

50. The Witness

(#1 is walking around a police interrogation room. #2 enters.)

- #2: Mr./Ms Kramer, I'm Detective Roth. Why don't you sit down?
- #1: I don't feel like sitting down.
- #2: OK. Can we get you anything? Coffee, soda, juice?
- #1: What I'd like is to get out of here.
- #2: I'm afraid that we can't do that. Not just yet.
- #1: Why not? I told the other officer that I didn't see anything.
- #2: Unfortunately, he didn't believe you.
- #1: Well that's too bad! You can't just keep me here.
- #2: Yes, we can. We believe that you are a material witness to a homicide, and we can keep you here until we get some answers.
- #1: I told you! I didn't...
- #2: Look, why don't you just stay calm. Sit down and tell me what happened.
- #1: I already told the other cop.
- #2: Humor me. Let's take it from the beginning.
(Both sit down at the table.)
- #1: OK, I was coming home. I stopped at a convenience store...
- #2: The one at Third and Cochran?
- #1: You know it was.
- #2: Just verifying facts. Was anyone else in the store?
- #1: A couple of people.
- #2: Go on.
- #1: I was getting a soda, someone came in, there was yelling and then I heard some shots. That's when the guy in the blue ski cap ran out.
- #2: What guy?

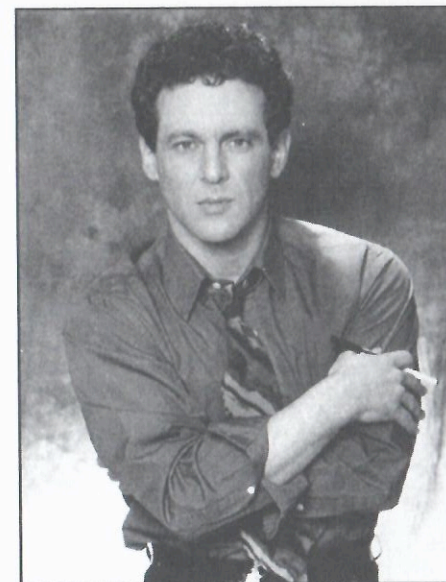
- #1: I told the other cop that I saw someone run out!
- #2: I know, but you didn't mention the blue ski cap before and...how did you know that the guy in the ski cap came in and wasn't already there.
- #1: Because I didn't notice him when I came in.
- #2: Oh, so you do notice things like that. See, this is the problem that I'm having. You said you didn't see anything, yet you've just told me two new facts that you didn't mention before.
- #1: So?
- #2: So, I'm thinking that maybe you remember more than you're telling me.
- #1: I really don't care what you're thinking.
- #2: You should. Now, did you see the guy in the ski cap come in? If you were getting a soda, as you said, the refrigerator is across from the door with only the check-out counter between you. The clerk remembers you standing there.
- #1: Yeah, right! The clerk was in the back room or something during the whole thing. He couldn't have seen me.
- #2: Oh that's right...but you noticed the missing clerk. So...maybe you did notice Mr. Ski-cap come in.
(A silence.)
- #1: OK, yeah, I guess I saw him come in. But I really didn't take any notice of him.
- #2: You didn't take notice?
- #1: No, I didn't! What are you saying? Every time you're in a store you can describe everyone who's there or comes in after you?
- #2: No, but if a person came in and blew someone's head off, I probably would.
- #1: I hit the floor when the shooting started. I was covering my head and praying that I wasn't going to get shot. I really apologize for not taking the time to sketch a picture of the assailant for you.

- #2:** When did you look up again?
- #1:** When I heard a car screeching away from the front of the store.
- #2:** Did you see the car?
- #1:** Somewhat.
- #2:** Do you know what kind it was?
- #1:** *(Pause)* Mustang. Probably sixty-five or sixty-six.
- #2:** How do you know that?
- #1:** I recognized the back end. It was black. I used to have the same one.
- #2:** Now, for the sixty-four-thousand-dollar question. Did you get a license plate number?
- (The two stare at each other for a moment.)*
- #1:** I...I don't remember.
- #2:** Did you get a license plate number?!
- #1:** I don't remember!
- #2:** TELL ME!
- #1:** OK, you want the truth?! Fine! When I looked up, the back end of the car was lit up by the store lights and I saw a license plate. Also, I could probably pick the guy out in a line-up...but I won't.
- #2:** What do you mean, you won't?
- #1:** Just that. I won't do it!
- #2:** Why not?
- #1:** Why should I? From what I was told it was gang activity. If they want to hurt each other,...whatever.
- #2:** Well here's a fact you might not know. There was a second person killed in that store. And she wasn't a gang kid. She was a mother just stopping at the store to get her kids some ice cream.
- #1:** I'm sorry about that, but I don't plan on winding up like she did.
- #2:** That won't happen.
- #1:** Really!?! *(Tosses #2 the pad that's on the table.)* Go ahead! Put it in writing. Write me a guarantee it won't. Because

- when I'm lying on the sidewalk in front of my house or on the floor of some store, or slumped over in my car with a bullet in my brain, at least I'll have it on paper that you said it wouldn't happen!
- #2:** If you help us we can nail this guy and put him away. He won't be able to hurt you.
- #1:** Do you see moron written on my forehead? What, he doesn't have friends? He won't have gang buddies sitting in the courtroom looking at me and...and following me everywhere until they can get a clear shot?
- #2:** *(Pause)* We will do everything we can to protect you. You'll have a twenty-four-hour guard.
- #1:** For how long? Forever? Sooner or later you'll leave and these guys have a long memory...and you know it.
- #2:** We'll do everything we can.
- #1:** That's not good enough. Forget it!
- #2:** This is what really makes me mad. Everyone's upset about all the violence out there and you have a chance to do something about it.
- #1:** Hey, I didn't ask for this!
- #2:** Who does? But the facts are, it happened, you were there, and what the hell are you going to do about it?
- #1:** I don't plan on doing anything!
- (A pause.)*
- #2:** Then there's nothing else I can do. *(#1 gets up and starts to leave.)* I want you to remember something, though. This kid killed two people tonight. He's probably killed before and will almost definitely kill again. And when he does, it's going to be partially your fault, because you could have helped put him away.
- #1:** You can't lay that on me.
- #2:** I'm just stating facts...and you know what I'm saying is true. If you can live with that – more power to you. Now, you can go.
- (#1 starts to head out, stops and turns back to #2.)*

- #1:** Look I'll give you the license and if you get him, I'll pick him out of a line-up, but I don't want to testify.
- #2:** We'll do everything we can. Who knows, maybe he'll cop to a plea.
- #1:** I hope so. *(Walks back to the table and sits down.)*
- #2:** You're doing the right thing.
- #1:** Just keep telling me that. OK, the license is...
(They talk.)

About the Author



Garry Kluger was born in Baltimore, Maryland and started acting in theatre at the age of eight. Since moving to Los Angeles, he has appeared in close to twenty films and television shows, and more than fifty plays, both popular and classic.

Garry's writing includes his first book, *Original Auditions Scenes for Actors*, which won an award in 1988, scripts for television, movie reviews, magazine articles, and three plays. His first play, *Till Death, or Whatever, Do Us Part*, had its world premiere in Los Angeles in 1992 and is currently in print. His other two plays are at various stages of development at this time. They are *Office Hours* and *In A Yellow Wood*. Garry, along with his wife Lori, are the head writers and story editors for an award-winning Discovery Channel show titled, *The Ultimate Guide*.