

Presumed Guilty

written by

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(c) 2025

Comedy noir

OVER BLACK:

PHONE LINE CONNECTS to OPERATOR.

OPERATOR V.O
*Emergency operator. Which
service?*

CALLER V.O
(Aged male)
Ambulance. Hurry, please...!

OPERATOR V.O
I'm just connecting you now.

Heavy breathing and sniffles.

AMBULANCE SERVICE V.O
*Ambulance service. How may I
help?*

CALLER V.O
*I need an ambulance sent to
number 13 Goodship Avenue.
Hampstead, right away.*

AMBULANCE SERVICE V.O
*OK. Can I have your name and what
has happened, sir?*

CALLER V.O
Hugo Thirst.

AMBULANCE SERVICE V.O
*No, you go first. We don't give
out our names, unfortunately.*

CALLER V.O
It's my wife - Diana Thirst.

AMBULANCE SERVICE V.O
Can you give her some water?

HUGO
No-no. Her name is Diana Thirst.

AMBULANCE SERVICE V.O
*Oh, I see. Sorry. So can you tell
me what has happened to her?*

CALLER V.O

*Yes. She's fallen over the dog
and accidentally slit her throat
with her wine glass.*

AMBULANCE SERVICE V.O

Is she lucid?

CALLER V.O

No, she's Dodi.

AMBULANCE SERVICE V.O

*I meant your wife, sir. Is she
lucid?*

CALLER V.O

Oh. Sometimes.

AMBULANCE SERVICE V.O

Sometimes?

CALLER V.O

*She's just lying on the floor.
There's blood spurting out of her
neck. It won't stop. It's like a
fountain. It's everywhere.*

AMBULANCE SERVICE V.O

*Do you know if she is still
breathing at all?*

CALLER V.O

*No, definitely not breathing, I'd
say.*

AMBULANCE SERVICE V.O

*Well, can you check and see if
she has a pulse? Do you know
where to feel for that?*

CALLER V.O

*Usually, but I've never felt any
movement in the past.*

AMBULANCE SERVICE V.O

*OK. You need to feel her radial
artery. This can be located on
her wrist.*

CALLER V.O

OK. I'll go and check now.

AMBULANCE SERVICE V.O

*Come back to me when you have
done this. There is a paramedic
on his way to you now.*

The phone line goes dead.

INT. HOUSE - LOUNGE - NIGHT

In the centre of the room there is a glass coffee table. A glass of misty beer is situated on top.

A blood stained white PUPPY DOG lies beneath the coffee table.

Glamorous blonde DIANA THIRST (late 60s) lies supine with her eyes wide open on the blood soaked carpeted floor. A broken flute sticks out of a deep laceration to her neck.

A PARAMEDIC kneels down beside her and feels her wrist for a pulse.

HUGO THIRST (60s) His clothes soaked in blood stands in reverie and bites his fingernails.

AL JEDU (40s) A 7ft lanky Hispanic Detective enters the room, followed by a 4ft nothing, bald headed UNIFORMED OFFICER (50s)

The Detective removes his Fedora hat and automatically places it upon the head of the 4ft Uniformed Officer who stands next to him.

The Paramedic looks up at them and shakes his head.

PARAMEDIC

It's too late.

Detective checks his watch.

DETECTIVE

It's only 11.30.

Detective turns to Hugo and ushers him to the far corner of the room.

Hugo Thirst stands pale and dazed as he faces the concerned looking Detective.

DETECTIVE

Al Jedu.

HUGO

How d'you do.

DETECTIVE

Who are you? What's your name?

HUGO

Hugo Thirst.

DETECTIVE

Listen punk, I'm asking the questions, right?. Don't get smart. Just answer the question.

HUGO

I'm telling you my name is Hugo Thirst.

DETECTIVE

Just Hugo will do for now.

Hugo stares at the Detective with a blank expression upon his pale face.

HUGO

That's what I said.

DETECTIVE

I said don't get smart.

(hesitates)

Now, I'm going to have to ask you some very serious questions.

Think before you answer.

(clears throat)

Now, in your own words tell us what happened here tonight. Are you able to do that?

HUGO

(stutters)

I'll try.

DETECTIVE

Are you coherent?

HUGO

Yes.

DETECTIVE

In your own time, then.

(waits)

Hurry up, we haven't got all day.

Hugo lets out a nervous cough as he becomes flushed

HUGO

Well, we were just having an episode of a suck session... having a drink. It's what we do, you see?

DETECTIVE

I think you mean Succession. But carry on, I'm all ears.

CU: His large cauliflower ears.

HUGO

Well, she got up to pour herself another glass of champagne.

DETECTIVE

Right. Carry on.

HUGO

She was happy, laughing and joking, flashing her tits like she always does when she's slightly intoxicated.

Hugo begins to sweat profusely and becomes more flushed.

DETECTIVE

Was she drunk?

HUGO

No, not at all. A bit tipsy maybe. She had a couple of flutes of champagne, that's all.

DETECTIVE

Was she Diana Thirst?

HUGO

Not really. She ususally has three glasses before she starts on the beers.

DETECTIVE

I said don't get smart. Your wife's name. Was she Diana Thirst?

HUGO

Oh. Sorry. Yes, she was.

DETECTIVE

Carry on.

HUGO

Well, she went to walk out the room, but lost her balance and tripped over Dodi the dog. He flew at her from under the glass table when she went to walk past. She didn't see him.

DETECTIVE

(reflects)

Diana died while Dodi didn't.

CU: Dodi opens his sad brown eyes.

HUGO

Yes, it seems so.

DETECTIVE

Was she clutching the wine glass when she fell?

Hugo is now dripping wet and red as a beetroot.

HUGO

Well, yes she was as a matter of fact.

(reflects)

It smashed on the table, then went straight through her jugular vein as she tried to protect herself and Dodi.

DETECTIVE

And that is exactly what you saw happen, is it?

HUGO

Yes. It all happened rather quickly. One second she was laughing and flashing her wares, and the next, well, she was...

DETECTIVE

Do you really expect us to believe that is what happened here tonight? Look at you, you're covered in blood.

HUGO

I know. It was spurting out and going everywhere. There's even some in my beer on the table. I'll show you if you like?

DETECTIVE

No thanks. I'm working. I never drink on duty.

HUGO

Oh.

CU: A glass of beer tainted with blood.

DETECTIVE

Well, I'm afraid I am going to have to arrest you for murder. Your version of events simply doesn't add up. I think you murdered her in a fit of rage and tried to blame Dodi the dog. Isn't that what happened here, Hugo Thirst?

HUGO

OK.

(sighs)

No! I'm innocent! I couldn't stop it happening! It happened too quickly!

Detective walks over to Dodi the dog and stares down at him questioningly.

DETECTIVE

You know the truth, dont'cha Dodi?

Dodi the dog barks twice.

DETECTIVE (CONT'D)

There! See! Hugo Thirst, I am arresting you for the murder of Diana Thirst. You do not need to say anything, but it may harm your defence if you do not mention when asked something which you rely on in court. Anything you do say may be used in evidence.

(to Officer)

Cuff him, Twit.

The Uniformed Officer cuffs him without fuss.

HUGO

But I'm innocent, I tell you! I loved her! It was an accident! I wouldn't have hurt her, you imbecile!

The Detective grabs his hat from off the uniformed Officers head, then shakes Hugo's hand.

DETECTIVE

It was almost nice to meet you. I've never taken on a case like this one before but it's obvious that you murdered her in a fit of rage after a drunken suck session.

HUGO

I am innocent, you fool!

Hugo protests his innocence as he is led out the door by the uniformed Officer.

Detective turns to the Paramedic and shakes his head in wonder.

DETECTIVE

What's he takes us for, idiots?

Dodi the dog looks up at him and barks once.

END