

Poof!

A play in one act

By Alex Coulombe

Contact:
Alex Coulombe
462 Lexington Ave
Apt 2L
Brooklyn, NY 11221
603-348-8702
alex.coulombe@gmail.com

CAST OF CHARACTERS

DONOVAN, a young scientist

KATHY, a Southern belle

OLD-TIMEY REPORTER, on the radio

MISTER DISAPPEARERERER, a superhero

SETTING

The present day.

SCENE 1

An empty kitchen. The radio plays soft music. Suddenly, in through the window and out of breath dives DONOVAN, a young British man looking far more bedraggled than suits him. He fumbles his bag, and out falls a black leather mask, which he promptly buries back in. From a distance, we hear someone coming up stairs, singing. DONOVAN dives for the kitchen table, grabs a newspaper and a box of Wheaties. He composes himself and does what he can to look nonplussed just as the door opens.

KATHY enters to see DONOVAN sitting down, calmly reading the paper, and eating Wheaties from the box. KATHY, in this moment, looks like she belongs in The Addams Family; her hair and professional attire have been completely obliterated by smoke and ash. She approaches DONOVAN from behind. She waits for him to turn around. She gives a loud cough.

DONOVAN
(not looking at her)

Good evening.

KATHY
Hi.

Pause. KATHY clears her throat.

POOF!

DONOVAN

Coming down with something?

KATHY

Look at me!

DONOVAN turns, chews,
and considers her.

DONOVAN

What happened?

KATHY

Can't you smell what happened?

DONOVAN

No.

KATHY

Our bank was robbed today!

DONOVAN

It exploded?

KATHY

Do I look exploded?

DONOVAN

More... exploded upon.

KATHY

Right because the robbery...

DONOVAN

The robbery... involved dynamite...?

KATHY

The robbery wasn't successful. Because... we... were...
rescued...?

DONOVAN

Oh, you were rescued by-

POOF!

KATHY

Our local superhero: The Human Poof!

DONOVAN

Mister Disappearer.

KATHY

Whatever. Same guy.

DONOVAN

I believe he prefers Mister Disappearer. I mean, I think simply 'Mister Disappear' would be a cleaner title but...

He returns to reading his paper.

KATHY

But that's what The Daily News is calling him, and my editor is pushing for 'The Human Poof' to catch on.

(A long pause.)

How are you not more interested in this? I was rescued today by a goddamn superhero!

DONOVAN

There's no such thing as superheroes.

KATHY

And as a chemist who works at a smoke factory and deals with this stuff all day, how can you not take one look at me-- or smell at me-- and know this is not from an actual explosive, but just a smoke bomb?

DONOVAN

I believe he calls them smoke poofs. But since you bring it up, I smell KC103, baking soda, and sugar. Potassium chlorate as oxidizer, dextrin as fuel, and sodium bicarbonate to moderate the temperature. Standard smoke compound.

KATHY

That's what I wanted! It's no fun to make someone guess something, give them an answer, then have them explain afterwards why that answer is obvious. Why didn't you say that when I came in?

POOF!

DONOVAN

I didn't smell you when you came in.

KATHY

Why not?

DONOVAN

I was smelling my Wheaties.

KATHY

You never smell me.

DONOVAN

Most people don't particularly enjoy being smelled.

KATHY

I do. As your girlfriend, smell me as you please.

DONOVAN

Sounds good. Or rather... smells good.

He returns to reading and eating.

KATHY

Are you eating Wheaties without milk?

DONOVAN

Yes.

KATHY

You never eat Wheaties without milk.

DONOVAN

Yes I do.

KATHY

Why are you so sweaty?

DONOVAN

I'm not.

(KATHY gives him a long
penetrating stare)

Stop it.

POOF!

KATHY

And don't you have an apology for me?

DONOVAN

Jesus, Kathy! For what?

KATHY

You missed our lunch date again.

DONOVAN

Oh. Goodness. Dear, I'm terribly sorry, I... got caught up at work. I'll make it up to you.

KATHY

Donovan you keep doing this! You're never where you say you're going to be. I've spent more of our relationship waiting for you than doing things with you! Where are you all the time?

DONOVAN

I told you-- work. I get caught up in a project and--

KATHY

Forget to eat? Something tells me you're eating heartily. Donovan. Are you having an affair?

DONOVAN

(long sigh)

No.

KATHY

Not even a gay affair?

DONOVAN

That would still be an affair!

KATHY

Well *I* know that. When did you get home?

DONOVAN

A couple hours ago, like usual.

KATHY

You're hiding something.

DONOVAN

I'm not.

KATHY

Why do you take two hour lunches by yourself?

DONOVAN

Who told you I take two hour lunches?

KATHY

Ha! You just did-- it was a hunch. Score.

DONOVAN

I didn't say I did, I wished to know who gave you false information.

KATHY

Seriously, not an affair?

DONOVAN

Kathy, not an affair. Drop it.

KATHY

I'm kidding. I know you wouldn't. But come on, you have to understand me being a little upset. If I wasn't waiting for you to pick me up at the bank, I would have been gone when the robbery happened.

DONOVAN

But if you were with me, then you wouldn't have had the pleasure of being rescued by the amazing Mister Disappearererer.

KATHY

True. Y'know I've been thinking about it all day, and the high of being in the same room as that guy is indescribable.

DONOVAN

Please don't.

POOF!

KATHY

It's intoxicating though. Definitely that. Suddenly to know that everything is going to be okay. It's like, first there's this calm. Then there's this excitement-- not only do you know everything's going to be okay, there's the thrill of knowing you're about to find out how he'll make it okay, y'know? I wonder if his girlfriend or wife or whatever he has feels that when he comes to her. I mean the danger- knowing he's putting himself in harm's way so often, it must be so stressful but also... exhilarating. Do you think he keeps his costume on for sex? I would. Or I'd... like that. All that tight leather and latex or whatever- I guess he's already using protection. Seems like a safe guy. And the mask? Yeah. So I can imagine like, I'm his girlfriend-- like Mary Jane or Batman's girlfriend or whatever-- I'm having a normal night just watching TV, and without warning he bursts in through the window and sets off an incense poof. The smoke bomb is like a safety word kind of thing so I know he's not a rapist. Then he grabs me and forces me down onto the bed and pushes into me with this incredible force. But then another poof and he's gone. I turn around and around but no, he's vanished. I get up and search the room. I see a shadow in the corner. Flashes of darkness, a soft caress, the waft of his poofs, a whisper with each touch. That progresses to kisses on my neck, tiny licks, kisses all over my body... lotsa tongue stuff. I spin and flail in aching ecstasy but I still can't see him until... there in the corner. He's hiding in my laundry. I stalk him like a cat and pounce! I think I have him. I think he's dominated. I feel his rippling body beneath me and I know that I've claimed him. I try to hold him down, but he's so strong. He pushes me up against the wall, and he's a wall in himself, inches from me, breath hot, his hand covering my mouth, a big black wall of man driving up into me with acres of--

DONAVAN's cell phone goes off.
A bizarre ring tone. DONAVAN looks
at it, silences it, pockets it.

DONOVAN

Don't you want to clean up? Wash your hair or something?

POOF!

KATHY approaches him seductively.
Just then the radio's music is cut
off. The volume increases and plays
over their continuing conversation.

OLD-TIMEY REPORTER

This just in! A high speed chase has ended with ten attackers forming a ring around an abandoned warehouse out on Pier Seven. All assailants are heavily-armed, and are rumored to have a hostage in the form of a high-ranking government official. Some are speculating it could be the President of these United States. SWAT teams are currently being dispatched, but it could be an hour or more before they arrive on--

KATHY

Kind of... but also kind of not. It's like when you touch someone famous, and you never want to wash that hand again. Like that but... all over me.

DONOVAN

I'm awfully sorry Kathy, but I've had a long day and I truly need some quiet time so I'm heading down to the library.

KATHY

No no don't go! I haven't even told you about the robbery. It was three big, ol' fat guys and they were wearing Alfred Hitchcock masks and they hadn't even gotten the money yet when this deep, sensual voice coming from nowhere was like 'Justice is a dish best served... smoked' and then these smoke poofs or whatever rained down and we're all coughing and we can't see and the guys were screaming and firing their guns and his cape whooshed right by me and--

DONOVAN

(putting on his coat)

Kathy! I'm sorry but I could not be less interested. This... man is good-hearted, but clearly an attention-starved buffoon, and the less credence we pay him, the sooner he can stop this shenanigans and try leading a normal life. Till then...

KATHY

I won't talk about him anymore! Tell me about your day! You never talk about your day! I need... I want... please stay?

KATHY grabs his coat and puts something in his pocket.

DONOVAN

I'm sorry, there's too much... energy here. This anxiety...

KATHY

(final seductive attempt)

Let me calm you down. Release some stress.

DONOVAN

I invoke the right set forth at the beginning of our relationship that when either of us needs alone time, we have the right to claim it by any means necessary. I'll see you in a few hours. Try to do something productive and stop obsessing over the Disappearing Poof.

KATHY

Are you the Disappearing Poof?!

Pause.

DONOVAN

No.

DONOVAN kisses her, grabs his bag, and exits.

KATHY

But he saved me! Why can't you ever save me?

(pause)

I think I'm in love with him!

(Beat. She goes to her cupboard and pulls out pickles. She eats them voraciously and talks to herself.)

Jerk. He's the only one who ever invokes that right. Oh Kathy. What a pickle. No one needs that much alone time.

(MORE)

POOF!

KATHY (CONT'D)

When Poofey was at the bank, he definitely lingered on me. Lingered on me, hard. And when that cape whooshed by me, I swear he smelled like Donovan. So let's review, Kathy, you amazing reporter you. Number one: my boyfriend manufactures chemicals that get used in all sorts of tactical espionage actiony stuff. Number two: there's vast periods of time during which he's unaccounted for. He's a modest person and hates it when I talk about Disappearo Man: that's number three. Number four is he left right when he heard about this hostage crisis thing. And five, when The Vanishing Human Poof was at my bank, Donovan was nowhere to be seen. Bonus-- Donovan and Disappearerer both start with D. Could they be the same person? Tonight, with the help of an overpriced Radioshack GPS tracking device, I'm gonna find out. But crap-- what if he is Mister Poof, and is also having an affair? God, superheroes must get a ton of tail. What if he's having sex with everyone he saves? That woman on the Citicorp tower had a huge rack. And that guy on the subway was hung like a moose. Nah- Kathy don't be ridiculous. You've been paranoid before, and he's always been faithful. I trust him. I do. Okay, let's go find him! Get amped! I'm gonna catch him doing superhero stuff, and he'll trust me, love me, marry me, and with me, make lots of super babies!

She exits.

BLACKOUT

END OF SCENE

SCENE 2

The streets of the city, late at night. We hear cars, horns, sirens, etc.

DONOVAN crosses the stage.

DONOVAN

(on his cell phone)

I'm already coming. Establish a perimeter just outside the crisis and get prepped. I'll be right there.

After some time, KATHY enters, cell phone in hand and practically skipping. As she speaks and crosses the stage, she travels through several city locations.

KATHY

--and if he is, maybe I can join him! We could be like... The Disappearing Duo! Or maybe I can be... fish-girl or something. Cause of my webbed-feet. But nah... I gotta get in shape first. I could start doing yoga again. I bet I still remember some gymnastics. I could be like the girl who kicks the dinosaur in Jurassic Park 2! But I don't want him to feel like I'm being overbearing. One week. If I can do yoga for one week and remember some gymnastics, then I get to reward myself by suggesting to him that we team up as Donovan's Dynamic Disappearing Duo. Then we do missions together, and he could also go on solo missions sometimes since I'll need time to plan the wedding, and pretty soon we can retire together and have those super-babies. Though being a pregnant superhero could be really empowering! But no, no NO-

KATHY trips and falls down. She lifts up the clothes we most recently saw DONOVAN wearing. She pulls out the GPS tracker she put in his coat earlier. KATHY gasps.

I was right. This is friggin' awesome! It all makes sense now-

POOF!

A creak is heard from a nearby catwalk and KATHY spies the shadowy whoosh of MISTER DISAPPEARERER.

KATHY (CONT'D)

Oh my God that was him. Honey! Honey! It's okay I know! Library my ass, poof man!

She chases after him.

KATHY (CONT'D)

(singing and dancing)

Following my boyfriend, watching him parkour, he's Superman and I can't, believe I didn't see it before! Gonna make some crazy love, lots of leather and tights. Super sexy boyfriend, solving crime all night. He's super crazy awesome, this is what I sang, then he'll come back to me at night and pulls out his big ol'-

Lights fade to black as she makes her way off stage.

BLACKOUT

END OF SCENE

SCENE 3

A back alley with a dumpster. We hear the distinct sounds of police, gunshots, and helicopters nearby. It's clear we're not far from the hostage crisis. We also hear grunting.

From the audience's view, we see that MISTER DISAPPEARERER is behind the dumpster in a tight black suit, no pants on, goggles, a bandana, a mask that covers his entire head, and a cape spread wide. His voice is deep, mysterious, over-dramatic.

DONOVAN is hidden by his cape.

MISTER DISAPPEARERER

Awww I needed this... yeahhh... make it disappear! Make it reappear! Make it disappear, make it halfway appear--

DONOVAN

Shut up! I hear someone.

MISTER DISAPPEARERER

Fuck you, I'm almost there.

DONOVAN

No you have to go. The poofs are in the bag. Just go.

MISTER DISAPPEARERER

Ah come on... five more minutes.

More gunshots are heard, and KATHY enters panting, ecstatic. She sees MISTER DISAPPEARERER from the waist up, but not DONOVAN.

POOF!

MISTER DISAPPEARERER (CONT'D)

You!

KATHY

Donovan!

DONOVAN

Fuck!

KATHY

Don't look at me like that. I figured out what's going on.

MISTER DISAPPEARERER

What... what are you talking about... young miss?

KATHY

(approaching him)

Honey, you can end this silly charade. Stop doing that silly superhero voice and come here. I'm not mad. I get why you lied.

DONOVAN

You are... referencing which lie in particular?

KATHY

There you are sweetie! I knew it was you!

While it is clear to us that MISTER DISAPPEARERER and DONOVAN are different people, MISTER DISAPPEARERER gesticulates when either voice is heard. KATHY is convinced both voices are coming from the same person.

DONOVAN

Kathy, please don't come any closer.

KATHY

Why, Donovan?

POOF!

DONOVAN

I've... set up a perimeter. There are poof bombs rigged to go off if anyone gets within a six foot radius of me.

KATHY

What are you doing back there?

DONOVAN

An experiment. A poof-power experiment that you must not see.

KATHY

Are you getting ready to go to that hostage crisis thing?

DONOVAN

Ah. Yes. Yes I am. Please don't tell anyone.

KATHY

Donovan you can trust me! Fuck, you can show me. I'm not mad you lied to me about being The Human Poof.

MISTER DISAPPEARERER

(imitating DONOVAN)

Mister Disappearerer!

KATHY

Sorry.

DONOVAN

That's okay.

KATHY

I understand the importance of secrecy and why you kept this from me. I remember The Dark Knight. The second actress who played Batman's girlfriend blew up. And didn't something happen to Mary Jane in the Spider-man comics?

DONOVAN

He snaps her neck accidentally.

MISTER DISAPPEARERER

(softly)

That was Gwen Stacy.

POOF!

DONOVAN

I mean, that was Gwen Stacy, but yes. I'm protecting you.

KATHY

God! Donovan! This is so amazing. Y'know I was thinking that since I have webbed feet and am about to start yoga again, maybe I could also become a superhero and we could fight crime together!

DONOVAN

Um...

MISTER DISAPPEARERER

Abso-fucking-lutely!

KATHY

You don't have to answer right now. Let me do some yoga first. But first, first, first, how's bout we get back to the apartment and, y'know, celebrate?

DONOVAN

No! Love-making is a drain on my faculties at this critical time. There is much crime to fight tonight and it needs to be... fought.

MISTER DISAPPEARERER

Hard.

DONOVAN gives a small moan.

KATHY

Oh of course! I meant after the hostage thing. Look, I know you need to get going-- sounds like it's getting intense over there-- but I just want you to know I am absurdly horny right now. This whole superhero thing? Huge turn on.

DONOVAN

I understand. But there is a code I must follow. A way.

MISTER DISAPPEARERER snickers.

POOF!

KATHY

(approaching)

Just a quickie? I don't mind doing it behind a dumpster.

DONOVAN

No Kathy don't!

KATHY

Tell me where the poof bombs are and I'll jump over them! I have so much friggin' adrenaline right now!

MISTER DISAPPEARERER

If you go home right now, I promise that every night for the next month will be the wildest night of your life. I'll wear this incredible suit. I'll show you my secret stash of poof bombs, including Cinnamon-Scented-Poofs and even Roofie-Poofs.

KATHY

You have Roofie-Poofs?

MISTER DISAPPEARERER

Fuck yeah I do. So you run along home and next time you see me, we're going to have mind-blowingly super sexy sex.

KATHY

There is literally a tsunami in my pants. Come home soon!

She picks up his clothes, gives a big whiff of them, and starts to leave.

DONOVAN

Leave my clothes please.

KATHY

For tonight-- promise me you're going to play out exactly the thing that I talked about earlier. With coming in through the window and the incense poof and the tongue stuff?

MISTER DISAPPEARERER

Absolutely. I prom-

POOF!

DONOVAN, almost nude, stumbles out
from the dumpster toward KATHY.

DONOVAN

No! Kathy I'm so sorry but... this.

KATHY stares dumbstruck.

MISTER DISAPPEARERER

Fuck, Donovan. What the hell?

DONOVAN

Kathy this is-- it's recent. I used to just get him supplies,
like Q in 007. But then he started insisting on... more. He
said he couldn't fight crime with a full pair o' bullocks.

MISTER DISAPPEARERER

Oh please, you were begging for it.

DONOVAN

Please say something.

KATHY is frozen.

MISTER DISAPPEARERER

Why'd you screw this up? I was so close...

DONOVAN

I wasn't going to dress up like that and do all the things
you were promising.

MISTER DISAPPEARERER

I would have done it for you.

DONOVAN

A, I'm not going to let you have sex with my girlfriend you
sick fuck. B, you're not bi like I am.

MISTER DISAPPEARERER

I would have thought about you.

DONOVAN

Have you lost your senses?

POOF!

MISTER DISAPPEARERER

(to KATHY)

By the way, you're welcome for saving you.

DONOVAN

Shut up Rick.

MISTER DISAPPEARERER

Don't tell her my secret identity!

DONOVAN

What, she's going to figure out who you are from just 'Rick'?

MISTER DISAPPEARERER

You said she's a reporter!

DONOVAN

She's not a CSI: Miami computer.

MISTER DISAPPEARERER

I'm still so fucking horny. Look, Donovan's "girlfriend," if you're not going to say something, can you leave?

DONOVAN

Fuck you Rick.

MISTER DISAPPEARERER

(at KATHY)

And why can't you idiot reporters settle on one name for me?

DONOVAN

No one knows what to call you because you stopped wearing your chest patch with your title.

MISTER DISAPPEARERER

It chaffed my nipples.

KATHY

Donovan... I...

MISTER DISAPPEARERER

Ugh. Boring. Lunch tomorrow for a nooner. My balls feel like grapefruits, but... what're you gonna do. To the hostage crisis!

MISTER DISAPPEARERER sets off a poof-bomb. When the smoke clears, he and KATHY are gone. DONOVAN is alone. He stares to the distance as the sirens and gunshots ring louder and we fade to...

BLACKOUT

END OF PLAY

POOF!