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Dramatic Publishing

**DETECTIVE
PARTNER
HERO
VILLAIN**



BY BRETT NEVEU

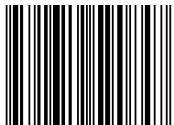
DETECTIVE PARTNER HERO VILLAIN

Drama. *By Brett Neveu. Cast: 4 either gender.* The black-and-white morality of superheroes is turned on its head in this ode to the modern action/comic book genre mixed with the dark humor of a gumshoe noir. Introducing the world to crime-fighter The Fantastic Phenomenon (the hero) and his arch nemesis Supernova (the villain), a detective searches for the killer of superhero super-fans while trying to understand his own relationship to The Fantastic Phenomenon. Discovering that The Fantastic Phenomenon is having an emotional breakdown, the detective tries to be a shoulder for him to lean on in hopes of getting the hero back on track toward capturing Supernova. The detective's world unravels as he begins to question his own belief in law and justice and peels back the good-versus-evil veneer, exposing the consequences of trusting those who tell us to "keep the faith." *Two or three int. sets and one ext. set. Approximate running time: 75 minutes. Code: DF9.*

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By
Brett Neveu



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(DETECTIVE PARTNER HERO VILLAIN)

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“First produced by Strawdog Theatre Company, Chicago, Nov. 26 to Dec. 17,
2013, directed by Gus Menary.”

Detective Partner Hero Villain was first produced by Strawdog Theatre Company, Chicago, from Nov. 26 to Dec. 17, 2013.

CAST:

DetectiveJohn Wilson
Partner Marc Rita
Hero..... Sam Guinan-Nyhart
Villain..... Tim Parker

PRODUCTION:

DirectorGus Menary
Artistic Director Hank Boland
Hugen Hall Artistic Director..... Anderson Lawfer
Managing Director Mike Mroch
Lighting..... Kyle Land
Sound Stephen Ptacek
Costume Design.....Aly Renee Amidei
Fight Choreographer Ryan Borque
Stage ManagerKelsey Rhainn Shipley

Detective Partner Hero Villain

CHARACTERS

DETECTIVE: male, 30-40.

PARTNER: male, 40-50.

HERO: male, 30-40.

VILLAIN: male, 30-40.

PLACE

Scene 1: a police station

Scene 2: an alleyway

Scene 3: a crime scene

Scene 4: a police station and an undisclosed location

Scene 5: an alleyway

Scene 6: a police station

Scene 7: a seedy bar

Scene 8: a crime scene

Scene 9: a police station and an undisclosed location

Scene 10: a police station

TIME

The past or present or future.

“I’m not a prophet
or a stone age man
Just a mortal
with the potential of a superman
I’m living on
I’m tethered to the logic
of Homo Sapien
Can’t take my eyes
from the great salvation
Of bullshit faith
If I don’t explain what you ought to know
You can tell me all about it
On the next Bardo
I’m sinking in the quicksand
of my thought
And I ain’t got the power anymore”

—David Bowie, 1971, “Quicksand”

Detective Partner Hero Villain

TEASER

(Low light up on an alley. As a sound cue rises, the VILLAIN, wiping a length of pipe, stands in the semi-dark.

A pause.

Lights smash cut to:)

SCENE 1

(Lights up on a sparse police station. A wall displays a large map of a city. Pinned to the map are five gruesome photos of dead men with smashed, bloody heads and wearing bright yellow T-shirts. Near the wall is a wooden desk and two wooden chairs. On the wooden desk rests an older, yellow rotary telephone. The DETECTIVE, in a newer suit, sits on one of the wooden chairs. Near him, in the other wooden chair, sits his PARTNER, in an older suit.)

PARTNER. You never complained before.

DETECTIVE. I'm not complaining.

PARTNER. You're aware it's a gift you've been given.

DETECTIVE. I know.

PARTNER. No, you just, you go someplace to meet him—

DETECTIVE. I don't "go someplace." It's involuntary how it happens. It can happen anywhere.

PARTNER. You take pride in it.

DETECTIVE. I don't.

PARTNER. You take pride in the set-up.

DETECTIVE. If you want the set-up, it's yours.

PARTNER. I'm not you.

DETECTIVE. You know what I mean.

PARTNER. And you're not being sincere.

DETECTIVE. I'm being as sincere as a heart attack.

PARTNER. Who wouldn't give his left nut, who wouldn't take the opportunity—

DETECTIVE. All right, all right —

PARTNER. It's not up to you anyhow. He chose you. You're his biggest fan.

DETECTIVE. I'm not his biggest fan. I'm just ... I believe in him.

PARTNER. We've got five murders.

DETECTIVE. I know.

PARTNER. Him not calling, it's not normal.

DETECTIVE. So what am I supposed to do?

PARTNER. You gotta search him out. See what's going on in his head.

DETECTIVE. That's not how it works.

PARTNER. Then what do we do?

DETECTIVE. I'm thinking instead the next time I see him, I'll look him in square the eye and say, "Find yourself another message boy."

PARTNER. To you, you're his "message boy"? C'mon, Bradley. I know you don't feel that way. With him, you've got a direct line to the benevolent. You've a direct contact with a higher power's eyes out in the world. You've his voice unto your ears.

DETECTIVE. It's more like he says, "Here's what I know, now you go do all the work."

PARTNER. See? You *are* complaining.

DETECTIVE. I'm just venting.

PARTNER. Whatever you hear it from him, you always run with the ball.

DETECTIVE. Why doesn't he just run with the ball?

PARTNER. He likes to work in conjunction.

DETECTIVE. But what about you, Warren?

PARTNER. Eh, it's OK.

DETECTIVE. You're my partner—

PARTNER. And you're his main-man. I serve more as a counterpoint.

DETECTIVE. A counterpoint?

PARTNER. Or a second set of eyes. Like a circle.

DETECTIVE. A circle?

PARTNER. The two parts of a circle, both together—

DETECTIVE. What two parts?

PARTNER. The two parts that make up the whole. The two parts that make a perfect circle.

DETECTIVE. But the two parts aren't equal—

PARTNER. The two parts can be bigger than each other. I don't mind.

DETECTIVE. Then that doesn't make a circle.

PARTNER. Sure, it's a circle. I know what a circle is. It's a lopsided circle.

DETECTIVE. But then your analogy—

PARTNER. I wasn't making an analogy.

DETECTIVE. Then what about the third chunk?

PARTNER. The third chunk?

DETECTIVE. Of your lopsided circle. Meaning *him*. The Fantastic Phenomenon.

PARTNER. So you got the one half, the other half and then you got the third chunk.

DETECTIVE. That's what I'm saying.

PARTNER. And the third chunk is counter to —

DETECTIVE. There's one way of looking at something then there's another way of looking at something and then there's his third chunk way of looking at something. His way of looking at something.

PARTNER. His way isn't a bad way.

DETECTIVE. I know it's not.

PARTNER. He hasn't been steering you wrong, has he?

DETECTIVE. No, but—

PARTNER. There's these new murders.

DETECTIVE. Exactly. That's my point. And he hasn't called.

(A pause.)

PARTNER. So take the label of who he is. Him being what he is. And everything he's done for everyone. Take all that into account. All the things he's done.

DETECTIVE. These murders keep piling up—

PARTNER. And he has yet to tell you anything.

DETECTIVE. The phone hasn't rung.

PARTNER. You think maybe you could solve the sucker without him?

DETECTIVE. I don't know—

PARTNER. So—

DETECTIVE. I'm just saying what you're saying.

PARTNER. And I'm saying what?

DETECTIVE. You're saying—

PARTNER. *You* said he was the third chunk of the circle.

DETECTIVE. But then you said—

PARTNER. I said?

DETECTIVE. You said—

PARTNER. Something something blah blah blah. I don't remember what I said.

DETECTIVE. You said he “wants to work in conjunction.”

PARTNER. OK. Right. I said that.

DETECTIVE. So then we wait for him to call.

PARTNER. Right. We wait.

(A pause.)

DETECTIVE. Waiting by the phone isn't really “working in conjunction,” is it?

(The PARTNER shrugs.)

PARTNER. What do you think he knows?

DETECTIVE. I don't know. He's elusive. He's mysterious.

PARTNER. He's always been like that, though, hasn't he?

DETECTIVE. I suppose he has. Yeah.

(A pause.)

PARTNER. It's funny.

DETECTIVE. What is?

PARTNER. On one side you got him, and on the other side you've got the killer, and then here we got us, and all of it involves everybody and is tied directly into him as a whole, but the only one who can really do anything is our killer. The killer creates our relationship to him. And in this case, the killer might make everything worse before he can try and make it better.

DETECTIVE. We need to try and not let everything get worse.

PARTNER. A cop's hopeful job description.

DETECTIVE. Mm.

(A beat.)

PARTNER. You need anything? Coffee?

DETECTIVE. No thanks.

(The PARTNER exits. A pause. The yellow telephone rings.)

PARTNER *(offstage)*. There he is! The voice from on high!
(Pause.) Would ya answer the damn thing already?!

(A pause. The DETECTIVE picks up the yellow telephone. He holds it to his ear. Lights fade to black.)

SCENE 2

(Lights rise on a dim alleyway. The DETECTIVE, a manila envelope in his hand, stands alone. A pause.)

From the surrounding darkness, a shadow appears. It's the HERO. He is tall, quite muscular and wears a tight, black costume with yellow pin-striping. He also wears a tight-fitting, black cowl covering a majority of his face. A pause.)

HERO. Hand it to me.

(The DETECTIVE hands the HERO the envelope.)

DETECTIVE. Imagine the other killings, and you'll already have a good idea of this one, too.

HERO. His head is smashed in.

DETECTIVE. Same as the others.

HERO. He's wearing a yellow shirt. With my face printed on it.

DETECTIVE. The same as the others.

(The HERO opens the envelope and looks at the papers and photos within. A pause. The HERO hands the envelope back to the DETECTIVE.)

DETECTIVE *(cont'd)*. Do you know something more?

HERO. I would tell you if I knew something more.

DETECTIVE. If you want to tell me more—

HERO. I only know what I know.

DETECTIVE. And what is it you know?

HERO. I am here to fill the gap.

DETECTIVE. The gap?

HERO. The gap between the truth and lies. It's what I've always done.

DETECTIVE. I've never heard you describe it that way before.

HERO. That's because I've never before described what I do.

DETECTIVE. True, but—

HERO. But?

DETECTIVE. But I still don't understand what you mean by—

HERO. *Exactly.*

(A pause.)

DETECTIVE. It seems to me that the killer? It seems to me he's an angry person.

HERO. You believe he's angry?

DETECTIVE. These pictures don't reveal a gentle spirit, do they?

HERO. Violence exists only as a strong reaction to a previously felt stimulus.

DETECTIVE. So you're saying we should investigate—

HERO. His previously felt stimulus. Yes. Maybe it will reveal what is causing him to act out.

DETECTIVE. Or maybe we should take a more practical approach. Hit the streets, do some leg work.

HERO. There have been four dead in four days, Detective.

DETECTIVE. Five dead, counting last night.

HERO. Five dead in five days.

DETECTIVE. As of last night. Yes.

(A pause.)

HERO. Did you find anything at the murder scene?

DETECTIVE. The body. The mess. Nothing more. Nothing less. *(Pause.)* We've put forth an effort to curb future problems, so everything is gone. And we've released a warning to the press for people not to wear those yellow T-shirts with your face on them. Anything yellow and black with your insignia or face, people should destroy that stuff, throw it in a fire and burn it. Without those T-shirts, then maybe we get rid the killer of at least one possible motive. We stop your fans from wearing those shirts and maybe then we stop him, too. *(Pause.)* Because you're the third chunk. I mean, of the circle. Of the lopsided circle. Or whatever. *(Pause.)* Just working theory. Not entirely ironed out yet.

HERO. Sounds like a plan.

DETECTIVE. Thanks.

(A pause.)

HERO. There was another reason I called you.

DETECTIVE. There was?

HERO. I need a friend.

DETECTIVE. You need a friend?

HERO. Yes. I needed to see a friendly face. I needed to talk to a friend. I needed to talk to someone I feel I'm close to. Someone who talks to me.

DETECTIVE. So you want to have a conversation?

(A pause.)

HERO. You're a good person, Detective Baker. A real humdinger.

DETECTIVE. I'm just a regular guy.

HERO. A regular guy who is good and also a real humdinger.

(A pause.)

DETECTIVE. I should get back to work.

HERO. You're going? *(Beat.)* All right.

(A pause.)

DETECTIVE. Me first?

HERO. You first?

DETECTIVE. You usually duck backwards into the darkness and disappear.

HERO. You want me to do that?

DETECTIVE. It's not a request. It's just what you usually do.

(A pause.)

HERO. Good bye, Bradley.

DETECTIVE. Yeah. OK. Bye.

(A pause. The DETECTIVE exits. Lights fade to black.)