



# *Death of the Parish Councillor*

Written By Tom Hitchcock

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The idea of the radio play is to recreate the feel of the traditional radio plays from the 50's and 60's, etc. The script has a small "Goon Showesque" feel to it, and the humour should be allowed to come through. This is a different form of acting, as it relies upon the vocal technique rather than the physical, such as timing, tone, pitch, etc to create the desired affect. Advice: Scripts don't have to be learnt off by heart, just familiar enough for a polished rehearsed read through.

## Cast

**Presenter** - BBC accent

**Inspector Clue** - Inspector of the Police (1)

**PC Correct** - A police constable who helps Inspector Clue (4)

**Mrs Broom** - An old cleaner woman. Verging on cockney. Loose with her tongue. Think Catherine Tate's grandma (2)

**Brian Smith** - Chairman of the Parish Council. Pompous (1)

**Dick Heron** - A local Farmer.

**Jenny Granger** - The local Reverend (2)

**Cecil Bryant** - Runs the village shop and Post Office. An old man. (4)

**Elizabeth Smith** - Brian Smith's Wife (3)

**Valery Jenkins** - Clerk of the Parish Council. A younger woman (3)

*The presenter is played by one person all evening and wears a suit. The other actors may have to multi role (see numbers above) for the other parts and would ideally wear black. Each character needs a specific item of clothing to use as well as a stance they hold whilst in that character. This keeps the performance visually appealing.*

*For example - Dick Heron: Flat Cap*

*Jenny Granger - Dog Collar*

*Valery Jenkins: Secretary glasses.*

*Cecil Bryant - Walking Stick.*

*Inspector Clue - Mac*

*PC Correct - Hand cuffs*

*Elizabeth Smith - Handbag*

*Mrs Broom - Mop*

*Brian Smith - A Tie*

*The play begins with the traditional "beeps" from the BBC*

**Presenter:** And now begins Red House Radio's *Thriller* hour.

*SFX - Dramatic music (Dun, dun, dun or similar)*

**Presenter:** *(In a dramatic voice)* The Death of the Parish Councillor

*SFX - Dramatic music - Theme*

**Presenter:** It is a cold .....*(Change date to suit time of year)*  
evening, we find our protagonist - Inspector Clue half asleep in his  
study after a hard day's graft. He is roasting his chestnuts on the fire

*SFX - Fire*

**Inspector Clue:** Ah, nothing like nice warm nuts on a cold evening.....\*  
This is the life, feet up on the poof in front of a roaring log fire, a small  
brandy in hand, Labrador by my side. Not a trouble in sight.

- *SFX - Wind blowing/ rain beating down on a window pane*

*SFX - A telephone rings, followed by the dog barking.*

**Inspector Clue:** Calm down Dexter, it's only the telephone. *(As if to himself)* Every bloody time it rings *(SFX - lifting receiver)* Hello, Inspector Clue here.

**PC Correct:** Sorry to disturb you Inspector, PC Correct here. I'm afraid I have some grave news.

**Inspector Clue:** Grave news? Well spit it out man.

*SFX - Someone spitting out a sweet into a bin.*

**PC Correct:** Sorry Inspector, I wouldn't normally talk on the phone with a Barley Sugar in my mouth but I needed a slow release of energy as I have been on the beat all day and things have hotted up in the office.

**Inspector Clue:** Have you tried turning the thermostat down?

**PC Correct:** Very witty sir.

**Inspector Clue:** I wasn't being witty I was being serious. Now tell me, why did you call me at this ungodly hour?

**PC Correct:** It is only seven twenty five sir, if you pardon my saying. *(He clears his throat)* I'm not sure how to put this without offending anyone.

**Inspector Clue:** PC Correct, who are you going to offend? It's only me listening and I'm not easily offended.

**PC Correct:** Very well sir. This evening we received a telephone call from a Mrs Broom, the cleaner at the Village Hall in *(Enter Name of Village/Town being performed in)*..... She had gone into the Hall to clean at precisely seven pm and found that the light was still on in the back room. She remarked how odd this was as the Parish Council meeting had been moved to the earlier time of five pm, due to the chairman and his wife going for a meal to celebrate her birthday. Mrs Broom wasn't invited to the meal, even though she has cleaned in the home of Mr Smith, the chairman of the Parish Council, for over ten years.

**Inspector Clue:** Is there any chance of this story moving along at a more rapid pace Constable?

**PC Correct:** Yes sir, right away sir. *(He speaks the next set of lines at a faster pace - still coherent though)* Mrs Broom approached the meeting room, mop handle in hand, ready to strike at the supposed intruder, if there was one.....

**Inspector Clue:** Stop, stop. Just hold on a second. I didn't mean speed up, I meant just tell me the necessary facts; forget the waffle.

**PC Correct:** *(In an understanding tone)* Right.... *(Authoritative tone)* He's dead.

**Inspector Clue:** *(As if to himself)* I don't believe this - pride of the force!  
*(To PC Correct)* Who, might I ask, is dead Constable?

**PC Correct:** Mr Smith, the chairman of the Parish Council.

**Inspector Clue:** Any suspicious traces?

**PC Correct:** By traces, do you mean the blood splattered up the wall and the knife in his back as well as the note saying "Die you horrible bar steward"

**Inspector Clue:** Yes, that'll be the kind I mean.... Bar steward?

**PC Correct:** I daren't say the correct word; as it's a naughty one. Let's just say it sounds similar to Bar Steward. The chief constable has asked if you will head straight to the Hall now and help us to solve this terrible case.

**Inspector Clue:** I am on my way constable.

*SFX putting the receiver down*

*SFX Dramatic theme music*

**Presenter:** Inspector Clue places his nut cracker down on the side table, grabs his hat and coat before switching the light off in the living room. He turns the small light on in the kitchen and puts the radio on in the living room, so that potential burglars believe he is in his living room listening to the radio in the dark.

*(SFX on light switches going off, radio turning on all to accompany the above actions)*

**Presenter:** Now if you will humour me dear listener, we shall briefly turn back time to four pm – where we find our Parish Councillor, Brian Smith, in his study at his home preparing for his meeting. His wife, Elizabeth is busying herself upstairs, whilst the cleaner – Mrs Broom, is cleaning in the study.

**Mrs Broom:** So I says to this man, you keep your filthy hands to yourself and he replies – I would if you let go of my dabber! Oh how we laughed - You see I had his dabber in my hand. A great big ol' thing it was, with a red end – leaves a nice circle round your numbers; made my little, blue, dabber seem inadequate!

*(She mutters a few incoherent things in the background whilst Brian replies)*

**Brian Smith:** *(In an uninterested tone)* Yes, most amusing. *(Calling out)* Elizabeth, have you seen my pad with the article I'm writing on it?

**Mrs Broom:** You wouldn't believe it though if I told you.

**Brian Smith:** *(Irritated tone)* Told me what?

**Mrs Broom:** About that night! Cor, blimey - Ain't you been listening to me at all? Here I am telling you about a wonderful night I had and wallop: you don't even care. There, I thought after all these years, you'd have grown to love me for all that I am!

**Brian Smith:** Don't you ever stop?

**Mrs Broom:** *(Puzzled)* Hey?

**Brian Smith:** Here I am trying to get ready for a meeting and all you can do is witter on about nothing. Mrs Broom, your life is empty and boring – so much so that I don't wish to hear any more about it.

**Mrs Broom:** *(In shock)* You don't really mean that do you?

**Brian Smith:** I mean a lot worse, but I can't say that to you as it would be too impolite. You have been boring me for so many years!

**Mrs Broom:** How many exactly?

**Brian Smith:** How many years have you been cleaning for us?

**Mrs Broom:** Well over ten years now I'd say.

**Brian Smith:** What a coincidence! That's exactly the same amount of time that you've been boring me for. Now disappear and move dust about in another room, instead of actually cleaning it like you're paid for. *(Calling out)* Elizabeth, have you seen my pad?

**Elizabeth Smith:** Dear husband, I believe you have left it in your top drawer, where you normally leave it. It'll be under your receipts I imagine.

SFX – drawer being opened.

**Mrs Broom:** Oh Mrs Smith, is that a new dress on your arm?

**Elizabeth Smith:** Why yes Mrs Broom, it is. I shall be wearing it tonight when I go out for my birthday meal with Brian and our friends.

**Mrs Broom:** Oh lovely, what time are we going?

**Brian Smith:** We? There is no "we", only "us" Mrs Broom. You aren't invited. No get on with your cleaning. Oh and don't forget, the Parish Meeting is moved to the earlier time of five thirty, so the whole Hall will be clear for your to clean straight through: front to back. It'll be nice to not be disturbed by you dragging the Hoover like some ghoul in the middle of our meetings for once.

**Mrs Broom:** *(Sarcastically)* Ooo, what a charmer you have there Mrs Smith! A real Mr Darcy! Would have been nice to have been invited, considering I'm part of the family with the amount of time I've spent here.

**Brian Smith:** More like part of the waste! I like to throw it out every week – now get out and leave me in peace you wretched woman.

**Mrs Broom:** Alright, alright – keep your hair on – if you had any! *(Under her breath)* Baldy! *She laughs to herself.*

SFX – door opening.

**Elizabeth Smith:** You really shouldn't treat her like that Brian. She has always done well by us.

**Brian Smith:** She is what she is, an irritating old bat who can't clean for toffee.

**Elizabeth Smith:** I'll be ready and waiting for you at six thirty darling. Don't be late and ruin my evening by letting your meeting drag on for too long – or doing paper work in the back room with the parish clerk.

**Brian Smith:** I haven't forgotten my sweet. I did book the restaurant you know! I wouldn't spend all that money and be late for it. I am sorry that we couldn't do it on your actual birthday.

**Elizabeth Smith:** I know, duty calls – another conference in Birmingham isn't it? A Parish Councillors duty is never done! I'll make sure I have a hot bath ready for you when you return Sunday evening.

**Brian Smith:** Thank you darling. Now where's my brief case?

**Presenter:** And now dear listener, we shall fast forward to five pm – the start of the Parish Council meeting. Brian Smith is in the "Chair" and to his right Dick Heron, the local land owner is sat in a chair, next to the "Chair". Jenny Granger, the local Reverend isn't sat on a chair next to the chair, which is next to the "chair"; she is instead kneeling on a prayer mat. However, the Clerk of the council, Miss Valery Jenkins and Cecil Bryant, who runs the Post Office and village shop are both seated in chairs, opposite the "chair".

**Brian Smith:** Good evening everyone. I would like to bring tonight's meeting to order please. Sadly Mrs Turner cannot make tonight's meeting due to her husband's water works...

**Dick Heron:** Has he still not fixed that leaking tap yet?

**Brian Smith:** Thank you Mr Heron.



**Dick Heron:** Please Brian, just Dick.

**Brian Smith:** Also, Mr Thompson won't be joining us as his pansies have drooped.

**Jenny Granger:** He is hoping to win first prize again at the Village flower competition on Saturday - I've seen his display; ooo what lovely blooms.

**Brian Smith:** We need to make this meeting as snappy as possible everyone, so we can disband with the typical formalities and skip through the mandatory items very quickly. Have you all read the minutes from the last meeting? If so please raise your hand *(They all do)* Good. Are you all happy with the minutes; being a full depiction of what happened in the last meeting? If so raise your hand...*(They all do)* Good. Any discrepancies or matters arising from the minutes you wish to discuss? *(Only Jenny raises her hand)* Good; moving on then. *(Jenny looks dishevelled)* Only three items on the agenda to discuss tonight. Firstly, the pub would like some money towards a new sign as the picnic benches on the playing field were used to destroy the old sign.

**Dick Heron:** Vandals, the whole bloody lot of them! They should be taught a lesson. Why, if I ever see them on my land I'll...

**Jenny Granger:** Oh Mr Heron, we know that you don't mean that. After all they are all God's children and occasionally, they will run amuck.

**Cecil Bryant:** Run amuck - they're damn near feral. I blame the parents, no real discipline any more. When I was a young lad; my father often used to take his belt and

*(SFX of a belt hitting a table)*

You wouldn't walk properly for a day or two after that. We sure learnt some discipline then. *(Laughs jovially afterwards as if a happy memory)*

**Valery Jenkins:** Most entertaining Mr Bryant. But we need to move on and make a decision; there are other pressing matters to attend to. .... Should we, as the Parish council, give public money to the Public House for a new sign?

**Dick Heron:** Well, it would look nicer to have a new sign. The old one was on its last legs way before the kids of the village got near it.

**Brian Smith:** All those in favour of a new sign raise your hand. (*All do bar Jenny*) Good. Second item. The church needs some gravel for their path. You know I'm not sure that this is the best thing for us to be spending public money on, Miss Granger. I mean the stones get caught in the tread on people's footwear then they end up taking it away with them. Seems like a waste of time. The less gravel the better I'd say.

*All bar Jenny nod and utter some agreement.*

**Jenny Granger:** Well, could we at the church have a donation towards the lead we need for the roof to stop it leaking instead then?

**Brian Smith:** Well, how much are you talking about?

**Jenny Granger:** About five thousand pounds worth.

**Brian Smith:** Oh no, no, no. We couldn't possibly do that without consulting the county council first - then we would need a surveyor to have a look, followed by builder's quotes. It all costs money, which, I feel that the parish council surely cannot back.

**Jenny Granger:** In that case, can I have the two hundred pounds for the gravel then? That'll be far cheaper for the Parish Council.

**Brian Smith:** I'm sorry, but the rules state that we must use the public money wisely and, as already highlighted, it wouldn't be used wisely on your gravel path.

**Jenny Granger:** (*Getting slightly miffed*) Put it to the vote then? That's what is stated in the Parish Council guide book. Chapter four, paragraph six; the council reserves the right to vote on matters which may or may not benefit the use of spending public money on non urgent matters.

**Brian Smith:** All those in favour of the church gravel raise your hand. (*Jenny and Cecil raise their hand*) One, two. Against? (*Dick and Valery raise their hands*) One, two. As chairman, I have the deciding vote - Chapter four paragraph eight – (*Slightly pointed tone*) And I vote against. The church will not receive public money. Item three

**Jenny Granger:** You always do this to me Brian. You always block the church at every available point you can. What is it? Were you dropped in the font as a child?

**Brian Smith:** Miss Granger, I do not wish to bandy religious ideals with you. Item three...

**Jenny Granger:** Oh, so it comes down to religious views. If I was in charge of a different religious church; I suppose we would get all of the money we wanted from you?

**Brian Smith:** Item three...

**Jenny Granger:** I'm being ignored again – I am here you know, I'm not invisible like the Holy Ghost!

**Brian Smith:** Item three Reverend! Mr Heron has put in a request to have another four barns put up on his farm to house grain, stores and livestock.

**Cecil Bryant:** Is that what you've been doing with the digger and the Lorries I've seen up at your farm? I did wonder what was going on. Bit eager aren't you? Looks like you've got all the foundations in.

**Dick Heron:** Financially; I've put everything I can into these plans – its fool proof: so much so that I'm confident that I'll be granted permission. How was the whiskey Brian?

**Brian Smith:** *(In a fluster)* Fine, yes. Ahem.

**Dick Heron:** Eighteen year old Glenlivett; as smooth as a baby's backside.

**Jenny Granger:** I cannot believe what I am hearing, bribery on the Parish Council.

**Brian Smith:** Certainly not..... It was a birthday present.

**Cecil Bryant:** Thought your birthday was in June?

**Brian Smith:** It was an early birthday present, wasn't it Dick!

**Dick Heron:** Yeah, along with the golfing lessons - you can't half cut grass well with that seven iron!

**Valery Jenkins:** *(In a half flirtatious manner)* There are a few games he is much better at.

*SFX Whip cracking*

**Brian Smith:** Well, the county council has been in contact with me over Nick's application and they are happy to grant permission for one barn and as chairman of the Parish Council they had asked me if I would accept their offer on your behalf. I had to give an answer to them immediately and thinking what was best for you and the village... I went with their decision as anything else would have meant another meeting and more costs, but at the same time, funnily enough, they accepted my application for the development on the meadow land I inherited opposite the Post Office - forty five new homes on 2 acres of land...oh and a Tesco Express... My hands are tied. Meeting closed at five thirty two pm. See you in six weeks. Mrs Jenkins, if you'd be so kind as to stay

behind to go through some of the paper work in the back room, then I'd be most obliged.

**Dick Heron:** WHAT! (*SFX hand banging on the table*) I have never in all my life been so humiliated and used. You low down....

**Brian Smith:** Meeting adjourned. Good evening!

*SFX footsteps walking away and then a door shutting.*

**Cecil Bryant:** Thought you said it was fool proof? You never said it was Parish Councillor proof!

**Dick Heron:** Why that double crossing slimy bast/...

**Jenny Granger:** /Mr Heron!

**Dick Heron:** Bar Steward. I was going to say Bar Steward Reverend.

**Jenny Granger:** I am certainly glad that you did. Although I whole heartedly agree with your sentiments, there isn't much that can be done about it. However, the good lord always finds away to fulfil what is right!

**Dick Heron:** The Good Lord needs to rain down his wrath before I get a chance to get my hands on that little weasel. Do you know how much I have invested into those barns? – every last penny I have! I've got the frame work turning up next week! My whole livelihood is in the ground as footings – I'm ruined!

*SFX Footsteps walking off quickly, followed by a front door being slammed.*

**Jenny Granger:** (*Calling after him*) I'm sure it's not as bad as it seems Dick. The Lord's light will find away to brighten your destiny! (*Pause*) Well Cecil, can you believe it; Forty five homes on that tiny scrap of land. How on earth did Brian manage that?