

# Vince Washburn: "Penalty For Early Death"

A Short Comic Mystery Play

By

Jerry Stearns

Approx: 22 minutes

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## Vince Washburn: “Penalty For Early Death”

### Cast of Characters

- Vince Washburn: Thirty-ish. Smart and mild mannered. Self-assured, disciplined, but empathetic. Steeped in New Age philosophies. Probably has his hair tied back in a long ponytail.
- Sheridan: Vince’s receptionist. Male or female. Efficient and polite.
- Adele Upton: Late twenties. Single, and very pretty. Leaning toward ditsy, but hasn’t reached it yet. Dresses in young modern, petite, pastels.
- Aquila: Matronly. Dresses in Mother Earth styles, with scarves and big hats. She embraces New Age philosophies and practices, and is a channeler.
- Arthur Bedford: Forties. Short haircut. Business suit. Smarmy. Ethics challenged.
- Jacques Frontage: Seventeenth century explorer, channeled by Aquila. Large and robust character, full of energy. Never seen. Cheap French accent, but speaks knowledgeably in colloquial English.
- Lt. Emerson Lake, M.P.D.: Police detective. Plain clothes, with obvious badge and handcuffs. Officious and controlled.
- Jill: Half of the coffee shop book club. Well read and critical of literature.
- Jane: Other half of the book club. Soft spoken. Soft sell of product.
- Narrator: For commercial. FM narrator voice. Off stage.

# Vince Washburn: New Age Detective

by Jerry Stearns

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**MUSIC:**           **Something spacey, ethereal.**

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**Music:**           **Theme up and out.**

**Music:**           **Vince theme, electronic mellow jazz.  
Continues under.**

**Announcer:** And now another entry in the personal journal of Vincent Washburn, the New Age Detective. This week, "Penalty For Early Death."

**Vince:**           (\* narration filter effect.)

\* It was autumn and I was glad. I look good in Fall colors. The early morning sun streamed in through the window of my second story office, making the natural hardwood floor the color of a field of wheat with all the bran and fibre still in it. My name is Vincent Washburn, and I'm a Personal Investigator.

1 I had finished my morning stretching exercises  
2 and low-impact aerobics. I'd meditated,  
3 showered and was starting in on a large  
4 orange juice in an earthenware mug, when... \*

5

6 **SFX:** Tone of intercom.

7

8 **Sheridan:** (on intercom) There's a Ms. Upton here to  
9 see you, Mr. Washburn.

10

11 **Vince:** Thank you, Sheridan. Send her in.

12

13 **Sheridan:** (intercom) Yes, Mr. Washburn.

14

15 **Vince:** (Filtered) I slipped my fresh box of Hershey  
16 bars into the drawer of my Danish Design  
17 desk. It won't do to let clients see any sign of  
18 weakness you don't want them to see. I  
19 slipped a sport coat on over my sweatshirt as  
20 the woman came in. \*

21

22 **SFX:** Door opens.

23

24 **Sheridan:** Ms. Adele Upton, this is Vincent Washburn.

25

26 **Adele Upton:** I'm pleased to meet you, Mr. Washburn.

27

28 **Vince:** Take a Balanz chair, Ms. Upton, and please call  
29 me Vince. Everyone does.

30

31 **SFX:** Door closes.

32

33 **Vince:** (Filter) I looked her over slowly. She was ...  
34 "pert." She had on turquoise sweatpants, and  
35 a sweatshirt with the collar ripped out to  
36 show the white tank top underneath. There  
37 were even matching turquoise laces in her  
38 Reeboks. I just knew she had a pair of Nike's  
39 at home with laces that matched her **other**  
40 set of sweats - probably pink. And the look  
41 on her face told me she needed my help. \*

42

1 **Adele:** They're Nike's with red laces, Vince, and I  
2 need your help.  
3  
4 **Vince:** (Filter) Oh, oh. Two out of three isn't good  
5 enough in my business. \*  
6  
7 **Vince:** Can I get you some herb tea?  
8  
9 **Adele:** Yes. Thank you.  
10  
11 **SFX:** Sounds of tea pot and cups under  
12 dialogue.  
13  
14 **Vince:** Are you any relation to Thomas Upton, the  
15 famous New Age entrepreneur and psychic,  
16 who died yesterday?  
17  
18 **Adele:** (emotionally) Yes. He was my grandfather.  
19  
20 **Vince:** I'm so sorry. How can I help you?  
21  
22 **Adele:** I believe that my grandfather was murdered,  
23 and that something was stolen from our  
24 house at the same time. I want you to prove  
25 it was murder, and find the stolen objects.  
26  
27 **Vince:** The papers didn't say anything about a  
28 burglary in connection with the death.  
29  
30 **Adele:** Oh, no. I couldn't tell the police about it. It  
31 might get into the media.  
32  
33 **Vince:** What, exactly, was stolen, Ms. Upton?  
34  
35 **Adele:** My ... mantra.  
36  
37 **Music:** **Sting.**  
38  
39 **Vince:** Of course. It wouldn't do to have one's  
40 personal secret meditation chant plastered all  
41 over the wall behind the news anchor's head.  
42 Is that all?