

Contemporary Literary Characterological Writing Example

Excerpted from John Grisham's, *The Client*, New York: Doubleday, 1993, pp. 21-22.

THE SHOES WERE SHARK, and the vanilla silks ran all the way to the kneecaps where they finally stopped and caressed the rather hairy calves of Barry Muldanno, or Barry The Blade, or simply The Blade, as he liked to be called. The dark green suit had a shine to it and appeared at first glance to be lizard or iguana or some other slimy reptile, but upon closer look it was not animal at all but polyester. Double-breasted with buttons all over the front. It hung handsomely on his well-built frame. And it rippled nicely as he strutted to the pay phone in the rear of the restaurant. The suit was not gaudy, just flashy. He could pass for a well-dressed drug importer or perhaps a hot Vegas bookie, and that was fine because he was The Blade and he expected people to notice, and when they looked at him they were supposed to see success. They were supposed to gawk in fear and get out of his way.

The hair was black and full, colored to hide a bit of gray, slicked down, laden with gel, pulled back fiercely and gathered into a perfect little ponytail that arched downward and touched precisely at the top of the dark green polyester jacket. Hours were spent on the hair. The obligatory diamond earring sparkled from the proper left lobe. A tasteful gold bracelet clung to the left wrist just below the diamond Rolex, and on his right wrist another tasteful gold chain rattled softly as he strutted.

The swagger stopped in front of the pay phone, which was near the rest rooms in a narrow hallway in the back of the restaurant. He stood in front of the phone, and cut his eyes in all directions. To the average person, the sight of Barry The Blade's eyes cutting and darting and searching for violence would loosen the bowels. The eyes were very dark brown, and so close together that if one could stand to look directly into them for more than two seconds, one would swear Barry was cross-eyed. But he wasn't. A neat row of black hair ran from temple to temple without the slightest break for the furrow above the rather long and pointed nose. Solid brow. Puffy brown skin half-circled the eyes from below and said without a doubt that this man enjoyed booze and the fast life. The shady eyes confessed many hangovers, among other things. The Blade loved his eyes. They were legendary.

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