

Now THAT Is One HORRIBLE Stage Manager

Wow – what happened here? Due to a props department mix-up, an actor was doing a suicide scene with a real knife instead of a fake one. Luckily, he wasn't killed, but this qualifies as a bit more than a simple mistake, wouldn't you say? Perhaps I'll think twice about offering to stage manage anything in the future – apparently there's a lot at stake. And for you actors who read this, how much trust do you have in your props people? And how much will you trust them after reading something like this?

From Time.com

by Adam Smith

Try this for an Agatha Christie plotline: performing on stage inside Vienna's Burgtheater, one of Europe's oldest and grandest, an actor takes a knife to his throat in his character's desperate attempt at suicide. As audience applause fills the opulent theater, blood pours from the actor's neck. But something's not right. Buckling and staggering his way off stage, the actor collapses to the floor. That's because the knife, and the harm that it's done, are both tragically real. Unfortunately for Daniel Hoevels, a 30-year-old actor from Hamburg, those pages from a murder-mystery came to life last Saturday night during a performance at the Burgtheater of Mary Stuart, Friedrich Schiller's play about the wretched life of Mary Queen of Scots. Rushed to the nearby Lorenz Bohler hospital having sliced through skin and fat tissue but thankfully not his main artery, Hoevels was fortunate to survive. "Just a little deeper," said Wolfgang Lenz, a doctor who treated him, "and he would have been drowning in his own blood."

The police investigation into the calamity points more to a foul-up than foul play. Viennese police say they're not

probing the possibility of attempted murder; press reports had speculated a "jealous rival" could have had a hand in Hoevels' injury. Instead, investigators are focusing on possible negligence within the props department of Hoevels' Thalia Theater ensemble. According to local media, the company picked up the knife in Vienna to replace one brought from their Hamburg base that was then found to be defective. One possibility: that props staff forgot to blunt that new blade, which, police say, still had the price tag on it.

Hoevels himself seems to have put the snafu behind him. "I am now absolutely fine again," he told local media, "but I will always for the rest of my working life have a strange feeling about this scene." After reprising the role Sunday, albeit with neck bandaged, Hoevels headed back to Hamburg Monday in preparation for his role in Goethe's *The Sorrows of Young Werther*. In that play, the long-suffering title character winds up shooting himself in the head. Someone might want to double-check the gun.