

ep 94: Expensive perfume and cheap shots

by Shannon Perry

EPISODE 92 - NARRATORS' BRIDGE

Noir-style detective story. G'luck.

NARRATOR

1 It's late. The kind of late that calls
 itself "late" but has enough "early"
 in it to be almost respectable.
 Almost.

N2

2 Ah hell, did we hit another wormhole?

NARRATOR

3 Yeah, but it's the good kind that
 comes with hats.

N2

4 Is that a trilby?

NARRATOR

5 Trilbies are for journalists. This is
 a fedora. Hush. The sun is still
 slinking below the horizon, unwilling
 to cast the harsh light of day on
 characters who are better off in the
 dark. And speaking of slinking....

DETECTIVE'S OFFICE

SFX: A door opens and closes. The click of high heels on
cheap linoleum as a woman enters the room.

PLUTO

6 (detective-y) *It was a cold December
 morning when she oozed into my life
 like Lyle's golden syrup poured over a
 snowbank.*

N2

7 Hang on a minute, is he doing
 narration?

NARRATOR

8 It's genre-appropriate. Just enjoy the
 hat.

N2

9 I look like an 1890s newspaper boy.

NARRATOR

10 That's not new.

PLUTO

11 *She was dressed in black from head to toe – black like secrets and storm clouds and the meatloaf at Tiny Tony's Breakfast Bar. What feeble light managed to sneak in under my window shades just gave up and let her have the room. Can I help you?*

MRS SHEFFIELD

12 I find myself in need of some ... assistance.

PLUTO

13 If you're looking for directions, judging by your accent, I'd say take a slight right at Greenland. *She smiled at that, but her eyes said, "The Beatles already made that joke and did it better."*

N2

14 The Beatles? Isn't this, like, 1942?

NARRATOR

15 Just go with it.

MRS SHEFFIELD

16 If that's as helpful as you intend to be, I'd advise you to head directly south.

PLUTO

17 Is that your way of saying "go to hell"? Because ... been there, ruled that.

MRS SHEFFIELD

18 I see our banter is off to a rocky start.

PLUTO

19 Whose fault is that?

MRS SHEFFIELD

20 Not mine – I can bant with the best of them. But until you're up to speed, shall I explain my ... situation?

PLUTO

21 *She said "situation" like it had just
crawled out of a tangle of sheets in a
satin-choked boudoir and blown me a
kiss.*

N2

22 This doesn't bother you?

NARRATOR

23 The one who narrates these kinds of
scripts usually gets shot at least
once, so I'm good, thanks.

MRS SHEFFIELD

24 *He paused, cocking his head to one
side like a confused dog. Only this
"dog" was clad neck to mid-thigh in a
gold lamé romper and had a bident
propped o-so-casually against the
grubby wallpaper.*

N2

25 Her too? This is getting out of hand.

NARRATOR

26 Where are you going?

N2

27 To call my union rep.

NARRATOR

28 You don't have one.

N2

29 Fine! I'll call yours!

SFX: Stomps out, door slams.

PLUTO

30 (hollering) How many times I gotta
tell ya, don't slam the door! That
window's holding on by its nails.

DONNA

31 (calling back from outer office) Not
my fault your carpentry skills are on
par with your other charms. (pokes her
head in the inner office) And a grand
good morning to you too, Boss. Oh,
hiya. Who's this?

32 PLUTO
New client.

33 MRS SHEFFIELD
That's a bit presumptuous.

34 DONNA
I think you mean "who is a bit
presumptuous." But you don't seem that
bad to me.

35 MRS SHEFFIELD
I beg your- what?

36 PLUTO
Now THAT'S banter. Don't suppose you
could scrape up a couple cups of joe,
hey, doll?

37 DONNA
"Scrape" is right. You gotta pony up
for a new coffee machine, Boss. They
got better-tasting tarmac under the
planes at JFK.

38 PLUTO
Tell it to our bank account.

39 DONNA
(starts in office, then fades as she
walks out) Coffee coming up, but call
me "doll" again, and I'll have to pour
yours straight down your neck hole.

SFX: Donna's heels going out, door slamming behind her.

40 NARRATOR
You're back. What'd you find out?

41 N2
Did you know your contract has a
"noir-ration exclusion"?

42 NARRATOR
Yep. You missed the entrance of the
saucy but loyal secretary.

43 N2
Damn! I love banter. But did I
overhear her mention "JFK"? As in the
airport? In 1942?

NARRATOR

44 Are you going to question every
anachronism? Because there's gonna be
lots, and I'm gonna get annoyed.

PLUTO

45 You still haven't told me why you're
gracing my linoleum.

MRS SHEFFIELD

46 It's a long story....

PLUTO

47 I get paid by the hour.

MRS SHEFFIELD

48 Well, get comfortable.

We hear **Mrs S inaudibly telling her story** under the dialogue until "And that's why." We should be able to hear Pluto and the narrators, but Mrs S is in the background.

MRS SHEFFIELD

49-50 I teach at a spy school
called the MCCACEC, which,
given how easy it was for me
to pick your lock, you've
never heard of. Some time
ago, a fellow colleague of
mine – a brilliant scientist
named Dr. von Haber Zetzer –
and I had a fling.

PLUTO

*I got comfortable, but lemme
tell ya – it didn't last.
The story that dame
unleashed came at me like a
hangry hangry hippo on the
trail of a crocodile-scented
cantaloupe.*

MRS SHEFFIELD CONT

51-52 Then he disappeared. Right
before my eyes.

N2

Are you taking notes?

MRS SHEFFIELD CONT

53-54 One moment he was lying
there, trying to catch his
breath, and the next, he was
gone.

NARRATOR

"Hangry hangry hippo"? This
is GOLD. I'm totally writing
this up for my panel at this
year's NarratorCon.

MRS SHEFFIELD CONT

55-56 No clue of his whereabouts,

N2

We have a con?

MRS SHEFFIELD CONT

57-58 but I have found a number of
newspapers in which he
appears – only the papers
are 40 years old.

NARRATOR

No, tour guide, you do not
have a con: WE have a con.
Hush.

MRS SHEFFIELD
59 And that's why I'm looking for help.

PLUTO
60 That's quite a story. How'd you
stumble through my door?

MRS SHEFFIELD
61 "Stumble" is right — I think the
thumbtacks have come loose from the
linoleum around the door jamb.

PLUTO
62 *I don't know where she came from or
how she found me, but she wove a tale
more complicated than a fishtail braid
and frankly, twice as fishy.*

MRS SHEFFIELD
63 *One look, and I knew he hadn't
swallowed my tale hook, line, and
sinker, as I'd hoped. More nibbled at
it, thought better of it, and returned
to the safety of an underwater log
jam. But I could tell: another cast or
two, and I'd have him on the hook.*

N2
64 This is just getting silly.

PLUTO
65 *With a last, disgusted look, either at
me or the styrofoam cup of gas-station
coffee or maybe both, she glided out
my door, leaving a faint trail of
expensive perfume and cheap shots.*

MRS SHEFFIELD
66 Given the hordes beating at your door,
I suspect you can start today, yes?

DONNA
67 Some days it's hordes, some days it's
hos. You have a nice afternoon, now.

SFX: Mrs Sheffield's shoes and door as she exits.

PLUTO
68 Well, that was interesting.

69 DONNA
I knew I shoulda put laxative in her
cup.

70 PLUTO
Doesn't matter. She didn't drink any.

71 DONNA
I meant instead of yours. Also, I hid
the key to the men's room.

72 PLUTO
What? What'd you do that for?

73 DONNA
So you'd know what it's like to go
three floors to a freezing cold
ladies' room, that's why. I used the
Pluto Water laxative from French Lick,
so you better get a move on. It's
famous for being ... efficient.

74 PLUTO
Dammit, Donna! You have no idea how
hard it is to wiggle out of a onesie.

75 DONNA
I'll use that image to keep me warm on
my next trip down there. Wipe the
sink!

76 N2 TTT
Now do we get to do our jobs?

77 NARRATOR
Let's just let this one ride. Unless
you're really keen for a .22 slug in
the ribs.

78 PLUTO
*After the story I'd just heard, my
first stop*

SFX: loud stomach gurgle

79 PLUTO CONT
*my second stop was Dr. Theo's lab.
Coincidentally, he worked at the same
spy school as my client and her
misplaced paramour. If anybody had any
idea what was going on, it'd be him.*

DR THEO'S LAB

SFX: burbling things, machines that go *ping*, something humming in the background, that sort of thing.

DR. THEO

80 I have no idea. And don't touch that.
It's an anachronism.

PLUTO

81 *Dr Theo Bromae wasn't just the
smartest guy I knew, he was also the
strangest. He skulked around the
hallways of the MCCACEC like he was
afraid the football team would tackle
him the minute he poked his nose out
of the lab. He moved offices at least
once a month, and loud noises made him
twitch like my mother-in-law's eyelid
at the Pompeii Pomegranate Festival.
C'mon, Doc, you gotta have something!*

DR. THEO

82 Sadly, no. You're talking about
metaphysics here, a breach in the
fundamental nature of being.

N2

83 Pompeii Pomegranate festival?

NARRATOR

84 When you were a kid, did you hunt for
Easter eggs or just ask your parents
to point them all out to you? Pluto
plus pomegranate. Look it up.

PLUTO

85 Do you think what she's suggesting is
even possible?

DR. THEO

86 (alarmed) What was that?

PLUTO

87 What was what?

DR. THEO

88 That sounds like ... two dozen pom
poms being muffled as cheerleaders
sneak up the staircase.

89 PLUTO
 Could we set aside the paranoia for
 just a minute please? Or the fantasy?

90 DR. THEO
 I assure you, it's neither. They've
 stolen my spare lab coat, my lunch,
 and my mortar. I'm sure this time
 they're after my pestle.

91 PLUTO
 Wow. Running right up to the edge of
 family-friendly, huh?

92 DR. THEO
 I've heard of people meticulously
 plotting their own disappearance, but
 this.... This stretches the bounds of
 credibility. (voice drops to a
 whisper) They're in the hallway. I can
 smell the Teen Spirit.

93 N2
 "Teen Spirit"?!

94 NARRATOR
 TWO! Call it a drinking game. Take a
 shot for every anachronism.

95 PLUTO
 So what you're saying is, what she's
 hinting at is impossible.

96 DR. THEO
 I suppose it's theoretically possible,
 but not with today's technology. In my
 experience, Detective, people tend to
 disappear in space. Not in time.

OUTDOORS - CITY

97 COLIN (GANGSTER KING)
 Well, what have we here? I got a
 ticket?

98 JOE (IRISH OR BRONX COP)
 Hiya.

99 COLIN
 Jesus!

JOE
100 No sir, just your friendly beat cop,
though maybe I do need a hair cut.

COLIN
101 Are you the fellow who put this
parking ticket on my Rolls?

JOE
102 That I am.

COLIN
103 Have you any idea who I am?

JOE
104 Can't say as I do. Should I?

SFX: **Thuggish laughter.**

COLIN
105 The boys and I recommend you do
some...research. In the meantime...

SFX: Ripping up the ticket

JOE
106 Hey, now! Right, that's an extra five
bucks for littering!

SFX: Car door swings open; Colin is getting in.

COLIN
107 Make sure he doesn't forget my name.

SFX: Punching and **"oofs" from Joe**. High heels come clacking
up the alley.

MADELINE
108 All right, boys, that's enough.

SFX: Colin's electric window rolls down.

COLIN
109 Well, hey now. Where you been, Doll?

MADELINE
110 Here and there, Colin; here and there.

COLIN
111 I told you not to call me "Colin."

MADELINE
112 It's not even your real name, *Horace*!

COLIN
113 Well, I like "Red," so maybe you just
call me "Red." If you know what's good
for you.

MADELINE
114 I'm in a back alley in New York City
at o-dark-thirty, chattin' with a
crime boss. Knowing what's good for me
ain't exactly my *modus operationalis*.

COLIN
115 Well, since you're already making bad
decisions, how about you slide on in
and keep me cozy until seat warmers
are invented?

MADELINE
116 You're pushing it with the electric
window. Tell your boys to go easy with
the local blue. We got a nice balance
in this neighborhood.

COLIN
117 What's news?

MADELINE
118 You want I should spill the sauce in
front of a cop? You're going soft,
Red.

COLIN
119 He's out and snoring. But watch your
mouth, doll; even ladies aren't
allowed to call me that.

MADELINE
120 Good thing I ain't a lady, then.
(conspiratorially) Word is somebody's
lookin' into that von Hasta la Vista
fella's *disappearance*.

COLIN
121 Whooooooooeeee. Give that word any more
spin, and I could drill holes in this
lug's thick head. (SFX: slap and **ow!**
from thug) Who's looking?

MADELINE
122 Some dame. Brit. Dress tighter than
 Moe here on the Friday after payday.

COLIN
123 Well, perhaps we'd best do a little
 investigating ourselves. Who did she
 consult?

MADELINE
124 Goldipants Detective Agency.

COLIN
125 Got it. On, Chester!

SFX: Rolls pulls away.

MADELINE
126 (calling after) Oy! Thanks for the
 lift, ya limey hairball.

Joe moans.

MADELINE CONT
127 Welcome back, baby bull. Lemme help
 you up.

Grunts from both as he gets up, painfully.

JOE
128 What are you doing with the likes of
 him?

MADELINE
129 Eh, he ain't so bad.

JOE
130 Not so bad? He just left you in a dark
 alley and took off!

MADELINE
131 What are you, my brother or somethin'?

Pause.

JOE
132 Well, this is awkward. (pause) Surely
 you don't need Red and his crowd in
 your life?

MADELINE

133 Look, I been poor and goody-two-shoes,
and I been rich with fellas drinkin'
champagne outta one of them shoes, and
believe me, rich is better, even if
your shoes are a little sticky and
your stockings smell like Dom
Perignon.

JOE

134 Yeah, well, thanks to you, someone's
gotta warn the detective that Red and
his boys are coming for him.

MADELINE

135 You do that, baby bull. I got a long-
standing appointment with a bar stool.

JOE

136 Where can I find you? In case we need
you to identify Red's boys from a
lineup?

MADELINE

137 Sweetie, the only "lineup" in my
future is a line of tequila shots
straight down the bar. But I will tell
you one thing: Red and co. most often
hang out at the Hell's Belles at 96th
and Central Park.

THE STREET OUTSIDE PLUTO'S OFFICE

PLUTO

138 *By the time I got back to my office,
things had taken a left turn. For the
worse. Cop cars and yellow tape
covered my street like the world's
most unwelcome parade, and my building
was the Grand Poobah float at the
center. Hey, kid, what's happening
here?*

GREG

139 Oh, hey, mister. Newspaper? Just a
nickel.

PLUTO

140 Not right now, thanks. What's with all
the activity?

GREG
141 That kind of information will cost you
a quarter.

142 PLUTO That so, huh?

SFX: coin being flipped.

PLUTO CONT
143 Spill it.

GREG
144 Overheard one of the heat saying they
got a hostage situation going on in
there.

PLUTO
145 "The heat"? How old are you?

146 52. GREG

PLUTO

147 Old enough to know better. What else
did you "overhear"?

Pause. **Pluto sighs.** SFX: Another coin being flipped.

GREG

148 It might be Red's gang – they found
his Rolls just a block away.

PLUTO

149 Still further than Red would walk,
especially in this neighborhood.

GREG
150 Heard tell they got a lady in there.

PLUTO

151 A "lady," huh? That's good. That means
Donna got out.

DONNA
152 I heard that. What are you
insinuating?

PLUTO

153 You'll always be a lady to me.

DONNA
154 You watch yourself before I stop
cracking wise and start cracking
skulls.

PLUTO
155 So, who is in there, if not you?

GREG
156 I reckon it's that posh dame that was
hanging round here this morning.
That'll be another quarter.

SFX: Coin flip.

PLUTO
157 Our client?

DONNA
158 Yep. She came back not long after you
ducked out. Said the boys who
threatened to disappear her fella were
trying to do the same to her.

PLUTO
159 You could have saved me a quarter if
you'd spoken up a little faster. Well,
I guess I'd better scoot around the
back entrance and see what I can do.
Donna-

DONNA
160 If you're gonna finish that sentence
with a "you wait here," you know what
my answer's gonna be, right?

PLUTO
161 I really regret getting you boxing
lessons for Christmas last year. Let's
go.

GREG
162 Excuse me, mister.

PLUTO
163 Yes, young fellow?

GREG
164 I reckon I was pretty ... helpful.

165 PLUTO
You do, do you?

166 DONNA
If nothing else, we won't have to
worry about the jingle of loose change
giving us away.

167 JOE
(from a distance) Hey! You! Hang on a
minute!

168 GREG/PLUTO/DONNA
Jesus!/Me!

169 GREG
Might even be willing to keep a cop
occupied while you slip away....
That's worth an ace, ey?

170 JOE
(coming towards them) Hey! I need to
talk to you!

171 DONNA
Give him a buck and let's go.

SFX: Donna and Pluto run around the back of the building.

172 JOE
Wait! Stop!

173 GREG
Paper, officer?

SFX: **Ooooof from Joe** as Greg trips him. Thump of Joe hitting
the sidewalk.

174 GREG
Oh, hey, sorry, Sir. I got restless
leg syndrome.

SFX: Opening outside door into the stairwell. Dr. Theo,
Pluto, and Donna become echoey in this bit.

175 PLUTO
There is something weird about that
kid.

176 DONNA
Apart from him being a newspaper boy

at 50? And a zebra?

NARRATOR

177 Relieved of a dollar, Pluto and Donna
make their way around the back of the
office building, hiding from both the
windows above and the watchful eyes of
the cops below.

N2

178 I thought you didn't want to narrate
this in case you got shot.

NARRATOR

179 It's in my contract: at least one
sentence in each episode, or I don't
get my per diem.

N2

180 You get a per diem? Man, I have GOT to
get an agent.

SFX: two sets of footsteps going up an interior stairwell.

PLUTO

181 *I'd forgotten the smell of the rear
stairwell, but it came back quick:
dumplings, dust, and desperation.
Donna slipped off her shoes and was so
stealthy, I had to sneak a glance
behind me to make sure she was still
there.*

DONNA

182 You know you're not supposed to do
that, right?

PLUTO

183 Damn. I do owe that couple an apology.

DONNA

184 Huh?

PLUTO

185 Orpheus and Eurydice. Long story.

DONNA

186 *I'm not much for rompers on a man, but
I have to say, my boss has the
backside of a god. As we carried on up
to our floor, I wondered — would he go*

*to these lengths to save me? Or just a
sexy client with big...money bags?*

SFX: the click of a gun being cocked

DONNA CONT

187 Ah hell.

DR. THEO

188 Well, hello, detective, Donna.

PLUTO

189 Dr. Theo?! What are you doing?

DR. THEO

190 It's nothing personal.

DONNA

191 Don't know about you, but a gun in my
face feels pretty personal.

PLUTO

192 What are you doing working for Red?

DR. THEO

193 He promised me my own personal
protection squad if I help get you off
his case. So that's what I'm doing.
Now, move.

PLUTO

194 All this to be safe from a gaggle of
teenage girls?

DR. THEO

195 And the football team and half of the
lacrosse team, plus the janitorial and
kitchen staff, my research assistant,
and the tenure committee. Believe me,
it's worth it.

DONNA

196 So what happens if your protection
squad falls in love with you too?

DR. THEO

197 If my- What- Well, crap. Just keep
walking.

PLUTO

198 *Dr. Theo shoved the Colt into the*

small of my back and flapped his other hand in the general direction of my office. I looked down at Donna, who looked as cool as a long drink of water infused with cucumber, making her doubly cool. I knew my secretary had guts, but today she was a veritable sweetbread factory.

DONNA

199 *As the Doc escorted us down the hallway, I stole a sideways look at my boss. From the thoughtful look in his eye, he was either formulating one of his crazy plans, or he was narrating. Either way, leaving it up to him was gonna get us killed deader than Sunday church services when the Golden Gophers are playing the Badgers for the Slab of Bacon.*

N2

200 You reckon we need a footnote for that one?

NARRATOR

201 Do I look like a Google Doodle? They can look it up or get it from context.

DR. THEO

202 Well? Go on, open the door, and get in there.

DONNA

203 You'll never make it outta here, you know. There's cops everywhere.

DR. THEO

204 The nerdy scientist always gets away. How else can you hint at a sequel? In!

SFX: Door opens, they walk into Pluto's outer office.

COLIN

205 Well, looky here. Good work, Theo.

DR. THEO

206 That's DOCTOR Theo, and would you ask your man to back off, please.

COLIN
207 Suuuuuure, "Doctor" Theo. MOE! Give
 the man some air.

(pause - SFX: shuffling feet)

COLIN CONT
208 MORE air, Moe.

DR. THEO
209 It doesn't count if he still has his
 hand on my shoulder.

COLIN
210 MOE. Go check on our guests.

SFX: Moe walks to the door to the inner office, opens it,
walks in, closes it behind him. When the door is open, we
hear:

MRS SHEFFIELD
211 Are you just one big muscle under that
 trench coat, or did you stack three
 gorillas one on top of another?

Door closes. We hear Mrs. S, muffled.

MRS SHEFFIELD CONT
212 Oh, hello, Moe. Welcome to Club Thug.

PLUTO
213 She doesn't sound very scared.

COLIN
214 She will. Now. Let's talk business. As
 in, I told you to get your nose outta
 mine.

PLUTO
215 I can't do that, Red. A man is
 missing.

COLIN
216 And you think I had something to do
 with that?

PLUTO
217 Red, I think you had *everything* to do
 with that.

218 DONNA
(aside to Theo) Not to worry you, but
the missing guy was Red's last "nerdy
scientist."

219 DR. THEO
I'm more worried about why you still
have your tongue in my ear.

220 DONNA
Dang. There is something strange about
you.

221 DR. THEO
You have no idea.

222 PLUTO
*The plan I'd been formulating was
taking shape, when suddenly that shape
had a few extra curves.*

The door to the inner office opens, and Mrs S walks out.

223 MRS SHEFFIELD
Oh, goodness, the party's out here.
Detective. Doctor. Donna.

224 NARRATOR
Aaaaaaaaand that's the end of part 1.

225 N2
This is a two-parter?

226 NARRATOR
It is.

227 N2
Oh, I get it. If this only part one,
that's why no one's been shot yet!

228 NARRATOR
No! Dammit, Two!

229 N2
What? What?

230 NARRATOR
You don't say that in a detective
drama the same way you never say,
"just one last time," or "what's the
worst that could happen" or "it's just

a three-hour tour." You got that? Two?
Two?!

PLUTO

231 *It was a dark day, even for a city
where most folks would wear night
vision goggles 24/7 if they hadn't all
suddenly disappeared that one strange
Tuesday. As I stared down the barrel
of Red's pistol, I lit up a cigarette
and flicked it out the window because
I don't smoke. Just what had happened
in my interior office? Where was the
mysterious missing scientist? Or when?
And why did my secretary have her
tongue in Dr. Theo's ear?*

DONNA

232 Dammit! That's so nasty.

DR. THEO

233 You have no idea.

PLUTO

234 You've been listening to-

NARRATOR

235 Oh, no you don't, glitter pants. We
may be down a tour guide, but end
credits are NOT in the Noir-ration
carve out. You've been listening to:
Lee Shackleford as Pluto
Sarah Golding as Mrs Sheffield
Bonnie Brantley as Donna
David S. Dear as Dr. Theo Bromae
Tim Sherburn as Colin
Eric Perry as Joe
Shannon Perry as Madeline
Kevin Hall as Greg
Kyle Jones, who's around here
somewhere, was your Narrator 2, and
I'm Chris Nadolny Gourley, your
Narrator.

Our music is composed and performed by
John Faley; Lucas Elliott creates our
artwork. Sarah Golding is our dialogue
editor. Shannon Perry is our sound
designer. Oz 9 is written by Shannon
Perry.

Oz 9 is a proud member of the Fable
and Folly Network. Be sure to check

out all the great shows at
fableandfolly dot com.

NARRATOR

236

Two? Two! If you can hear me, just say
"meanwhile." Two? I'll let you hold
the microphone next time. You can even
cup your hand over your ear, and I
won't make fun of you! Two! (fades
into distance)