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SF PERUSALS

Beyond Reasonable Doubt

A Play

Jeffrey Archer

Samuel French - London
New York - Toronto - Hollywood



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BEYOND REASONABLE DOUBT

The first London production of *Beyond Reasonable Doubt* was presented by Lee Menzies, at the Queens Theatre on 22nd September, 1987, with the following cast of characters:

Court Usher	Brian Ellis
Clerk of the Court	Peter Clapham
Mr Justice Tredwell	Andrew Cruickshank
Anthony Blair-Booth QC	Jeffry Wickham
Det. Chief Inspector Travers	David Weston
Sir David Metcalfe QC	Frank Finlay
Prison Officer	Liam Kennedy
Mrs Rogers	Antonia Pemberton
Dr Weeden	Robert James
Lionel Hamilton	David Langton
Mr Cole (Junior Counsel for the Crown)	Daniel Davies
Robert Pierson (Junior Counsel with Sir David)	Philip York
Stenographer	Angela Ellis
Lady Metcalfe	Wendy Craig

Directed by David Gilmore
Designed by Tim Goodchild
Lighting by Mark Henderson

Company Stage Manager Peter Gardner
Deputy Stage Manager Michael Towner
Assistant Stage Managers Penelope Foxley, Donna Percival

The action of the play takes place in the Central Criminal Court (The Old Bailey) and in the home of Sir David and Lady Metcalfe in Wimbledon

Time—the present

SYNOPSIS OF SCENES

ACT I *The Trial*
The Central Criminal Court (The Old Bailey)

ACT II *Before the Trial*
The home of Sir David and Lady Metcalfe in Wimbledon

SCENE 1 Evening, about nine months before the trial
SCENE 2 Later that evening
SCENE 3 One week later, the evening of 23rd March
SCENE 4 Later that night

After the Trial
SCENE 5 Sir David and Lady Metcalfe's home. Two weeks after the trial, about 8 p.m.

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ACT I

The Trial

The Central Criminal Court—The Old Bailey. Morning

In court are the Usher, the Clerk, Anthony Blair-Booth QC, Robert Pierson, the Prison Officer, Sir David Metcalfe, Cole and the Stenographer

Usher Be upstanding in court.

All rise

The Judge enters

All persons who have anything to do before my lords, the Queen's Justices, at the Central Criminal Court, draw near and give your attendance. God Save the Queen.

All bow and the Judge returns the bow. Everyone sits and Sir David takes his place in the dock

Clerk (*to the jury i.e. the audience*) Members of the jury. The defendant, Sir David Metcalfe, Knight, stands charged with one count of murder. To this count, he has pleaded "not guilty". Your charge therefore is to hearken unto the evidence and say whether he be guilty or no.

Judge (*to the audience*) Ladies and gentlemen, each one of you is now a member of the jury whose solemn task it is to try Sir David Metcalfe for murder. This case has already attracted much lurid publicity, but as you embark upon your labours you must put all such matters from your mind. You have sworn to give a true verdict according to the evidence. The only evidence that matters is the evidence heard in this court. When you return home your family and friends are bound to ask what you have been doing at the Old Bailey. If you mention this case they will not only ask you for your views upon it, they will give you theirs. But they have taken no jury oath, they have heard no evidence. In my experience it is always those who have never been in court who are most certain as to what the verdict should be. The springs of justice flow from knowledge not ignorance. So please do not talk to anyone about this case and don't allow anyone to talk to you. It is you and you alone who will decide if Sir David Metcalfe is guilty or not guilty of murder. Yes, Mr Blair-Booth.

Blair-Booth rises, bows, very slightly

Blair-Booth May it please your lordship, members of the jury . . . in this case I appear for the Crown, together with my learned friend, Mr Cole. The defendant, Sir David Metcalfe, QC, has elected to represent himself. With

the leave of his lordship, Sir David is assisted by my learned friend Mr Pierson. Members of the jury, the Crown will not dwell overlong on its opening address, for I feel certain that you will find this case a simple one.

The Judge promptly intervenes

Judge I shall be most interested to follow your argument, Mr Blair-Booth. In more than forty years' involvement with the law, I've yet to come across a simple case.

Blair-Booth If it so please your lordship. Members of the jury, you will find that there is only one count on the indictment—that of murder. The deliberate, non-accidental cold killing of Lady Millicent Metcalfe by the defendant her husband, Sir David Metcalfe. Members of the jury, it gives me no pleasure to appear for the Crown on this occasion. Sir David has had such a distinguished legal career that I am sure you are aware he was an ornament of the Bar. Indeed Chairman of the Bar Council. So you will appreciate how distressing it is for me to find myself prosecuting a former colleague. I have not avoided that grave responsibility, realizing that no man can be above the law and that justice must always be seen to be done. The Crown will present a case which will convince you, members of the jury, beyond reasonable doubt, that Sir David Metcalfe did wilfully murder his wife in the early hours of March twenty-fourth this year. The Crown will also show that the relationship between Sir David and Lady Metcalfe was not a happy one and had, in the period preceding her death, become acrimonious. Earlier in the evening in question, the two of them had quarrelled noisily and openly and later, when the opportunity to poison Lady Metcalfe presented itself so conveniently, Sir David grasped at the chance to be rid of his loyal and devoted wife. The Crown will further show how he went about this evil task, deliberately and knowingly administering the wrong medicine to Lady Metcalfe, thus giving her a lethal overdose of the drug, Cyclotoxelix. The Crown will call witnesses to show a clear motive for this calculated murder and, most important of all, a witness to the murder itself. The Crown will leave no room for doubt about the actions taken by Sir David Metcalfe in the early hours of that fatal March morning, and you will, we submit, be left with no alternative but to find Sir David guilty, unhappy and unpalatable though that may be. My lord, we call our first witness, Inspector Travers.

The Prison Officer stands and announces Inspector Travers, as he will do for all other witnesses, from the lobby outside the double doors. He then shuts the doors and returns to his seat and whatever book he may be reading

The Inspector enters. Whenever he addresses the jury he looks straight at the audience. All witnesses do this in order to make the audience feel they are the jury

Usher Take the testament in your right hand and read from the card.

Travers I swear by Almighty God that the evidence I shall give shall be the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth.

Blair-Booth Is your name Richard William Travers and are you a Detective Chief Inspector with the Serious Crime Squad?

Travers Yes, sir.

Blair-Booth On the twenty-fourth of March last when Lady Metcalfe was killed——

Sir David Objection, my lord.

Blair-Booth I apologize, my lord. I should have said, "died".

Sir David Though it was never your intention to do so.

Blair-Booth Inspector, you, I think can produce a copy of the death certificate. My lord, it is an agreed document in the jury bundle. Under the heading, "Cause of Death", what do we read, Inspector?

Travers The certificate states natural causes, my lord, and then the word "Lymphosarcoma".

Blair-Booth At the time, did you have any good reason to doubt the accuracy of the certificate?

Travers No, sir.

Blair-Booth No-one came forward to suggest that this death might have been other than the result of natural causes?

Travers No, sir.

Blair-Booth Sir David Metcalfe never made any effort to contact you in particular or the police generally?

Travers No, sir.

Blair-Booth Then what first aroused your suspicions, Inspector?

Travers The appearance at Wimbledon Police Station of Lady Metcalfe's housekeeper, Mrs Eileen Rogers.

Blair-Booth Did she make a written statement on that occasion?

Travers Yes, sir.

Blair-Booth What was the substance of that statement?

Travers She stated that she had witnessed Sir David Metcalfe poison his wife in the early hours of March twenty-fourth. She claimed that she had clearly seen him administer a fatal dose of Cyclotoxelix even though he must have known that Lady Metcalfe had taken a similar dose only a few hours earlier. She said she'd watched him put it in a cup of tea.

Blair-Booth What course of action did you take once you had learned this piece of information, Inspector?

Travers We obtained an exhumation order to remove the body from Wimbledon cemetery.

Blair-Booth And was that order carried out?

Travers Yes, sir. (*Reading from his notes*) The senior pathologist at the Home Office, Sir James Buckley, confirmed there was a far higher amount of Cyclotoxelix in the body than was consistent with the normal weekly dosage.

Blair-Booth My lord, the pathologist's report is agreed and is in the jury's bundle of documents. When the overdose had been confirmed by the Home Office pathologist what action did you take?

Travers I interviewed . . . (*checking his notes*) . . . Dr John Weeden, Lady Metcalfe's doctor; Mrs Rogers, the housekeeper; and Sir David himself. I then made my report and sent it to the Director of Public Prosecutions.

Blair-Booth Yes. And if you had such a clear indication that Sir David himself might have been involved in poisoning his wife, why did you not arrest him immediately?

Travers I did not consider it prudent, sir, to arrest the Chairman of the Bar Council on a charge of murder without the authority of the DPP.

Blair-Booth Quite so, Inspector. One would not wish to arrest someone of such eminence as Sir David Metcalfe unless one was absolutely certain of one's ground——

Sir David Objection, my lord. This sort of comment is quite improper and also prejudiced although not untypical.

Judge Yes, Mr Blair-Booth, you must avoid trying to be both Judge and Jury, as well as Prosecuting Counsel. It is a convenient but undesirable trinity.

Blair-Booth I apologize, my lord. I merely wanted the jury to realize the care and forbearance shown by the Inspector before he considered arresting Sir David. Could you tell the jury what happened next, Inspector?

Travers I obtained a warrant for the arrest of Sir David Metcalfe. Which I executed on the afternoon of April eleventh . . . (*he checks his notes*) . . . at his home in Wimbledon. I charged him with the murder of his wife, Lady Metcalfe.

Blair-Booth When you arrested Sir David, Inspector, how did he react?

Travers He seemed—distraught.

Blair-Booth He seemed distraught. Did he say anything?

Travers He volunteered no statement, sir.

Blair-Booth He volunteered no statement when being arrested for the murder of his wife?

Travers No, sir.

Blair-Booth Thank you, Inspector. (*He sits down*)

Judge Do you wish to cross-examine this witness, Sir David?

Sir David I do, my lord. Inspector, when making an arrest is it not your duty to inform the accused person that he need not make a statement?

Travers Yes, sir.

Sir David Did you in my case?

Travers No, sir.

Sir David Why not?

Travers It seemed superfluous with one of the leading legal authorities in the land and indeed proved so.

Sir David However, you did not carry out the recommended Home Office procedure.

Travers No, sir.

Sir David Inspector, if I had killed my wife in the manner indicated by the Crown, surely I could have destroyed the evidence quite simply by having her body cremated?

Travers Most criminals think they're cleverer than the law. That's usually how we catch them.

Sir David You told the court I looked distraught when you arrested me. Could this not have been a reaction to the recent death of my wife and all the *unnecessary* unpleasantness that had surrounded the post-mortem?

Travers I can't say, sir. It was some weeks after the event.

Sir David The "event"? Some weeks after? Queen Victoria remained distressed for forty years after the death of her husband, Inspector. No further questions, my lord.

Judge Inspector, did Sir David seem distressed before you told him you were going to arrest him?

Travers Difficult to say, my lord. I was so nervous at the thought of going to arrest the Chairman of the Bar Council, I just put the charge to him as soon as I walked through the door.

Judge Um, I see. Thank you, Inspector. Your next witness, Mr Blair-Booth.

Blair-Booth My lord, I should like to call Mrs Eileen Rogers.

Mrs Rogers enters

Usher Please take the testament in your right hand and read from the card.

Mrs Rogers I swear by Almighty God that the evidence I shall give shall be the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth.

Judge Would you like to be seated, Mrs Rogers?

Mrs Rogers Thank you, no. I'll stand.

Judge As you wish.

Blair-Booth Is your name Eileen Rogers?

Mrs Rogers Yes, it is.

Blair-Booth Where do you live?

Mrs Rogers (*softly*) Do I have to tell you, with him here? (*She points to Sir David*)

Judge Could you speak up, Mrs Rogers?

Mrs Rogers Do I have to tell you with him here?

Blair-Booth No I don't think that will be necessary, but did you previously live at forty-four The Oaks, Wimbledon, the home of the late Lady Metcalfe?

Mrs Rogers Yes, I did.

Judge Would you please address your replies to the jury, Mrs Rogers?

Blair-Booth And were you in the former employ of Sir David and Lady Metcalfe as housekeeper and general help?

Mrs Rogers Yes. I worked for Lady Metcalfe for over seven years and lived in the house for nearly three, ever since my husband deserted me, but I have since left to take up employment elsewhere.

Blair-Booth Understandably. Mrs Rogers, I should like to start by going over what you remember of the evening of March twenty-third, from the moment Sir David arrived home.

Mrs Rogers Yes, my lord.

Blair-Booth No, you call me "sir" and his lordship, "my lord".

Mrs Rogers Yes, sir.

Blair-Booth Did Sir David arrive home late or early that night?

Mrs Rogers Late. He was nearly always late.

Blair-Booth Did this cause any unpleasantness between Sir David and Lady Metcalfe?

Mrs Rogers Not from Lady Metcalfe, but Sir David can always pick a quarrel over the slightest thing, especially when he's in one of his moods.

Sir David My lord, I must object. This is quite absurd——

Judge (*interrupting him*) You will have your chance to cross-examine, Sir David, as you well know.

Blair-Booth So, Sir David did arrive home late, and Lady Metcalfe seemed distressed by this.

Mrs Rogers Yes. She told him he was a drunk and that alcohol would destroy his brain.

Blair-Booth And what was his reply to that?

Mrs Rogers He became angry. He shouted at her. He said, "You will regret those words, woman." And then he hit her.

Blair-Booth Hit her? You actually saw him hit her?

Mrs Rogers No, sir, but I heard her plead with him not to hit her again.

Blair-Booth And then what happened?

Mrs Rogers I tried to think of some excuse to get back into the drawing-room.

Blair-Booth And did you?

Mrs Rogers Yes. I made Lady Metcalfe a cup of coffee and went in early to give her her pills.

Blair-Booth Yes, we'll come to that in a moment. Let me ask you, Mrs Rogers, did Sir David drink a lot that night?

Mrs Rogers His breath smelt of alcohol when he came home, then he drank a bottle of wine and later another bottle. I know because I cleared them away.

Blair-Booth So by the end of the evening, would you say Sir David was drunk?

Sir David My lord, I must object. That is yet another outrageous leading question.

Blair-Booth All right, all right. We'll just leave it that Sir David came home smelling of alcohol and proceeded to drink two more bottles of wine. I doubt if even Sir David will be able to claim that is a leading question.

Sir David No, it's not even a question.

Blair-Booth (*to Mrs Rogers*) Now you were telling the court that you were looking for an excuse to return to the drawing-room?

Mrs Rogers Yes, I went in as soon as possible to give Lady Metcalfe her pills so she could have them and go to bed.

Blair-Booth And what were these pills, Mrs Rogers?

Mrs Rogers She takes a once-a-week pill once a week, and also a sleeping pill every night.

Blair-Booth What do you mean by a "once-a-week pill"?

Mrs Rogers It's a large red pill, it's very powerful and I'm afraid I cannot pronounce its name.

Blair-Booth My lord, I believe Mrs Rogers is referring to Cyclotoxelix. And on the night in question, did Lady Metcalfe take her once-a-week pill, the red one?

Mrs Rogers Yes.

Blair-Booth Then a white sleeping pill?

Mrs Rogers Yes, sir. At about a quarter to ten.

Blair-Booth So she should not have taken another red pill for at least seven days?

Mrs Rogers Correct, sir. Those were the clear instructions I was given by Dr Weeden.

Blair-Booth I understand. And was Sir David in the room at the time?

Mrs Rogers Yes, he was.

Blair-Booth And did he witness what was going on?

Mrs Rogers Well, of course, he did. He was standing there, wasn't he?

Blair-Booth But could Sir David have had any way of knowing which pill Lady Metcalfe was taking?

Mrs Rogers He must have known because when I give it to Lady Metcalfe I always describe it as the "once-a-week" pill so he knew all right.

Blair-Booth Always? So Sir David had heard the expression before?

Mrs Rogers Many times.

Blair-Booth I see. And then what happened?

Mrs Rogers Lady Metcalfe and Sir David went up to the bedroom.

Blair-Booth And did you then go to bed?

Mrs Rogers Yes, but not until I had counted the red pills.

Blair-Booth And do you always do that?

Mrs Rogers Oh yes, always, sir.

Blair-Booth And how many red pills were there in the bottle?

Mrs Rogers There were seven.

Blair-Booth Seven? Are you certain, Mrs Rogers?

Mrs Rogers Yes, sir. I am certain.

Blair-Booth After you had gone to your own room, what happened next?

Mrs Rogers I fell asleep almost immediately, but was woken in the middle of the night.

Blair-Booth At what time?

Mrs Rogers About three o'clock. I don't know what it was that woke me, but I thought it must be Lady Metcalfe because she often wakes up in the middle of the night and comes downstairs to make herself a cup of tea. So I put on my dressing gown and went downstairs.

Blair-Booth And what did you see?

Mrs Rogers I saw Lady Metcalfe alone with Sir David.

Blair-Booth Yes?

Mrs Rogers I watched them from the stairs but they couldn't see me. He was standing behind her. I saw him drop another once-a-week pill into her tea. Poor Lady Metcalfe did not see what he had done, but I did.

Blair-Booth But Mrs Rogers, can you be certain which pill Sir David dropped into her tea?

Mrs Rogers Oh yes, I saw it clearly.

Blair-Booth How can you be so sure?

Mrs Rogers Well, because of the colour. It was red. And anyway, I counted them again later.

Blair-Booth You counted them again? How many were there this time?

Mrs Rogers Six.

Blair-Booth Six! When you saw Sir David had given the red pill to Lady Metcalfe, why didn't you say something?

Mrs Rogers Because I feared what he might do to me.

Blair-Booth Feared what he might do to you? Please explain to the jury Mrs Rogers, why you were frightened of him.

Mrs Rogers Because he has a very violent temper and because he often used to shout at me. Like he shouted at Lady Metcalfe. So I kept quiet as I was worried that if I said anything he might—well—hit me as well.

Blair-Booth I see. But subsequently you did make a statement to the police?

Mrs Rogers Yes, I felt it was wicked that he should be allowed to get away with it.

Blair-Booth You do understand the full consequences of what you are telling the court, Mrs Rogers?

Mrs Rogers Yes, I do. I watched him kill her.

Blair-Booth No more questions, my lord.

Mrs Rogers promptly starts to leave the witness box

Judge Just a moment, madam. I think Sir David may have some questions for you.

Sir David I certainly have, my lord. I would like to start, Mrs Rogers, with what you say you remember of the evening of twenty-third March.

Mrs Rogers I will remember everything that happened that night for the rest of my life. I will never forget it.

Sir David When you gave my wife her pills, where was I standing?

Mrs Rogers In the room with Lady Metcalfe.

Sir David Yes, but where in the room was I standing?

Mrs Rogers By the drinks table.

Sir David You're sure of that?

Mrs Rogers Yes. I am sure.

Sir David But that's at the other end of the room from where my wife was sitting—isn't it?

Mrs Rogers Yes.

Sir David So it's possible I couldn't have seen which pill Lady Metcalfe took?

Mrs Rogers (*a shrug*) I've no idea.

Sir David Exactly. Now, I should like to turn to what you say you saw a few hours later.

Mrs Rogers Wait a moment. I called it the once-a-week pill so you must have known.

Sir David We have only your word for that.

Mrs Rogers And we have only your word to say I didn't.

Sir David You say you stood on the stairs and saw me put a pill in my wife's tea?

Mrs Rogers Yes. I did.

Sir David And you knew that it was the Cyclotoxelix because the pill was red?

Mrs Rogers Yes.

Sir David All right. How far would you say it was from the stairs to the sofa, where Lady Metcalfe was sitting?

Mrs Rogers What do you mean?

Sir David I think you know exactly what I mean, but let me make it easier for you. Would you say you were at about the same distance from me then as you are now?

Mrs Rogers (*more confident now*) Yes. It's about the same distance.

Sir David Good. Then perhaps you can tell me the colour of the pills in these three bottles, Mrs Rogers. (*Sir David produces three full pill bottles from the shelf in the dock*)

Blair-Booth My lord, are we to be subjected to a conjuring trick by the defendant?

Judge I am as intrigued to find out as you are, Mr Blair-Booth—carry on, Sir David.

Sir David What colour are the pills in this bottle, Mrs Rogers?

Mrs Rogers Blue.

She is wrong. They are bright green. He holds up another bottle

Red.

She is right. He holds up another

Green.

She is wrong. The pills are blue

Sir David One out of three, Mrs Rogers. That could hardly be described as beyond reasonable doubt. And there were, if I am not mistaken, *two* bottles of pills by Lady Metcalfe's side. What was in the other bottle?

Mrs Rogers Her sleeping pills.

Blair-Booth whispers to Cole, his junior

Cole promptly leaves the court

Sir David And was Lady Metcalfe allowed to take more than one sleeping pill?

Mrs Rogers The doctor did not give me any instructions about them.

Sir David Then let me ask you, did Lady Metcalfe sometimes take more than one sleeping pill, if she could not get to sleep?

Mrs Rogers Yes. She did.

Sir David Then it might have been the sleeping pill, might it not, which you saw me put in my wife's tea?

Mrs Rogers No, it wasn't. It was the red once-a-week pill.

Sir David puts the pills back on the shelf under the dock rail

Sir David Is it possible that despite having worked for my wife for some considerable time you misunderstood the relationship between us?

Mrs Rogers What do you mean?

Sir David Exactly, what I say.

Judge (*intervening*) Mrs Rogers, do you think Sir David and Lady Metcalfe might have got on well together, but you didn't fully appreciate their relationship?

Mrs Rogers No, my lord, that is not possible. I watched them together over many years. Lady Metcalfe was a very charming woman, but Sir David was always drunk and shouting at both of us.

Sir David I think what Mrs Rogers is trying to tell the court, my lord, is that she doesn't like me.

Mrs Rogers No, I don't.

Sir David No, in fact, you don't have a good word to say for me—do you?
Mrs Rogers If there was anything good to say I would be happy to tell the Judge.
Sir David So you're only interested in saying harmful things.
Mrs Rogers No. I didn't say that. You're trying to put words into my mouth like you do with everybody. I only want the truth to come out.
Sir David The truth as you imagine you saw it—what was it you reported me as saying to my wife? "Woman, you will regret this"? Or words to that effect?
Mrs Rogers Yes.
Sir David And that I hit her.
Mrs Rogers Yes.
Sir David And then she begged for mercy?
Mrs Rogers Yes. I could hear it all clearly from the kitchen.
Sir David Have you ever heard of play-acting, Mrs Rogers? Is it not possible that you gained a totally false impression of what was really happening in the drawing-room?
Mrs Rogers I don't understand.
Sir David Agreed.

Since Sir David's attack was for the benefit of the jury, he doesn't mind. But the Judge intervenes

Judge I think you might have confused her, Sir David. I am not convinced myself that she fully understands.
Sir David I doubt she understands very much at all, my lord, except her own prejudices.

Cole enters with a bottle of white pills which he gives to Blair-Booth

Judge Sir David, that comment should not have been made. The jury will ignore it. Do you wish to re-examine this witness, Mr Blair-Booth?
Blair-Booth I do, my lord. Mrs Rogers ... about the test Sir David surprised you with ... you failed to distinguish between the green and the blue pills ... tell me—did Lady Metcalfe have any blue or green pills?
Mrs Rogers No ... only red ... and white.
Blair-Booth Exactly. And the colour you did identify correctly was red. (*He suddenly holds up a bottle of white pills*) Can you tell me, Mrs Rogers, the colour of the pills in this bottle?

Mrs Rogers hesitates only slightly

Mrs Rogers White.
Blair-Booth Correct. Thank you. No more questions, my lord.

The Judge indicates that Mrs Rogers can stand down

I would like to call Dr John Weeden.

Dr Weeden enters

The Usher administers the full oath

Blair-Booth Are you Dr John Weeden, of thirteen Beckers Hill Drive, Wimbledon?

Weeden I am.
Blair-Booth Are you a registered medical practitioner?
Weeden Yes.
Blair-Booth And were you the late Lady Millicent Metcalfe's doctor?
Weeden Yes . . . and Sir David's.
Blair-Booth Dr Weeden, would you please tell the court how you came to hear of Lady Metcalfe's death.
Weeden Sir David called me in the early hours of March twenty-fourth. I went to his house immediately but, when I arrived Lady Metcalfe was already dead.
Blair-Booth At what time was that, Dr Weeden?
Weeden Sir David called me around half-past five in the morning. I must have reached his home a little after six.
Blair-Booth And what hour would you have put the time of death?
Weeden Approximately four a.m.
Blair-Booth Four a.m.
Weeden Yes.
Blair-Booth So, when Sir David called you, his wife must have been dead for some time.
Weeden I assume so.
Blair-Booth Did it in any way concern you, Doctor, that Sir David had waited for over an hour before he got in touch with you.
Weeden No. It's not uncommon for a bereaved husband or wife to remain a considerable time alone with their dead spouse before letting anyone know. Sometimes they refuse to accept death has actually taken place.
Blair-Booth And in your professional opinion this was death by natural causes?
Weeden Yes.
Blair-Booth Would you describe yourself as a close friend of Sir David Metcalfe, Dr Weeden.
Weeden I would like to think so.
Sir David (*interjecting*) What is the purpose of this line of questioning, my lord? Is Mr Blair-Booth suggesting a conspiracy?
Judge I hope that is not the case, Mr Blair-Booth?
Blair-Booth Far from it, my lord, Sir David wrongs me. It is, in fact, the exact opposite I am trying to establish, namely that Dr Weeden was purposely misled into believing that this was a death by natural causes. Whereas in fact Sir David knew exactly what he had done. So, Dr Weeden, at no time did you suspect that Lady Metcalfe had been given an overdose of drugs?
Weeden (*firmly*) At no time.
Blair-Booth Would you describe Lady Metcalfe as the kind of person who might take her own life?
Weeden No, sir. Though one can never be sure in these cases.
Blair-Booth Dr Weeden, did you write out the prescription for Cyclotoxelix?
Weeden Yes, I did.
Blair-Booth When?
Weeden (*checking his notes*) On February twenty-third.

Blair-Booth How many pills did you prescribe?
Weeden Twelve.
Blair-Booth Twelve?
Weeden Yes. Enough to last three months.
Blair-Booth At one a week?
Weeden Yes.
Blair-Booth So . . . (*He refers to his pocket diary*) February twenty-third—they started immediately?
Weeden Yes.
Blair-Booth March second . . . ninth . . . sixteenth . . . twenty-third. Five weeks?
Weeden Yes.
Blair-Booth And there should have been how many remaining?

As Weeden hesitates

Seven?
Weeden Yes, I suppose so.
Blair-Booth You suppose so? Have I miscounted?
Weeden No.
Blair-Booth No. But you didn't actually count how many pills were left?
Weeden I did, but not in the sense you mean. It was just to check how many there were.
Blair-Booth I see. And even that did not make you revise your opinion as to the cause of death?
Weeden No.
Blair-Booth Well, perhaps I can. Tell me, Doctor, could anyone who had read the label on the bottle be left in any doubt as to what the result of an overdose might be?
Weeden I don't think so.
Blair-Booth Let's be absolutely sure, shall we, Dr Weeden? Will you be so kind as to read out to the Court the instructions as they are printed on the label. (*Blair-Booth addresses the Judge*) My lord, Exhibit One.

The Usher takes the bottle to Weeden

Yes, Dr Weeden?
Weeden "Cyclotoxelix. One pill two and a half grams, every seven days. Keep in a locked cupboard. Any excess of the prescribed drug could prove fatal."
Blair-Booth (*emphasizing the words*) Could—prove—fatal. Admirably clear, Doctor. Yet you were surprised by the police investigation and the pathologist's report?
Weeden Yes, I was.
Blair-Booth And, one final point, Dr Weeden. When you examined Lady Metcalfe, did you find any bruises on her?
Weeden Yes, I found an extensive bruise on the outside of her right forearm which——
Blair-Booth (*interrupting*) Could that have been caused by a blow?
Weeden Well, I suppose it could, but——

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