



RINSE THE BLOOD OFF MY TOGA

by Frank Wayne and John Schuster

CAST

ANNOUNCER	<i>Roman Announcer</i>
FLAVIUS	<i>Private Investigator</i>
SECRETARY	<i>Beautiful Assistant</i>
BRUTUS	<i>Senator</i>
MARK ANTONY	<i>Senator</i>
CALPHURNIA	<i>Caesar's Wife</i>
CLADIUS	<i>Bartender</i>
CENTURION	<i>Guard</i>

ANNOUNCER: Rinse the Blood Off My Toga!
This play is presented with apologies to
William Shakespeare—and Sir Francis
Bacon...just in case. Rome! 44 B.C.!

FLAVIUS: My name is Flavius Maximus. I'm
a Private Roman I. (*points to license on the wall*)
My license number is MCMLXXVIII. It also

comes in handy as an eye chart. I'm gonna tell
ya about the Julius Caesar Caper. It all began
during the Ides of March. I was in my office. I
had just sent another criminal to jail—
Suetonius the Gladiator. He'd been fixing
fights at the Coliseum. He had a crooked lion
who kept takin' a dive. Anyhow, I was just
beginning to rest on my laurels when my
secretary walked in.

SECRETARY: (*seductive voice*) Good
morning, Flavius. Here's the mail. (*loud
rock-on-rock clattering sound*)

FLAVIUS: Easy with those marble
postcards. You'll break my table. Anything
else, baby?

SECRETARY: Yeah, there's some guy
outside to see ya. Seems awful excited about
something.

FLAVIUS: Okay. Show him in, doll.

SECRETARY: (*to stranger*) Would you come
in, sir?

BRUTUS: Thank you, miss.

BRUTUS: Are you Flavius Maximus, private
Roman eye?

FLAVIUS: I certainly am. What can I do for
you? What's on your mind?

BRUTUS: Just a minute. Are we alone?

FLAVIUS: Yes, we're alone.

BRUTUS: Are you sure we're alone?

FLAVIUS: Yes, yes! I'm sure we're alone!

BRUTUS: Are you *positive* we're alone?

FLAVIUS: (*angrily*) I'm positive we're alone!

BRUTUS: Then who's that standing beside you?

FLAVIUS: That's *you!*

BRUTUS: I know, but can *I* be trusted?
(*dramatic music*)

FLAVIUS: (*aside*) I could see I was dealing with no ordinary man. This guy was a nut!
(*then*) All right, what's on your mind?

BRUTUS: Flavius Maximus, a terrible thing has happened. It is the greatest crime in the history of Rome!

FLAVIUS: All right, give it to me straight. What's up?

BRUTUS: Julius Caesar has been murdered!
(*dramatic music*)

FLAVIUS: Julius Caesar murdered! (*aside*) I couldn't believe my ears! Big Julie was dead!

BRUTUS: Yes, it happened just a few hours ago. Happened in the Senate. He was stabbed.

FLAVIUS: Stabbed? In the Senate?

BRUTUS: No, not in the Senate. They got him right in the rotunda.

FLAVIUS: That's a fatal spot. I had a splinter there once. Those marble splinters, you know.

BRUTUS: Boy, I tell you! All of Rome is in an uproar. I came to you because you are the top private eye in Rome. You've got to find the killer.

FLAVIUS: Well, I'll try.

BRUTUS: Oh, you can do it. After all, you're the guy that got Nero and you sent them up on that arson rap—

FLAVIUS: Yes, the whole town was burnt up about him. Holy Jupiter!

BRUTUS: Now look, what do you say, Flavius? Will you take the case?

FLAVIUS: Just a minute, pally. I'd like to know just whom I am working for.

BRUTUS: I'm a Senator. I was Caesar's best friend. The name is Brutus.

FLAVIUS: Brutus, eh? All right, Brutus, you got yourself an investigator. I'll take the case. My fee is 125 drachmas a day—payable in advance, of course.

BRUTUS: Okay, here you are!

(*long sequence of rattling coins*)

FLAVIUS: You're one short.

BRUTUS: Hey, you got a good ear.

FLAVIUS: When it comes to money—perfect pitch.

BRUTUS: Let's go.

FLAVIUS: I'm ready. (*aside*) We went outside—flagged a passing chariot and made our way down the Via Appia. The streets were crowded with the usual people—slaves, senators, tutors, patricians, and little men who came out of doorways to sell you postcards from Gaul. Before long we found ourselves at the Senate.

BRUTUS: Flavius, this is where it happened. This is where Big Julie got murdered.

FLAVIUS: Yeah, well, where is the *corpus delecti*?

BRUTUS: The what?

FLAVIUS: The *corpus delecti*! *Corpus delecti*. What's the matter, don't you understand plain Latin when you hear it? The body!

BRUTUS: Oh, the stiff!

FLAVIUS: Yeah, yeah.

BRUTUS: He's lying right over there.

FLAVIUS: (*whistles*) Would you look at that! Eight daggers in him!

BRUTUS: Yeah, what do you think?

FLAVIUS: I think that if he were alive today, he'd be a pretty sick boy. He's really fixed for blades, huh?

BRUTUS: Oh, come on Flavius, you gotta solve this crime.

FLAVIUS: All right, all right. Who are those men over there?

BRUTUS: They were all here when it happened. That's Publius, that's Casca, and there's Trebonius.

FLAVIUS: Who's that guy over there with the lean and hungry look on his kisser?

BRUTUS: That's Cassius.

FLAVIUS: Yeah? He looks like a loser from the Coliseum. Who do you think is the likeliest suspect?

BRUTUS: That fella next to him.

FLAVIUS: Wait a minute! That's you!

BRUTUS: I know, but how do you know I can be trusted? (*dramatic music*)

FLAVIUS: (*aside*) I could see that I was dealing with no ordinary case. This was a *mental* case. (*then*) Wait a minute! Who's the dame?

BRUTUS: That's Caesar's wife. Her name is Calphurnia.

FLAVIUS: Yeah, well she's a suspect, too. Wait a minute. Pardon me, Mrs. Caesar...

CALPHURNIA: (*obnoxious nasally voice*) Yes?

FLAVIUS: Flavius Maximus, private Roman eye. I'd like to ask you a few questions. What do you know about this?

CALPHURNIA: I told him, "Julie, don't go. Don't go Julie," I said. "Don't go! It's the Ides of March."

FLAVIUS: Now look, Mrs. Caesar, I'd—

CALPHURNIA: If I told him once, I'd told him a thousand times, "Julie, don't go..."

FLAVIUS: Please, don't upset yourself.

CALPHURNIA: "Julie, don't go," I said. "It's the Ides of March. Beware already." But would he listen to his wife? No!

FLAVIUS: Sergeant, would you take Mrs. Caesar home, please?

CENTURION: Come along, ma'am. Come along.

CALPHURNIA: I told him, "Julie don't go, don't go!"

FLAVIUS: (*aside*) I don't blame him for going. (*then*) All right you Senators, you can go, too. But don't leave town. (*murmuring of senators leaving*)

BRUTUS: Well, what do you think?

FLAVIUS: I don't know. There's not an angle anywhere. Not a clue.

BRUTUS: Cheer up, Flavius. After all, Rome wasn't built in a day.

FLAVIUS: Hey, what was that? What did you just say?

BRUTUS: I said, "Rome wasn't built in a day."

FLAVIUS: Heh, that's good—very good. "Rome wasn't built in a day" That's pretty good.

BRUTUS: You like it?

FLAVIUS: Yeah, I like it.

BRUTUS: It's yours.

FLAVIUS: Thanks. Well, let's reconstruct the crime: Caesar was over here, and—what's the matter?

BRUTUS: Look over there, behind that pillar. Shhhh! There's somebody behind that pillar. (*dramatic music*) I'll go get him. Shhhh!

FLAVIUS: Right!

BRUTUS: All right buddy. (*holds his dagger to the man's side.*)

ANTONY: Ow—ow—ow! Stop it! Stop it!

FLAVIUS: All right, Buster, what are you doing hanging around here?

ANTONY: Well, what do you expect me to be doing? Why shouldn't I be here? I'm Mark Antony.

FLAVIUS: Mark Antony?

ANTONY: Yes. I just made a speech over the body of Caesar. I said, "Friends, Romans, countrymen, lend me your ears!"

FLAVIUS: Yeah. What have you got in that sack?

ANTONY: Ears!

FLAVIUS: (*annoyed*) Will you get out of here!

ANTONY: But wait a minute. Don't you want to know who bumped off Julius Caesar?

FLAVIUS: Yeah. Do you know who did it? Out with it! What's his name?

ANTONY: His name is Ooh! Oo—ee—ooo—aaah! (*dying sounds*)

FLAVIUS: Hmmm. That's a funny name. Must be Greek.

BRUTUS: Look! He's dead. (*dramatic music*)

FLAVIUS: (*aside*) What a confusing case. All I got is two dead bodies and a sack full of ears.

BRUTUS: Now, look, Flavius, I'm paying you 110 drachmas a day—

FLAVIUS: 125 drachmas!

BRUTUS: All right, you got a good ear—

FLAVIUS: I got a sack full of good ears!

BRUTUS: Oh. Now look, let's have some action!

FLAVIUS: All right, all right. Don't get your toga in a knot. Listen, I got a pal, Claudius. He runs a bar on the Via Flaminia. He should have a few answers for me.

BRUTUS: That's the idea. Get out among the people. Ask questions. After all, when in Rome, do as the Romans do!

FLAVIUS: Hey! Hey, what was that one?

BRUTUS: I said, "When in Rome, do as the Romans do."

FLAVIUS: Oh, that's good. When in Rome, do as the Romans do. Very good.

BRUTUS: Do you like it?

FLAVIUS: Yeah.

BRUTUS: It's yours.

FLAVIUS: Thanks! *(aside)* Claudius' Bar and Grill is a hangout where I get all the answers. It's just a small place with a few tables and a guy in the corner playing a cool reed pipe.

CLADIUS: Hiya, Flav!

FLAVIUS: Hi, Claud. What's new?

CLADIUS: Nothin' much. What'll ya have?

FLAVIUS: Give me a Martinus.

CLADIUS: Don't you mean a "Martini"?

FLAVIUS: If I want two, I'll ask for it. Look, I'm working on this Julius Caesar kill. Do you know of anything?

CLADIUS: Try that dame over there.

FLAVIUS: Yeah?

CLADIUS: Yeah.

FLAVIUS: All right, sister, start talking...

CALPHURNIA: I told him, "Julie, don't go. Don't go, Julie—"

FLAVIUS: *(groans)* All right—out—OUT!

CLADIUS: Hey, look, Flavius, I think I know the guy you're looking for.

FLAVIUS: You mean—*Mr. Big?*

CLADIUS: Yeah. His name is Ooh—oooo—ee —ah. *(dying sounds)*

FLAVIUS: Now that's an interesting name. Got a chisel? I'd like to write it down. Claudius? Claudius! I'll never get any more information out of him. He was dead! *(aside)* This was shaping up bigger than I thought. Suddenly, I looked up and there was Brutus.

BRUTUS: Hello, Flavius.

FLAVIUS: Brutus, what are you doing here?

BRUTUS: I was looking for you. Hey, who's that on the floor?

FLAVIUS: Claudius, the bartender.

BRUTUS: Hey, that's a funny place to carry a knife—in his back!

FLAVIUS: He's dead. He was stabbed—through the portico.

BRUTUS: Hey, that's even more painful than the rotunda. Hey, have you come up with any answers? Who killed Julius Caesar?

FLAVIUS: *(aside)* I started to think, and slowly the pieces fell into place. Brutus was the only man around when all those guys got killed. Caesar, Antony, the bartender. Brutus was always there. Things were beginning to add up. I put two and two together and it came out IV. It was time to make my move. *(dramatic music)*

BRUTUS: Well, have you come up with any answers? Who killed Julius Caesar?

FLAVIUS: Only one guy could have done it.

BRUTUS: Yeah, who?

FLAVIUS: Let's not play games, Brutus, or should I say—Mr. Big!

BRUTUS: What are you getting at?

FLAVIUS: If the sandal fits, wear it. *You* knocked off Big Julie.

BRUTUS: You're out of your mind! I hired you to find the killer.

FLAVIUS: Pretty smart, but not smart enough. Now, are you gonna talk? Or do I have to call in a couple of centurions to lean on ya?

BRUTUS: All right, flatfoot, I admit it. I admit it. I knocked off Big Julie, and I'd do it again!

FLAVIUS: That's all I wanted to know. I'm sending you up the Tiber for a long stretch. Come on, I'll call a chariot, and we'll go downtown.

BRUTUS: Don't move unless you want a dagger in the toga. I'm getting out of here, and don't try to stop me! *(running footsteps)*

FLAVIUS: *(aside)* He had the drop on me, and I couldn't stop him, but I knew where he was heading—the scene of the crime: the Senate. Fifteen minutes later, I pulled up in my chariot. *(then)* Tiberius, hand me that Ram's Horn.

CENTURION: Here you are, Flav.

FLAVIUS: *(megaphoned voice)* All right, Brutus, this is Flavius Maximus. I know you're in there! Come on out.

BRUTUS: *(shouting)* Come and get me, you dirty rotten flatfoot!

FLAVIUS: You haven't got a chance, Brutus. I got the Senate surrounded by a stake-out. Now, throw your sword down and come out with your hands up.

BRUTUS: Come and get me!

FLAVIUS: Get smart, Brutus! We can smoke you out. We'll throw in incense. We'll throw in an onion with garlic on a spear.

BRUTUS: I don't care what you do!

FLAVIUS: All right, you asked for it. *(to Tiberius)* Give it to him, Tiberius! *(crashing sounds, prolonged struggle)* All right, Brutus, one false move, and I'll fill you fulla bronze.

BRUTUS: All right, you got me! *(to Flav as he is being tied)* But I'll be back.

FLAVIUS: Oh no, you won't. This isn't a series.

BRUTUS: I'll be back. Just remember one thing, "All roads lead to Rome."

CENTURION: Come on, you! Let's go!

FLAVIUS: Now—now—wait a minute! Wait! Bring him back!

BRUTUS: What—what?

FLAVIUS: That last saying was a dandy! "All roads lead to Rome." That's the *best*.

BRUTUS: Do you like it?

FLAVIUS: Yes—

BRUTUS: Well, you can't have it! (*spits*)

FLAVIUS: Oh, get out of here.

ALL OTHERS: All Hail, Flavius! All Rome salutes you. Hail, Flavius!

FLAVIUS: Take him, boys. And now I got a date with a doll. Okay, baby, now are you sure your husband won't object?

CALPHURNIA: Well, frankly, I don't care. If I told him once, I told him a thousand times, "Don't go, Julie!" I said. "It's the Ides of March! Beware already. Don't go, Julie, don't go."

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. How is this script a parody of *Julius Caesar*?
2. What else is this script parodying?
3. What parts of the script reference information about ancient Rome?
4. What are some examples of dramatic irony in this script?
5. What are some examples of witty wordplay in the script?
6. Where is an example of *understatement*?
7. What was the funniest part? Explain.