling your coffee.

NORMAN Oh, I'm so sorry.

EMILY Here, let me help. *(She takes a cloth from her trolley and dabs his front. His boobs go out of alignment, to Emily's horror.)*

NORMAN *(Snatching the cloth and turning his back on Emily to wipe his front and push his boobs back in line.)* I can manage – thank you.
(Enter Harry, looking furtive and anxious. He has a habit of periodically scratching his right ear when he is nervous. During this dialogue Emily and Norman make conversation and drink coffee.)

LOUISE Good evening, sir. Can I help you?

HARRY I hope so. You may be expecting me.

LOUISE Are we?

HARRY Surely you recognize me by my description. It must have been broadcast. I would like to give myself up to the senior officer in the station.

LOUISE *(Sharp intake of breath.)* I'm so sorry, sir, we didn't expect you quite this soon. Welcome to Green Lane Station.

TOMKINS *(Off)* The next train for Bournemouth is the 18.43 from platform 12.

HARRY That's not the sort of station I had in mind.

LOUISE No, but that would be the senior officer you had in mind.

HARRY I just can't carry on with things as they are. Please just do whatever is necessary – I can't stand looking over my shoulder anymore.

LOUISE I understand; you don't like taking orders yourself, sir. You want to be in charge.

HARRY Go ahead and charge me. I deserve what I get.

LOUISE That's great. We love a boss with a sense of humour.

HARRY Just a moment, did you call me 'boss'.

LOUISE Yes, I'm sorry the old inspector didn't mind that. We can just call you inspector if you like.

HARRY Hm! Either will suit me just fine – but... but....

LOUISE Inspector Pickard, isn't it?

HARRY What, oh yes, yes Pickard. *(He shakes her hand.)*

TOMKINS *(Off)* This is Dr. Barnes! Would all patients awaiting a fertility test please collect a bottle from the receptionist in order to provide a urine sample. And please ensure you aim carefully. Last week Mr Dickens
(Louise leaps towards the machine and slams her hand on the off switch.)

LOUIS Sorry, sir. Sergeant Tomkins just wants to ensure the intercom is working for you when you arrive. But you have arrived now – haven't you?

HARRY It would seem so WPC

LOUISE Barnham, sir, Louise Barnham.
(Enter Tomkins in great mirth.)

TOMKINS What fun, eh Louise? We'd better enjoy ourselves while we can. We won't be able to do this once the old man arrives.

LOUISE No Serg. Except he's arrived already.

TOMKINS Sergeant Tomkins at your disposal inspector.
HARRY Well, sergeant, if you carry on like this ‘disposal’ will be an appropriate term.

TOMKINS Yes sir, sorry sir.
HARRY Now, sergeant, a briefing if you please; in here, I think. *(Gesturing to the sergeant’s office.)*

TOMKINS Certainly sir. *(He goes to jump over the desk as usual but checks himself before it is too late. He shows Harry the long way round. The three of them put their heads together.)*

NORMAN They’re a funny lot these police officers.
EMILY Are they?
NORMAN They seem to do nothing but talk and drink coffee. Speaking of which, is there a toilet here?
EMILY Sure, it’s that door just there.
NORMAN Thank you. *(He gets up and crosses to the toilets. As he exits.)* I say, any news about my car yet?

LOUISE Not yet, sorry ma’m.
NORMAN No hurry, I might as well stay the night. *(To Emily)* At least the coffee’s good here. *(Norman pushes open the door to the gents.)*

LOUISE Not that one, ma’m, that’s the gents.
NORMAN Oh, how silly of me. *(Exits to ‘ladies’)*
EMILY Some people are so eccentric! *(She starts polishing the tables.) (Harry crosses through door into public area.)*

HARRY Nearest fire escape?
TOMKINS The same door you entered, sir.
HARRY Well I think that’s about everything. Oh, one last question; where do you keep valuables – confiscated property and such like?
TOMKINS Just there in the safe, sir. *(Gestures towards the sergeant’s office.)*
HARRY And access?
TOMKINS Just the senior officer on duty, sir.
HARRY Well then, you’d better give me the keys, hadn’t you?
LOUISE But, but

HARRY Yes, WPC Barnham?
LOUISE Nothing, sir. *(Tomkins hands over the keys. As he does so, he spots a tattoo of a lion on Harry’s forearm.)*

HARRY Thank you, sergeant.
TOMKINS That’s an interesting tattoo, sir. A lion, if I’m not mistaken. Is Leo your birth-sign?
HARRY *(Brushing the comment aside)* My middle-name. Family tradition.
LOUISE Would you like that tour of the station now, sir? I’m sure you’d like to see your office.
HARRY Thank you, Barnham, that would be very appropriate.
LOUISE This way, if you please. *(They exit to the inspector’s office.)*
TOMKINS Oh my goodness, what a night! I need a drink.
EMILY Plenty of coffee in the machine, Sergeant.

TOMKINS Yes, of course. *(He finds the empty whisky bottle and hides it in the plant pot.)*

EMILY Pretty, isn't it?

TOMKINS What?

EMILY The plant.

TOMKINS Oh yes, I was just admiring the.... the..... the pretty leaves.

EMILY I'll pour you a coffee, shall I? *(She does so.)*

TOMKINS Thank you, Emily. Why are you here?

EMILY Pardon?

TOMKINS I mean, you normally go home at six.

EMILY There's lots to do, what with the new inspector and everything. I must make sure the place is clean and tidy for him.

TOMKINS Do you think you should call your husband or parents – let them know where you are?

EMILY I'm single. Mum'll be in the pub – and I don't know my dad. He went off when I was three.

TOMKINS You poor thing. When you were three, you say. That's a co-incidence. I have a daughter. *(Mumbling to himself)* She would be about your age by now and she's called.....

EMILY Pardon?

TOMKINS Oh, nothing important. What did you say your surname was?

EMILY Wetherspoon.

TOMKINS Oh yes, of course.

EMILY Sergeant?

TOMKINS Yes, Emily.

EMILY That woman – Norma Wilde....

TOMKINS What about her?

EMILY There's something odd.....She has such a deep voice for a woman...

TOMKINS Well? Perhaps it's something in the water.

EMILY And her legs are **really** hairy.

TOMKINS Maybe she doesn't shave them.

EMILY And there's something else... *(She gathers up her cleaning materials.)*

TOMKINS I don't think I want to hear this.

EMILY When she went to the toilets she was about to walk into the gents.

TOMKINS You don't mean..... *(Emily grins and nods)* You **do** mean..... That's ridiculous. Why would she, he come into a police station dressed like that?

EMILY I think I'll go and clean the ladies – shall I? *(She exits to ladies with her bucket and mop.)*
(Enter Harry.)

HARRY Ah, Sergeant, everything okay?

TOMKINS *(Picking up his coffee.)* Yes, thank you, sir, I was just getting a coffee. Can I get you one?

HARRY Thank you.
(Tomkins pours him a coffee. Harry goes round to the sergeant's side of the desk just as Louise enters with an armful of papers.)
Ah, Barnham, the files. Bring them in and we'll make a start.

(She takes the papers into the sergeant's office.)

TOMKINS Your coffee, sir.

HARRY Oh, just put it on the desk will you.

TOMKINS Sir, would you mind covering for me while I go to the gents.

HARRY Certainly.
(Exit Tomkins to gents.)

Barnham, there is a file missing – January 2007. See if it's still in my office, would you.

LOUISE Certainly, sir. *(She exits)*
(Harry rubs his hands and whistles to himself as he juggles the safe keys and crosses to open it. He opens the safe and reaches inside. Enter Evelyn.)

EVELYN Good evening, constable.
(Harry slams the safe shut with a start and leaps up.)

HARRY Evening, madam. I'm an inspector, actually.

EVELYN Oh, I beg your pardon. I thought you were a policeman. What are you inspecting?

HARRY I am a policeman.

EVELYN Oh good. I have a theft to report – and a missing person.

HARRY Just a moment, madam. I'll get my notebook. *(He looks around for something to right on and picks up a notebook.)*

Now then, madam. Who is this missing person?

EVELYN *(Starting to sniffle.)* My husband. He should have been home hours ago.

HARRY His name, madam?

EVELYN Norman, Norman Wilde.
(Norman enters from the ladies, sees Evelyn and quickly exits into the gents.)

HARRY That name seems familiar somehow. Age?

EVELYN Thirty-eight.

HARRY And when did you last see your husband?

EVELYN This morning, before I went to work. He had the day off today and should have cooked the dinner ready for my return. *(She weeps.)* But when I got home the house was empty and there was no supper.

LOUISE *(Over the intercom, singing.)* "The hills are alive with the sound of music".

HARRY I do apologise, madam. Someone must have left the intercom on. Now, you also mentioned a theft.

EVELYN It's most curious. None of our valuables was touched except that my handbag is missing, one of my dresses, a pair of high heels; oh, and a a bra.

HARRY Size?

EVELYN None of your business!

HARRY What was in the handbag? Money, credit cards?

EVELYN Indeed, about two hundred pounds in cash. I have had my cards cancelled.

HARRY Please take a seat, madam and I will make some enquiries.

EVELYN Thank you, inspector, but I would like to use the ladies first.

HARRY Be my guest madam. *(He gestures towards the ladies and she exits.)
(Enter Norman, from the gents, followed closely by Tomkins.)*

NORMAN I'm so sorry, sergeant, you see, I don't have my glasses with me. I thought the little picture there was a lady. *(He inspects the sign.)* I can see now it is a man.

TOMKINS Forget it. We all make mistakes. *(He goes behind the desk with the inspector. Enter Louise, still singing. Norman's mobile rings in his handbag and he silences it. A few seconds later it rings again. He answers in his female voice.)*

NORMAN Hello. I'm sorry I can't talk right now, I'm in the bank. It's...it's...late night closing today. Uh, I have a sore throat. Look I must go; I'll call you back later. *(In an impatient male voice.)* Goodbye. *(He clears his throat and resumes the female voice.)* Goodbye.
Sergeant? *(No response from Tomkins. Louder.)* Sergeant?

TOMKINS Yes, what is it now?

NORMAN I need to have a word with you.

TOMKINS *(Crossing into public area.)* Yes, what's the problem?

NORMAN Well, it's rather delicate. May we go somewhere private?

TOMKINS *(Exasperated.)* Oh, very well. Inspector, may we use your office for a moment.

HARRY Certainly, sergeant.
(They exit to inspector's office. Enter Evelyn, touching up her make-up. She sits.)
And what's this, a shopping list?

LOUISE You're teasing me, sir. You know what a duty roster looks like.

HARRY Of course I do. It says Sunday here. Are we open on Sundays?

LOUISE Sir! *(She regards him with suspicion now.)*

HARRY Look, would you make the lady a cup of coffee.

LOUISE Sir! *(She does so.)*
(Meanwhile, Harry looks inside the safe and is trying to find the necklace when Louise returns. Harry quickly shuts the safe and stands between it and Louise.)

NORMAN *(Over the intercom.)* It's just a harmless hobby. A lot of men do it.

TOMKINS Do they really, sir?

NORMAN So I'm told. Anyway, my own clothes were stolen with the car and my house keys.

TOMKINS I may be able to find you something....

NORMAN Thank you, I can't go home like this, wearing my wife's....
(Louise quickly slams her hand on the off button. She clears her throat)

EVELYN Who was that, constable? The voice is familiar.

LOUISE Oh, that was just an old radio programme, Hancock or someone like that. I've turned the radio off now.
(Enter sergeant. He passes through the public area and exits to the locker room.)

HARRY Barnham, please go and turn off the intercom in my office.

LOUISE Sir. *(She exits.)*

(Harry furtively opens the safe and extracts the necklace. He holds it up and gazes at it in wonder. Evelyn stands up to stretch her legs and sees the diamonds. Harry jumps.)

EVELYN My goodness, that's a fine piece. Are those diamonds real?

HARRY Yes ...yes, they are as a matter of fact. Lost property, you see. Found in the street. Waiting for its owner to claim it.

EVELYN Must be a very well-to-do owner, I should think.

HARRY Quite!
(Enter Tomkins, carrying a constable's uniform, on the way back to the inspector's office and Harry quickly pockets the necklace and pushes the safe door shut with his foot.)

EVELYN Ah, sergeant, the inspector was just explaining about the valuables.

HARRY That's right. We offer a valuable service to the public, do we not?
(Tomkins exits, muttering under his breath.)
Phew, it's getting hot in here. I need a cup of coffee.
(He crosses into the public area.)
(Enter a workman carrying a sheet of glass, whistling.)

WORKMAN Evening. Come to replace the glass.

HARRY Very well, get on with it then!
(He does the job very quickly by simply sliding the glass downwards into its slot.)

EVELYN Here, allow me.
(While her back is turned to pour coffee, Harry takes the necklace from his pocket and conceals it in the filing cabinet in the public area.)

HARRY Ah, thank you. *(He takes a sip.)* Wow, this is good stuff. It has a sort of...

EVELYN Tang!

HARRY Yes, that's it; a tang!

EVELYN I think I'll have another myself.

WORKMAN That's me done. Goodnight.

HARRY Goodnight. *(Aside)* I expect he'll charge fifty quid labour for that!
(Exit workman and enter Louise from inspector's office.)

LOUISE *(Muttering to herself.)* And I thought it was going to be a quiet evening.

HARRY I must have a word with Emily about the cleaning roster. Cover the desk please, Barnham.

LOUISE Sir. *(She goes behind the desk.)*
(Enter Tomkins.)

TOMKINS Louise, pass me that finger-printing ink will you.

LOUISE Who are you finger-printing?

TOMKINS No-one in particular. Just whoever happens along.

LOUISE *(Muttering again.)* Things are getting crazy around here!

EVELYN Constable, is there any news about my husband? *(She hiccups.)* I'm very concerned, you know. *(She pours herself more coffee.)*

LOUISE Not yet, I'm afraid, madam. Why don't you go home and I'll call you as soon as we hear anything.

EVELYN Not likely. As soon as I go out of that door you'll forget all about it.

LOUISE Why don't you have another lovely cup of coffee?

EVELYN As a matter of fact, I think I will.
(Enter Simon, unsteady on his feet.)

SIMON Good evening, captain. *(He salutes.)*

LOUISE Just constable will do.

SIMON Constrabuwel!

LOUISE How can we help you, sir.

SIMON Ooh, I like it. Call me 'sir' again. *(He wobbles and nearly falls over.)*

LOUISE How can we help you, **sir**.

SIMON *(He grins and wobbles.)* I'd like a double room for one night, please.

LOUISE This is a police station – not a hotel.

SIMON Oh, so this is the police station. I wondered why they didn't breathalyse me next door.

LOUISE Next door **is** a hotel. What is it you really want, sir?

SIMON You can call me father.

LOUISE I'm sorry, I didn't realize you are a priest.

SIMON I'm not. You see – it's like this: I am a father. I have had a baby.

EVELYN There's a first.

SIMON Well, my wife actually. Seven o'clock this morning – and I have been out to cbrellbrelate.

LOUISE So we can see.

SIMON And I've lost my car-keys.

LOUISE Under the circumstances I think that's just as well. You're in no fit state to drive.

SIMON Are you implying, captain, that I'm ine, ine, inebli ... drunk. *(He thrusts his neck forward to peer at Louise and loses his balance, falling over the desk and breathing over Louise. She fans some fresh air into her mouth.)*

LOUISE *(Coming round to the front.)* Look er....

SIMON Simon. That's my name. Yes, Simon. Simple Simon. Hey, can you play 'Simon Says'?

LOUISE *(Taking his arm and guiding him to a seat.)* Sit here and I'll pour you a nice cup of coffee. That'll help you sober up.
(She sits him next to Evelyn who moves away with a look of distaste on her face.)

SIMON Ooh, hello. Are you a police-woman as well?

EVELYN No I am not. I've just lost my husband.

SIMON *(Crossing himself.)* May his soul rest in peace.

EVELYN He's not dead – yet!

SIMON *(To Louise.)* Poor soul. They say that to help them cope with it sometimes.
(He moves closer to Evelyn and she moves away.)

LOUISE Here, drink this.

SIMON Thank you, colonel. That's very kind. *(He takes a sip.)* Hey, you know how to make a good cup of coffee around here. *(He drinks some more.)*
(Louise goes back behind the desk. Enter a man in overalls pushing a filing cabinet on a trolley.)

MAN Evening ma'm. Where would you like your filing cabinet?

LOUISE *(Ponders.)* Oh, just put it where the old one is please.

MAN Very well.

SIMON *(Slurred)* Just leave it there, man.
(He leaves the new cabinet and wheels the old one off.)

MAN Goodnight, ma'm.

LOUISE Thank you. Goodnight.
(Enter Harry with Emily.)

HARRY That will be all, Emily. *(To Louise.)* I must be off now. I'll see you in the morning.

LOUISE But sir, I thought you would be staying the whole shift.

HARRY Not this time, just a flying visit to check everything is in good..... *(He notices the new filing cabinet.)* What on earth? Constable, explain this to me. *(Gesturing aggressively at the filing cabinet.)*

LOUISE Nice, isn't it? The lock on the old one kept getting stuck.

HARRY *(Looking around)* And the old one is....?

LOUISE Taken away – by the same man who delivered this.

HARRY What? I didn't authorize this. Who told you to do this?

LOUISE The sergeant did. We've been waiting for this new one for months.....

HARRY Sergeant, come here, at once! And you, Barnham, get on that phone and get that old cabinet returned. It was a perfectly good filing cabinet and I'll not have such a waste of resources in my station.

LOUISE *(Looking very puzzled.)* Yes, sir. *(Aside)* Crazier and crazier.
(As she goes to the phone, enter Tomkins followed by a sheepish Norman, dressed in a constable's uniform and with his face darkened by finger-printing ink. Norman has a look of horror on his face when he sees Evelyn and he tries to keep Tomkins between him and her. Emily smirks and sits to watch with amusement.)

HARRY And who the hell is this?

TOMKINS Constable Patel, sir, our new recruit.

HARRY And where the hell did you spring from, constable?

NORMAN Calcutta, sir.

HARRY There is no need for insolence. He opens the filing cabinet and inspects the inside.

LOUISE *(On the phone.)* I know you did but the new inspector wants it back. Then we'll pay another delivery charge. *(She continues the argument.)*
(Eve is staring at Norman, who clearly seems familiar. Simon puts his arm around Eve's shoulders. She pushes him away and he falls to the ground, giggling.)

EVELYN Oh, I'm so sorry. I didn't intend to push you over.
(She offers Simon her hand but when she tries to pull him up he pulls her on top of him. They both end up in a heap, giggling.)

LOUISE I know it's irregular but I'm asking you to return it.....
(She continues arguing throughout the next bit of business.)
One of the other phones rings. Tomkins tries to leap over the desk, as is his custom. He crashes into the new pane of glass and falls to the floor unconscious. Norman bends over him in an attempt to revive him. The

*station falls silent as Pickard enters, dressed in an inspector's uniform.
Simon and Evelyn are still in a heap on the floor.)*

PICKARD What the hell is going on here?

NORMAN *(Rising.)* Can I help you sir?

PICKARD It appears that I have arrived just in the nick of time.

SIMON I get it, the **nick** of time. That's a good one.

(The others all stare at Simon and Evelyn puts a hand over his mouth.)

PICKARD Pickard's the name. Inspector Pickard.

(They stare open-mouthed at him, except Harry who creeps into the filing cabinet and pulls the door closed behind him.)

(Raising his voice.) Your new station commander!

Act II, Green Lane Police Station

The act opens with an eerie silence and the action follows on immediately from act 1. Pickard can do nothing but stare at the mayhem. Louise slams down the phone and Emily rushes to help Tomkins, who is just regaining consciousness. Evelyn and Simon pick themselves up off the floor.

PICKARD I must say, this is not how I expected to be greeted in my new Station.
(Harry emerges from the filing cabinet and stands behind him. During this dialogue he picks Pickard's pocket.)

NORMAN But I don't understand. How many bosses can there be in one station?

PICKARD This is only a small station; the officer in charge is an inspector.

NORMAN But there already is a new Inspector Pickard.

PICKARD I beg your pardon?

TOMKINS What happened? My head....

EMILY It's alright sergeant, you've just had a little bump on the head.

TOMKINS Do you know, I thought you called me Dad just now, when I came round.

PICKARD Sit him down over here, he is clearly concussed.
(They sit him on one of the padded seats.)

TOMKINS Have you come to deliver a filing cabinet?

PICKARD No, I'm your new inspector.

TOMKINS W..... What?

PICKARD Your new inspector; Pickard's the name.
(Louise comes out from behind the desk.)

TOMKINS It must have been quite a bang on the head. I'm suffering from deja vu.

EMILY Here, have a cup of coffee; it might help.
(She gets him a cup from the machine.)

LOUISE I don't wish to appear rude, sir, but would it not be correct protocol for you to show us your warrant card. After all, how do we know you are who you say you are?

HARRY You're absolutely right, constable. Show us your warrant card, Pickard.

PICKARD Who the hell are you to order me around?

HARRY I'm a detective inspector; Inspector Pickard.

PICKARD Stop playing games with me. I'm Pickard. I already told you.

HARRY Ah, but I was Pickard first – and I have a warrant card to prove it.

PICKARD This is ridiculous. Oh very well – here's my I.D.
(He fishes in his pockets, becoming ever more confused, then frantic.)
I know it's here somewhere. I always carry it with me.

HARRY Enough! *(To Norman)* This proves that I'm your inspector. *(He produces the warrant card from his inside pocket.)* Now, impersonating a police officer is a serious offence. Take him to the cell, Patel.

PICKARD *(To Norman)* No wait! You're making a terrible mistake. You can be suspended from duty for this.

HARRY Patel!

NORMAN *(To Pickard)* This way, sir.

PICKARD Take your hands off me!
TOMKINS Please go quietly, I have a headache.
(Norman escorts Pickard, struggling to the cells.)

EVELYN What an efficient constable you have inspector. You know, he seems so familiar. I'm sure I've met him before.

HARRY Well perhaps you should introduce yourself to him – it may ring a bell.
EVELYN Good idea, inspector.

LOUISE Now sergeant, you must take it easy. You come with me and Emily and have a lovely lie down.

SIMON Now there's an attractive proposition for you, if ever I heard one.
(They exit to rest room.)

HARRY I'll man the desk.
SIMON *(Looking at Evelyn)* Does anyone else want a lie down?
EVELYN Simon, how could you? I think you need some more coffee.
SIMON Oh, Evelyn, how sweet of you to look after me.

RADIO Calling all cars - here is an update on the escaped convict from Wandsworth Jail: the suspect is about forty years old, of medium height and build with brown hair.
(Harry disappears slowly below the desk and crawls round towards the filing cabinet. Evelyn turns towards the desk and approaches it to hear better. Simon is leaning back, taking no notice.)
He has two distinguishing features: a tendency to scratch his right ear when agitated and a tattoo of a lion on his forearm.
(Harry creeps into the filing cabinet and pulls the door shut on himself.)
Please do not let this man deceive you. He is a confidence trickster. Over and out.

EVELYN Simon. *(No response.)* SIMON!
SIMON Evelyn, you made me jump. I was just nodding off.
EVELYN Did you hear the radio? There is an escaped convict in the area.
SIMON Not me, I swear.
EVELYN The voice on the radio said he has a habit of scratching his right ear. The inspector scratches his right ear frequently.

SIMON Evelyn, he's a policeman not a convict. Different sides, you know.
EVELYN *(Looking around.)* Where did he go anyway? I'm sure he was behind the desk just now.
(Enter the same delivery man as before. He brings back the old filing cabinet and takes the new one away, with Harry inside. As he exits he glares at Evelyn.)

MAN Ruddy beaurocrats, can't make up their minds, and people like me end up doing double the work. It's a disgrace! *(Exits)*

SIMON Was he supposed to take the new one away?
(Enter Louise.)

LOUISE He's not himself, you know. I might have to call an ambulance.
EVELYN You can't leave him alone if he's delirious. Would you like me to look after him.

LOUISE Thank you, that's kind of you.

EVELYN Constable, a rather curious thing – the man on your radio was talking about an escaped convict with a habit of scratching his ear and a tattoo of a lion.

LOUISE *(Looking around)* My goodness, Inspector Pickard fits that description.

EVELYN Apparently he's a con man and not to be trusted.

LOUISE Where is the inspector, if he indeed is an inspector?

EVELYN I don't know. Perhaps he heard the announcement and has run off.

LOUISE Oh my lord!

EVELYN What is it?

LOUISE You don't think the man in the cells really is Inspector Pickard and the phoney inspector some-how got hold of the warrant card?

EVELYN It's possible. Look I'll go and look after the sergeant. *(Exits to rest room.)*

LOUISE Thank you.
(Enter Norman.)

NORMAN We won't have any trouble from that prisoner.

LOUISE Don't speak too soon, Patel. On the contrary, I believe we are in for a good deal of trouble from him. I hope you were polite to him.

NORMAN I beg your pardon? He's a convict. They expect rough treatment, don't they.

LOUISE Rough treatment?

NORMAN Only a little bit rough.

LOUISE *(Groans and puts her head in her hands.)* What have we done Patel? Just because a man wears the uniform that doesn't mean he's a policeman, does it??

NORMAN Oh, I see! Well, I'm sorry you were deceived, Louise. You see, when my wife came in I couldn't let her see me dressed like that. The sergeant was so kind he....

LOUISE Stop! Stop it Patel! What on earth are you talking about? Let me finish, won't you.

NORMAN Sorry!

LOUISE We must phone HQ and get a description of Pickard, then we'll know for sure, which is the real one.

NORMAN Why, surely you don't think..... *(Gesturing towards the cells.)*

LOUISE Yes, I do think. *(Crossing to the phone.)* Our new inspector has a distinctive tattoo and a habit of scratching his ear – just like the escaped convict. And – what's more – we have two Inspector Pickards.
(She picks up the phone and dials.)
Good evening sir, it's WPC Barnham from Green Lane. I wonder if you could help me. Our new inspector, Pickard, could you describe him to me? You see none of the three of us have met him yet. *(Pause)* I see. No, that is very helpful. Thank you, sir. *(Pause)* Yes sir, three; myself, sergeant Tomkins and PC Patel. *(Pause)* Patel, sir – he's a probationer. *(Pause)* I see, sir. Thank you for your help. Goodbye. *(She replaces the receiver, deep in thought.)*

NORMAN Well?

LOUISE We have been deceived on several accounts, Patel. The real Inspector Pickard is locked in the cell. I think you'd better go and release him.
(Norman hesitates.) At once!

NORMAN Whatever you say. *(He exits to the cells.)*
(Simon, who has overheard all of this, scratches his head in bewilderment, grabs another cup of coffee and crawls into the filing cabinet to sleep, in the company of the stolen diamond necklace.)
(Enter Evelyn)

EVELYN Have you worked out which one's the real inspector yet?

LOUISE I'm afraid we locked the real one in the cells. Patel is letting him out now. Our lives will not be worth living from now on.

EVELYN Anyone can make a mistake, you know. Speaking about Patel, there's something about him that's not quite right.

LOUISE You are a shrewd judge of character, Mrs. Wilde.

RADIO Oscar Delta Charlie 40 to base.
(Louise rushes to the radio and answers.)

LOUISE Go ahead Oscar Delta Charlie 40.

RADIO We've found the missing car parked on the sea-front, Barnham, *(She glances at Evelyn.)* registration RWP 256F

EVELYN That's my car.

RADIO No sign of the missing person but we found a lady's handbag inside belonging to a Mrs. Wilde.

EVELYN What would Norman want with my handbag?

RADIO There is also a set of men's clothes, shoes and a watch.
(Evelyn gasps and sits down heavily.)

LOUISE Please keep searching for the missing person.

RADIO Will do. Over and Out.

EVELYN He's dead isn't he?

LOUISE No, we don't know that. *(She comes out from behind the desk.)*

EVELYN The car was at the sea-front. He's walked into the sea and drowned. Oh cruel world. I was the only person who could have talked him out of it and I was not there when he needed me most.
(Louise puts her arm around Evelyn but she weeps inconsolably.)
(Enter Pickard, without Norman.)

LOUISE *(Struggling to make herself heard above Evelyn's noise.)* Sir, what can I say? I'm so sorry.

PICKARD *(Shouting angrily)* Sometimes it's better to say nothing, Barnham. Oh, quieten that woman down, will you.

LOUISE Yes, sir. Here, Evelyn, have a nice cup of coffee.
(Evelyn drinks the coffee she is offered in one and pours herself several more in quick succession. She quietens down now and is clearly giddy from the alcohol. She sits, quietly sniffing.)

PICKARD Now, where is the imposter.? He must be handcuffed and thrown in the cells.

LOUISE We can't find him, sir. He has disappeared.

PICKARD I want this station taken apart, piece by piece. And I will not be satisfied until he is found. Do you hear me Barnham?

LOUISE Loud and clear, sir.

PICKARD And get Patel to help you. I'll delay charges as far as he is concerned until after the imposter is behind bars.

LOUISE Sir, about Patel....

PICKARD I know, he is somewhat over-zealous in the execution of his duties. Now get on with the search, Barnham.

LOUISE Sir. *(She exits to rest room.)*
(Enter the sergeant, supported by Emily, uncertain on his feet.)

PICKARD Ah sergeant, I want to see the telephone log, the duty rosters, the charge sheets and the warrants.

TOMKINS Who let you out.

PICKARD I am your inspector, sergeant.

TOMKINS Which is it, inspector or sergeant?

PICKARD I told you – inspector. Now will you please prepare the documents I asked for? And I'll have the keys to the safe.

TOMKINS But the inspector has them.

PICKARD I **am** the inspector, you fool!

TOMKINS Oh dear! I do hope there's nothing missing.

PICKARD We'll soon find out. Where's the inventory?

TOMKINS There, sir on the desk. *(Points)*

PICKARD Spare key?

TOMKINS In the safe, sir.

PICKARDS This gets worse.

TOMKINS *(Mumbling to himself.)* The telephone directory, the the

EMILY But inspector, you can see he's not fit enough to work.

PICKARD Nonsense. He's only had a little bang on the head. And do cleaners make policy decisions in this station? Get on with it, sergeant.
(Pickard notices the safe is open and picks up the inventory.)
Tomkins – the safe is open!

TOMKINS Now you can get the spare key.

PICKARD And Joe Public can help himself to whatsoever he pleases.

EMILY Come on, I'll help you. *(They stagger off towards the sergeant's office.)*

TOMKINS *(As he passes the filing cabinet.)* That's funny, I thought we had a new one.

EMILY We did but the inspector wanted the old one back. They must have taken the new one away again by mistake. I'll telephone and get it brought back again. *(They go behind the desk. Emily goes to the telephone.)*
(Enter Norman from cells.)

PICKARD I don't believe it! Where the hell is the necklace?

TOMKINS In the safe.

PICKARD You incompetent fools. You have welcomed a con-man into your station and allowed him to steal a diamond necklace. The police are supposed to make life harder for criminals, not easier. Let's hope, for your sake, that we find him quickly.

(Enter from cell area Norman and from rest room Louise.)

LOUISE Can't find any sign of the prisoner, sir.

NORMAN Nor I, sir.

PICKARD Outside, both of you, and search the street, at once.
(They exit.)

EVELYN My husband, my poor Norman.

PICKARD Oh, do be quiet woman. Now let's see what sort of a state they've left my office in. (Exits to inspector's office.)
(Evelyn drinks some more coffee. Her speech is becoming slurred. We hear Simon singing inside the filing cabinet. Evelyn cannot detect the source of the sound and thinks it is coming from the audience.)

SIMON (Sings) The hills are alive with the sound of music.....

EVELYN (Joining with Simon) The songs they have sung for a thousand years.....
(Enter Norman and Louise with delivery man wheeling the filing cabinet containing Harry.)

MAN (Looking at Evelyn) You certainly get your share of drunks and crackpots here. (He puts the filing cabinet next to the old one.)

LOUISE I'm beginning to think this is all a bad dream.
(Simon starts to sing again.)

MAN Right, I'm out of here. Good luck to you! (Exits)
(Enter Pickard carrying Norman's dress and high heels.)

PICKARD WPC Barnham, I do not need items of women's clothing discarded in my office. It is neither a shoe-shop nor a boutique. Did I not send you and Patel into the street to search for the prisoner?

LOUISE But, sir.....

PICKARD (Dumping the clothes into her arms) Take these away – now!
(Exit Louise to rest room)

EVELYN Oh, inspector, you found my stolen clothes. Then you must have apprehended the thief.

PICKARD Your clothes? How the devil did your clothes appear in my office?

EVELYN I told you, they were stolen.

PICKARD Patel, have you found the criminal?

NORMAN Well sir, you see.....
(He is interrupted by a knocking sound from within the new filing cabinet.)
You see, I'm not really a..... (More knocking)
Excuse me a moment, sir. (He unlocks the cabinet with the key already in the lock and Harry springs out.)

HARRY You could have killed me. There's no air in there. If you'd have killed me I would have sued.

PICKARD Well done, Patel. An excellent way to catch a crook. I shall see you rewarded for this.

NORMAN Thank you, sir.
(Evelyn pours another cup of coffee, downs it in one and no-one notices her fall unconscious behind the chairs.)

PICKARD To the cell, Patel.

NORMAN Sir. *(He drags Harry off struggling violently. As he exits Harry spots the old filing cabinet.)*

HARRY I don't believe it! I just do not believe it. Look, I was going to give it to the poor. I'm just like Robin Hood. *(They exit)*

PICKARD Now, where was I? Oh yes, my office. *(Exits)*
(Tomkins staggers over to pour himself some coffee but finds the machine empty.)

TOMKINS This can't possibly be empty already. Emily only filled it today.
(Enter Norman.)
Ah, Patel – or should I say Norman? Are you still here?

NORMAN Of course I am. I can't go home like this. What would the wife think?
(Evelyn stirs but she is hidden by the chairs.)

TOMKINS Sadly, I haven't got one.

NORMAN I meant my wife. What happened to yours, anyway?

TOMKINS Walked off and left me thirty years ago for no reason that I could fathom. Took my three-year-old daughter with her. Not seen either of them since.

NORMAN You poor man. Now look, sergeant, I must get my clothes back from the car. Then I can get home. Where is my wife, anyway? Has she gone?
(Evelyn recognizes Norman's voice and peeps over the chairs, unseen by the two men.)

TOMKINS Are you married?

NORMAN You know very well I am.

TOMKINS Does she come from Bombay?

NORMAN You helped me disguise myself from her, remember? Evelyn – she came here to report me and the car missing.

TOMKINS Of course, the man in the dress. Well, never mind, I'm sure you can get something for it from the chemist.

NORMAN My wife must not find out. She. . . . she would not understand.

TOMKINS *(Aside)* I'm not sure I do – but I'll see if I can get those clothes back for you. I'll radio all cars.

NORMAN Thank you. *(He exits to ladies, then realizes the mistake and goes into the gents.)*

EVELYN *(Aside)* Married for ten years and I don't even know my own husband.
(Simon sings again inside the filing cabinet.)
It's about time he was taught a lesson. Keeping secrets from me like that. I'll show him.
(She staggers off to the rest room. Tomkins has fallen asleep and he is slumped over the desk, snoring loudly. As she exits Evelyn takes Tomkins' truncheon.)
(Enter Emily. She crosses to the desk and wakes Tomkins.)

EMILY Sergeant, please wake up. I need to talk to you. *(She goes around to his side of the desk.)* Sergeant! Daddy!
(Tomkins wakes abruptly and splutters.)

TOMKINS What, what, where is she? Oh, I'm sorry Emily, I dreamed I heard my daughter's voice.

EMILY You did, daddy. You see, I am your daughter.

TOMKINS You.... you're my daughter – Emily?
EMILY The same one.
TOMKINS But how? Your name is Wetherspoon. That's neither mine nor your mother's.
EMILY She re-married.
TOMKINS Not John Wetherspoon.
EMILY Yes.
TOMKINS Why the scheming bastard! He always had an eye for Felicity. And, your birth-mark?
EMILY Still there. *(She rolls up her sleeve to show him.)*
TOMKINS Emily, my darling, it is you!
EMILY It certainly is. *(He embraces her and kisses her.)*
(Enter Louise from the ladies and does a double take.)
TOMKINS Oh Emily. My darling Emily. *(More kisses.)*
LOUISE Sergeant, how could you?
TOMKINS No, Louise, you don't understand.
LOUISE How can I? I'm a woman.
TOMKINS Emily is my daughter.
EMILY That's right. I haven't seen him since I was three. Traced him on the internet.
LOUISE But, why didn't you say so before?
EMILY You try finding the right words to say to the father you haven't seen for thirty years.
TOMKINS But Emily, don't you have a proper job?
EMILY Got a sabbatical from the force to trace you. When I found you, I applied for the cleaner's job to be near you.
LOUISE The force?
EMILY That's right. University and fast track. Had a few promotions since then as well.
TOMKINS This is all too much. I.... I.... I....
(He faints. Emily tries to stop him but falls on top of him. Enter Pickard, staggering slightly, with a cup of coffee in his hand.)
PICKARD Right, Tomkins, this is the last straw. I am closing this station until new staff can be found.
(Tomkins is helped to his feet by Emily but is still shaky.)
LOUISE But why?
PICKARD For one thing he's dunk on druty...d...d... drunk on duty.
EMILY He's not the only one.
PICKARD And what's more, I come in here and find you canoodling with the cleaner. Have you no shame, man? She's young enough to be your daughter.
TOMKINS She is my daughter.
PICKARD Do you think I was born yesterday. You and Barnham couldn't organise a shampoo in a poodle parlour, let alone police the district. *(To Emily)* And as for you; you're fired!
EMILY But sir, there's something you should know....

PICKARD Not another word. Please leave.
(Emily opens her mouth to speak but thinks better of it, turns and struts off into the locker room.)

TOMKINS But she's my.....

PICKARD I saw exactly what she is, Tomkins. You should be ashamed of yourself. The only person I can call a real police officer in this station is Patel. He's a credit to the force.
(Enter Norman from the gents at the same time as Evelyn from the rest room.)
 Ah, Patel, I was just singing your praises.
(Norman opens his mouth but has no chance to reply.)

EVELYN Well now it's my chance to sing. *(She begins to hit him around the head with the truncheon.)*
 You thought you could fool me with your ridiculous disguise, did you, you deceitful creature. Well it didn't work. Now I'm going to teach you a lesson for embarrassing me.
(Enter Louise. She sees Evelyn hitting Norman and restrains and handcuffs her. Norman falls to the floor.)
 Get your hands of me. What do you think you're doing?
(She head-butts Louise, who also falls to the floor, unconscious. Tomkins kneels beside her and tries to revive her.)

PICKARD Patel, lock this woman in the cells at once.

NORMAN Certainly, sir. *(Norman staggers to his feet and drags Evelyn off-stage)*

EVELYN *(As she is dragged off)* How dare you? You can't lock up your own wife.

NORMAN Just watch me.

EVELYN Oh, Norman, this is quite fun, you know. We should do this more often.....

PICKARD Who is that woman, sergeant.

TOMKINS Just a drunk off the streets.
(Simon sings inside the filing cabinet.)

PICKARD Is it usual, Tomkins, to have singing filing cabinets?

TOMKINS Just another drunk, sir. *(Louise recovers consciousness and sits up.)*

PICKARD Now, sergeant, I shall be making a full report about what I have found here – and you will not come out favourably.

LOUISE *(Aided to her feet by Tomkins.)* With respect, **sir**, I found some coffee cups in your office, smelling distinctly of spirits.

PICKARD Why, how dare you insinuate that I have drunk on duty, constable? You are suspended from duty as well.

TOMKINS Well, I guess that just leaves you – and young Patel.
(Enter Norman in his own clothes.)

PICKARD Ah, Patel, what the devil? You're not off duty man.

NORMAN Well, actually I'm not Patel; just plain Norman Wilde.

PICKARD Is this some sort of a joke? I've had quite enough for one day, what with....
(All eyes fall on Emily, who enters from the locker room in full uniform, as a chief inspector.)

What's the meaning of this?
 EMILY *(Correcting him)* What's the meaning of this, Ma'm?
 PICKARD I don't understand.
 EMILY You didn't give me a chance to explain, did you.
 PICKARD But, you're just the cleaner.
 EMILY Things are seldom what they seem, inspector. As the senior officer here I am declaring you unfit for duty!
(Everyone stares open-mouthed.)
 PICKARD Un...un...unfit.... for duty?
 EMILY Ma'm!
 PICKARD Ma'm.
 EMILY Your judgement is somewhat questionable, Pickard, and you have allowed a civilian to undertake police duties.
 PICKARD But, but I didn't know...
 EMILY *(Raising her voice.)* It is your duty, Pickard, to know everything!
 PICKARD Yes, ma'm.
 EMILY Sergeant, call a squad car, if you please, to take the inspector home. Unless, of course, you would consider re-instating my father and WPC Barnham.
 PICKARD Well, under the circumstances, it would seem an appropriate course of action. Then he really is your father?
 EMILY I think you had better go to your office, inspector.
 PICKARD Yes, ma'm. *(He exits)*
 EMILY Now we just have to find the missing necklace.
(Simon sings again.)
 TOMKINS Louise, please let him out of there. *(She opens the door and Simon falls out.)*
 SIMON *(Rubbing his eyes.)* Ah, so this is where the party is! *(He passes out.)*
 LOUISE I was thinking! Why did Harry so desperately want this old filing cabinet back?
 EMILY Of course! He could have hidden..... just a moment!
(She opens the filing cabinet and feels around inside. The necklace is taped to the underside of the top.)
 Well done, Louise. That was good thinking.
 LOUISE Thank you, Emily, I mean ma'm.
 EMILY No, Emily will do. Louise, you'd better take this man to the cells to sober up.
 LOUISE Yes, Emily.
 EMILY And release Mrs Wilde. She can go home now.
(Exit Emily.)
 NORMAN I guess I'd better make a quick getaway then. Goodbye all – and thank you for your help.
(All respond as he exits.)
 EMILY You, daddy, shall get the credit for catching, Harry Stephens, the escaped convict.
 TOMKINS Why, thank you, dear.

(Evelyn enters dressed in a full sari.)
EVELYN Where is he?
EMILY He just left.
EVELYN Right! Well, he won't have got far. And when I catch him, he'll wish he'd never met me.
(All laugh as she exits.)
TOMKINS *(Putting his arm around her.)* Emily, I'm so proud of you; only thirty-three and already a chief inspector.
EMILY Well, actually I said I've had a few promotions but I'm just an inspector.
TOMKINS But, the uniform?
EMILY Found it in the locker room. Couldn't have pulled rank on Pickard as an inspector.
TOMKINS Emily, you crafty little thing, you!
(All laugh again.)
RADIO Attention all cars. We are getting reports of a serious disturbance in Green Street. A member of the public is allegedly being violently assaulted by a deranged woman. The suspect is described as 5ft 4, and Asian, wearing a Sari and armed with a police truncheon.
TOMKINS Oh no! Here we go again.

The End