

THE CLOSER

"FATAL RETRACTION"

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TELEPLAY BY: WENDY WEST & ROGER WOLFSON

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TRANSCRIBED BY: RAY MCGILLIVRAY

The Closer

"Fatal Retraction"

ACT I

FADE IN:

INT. MEDICAL EXAMINER'S OFFICE

DR. CRIPIN examines a body that was given to him. POPE, FLYNN, TAYLOR, are all in the room awaiting Dr. Cripin's ID on the body of LISA BARNES

MEDICAL EXAMINER

Well, gentleman, It's her.

CUT TO:

BLACK TITLE SCREEN: THE CLOSER

POPE (O.S.)

Dear god.

TAYLOR (O.S.)

Are you sure?

CUT TO:

INT. MEDICAL EXAMINER'S OFFICE

TAYLOR

Why didn't she ever show up before this?

MEDICAL EXAMINER

Look at her teeth, she got meth mouth. A full on addict she's probably happy people thought she was dead.

POPE

Go get chief Johnson please.

TAYLOR

A jury convicted Bill Croelick of killing this woman years ago.

POPE

Right well the jury was wrong apparently because she died this morning of an overdose.

TAYLOR

Listen to me sir, we know Croelick is a murderer. He's burned to death at least one other girl.

POPE

For which he was tried and found not guilty, get to the point.

TAYLOR

My point is, if you release this information to the press and Johnson can't get a confession out of him, Croelick walks out of prison a free man, not because he's innocent of murder, but because we misidentified his victim.

POPE

What's the alternative?

In walks BRENDA and GABRIEL

TAYLOR

(Whispering to Pope)

Do us a favor, send this girl to the crematorium as a Jane Doe. Keep Croelick in prison. Don't damage the reputation of our department to let a killer go free.

POPE

(Whispering to Taylor)

Here is the favor I will do for you. I will forget you said that.

(Walking over to Brenda)

Sorry to keep you waiting Chief. About three years ago we found a body badly burned in a car...Lieutenant Flynn..

FLYNN

Through dental records we ID'd the vic as Lisa Barnes. I worked the case, arrested a freak, Bill Croelick, has a history of barbecuing his victims.

TAYLOR

He sits on death row as we speak.

BRENDA

So what's the problem?

POPE

The problem is this is the Lisa Barnes who Croelick was convicted of burning up three years ago.

MEDICAL EXAMINER

She died this morning at eleven o'clock of methamphetamine related heart failure.

BRENDA

So a man's been sitting in prison for the last three years for killing a woman...

GABRIEL

Who died six hours ago.

POPE

Yup.

BRENDA

So who did Bill Croelick kill?

POPE

That's what we need priority homicide to find out, before we have to release him.

INT. POPE'S OFFICE

Pope opens the door for Brenda...

BRENDA

Thank you.

POPE

Here's how it'll work. Janet Powell, the deputy DA who prosecuted Croelick will call his defense counsel, who in turn will immediately petition the court for a writ of habius corpus.

BRENDA

And the D.A. won't appose that motion?

POPE

Well, they'll do what they can, but the conviction was based on tying Croelick to Lisa Barnes, not just through his MO but, also through her physical and personal characteristics.

BRENDA

Everybody's sure he killed somebody?

POPE

Yeah, but he went to great lengths to make sure we couldn't ID the vic. Cut off her hands and feet, set her on fire, twice, and pushed her off a cliff in a car.

BRENDA

Sounds thorough, in order to arrest Croelick again, we have to connect him to the young lady he actually murdered, and we may only have forty-eight hours before he walks? You want me to take a dry run at him?

There's a knock at the door, In walks SARA, Chief Pope's secretary

POPE

Maybe, but this guy's not your run of the mill psychopath. Thanks Sara. He never said a word after he was arrested, never spoke at his own trial, listens intently to his attorney and he has been studying law in prison.

BRENDA

Well I'll be extra polite.

POPE

Yeah and extra careful too, Please, your a...kind of his type.

INT. MURDER ROOM

Brenda, Flynn, TAO, PROVENZA, SANCHEZ, DANIELS, DA POWELL, DR. EASTON all sit in the murder room going over the Croelick case and the body found this morning.

BRENDA

Deputy DA Powell here prosecuted Mr. Croelick she can explain some of the mistakes made in the original ID process. Oh and Ms. Powell if you could start with a few words about the body we found yesterday.

DA POWELL

Lisa Barnes grew up in Fresno, moved to the miracle mile area of LA in ninety-eight, married in ninety-nine, somewhere in the next year she picked up a meth habit, her husband reported her missing in two thousand.

FLYNN

In June 02 we discovered the burnt out shell of a stolen car. Inside of it was the charred remains of Lisa Barnes.

BRENDA

Of who you thought was Lisa Barnes.

DA POWELL

It was a reasonable assumption.

FLYNN

I found Lisa's drivers license at the scene.

BRENDA

Did you run the dental records of the corpse through the missing person's database?

DA POWELL

No but we had...

BRENDA

Lieutenant Tao, would you mind compiling a list of all the missing females in the Las Angeles area during the crime.

TAO

You got it.

FLYNN

There was no need to run a search,
we had a positive ID.

BRENDA

Made by whom?

DA POWELL

Doctor Nelson Graydon, LA County's
chief forensic odontologist. He
checked three of the corps's...

BRENDA

Sergeant Gabriel could you arrange
a chat with Mr. Graydon please.

GABRIEL

Get right on it.

BRENDA

Thank you, so sorry to interrupt,
go on Ms. Powell.

DA POWELL

And on top of everything else Lisa
was Croelick's type. Blonde, small,
pretty in that common sort of way,
in fact she looked very much like
the other woman I prosecuted him
for killing.

FLYNN

In two thousand we...

BRENDA

I'm sorry who's we?

FLYNN

It was my case too. Another woman,
burnt out car, also missing her
hands and feet. Petite, blonde, a
little on the trashy side. Anna
Tandy. We had no leads, and then a
witness came forward.

DA POWELL

Our witness knew Anna, but more
importantly she knew Anna's
boyfriend.

BRENDA
Bill Croelick?

DA POWELL
Our witness placed Croelick at the car the night Anna was murdered and afterwards when he was drunk he confessed to her what he had done.

FLYNN
Unfortunately four days into the trial..

BRENDA
Your witness overdosed before she could testify.

DA POWELL
After our witness died I was left with a lot of circumstantial data, deposition and Dr. Easton, who did Croelick's psych evaluation.

EASTON
I want to stress the fact that my testimony in the case of Lisa Barnes was based on facts that have changed. I was not a part of this inquiry.

BRENDA
Understood Dr. Easton.

DA POWELL
Myself, Detective Flynn, Dr. Easton, Croelick's acquittal made us sick.

FLYNN
With Lisa Barnes we had another chance to put him away.

PROVENZA
So the doctor here had two chances to profile Croelick?

EASTON
I did. I even wrote about him.

INT. BRENDA'S OFFICE

Dr. Easton shows Brenda the book he wrote about Croelick and others...

EASTON

"Criminals and Their Victims: A Cycle of Violence", Croelick made an interesting chapter. I kept visiting him after the first trial I think it flattered him.

BRENDA

Do you think Croelick killed our Jane Doe?

EASTON

Well based on the similarities to his prior crime I'd say yes.

BRENDA

Please.

EASTON

Both murders demonstrated the hallmarks of a highly organized, sexually aggressive killer and though I'm not an expert on this, they found his fingerprints on a stainless steel lighter on the scene.

Looking at the candy Brenda is holding

BRENDA

Oh I'm sorry, don't mean to be rude. You want some? They're sugarless?

EASTON

My wife buys them for our children thanks. I eat them by the carton.

BRENDA

Well, I only have about five minutes before I interview this guy so I should probably get to the basics. What is he?

EASTON

Borderline sociopath, who knows the difference between right and wrong. Smart, I kind of feel for him. The patterns so formulaic.

(MORE)

EASTON (CONT'D)

His father started dropping acid when Croelick was five years old, ended up killing Billy's mother in front of him by holding her face down on a lit stove.

BRENDA

She was blonde too? His mother?

EASTON

She was, and so's every woman he's ever dated. And they're all drug users too. Croelick's way of reuniting the family.

BRENDA

And uh, after the parents died?

EASTON

He went from foster home to foster home, becoming ever more violent, for example he forced one families cat to swallow an M-80 fire cracker. The cat burst into flames. A year later he beat a young child with a hot curling iron, which earned him two years of juvenile detention, and after his release he branded his name onto a girls forearm during intercourse. He'd become sexually aroused by the smell of burning flesh and fantasizes about it. And of course he smokes, three packs a day, used to have my office fumigated after his visits.

GABRIEL

And he's here, waiting.

INT. OBSERVATION ROOM

Flynn, Easton, Provenza, Powell and Tao are looking at the camera, watching Bill Croelick being handcuffed to chairs by officers.

FLYNN

God this guy makes me sick. Why is she questioning him without an attorney?

PROVENZA

Declined counsel. I marandized him on the way in from the elevator.

DA POWELL
Well that's a break at least.

INT. HALLWAY

Sargent Gabriel and Brenda are walking towards interrogation where Bill Croelick awaits. They stop outside the door.

GABRIEL
Need a wing man?

BRENDA
No thanks, I think I'll have more
luck on my own.

GABRIEL
Ok. (She turns and takes off her
sweater)
Are you sure you wanna do that?

BRENDA
I don't know.

INT. INTERROGATION ROOM

Brenda walks in as BILL CROELICK is being handcuffed to a chair.

BRENDA
Well, hello William.

Bill Croelick looks up and is startled by the angel he sees in front of him. His demeanor immediately changes as he is aroused by Brenda.

CROELICK
Oh it's Bill. It's just plain Bill.

BRENDA
Alright just plain Bill, I'm just
plain Brenda, LAPD.
(Looking at the officers
in the room)
I think Bill and I will get along
better just one on one so, if y'all
don't mind...thanks. Well this is a
turn of events huh? I wasn't here
three years ago, but I heard you
pled not guilty to the murder of
Lisa Barnes. Turns out you were
telling the truth.
(MORE)

BRENDA (CONT'D)

But you know what, I think you do know who burnt to death in that car just plain Bill and I was wonderin if you'd do me a favor and tell me her name? Because even though you don't want to see Ms. Powell again, she's agreed that if you ID the victim, She'll make the capital part of your sentence go away. You won't have to face the death penalty any more. You'll even be eligible for parole. So all you have to do is tell me the truth.

CROELICK

Since you asked me so nice and all, and since your just, oh your just cute as a bug ain't ya. Uh, I'll tell you the truth.

EXT. INTERROGATION ROOM WATCH ROOM

CROELICK (O.S.)

If you wanna hear it?

INT. INTERROGATION ROOM

CROELICK

In twenty-eight hours I'm gonna be one-hundred percent free and drunk off my ass and there isn't one damn thing that you or anyone else can do about it, and you know why should I talk to you when Katie Couric sent me a fruit basket.

INT. INTERROGATION WATCH ROOM

CROELICK (O.S.)

(On the monitor)

And Diane Sawyer said her husband might direct a story on my life.

EASTON

Extraordinary, somethings different about him.

FLYNN

Yeah it's who he's talking too.

INT. INTERROGATION ROOM

CROELICK

I do wanna thank you, very much,
for your southern hospitality.

He stand up thrusting the steel chair up onto the table,
startling Brenda and bringing Gabriel and the other officers
back into the room. Brenda stares as Croelick leans in...

CROELICK (CONT'D)

See I knew you weren't alone. Cause
you know cute girls like you, your
never alone. But I do so hope we
meet eachother again.

(Whispering)

I never forget a face.
It was wonderful to meet you just
plain Brenda.

Brenda stands up and shakes his hand, looking him straight in
the eye..

BRENDA

Likewise.

They stare eachother down..

END ACT I

ACT II

INT. BRENDA'S OFFICE

In the office sitting patiently are KIM and ROY BARNES.
Brenda walks in...

BRENDA

Hello. I'm afraid I'm the bearer of some, well unique news. Uh, Mr. Barnes, it seems that your first wife, Lisa, she's dead.

ROY BARNES

Well, uh, yes, I know that.

KIM BARNES

Excuse me, is that the emergency you called us in to explain. You wanted to tell Roy that Lisa is dead.

BRENDA

Again. I mean she wasn't murdered three years ago, she just died yesterday of a drug overdose.

KIM BARNES

Roy, Tell me you didn't know about this

ROY BARNES

Um, no of course I didn't know about this alright I spoke at her funeral for god sakes, I mean or somebody's funeral. Um, I don't, who's funeral was it? Good god.

KIM BARNES

Did you pay for that funeral? We should get reimbursed for that.

ROY BARNES

Um look , can I uh, see her body?

KIM BARNES

No way are you seeing her, why would you even ask that?

ROY BARNES

Kimberly hold on, It's just that, I just want to make sure that it's really her. I just don't wanna keep going through this again.

BRENDA

I promise this the absolutely last time that Lisa will die. And we already have a positive ID on the body so we don't need you to see her again, but what we do need...

ROY BARNES

I'm sorry, Its just that I was so sure last time you know I was at the trial and if it wasn't her, where she been all this time?

BRENDA

Eventually we'll be able to answer all of those questions, but for right now we are on a bit of a time constraint. And what I need is for you to give me back...

KIM BARNES

You wanna swap bodies?

BRENDA

Well the good news is Lisa's in much better shape.

KIM BARNES

Well we don't want it.

ROY BARNES

Kimberly honey...

KIM BARNES

Don't honey me. You have always been obsessed with that woman, so help me god I am not going through another burial and three years of mourning. We are happy with the way things are.

BRENDA

Actually, you know, Roy was still married at your wedding.

ROY BARNES

Wait, look my wife Lisa was declared dead ok. I have the death certificate.

BRENDA

So do I. Mines a little more recent and it could cause all sorts of legal problems.

(MORE)

BRENDA (CONT'D)

You might need to get your marriage annulled, have another ceremony, or you could swap the dead girls and call it even. What d'ya say?

KIM BARNES

My god. That woman has never been anything but trouble. Sign it and lets just get it over with.

Roy reluctantly signs the paper.

ROY BARNES

Can you uh, at least tell me who it was that I buried three years ago?

BRENDA

Oh I wish I could.

INT. MEDICAL EXAMINER'S OFFICE

MEDICAL EXAMINER

Doesn't this look like fun? Huh?
Did some of her fall over there?

BRENDA

Sargent Gabriel a little help please.

Gabriel leans down and picks up a piece of bone and sets it on the examining table.

MEDICAL EXAMINER

Now you expect me to identify, this, what do we call this, Jane Doe?

GABRIEL

Uh, the body formally known as Lisa Barnes.

BRENDA

Dr. Cripin We are under a tremendous, time pressure here. We've only a few hours left to ID the body. Maybe she should see a dentist.

The ME looks at her then reaches over and grabs the bottom jaw of the burnt up corpse and dislodges the bottom jaw. He hands the jaw to Gabriel.

MEDICAL EXAMINER

Hold this.

GABRIEL

Uh...

MEDICAL EXAMINER

I've got a specimen jar right here.

INT. MURDER ROOM

A specimen jar holding the bottom jaw of the corpse is placed on a table. In the room are all the detectives, DA Powell, and DR. GRAYDON.

GRAYDON

I wasn't asked to identify the victim. I was asked to confirm the identity we already had.

PROVENZA

So you had an excuse to be sloppy.

Brenda notices Provenza eating her sugarless candies.

GRAYDON

Croelick had been held for almost two days Flynn told me, that if I didn't confirm the identity of his victim within forty-five minutes...

FLYNN

Hey asshole. No one asked you to lie.

GRAYDON

I didn't lie. It's not my fault.

BRENDA

No finger pointing please. Facts...

GRAYDON

Lisa Barnes was a meth user. Do you know what that does to your mouth.

TAO

Teeth take on the consistency of ripe fruit.

GRAYDON

Right, so I wasn't surprised when we I had only three good molars to work with.

DA POWELL

It's consistent with Lisa Barnes having meth mouth.

GRAYDON

Or being roasted at fifteen-hundred degrees. Here's the x-rays of the three teeth in the jar. And here are the only x-ray's I had at the time of Lisa Barnes correlating molars. Now see how similar the roots of the teeth are? The height of the bone, the absence of filling, with Flynn pushing me.

BRENDA

What would be the benefit of more time doctor?

GRAYDON

Well for one thing. I might have found Lisa Barnes more recent x-rays.

FLYNN

They look alike to me.

GRAYDON

Yeah well they're not. You see how white that area of the tooth is?

BRENDA

Uh huh.

GRAYDON

It's a brand new filling. Now you compare that to the teeth in the jar...

BRENDA

No filling.

DA POWELL

Jeeze.

GRAYDON

I had a deal with HBO. It's a documentary deal. I would appreciate another chance to identify who these teeth actually belong to.

BRENDA

Thank you so much for the offer doctor, but I think I'd like a second opinion.

FLYNN

Uh, chief, Graydon's the only forensic dentist in LA County.

BRENDA

I can't base another case on his assumptions. We'll find someone else.

FLYNN

Before Croelick walks, we have maybe an hour left..

BRENDA

I can tell the time Lieutenant thank you..

FLYNN

Thousand bucks says I'm gonna be wearing this bullshit.

INT. HALLWAY BEHIND BRENDA'S OFFICE

F.B.I. Agent FRITZ HOWARD is walking down the hallway towards the rear door of Brenda's office. He knocks and Brenda opens the door holding under her chin the teeth in the jar and a stack of manila folders.

BRENDA

Oh, Thanks for hurrying. Oh don't you look handsome today. Ok, we know our Jane Doe was white, early thirties, probably dropped out of sight about three years ago. These forty missing woman fit the profile, all I need from you is an expert to go over these dental records, match them with these teeth and tell me which missing person she was.

FRITZ

Ok I'll bight. Whats wrong with your odontologist?

BRENDA

He's the reason we got the wrong ID in the first place.

FRITZ

Brenda how many cases has this guy worked on?

BRENDA

Oh I don't wanna talk about that right now.

FRITZ

No, No, No, cause if this is true if it gets out that your guys just makin it up as he goes along, Croelicks not the only criminal who's goin free. Every defendant from every trial this moron testified at can sue to have their cases re-opened.

BRENDA

I know. Thats why, shhh, shhh ok?

FRITZ

Well Shh I can do, but fast. I don't know. I'll try. Hey should I stop in there and wave at the guys?

BRENDA

No you should hurry and help, please hurry, Thank you, hurry.

GABRIEL (O.S.)

Chief?

INT. BRENDA'S OFFICE

Gabriel sticks his head inside Brenda's office looking for her.

GABRIEL

Chief?

Brenda opens the rear door to her office.

GABRIEL (CONT'D)

You have a visitor.

In walks Bill Croelick. Dressed in a black leather jacket, jeans, and a smirk from ear to ear.

CROELICK

I just wanna say goodbye, and how nice it was meeting you just plain Deputy Chief Brenda Leigh Johnson.

A chill runs down her spine hearing him say her full name and wondering how he knows it.

CROELICK (CONT'D)

Whoa, got yourself a nice big office, a bunch of men workin for ya. Its not at all how I thought of you before. It's sort of a turn off, not every fantasy comes true huh.

BRENDA

Why don't you sit down. Take a load off. Love to talk to you.

Croelick laughs..

CROELICK

I'm sorry, my lawyers waiting for me downstairs. But some other time maybe.

BRENDA

Oh, count on it.

He turns and leaves her office.

INT. MURDER ROOM

As he walks by Lieutenant Flynn smiling, he holds out his hand and Flynn stands as if to cause harm and Croelick pulls his hand back.

I/E. BRENDA'S OFFICE

We see Croelick walking away as police officers close in on him as he walks out of the murder room, he quickly turns and waves at Brenda, then turns and walks down the hall. Brenda takes a look at Flynn who looks disgusted that Croelick is walking out.

INT. POPE'S OFFICE

Taylor and Pope are discussing Brenda and her investigation of Bill Croelick and Lisa Barnes.

TAYLOR (O.S.)

The one time we actually need Ms. Atlanta to get a confession, she blows it.

POPE

Here's what I'm wondering, Flynn basically got his promotion off this case. Do you think he might have worked the evidence? I'm beginning to think he did.

TAYLOR

That's because she's treating him like a criminal and our experts too. If she had spend as much time trying to ID the vic as she did running down the people that work for her, maybe this guy Croelick wouldn't be out on the street.

POPE

Or if you had handled this case correctly the first time, but that's the past. I'd like to solve the problem we have now.

TAYLOR

Getting this guy Croelick is going to take teamwork, but how are we going to assemble a team with Chief Johnson in charge. The FBI hates her. The DA hates her. The forensic specialists hate her. Everybody wants Croelick back in prison, but nobody's gonna help her do it.

POPE

Alright well, how would you suggest I change that dynamic?

TAYLOR

Commander Scott retired. Reduce Chief Johnson to his rank. You will send a clear and unambiguous signal that you are aware of the issue and that we here at LAPD are serious about correcting.

POPE

That's not just a reduction in rank, that consigns her to civil service. I don't even know if that can be done. And I think it creates more problems then it solves.

INT. MURDER ROOM

In walks Dr. Easton...

EASTON

I want police protection. I want my wife and kids in protective custody right now.

BRENDA
Whoa wait, calm down.

EASTON
Croelick called me on my private cell and told me I should start looking out for myself.

GRAYDON
He called you too? You see that I am not the only one

BRENDA
Wait a minute. How can you be so sure it was Croelick?

EASTON
He identified himself. This is how this lunatic got off the first time by eliminating anyone who can testify against him. My family, my kids...

Just the Flynn's cell phone rings.

FLYNN
Great, How much you wanna bet?
Hello?

Flynn motions that it is Croelick.

BRENDA
Lieutenant Tao, trace it.

FLYNN
Yeah, yeah, you listen to me you little...

BRENDA
Keep him on the line.

TAO
We got a call coming in on Lt. Flynn's cell.

FLYNN
Just wait one second...great he's gone.

Tao motions they got nothing

TAO
Too short to trace.

BRENDA

It's alright if that's real harassment we can have him arrested.

GABRIEL

I'm already on it Chief.

BRENDA

Lieutenant Provenza, I want protective custody for Dr. Graydon, Easton and Lieutenant Flynn.

FLYNN

Whoa, whoa, whoa, Listen I've got all the police protection I need right here.

BRENDA

Alright, I want to know what was said by him and by you two. Now in my office, now please thank you.

EXT. BRENDA'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Brenda is walking up to her front door searching for the keys in pocketbook and not paying attention. When she reaches the front door she hears a can opening and turns to see Bill Croelick on her front porch. She drops the groceries she is carrying...

BRENDA

The hell you doin here?

CROELICK

I'm unarmed.

BRENDA

Get down. Get down. Put your face on the ground.

CROELICK

It's alright I know the drill.

She pulls out her cell phone and begins dialing all the while noticing that Bill is looking at her.

BRENDA

Don't you look at me.
(On the Phone)
Sargent Gabriel, I found Croelick, on my porch, be nice if we had some company. Thank you.

She closes the cell phone and puts it in her jacket pocket.

CROELICK

Well you were looking for me. Here
I am.

END ACT II

ACT III

INT. BRENDA'S HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Brenda stand with weapon drawn and Croelick sits in a dining room chair handcuffed.

BRENDA

How'd you get my address?

CROELICK

Well haven't you heard, I'm a criminal. But don't worry. As it turns out your not my type. Though I admit to liking a fiery woman, your a little on the bossy side.

BRENDA

If you've got something private to say to me you best get to it.

CROELICK

Yes ma'am. Alright so uh someone called my attorney saying I made harassing phone calls, including one to a detective and that the police were looking for me, and since I didn't want to end up, you know, dead. I thought I'd save the trouble and turn myself in.

BRENDA

What makes you think you'd end up dead?

CROELICK

Flynn framed me for murder three years ago with Deputy DA Powell and Dr. Easton so clearly I'd say they'd fell better if I ceased to exist.

BRENDA

Maybe I would too.

CROELICK

Oh, but you don't know me as well. Anyway I don't know what they said to you, but uh, I told them who I was in each call and asked them only what as individuals they thought should happen to liars. Cause that's what they did. They all lied about me.

(MORE)

CROELICK (CONT'D)

Dr. Graydon obviously. Dr. Easton's profile, my psychological pathology was made up out of thin air. He was bought and paid for by Powell and she put me on death row and that's a seriously unhappy place to be, just plain Brenda.

BRENDA

Lots of folks seem to think you belong there.

CROELICK

So um, so sit down and I'll explain to you why you shouldn't be trying to put me to death for the murder of um...who is it by the way?

BRENDA

Hurry up. Your gonna hear sirens any minute.

CROELICK

Well if you look at the crime for which I was acquitted, that girl that...

BRENDA

Anna Tandy.

CROELICK

Whatever. Anyway she had uh, there I go again, Its a technical term for making a fire faster, hotter um...

BRENDA

An accelerant.

CROELICK

An accelerant, right, mmm. She had an accelerant poured in her mouth before she was lit up. Do you know why someone would do that? Pour an accelerant down someone's throat?

BRENDA

No.

CROELICK

Well from what I've heard, It makes
bodies light up like shooting
stars, because of the oxygen in the
lungs, and when they die, fire and
light flow out of their bodies,
like they were jack-o-lanterns on
Halloween.

Brenda is chilled by the description and look in Bill's eyes
as he tells the tale.

CROELICK (CONT'D)

Now I bet every tax free dollar
from the settlement the city is
sure to give me that your extra
crispy Jane Doe was not cooked from
the inside.

Just then sirens can be heard in the distance...

CROELICK (CONT'D)

Uh oh, times up.

BRENDA

What kind of accelerant is that?
Without killing the victim before
the fire starts?

CROELICK

Well I'd only be guessing, but,
how'd you like a couple of triple
martinis straight up with a strong
dash of pure grain alcohol.

In the background we hear the officers coming to the doorway.

GABRIEL (O.S.)

Chief?

Just the Sargent Gabriel and Lieutenant Flynn enter her home
with weapons drawn.

GABRIEL (CONT'D)

Chief? Chief?

CROELICK

Andy hi, good to see you again.

GABRIEL

(To Brenda)

You hurt?

BRENDA
Nope. I'm fine, I'm fine.

GABRIEL
We sent our dentist a couple of
uniforms this afternoon...

BRENDA
Yeah doctor Graydon?

FLYNN
He wasn't there. Vanished.
(Grabbing Croelick)
Lets go. And where were you? You
sack of human waste.

Throwing Croelick into the post.

CROELICK
Oww.

FLYNN
Where were you? Huh?

CROELICK
You know if my finger prints show
up on a lighter in the dentist's
pocket...

FLYNN
Shut up.

CROELICK
I'd be suspicious if I were you.

FLYNN
I said shut up.

Brenda stands there shocked by what she has just heard.

INT. MEDICAL EXAMINER'S OFFICE

The ME and Brenda are going over the autopsy report on Anna
Tandy.

MEDICAL EXAMINER
If the fire had originated inside
of your Jane Doe there would be
evidence of a lung exploding.

BRENDA
Well is there?

MEDICAL EXAMINER

No. Whatever was left
disintergrated. Now but this Anna
girl, a few years ago, her lungs
exploded.

BRENDA

Dr. Cripin, Do you think you could
take another look around inside?

MEDICAL EXAMINER

Tell me Chief Johnson. Where
exactly do you see an inside?

They both look at the bones on the table.

INT. BRENDA'S OFFICE

A knock at the rear door to her office. She closes the blinds
and answers the door.

BRENDA

Aww.

FRITZ

Hey.

BRENDA

(Mumbling)

Do you mind? Wait a minute, just
over here.

He pulls her close for a kiss. She breaks away after a minute
while grabbing the folder out of Fritz's hand.

BRENDA (CONT'D)

Is this my Jane Doe?

FRITZ

So much for foreplay. Any luck on
this end with your missing dentist?

BRENDA

No signs of foul play. We think he
may have skipped town.

She looks at the file, then looks at Fritz with a shocked
look on her face.

FRITZ

What? I promise that's your girl
and she was first reported missing
in June two thousand two.

BRENDA
She looks almost exactly like Lisa
Barnes...

INT. MURDER ROOM

BRENDA
Maybe we're about to get lucky.

PROVENZA
Drum roll.

He places a set of fake wind up teeth onto the desk as a joke
to Flynn. Flynn doesn't appreciate the humor.

BRENDA
Here's hoping this picture rings a
bell with someone. Her name is??

EASTON
Samantha Jones.

BRENDA
Could we have the lights please?
Dr. Easton you know this woman?

EASTON
She's chapter eight in my book. I
testified at her rape trial.

BRENDA
And who was the arresting officer
on the case?

Everyone looks at Flynn.

INT. POPE'S OFFICE

Pope walks into his office where Brenda, Taylor, Flynn, sit
and wait for Pope. He is obviously agitated at some news he
has received...

POPE
Ok, what's going on here? Explain
it to me, Croelick has nothing to
do with this Samantha Jones at all?

FLYNN
No, no, Samantha was raped by some
other scumbag. And we had a hell of
a time getting her to testify
against him. I mean the woman was
unstable, needy.
(MORE)

FLYNN (CONT'D)

I think Easton even talked to her parents, like told them she was about ready to have a meltdown. I mean hey, hey, you ask some of these chicks about it and they would rather be murdered than sexually assaulted. Samantha said that its in Easton's records. Some woman just can't deal with rape and when she disappeared we all thought she had committed suicide.

BRENDA

Well I suppose she could have lifted Bill Croelick's stainless steel cigarette lighter making sure his prints were still on it, made a copy of Lisa Barnes's license, stolen a car, pushed it off a cliff, choppin off her hands and feet while discarding them on route, after settin fire to herself. Maybe she trained for her suicide at the Cirque Du Soleil I don't know. But it seems much more reasonable that she was murdered. And someone planted the evidence, after the fact, doesn't it?

TAYLOR

Actually chief, it is possible listening to this from a purely objective point of view that this girl Samantha did commit suicide and that someone who was familiar with the Croelick case, Croelick's MO and understandably eager to put this maniac away might have made her death look like...

FLYNN

Hey. What is this?

TAYLOR

I'm just sayin there's a lot of mistakes here Andy. And I just think Internal Affairs should investigate this whole situation.

POPE

(To Brenda)

You agree?

BRENDA

No. No I don't. Not yet, I'd like to have a private discussion with Lieutenant Flynn, if you don't mind.

INT. CONFERENCE ROOM

Brenda and Flynn are in a room discussing a case.

FLYNN

You must be so happy right now, can't wait to see me get ripped apart, god.

BRENDA

You know what, in the general scheme of things, you matter to me about as much as a June bug in July, but if your interested in keeping your job and your rank, you better answer my questions lieutenant and without all the usual crap I have to take from you.

Flynn shrugs his shoulders in defeat.

BRENDA (CONT'D)

Three years ago, Samantha Jones, a rape victim, was murdered in the same way that Bill Croelick kills his victims.

FLYNN

Looks that way.

BRENDA

In another coincidence, Samantha was the same height, weight, and colorin as another missin girl, Lisa Barnes, a drug addict livin on the streets.

FLYNN

Yeah they do look a lot alike. Hey I don't know wether someone wanted to frame Bill Croelick. Or someone wanted us to think that Lisa Barnes was dead, or someone wanted us to misidentify Samantha Jones. Ok?

BRENDA

Someone planted Lisa's drivers license on the scene.

(MORE)

BRENDA (CONT'D)

Did you do that Lieutenant? Did you tamper with the evidence, because you saw a promotion in your future?

FLYNN

No.

BRENDA

I have an audit of your investigation. Eight print packages came back from the crime scene, A through G, seven before the trial, those packages went to the courthouse and H stayed here, why?

FLYNN

It arrived late. The case was over. Look the last package didn't help. They were partials and palm prints.

BRENDA

You mean they didn't match Bill Croelick's?

FLYNN

So the car was stolen. The partials could have belonged to anyone.

BRENDA

The prints were on the car? There were palm prints other than Bill Croelicks on the car? Where on the car?

FLYNN

Over the tail light. SID got to it late, but they weren't material. Look, there was no palm print database back then. And you can't find a criminal with it. You can only match it to someone you already have in custody, what did I do wrong? You tell me?

BRENDA

Get me the tail light off that car. And I want all the copies of the prints from package H and you keep this information completely to yourself Lieutenant, do you understand me? Because that is a direct order.

FLYNN

Yes ma'am.

Brenda turns and heads towards the door.

FLYNN (CONT'D)

Umm, your not gonna move to have me investigated?

BRENDA

No. Get me the print packages off that car, please, thank you.

END ACT III

ACT IV

INT. MURDER ROOM HALLWAY

Sargent Gabriel is leading Kim and Roy Barnes down the hallway towards the interview rooms. Kim Barnes is being her usual annoying self, barking into Sargent Gabriel's ear...

KIM BARNES

We've done what you asked, we changed the bodies, it is costing us a fortune, what Roy went through for that bitch I mean why aren't you questioning her family, her friends? I mean we hated her.

GABRIEL

Well you know as it turns out lots of killers hate their victims, go figure.

ROY BARNES

Wait, wait, your not seriously accusing us of murder are you?

KIM BARNES

That is just ridiculous and unfair.

ROY BARNES

I, I, I,....

GABRIEL

Hey, Hey, Hey, you have the right to remain silent. Why don't you use it. Just for a minute...really. Ma'am inside please. You with me over here.

INT. MURDER ROOM

Brenda walks with Dr. Easton explaining to him what's about to happen and what she needs from him..

BRENDA

Here's what I think is possible, but I have absolutely have no proof, which is a bad place for me to be when goin into an interview.

EASTON

Oh I understand that, but reactions can tell me a lot.

BRENDA

(To Flynn and Provenza)

And we still have Bill Croelick in jail?

FLYNN

Yeah but all his legal study in prison paid off. Technically his phone calls don't rise to the level of harassment. So we're gonna have to let him go.

PROVENZA

Again.

BRENDA

Alright never mind. Dr. You'll be wearin an ear piece when you interview these people and I'll be makin suggestions. So, lets see if this tracks. Roy Barnes reported his wife missing fact.

EASTON

Right.

BRENDA

Heres another fact. Everyone wanted us to think that it was Lisa who died in that car.

EASTON

Right.

BRENDA

She'd been missing for a long time. She was a drug addict. That was very, very possible that she was dead. But Roy couldn't marry until his wife was declared legally deceased. Fact. But I wanna know is if either Roy or Kimberly or both of them together had the ability to plan a murder this complex.

EASTON

And the emotional coolness to pull it off.

BRENDA

Right. And heres the most important thing, I need you to get them to grab a glass of water and leave it in the room when they go. Can you do that?

EASTON

Well probably, but why leave behind the glass?

BRENDA

I need to get their palm prints, but I need to do it legally. Ok...

INT. / INT. INTERROGATION / INTERROGATION WATCH ROOM

BRENDA

Buzz could you turn on the recording equipment in here please as well as the interview rooms?

BUZZ

Yes ma'am.

BRENDA

Thank you. We'll be recording all this. What did you ask me? Oh right, when someone leaves their glass behind deliberately, that means they don't consider it theirs legally and I can take the prints off it, even if I don't have probable cause to ask for it.

TAYLOR

It's the difference between solicitation and entrapment and we don't want to be accused of entrapment.

Brenda hands Dr. Easton an ear piece.

BRENDA

Here ya go doctor. I will be right in your ear,
(Into his earpiece)
tryin hard not to bother you.

GABRIEL

Ok. They're ready for their close-up. Declined counsel on the grounds that their innocent and it's too expensive.

BRENDA

Alright then Dr. Easton could you start with Roy here. Lieutenant Tao you have everything you need?

TAO

Yes ma'am.

EASTON (ON THE MONITOR)

Hello Roy. I'm Dr. Easton.

ROY BARNES

(On the monitor)

Yeah I remember you.

(Off monitor)

Your a psychiatrist. You testified at Lisa's murder trial.

EASTON

But Lisa wasn't murdered, was she?

ROY BARNES

No. I mean I don't know. I mean first they say she was, now she's not, but now I'm here. So...

EASTON

Your upset?

ROY BARNES (O.S.)

Yes!

BRENDA

Offer him a glass of water.

ROY BARNES

Because, I mean, my wife wasn't even killed really.

EASTON

No the victim turned out to be someone named Samantha Jones. Would you like...?

BRENDA

No, No, No, don't ask him.

ROY BARNES

Would I like a what?

EASTON

Would you like to tell me if you'd ever hear of a young lady named Samantha Jones?

BRENDA

Just pour a glass of water for
yourself and one for him.

EASTON

(On the monitor)

Because she looked remarkably like
your ex wife.

(In the room)

And your present one too for that
matter.

ROY BARNES

And?

BRENDA

Put it in front of him. He'll drink
it.

EASTON

There's a thought abroad in the
land that you might have murdered
Samantha because she looked like
Lisa. Because you wanted people to
think Lisa was dead

ROY BARNES

Wait, that's, I'm sorry, that's
ridiculous alright. I had no idea
where Lisa was. I gave up looking
for her long before she ever turned
up dead. I mean....

Roy grabs the glass and takes a drink.

BRENDA

Thank you doctor.

EASTON

And you weren't upset when she
left?

ROY BARNES

(on the monitor)

Oh my god yes. Yes I was, but now I
swear I wish I never even met the
bitch. I mean she totally...

BRENDA

Now ask him if he wants to take his
water with him.

(In Easton's ear)

(MORE)

BRENDA (CONT'D)

And if he says no, head on into the murder room and get ready for your next interview.

ROY BARNES

Lisa didn't used to be that way either, ok, she was a really good person once. She was and...

EASTON

Drugs can do terrible things to people. C'mon, c'mon let me find you some tissues. C'mon, you wanna take your water?

ROY BARNES

No thank you.

EASTON

(on monitor)

Alright lets go then.

Brenda looks back at Lt. Tao and he quickly gets up and heads out towards the interview room.

INT. MURDER ROOM HALLWAY

Dr. Easton is walking Roy to the murder room.

EASTON

You know questions like this can be very stressful.

Lt. Tao comes up and waits for them to go around the corner then enters the interview room that Dr. Easton and Roy just left out of.

INT. MURDER ROOM

Dr. Easton enters with Roy Barnes. Sargent Gabriel awaits them.

EASTON

Why don't you just take a couple of breathes and rest here a second with the...

BRENDA (O.S.)

(In Easton's ear)

Just leave him seated at a desk and head onto to the next interview room.

GABRIEL
 Why don't you take a seat right
 here Roy.

EASTON
 Which way to the a?

GABRIEL
 Uh, it's back down there sir.

EASTON
 Thank you

BRENDA (O.S.)
 (In Easton's ear)
 Move slowly and listen. I've a
 couple questions before you go in
 and see Kimberly.

EASTON
 Ok.

BRENDA (O.S.)
 (In Easton's ear)
 Because while she and Roy both had
 a motive. The murderer had to be
 someone who knew almost exactly how
 Croelick kills his victims. And
 someone who was in a position to
 manipulate Croelick.

Sargent Gabriel comes up behind Dr. Easton and looks at him
 through the doorway. Dr. Easton turns and notices him
 staring. He begins to catch onto what's going on.

BRENDA (O.S.) (CONT'D)
 (In Easton's ear)
 Into picking up a stainless steel
 cigarette lighter so it could be
 dropped later at the crime scene.
 Kind of like you manipulated Roy
 into picking up his glass just now.

Entering the hallway with Gabriel is Lt. Flynn.

BRENDA (O.S.) (CONT'D)
 (In Easton's ear)
 And you did say Croelick smoked a
 lot in your office. Didn't you?
 Someone who knew Samantha Jones..

INT. INTERROGATION WATCH ROOM

The door opens and Lt. Tao enters with the water glass from the interview room. He holds it carefully as to not disturb the outside of the glass where the fingerprints are located. He places the tall clear glass down on its base and begins his examination.

BRENDA

And someone who might have had special clearance to the missing persons database, which you got..

INT. MURDER ROOM HALLWAY

Dr. Easton is in the hallway listening to Brenda in his earpiece lay out just how he might have committed the murder.

BRENDA (O.S.)

(In Easton's ear)
in the first trial of Anna Tandy.

As he listens he realizes that he was the one they wanted and rushes to the interview room.

INT. INTERROGATION WATCH ROOM

Chief Pope kneels down next to Brenda with a worried look on his face, which he normally gets when Brenda acts like this.

POPE

Brenda, do you know what your doing?

BRENDA

I'm closing my case.

TAYLOR

And opening a hundred more.

BRENDA

(To Pope)
Do you want me to stop?

INT. / INT. INTERROGATION ROOM / INTERROGATION WATCH ROOM

The door flies open and Dr. Easton sees that it's his glass they took and not Roy's.

EASTON

Why did you? You tricked me. You used false pretences to.
(On monitor)
What print are you trying to match?
(MORE)

EASTON (CONT'D)

Why are you trying to match my print? There was nothing. What print are you trying to match?

TAO

I have, I have, It's good.

BRENDA

The palm print on the back of the car.

(O.S.)

Where Samantha Jones was in when you pushed her off a cliff.

(In the room)

I warned you doctor. Leave the glass behind and you've..

(O.S.)

Abandoned it. Look you were

(In the room)

The only one who ever said Samantha Jones was suicidally depressed

EASTON

No she was a..

(On the monitor)

She threatened to talk to my wife.

I tried to make the best of it I could. I am not a criminal.

BRENDA

Doctor?

(O.S.)

You have the right to remain silent. Anything you say can and will be used against you in a court of law.

INT. MURDER ROOM HALLWAY

Easton enters the hallway and see's Flynn, Gabriel and Provenza awaiting him. He then bolts past Provenza and into the murder room. Gabriel and Flynn give chase. Lt. Provenza sits down and awaits the end result.

GABRIEL

Hey! Hey! Come here, come here..

FLYNN

Grab that son of a bitch!

There is a bit of a scuffle in the murder room as they chase Easton around. Then finally there is a crash and they capture him.

Provenza, who was sitting in a chair with his hands behind his head suddenly gets up to join in on the festivities.

GABRIEL

Give me you hands! Give me your hands!

FLYNN

I'll kill you, you son of a bitch.

GABRIEL

Get him up. Get him up. Alright.
Alright. Lieutenant? Lieutenant?
Alright. Lieutenant.

Gabriel finally breaks Flynn's grip on Easton.

EASTON

I demand an attorney.

PROVENZA

Yeah, well, I'll get you a phone book.

Provenza cuffs him.

GABRIEL

Lets go. Pretty quick, for a little guy.

Just then Captain Taylor walks up behind Lt. Flynn.

TAYLOR

Well that's one arrest that's really gonna cost her.

FLYNN

You want to gloat to someone your close to? Grab a mirror Captain. I'm applying for permanent transfer to her squad.

Captain Taylor stands there in embarrassment.

INT. PARKING GARAGE

Brenda, exhausted from the day, walks to her car. Suddenly someone speaks and startles her a bit.

CROELICK

My, my, my, what a lot of trouble you caused for yourself. And all for me.

(MORE)

CROELICK (CONT'D)

Imagine Dr. Easton, having an affair with a rape victim and then murdering her just to keep it quiet. What a monster. Wouldn't you say?

BRENDA

I don't believe in monsters.

CROELICK

Tell me plain Brenda, do you smoke after sex?

The question catches her off guard. Croelick notices and backtracks a bit.

CROELICK (CONT'D)

It's an old joke. You know how it goes. Do you smoke after sex?

BRENDA

I don't know. I never looked.

CROELICK

Well lets just leave it that way, shall we? Not looking? Lets just leave things the way they are. And have a night cap on the way home why don't you. A little triple martini. In my honor.

Croelick laughs and walks away an whistles leaving Brenda angry. We pan in on Brenda's Face.

THE END