

READ HIM HIS RIGHTS

by
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BLACKNESS

The theme music from the old "Dragnet" TV show begins.

Lights up down stage. Standing in the pool of light is SERGEANT JIM FLENNER. He is clean cut and wears a suit and tie.

FLENNER

I'm Sergeant Jim Flenner, L.A.P.D.
Been on the homicide squad nearly
twenty years. Decorated. Got three
walls full of citations. Medals.
Honors. Promotions. You name it.
Just for bringing in the bad guy.
Just for doing my job. I'm a good
cop.

Lights out on Sergeant Flenner. Lights up on the opposite side of the stage on SERGEANT ANDY OAKTON. He is dressed in badly fitted pants with the fly open. His shoes are mismatched. He wears a brightly colored bow tie on his loudly patterned short sleeved shirt.

OAKTON

I'm Sergeant Andy Oakton, L.A.P.D
homicide squad: attention deficit
disorder unit. I have trouble
remembering names, clean my gun
with the bullets in it, absently
run over pedestrians in the squad
parking lot, and I occasionally wet
my pants for no apparent reason.
I'm a bad cop.

Lights down. An announcer is heard.

ANNOUNCER

This Fall, justice has a new
name...and a whole new set of
issues. It's "Flenner & Oakton:
Good Cop/Bad Cop." This weeks
episode..."Who The Hell Is Your
Barber?"

Lights up on Flenner and Oakton in the squad room drinking coffee from paper cups.

FLENNER

Well, Oakton, you did it again.

OAKTON

How's that?

FLENNER

I told you to organize a line-up,
didn't I?

OAKTON

Sure, so?

FLENNER

So you only got one guy.

OAKTON

Problem?

FLENNER

You bet.

OAKTON

How so?

FLENNER

Well it's like this, see. Say
you're going to one of those Irish
dance concerts. You know, just for
a laugh.

OAKTON

Sure, I get ya'.

FLENNER

But there's only one dancer.

OAKTON

Only one?

FLENNER

Only one.

OAKTON

Say, what's the deal?

FLENNER

And the dancer's doing his best,
you know. Getting a laugh.

OAKTON

Working hard, sure.

FLENNER

But if he's gotta dance, say, nine
or ten times.

OAKTON

Wow, that's a lot.

FLENNER

Not so funny. Kinda runs out of gas.

OAKTON

Sure does.

FLENNER

But now picture a whole line, say five or six dancers behind him.

OAKTON

Sure, I get ya'.

FLENNER

It's a lot funnier then, huh?

OAKTON

I'm pissing down my gaberdines just thinking about it.

FLENNER

Made my point?

OAKTON

Sure thing. Five or six is a better lineup than one.

They nod at one another. Music up. Flenner and Oakton walk downstage to the audience.

FLENNER

At eight fifteen we got a call.
Homicide in the upscale La Pollo
Loco neighborhood. We paid a visit.

OAKTON

I locked my keys in the squad car.

Music up. Lights up on stage. MRS. GREEBLY, the neighbor, is at the crime scene. She is mousy looking with glasses and a scarf on her head. She speaks in the same, staccato monotone as the cops.

MRS. GREEBLY

It was terrible, I tell ya,
terrible.

FLENNER

Calm down, ma'am. Start from the top.

MRS. GREEBLY

Well, last night I heard a noise,
see. Like breaking glass.

FLENNER

Breaking glass?

MRS. GREEBLY

Breaking glass. Then a scream. I
came over and looked through the
window, and she was dead.

OAKTON

Your neighbor?

MRS. GREEBLY

Cut up into fifty pieces. The
killer left a message in blood on
the wall.

FLENNER

(Reading.)
"Just Kidding."

OAKTON

How's that?

FLENNER

The message on the wall. Says "Just
Kidding."

OAKTON

Huh, ironic.

FLENNER

How's that?

OAKTON

She wasn't left alive to get in on
the joke.

Music up. They nod at one another. Lights down. The two cops
walk downstage again.

FLENNER

It was the same M.O. as the other
murders. The April Fools Killer.
Disemboweled their victims with
gardening implements, only to say
"the jokes on you" after it was too
late.

OAKTON

I got my keys out of the squad car.
Then I accidentally swallowed them.

Music up. Lights up on the squad room. Oakton carries a purse.

FLENNER

Nice. You got shoes to match?

OAKTON

I found this at the crime scene.
It's got a driver's license, credit cards, state I.D and a pair of bloodied gardening shears. Thought I'd bring it down to the lost and found.

FLENNER

(Taking the purse.)
Oakton...

OAKTON

Yeah?

FLENNER

You're a really bad cop.

Lights Down.

FLENNER

(To audience.)
The April Fool's Killer left one little piece of evidence behind. I gave the owner of this little faux alligator handbag a call...and waited.

OAKTON

I got my car keys. Now my poop's all bloody.

Music up. Lights up on the squad room. MARY PARSNIP enters. Her hands, forearms and elbows are covered in blood. There's blood stains on her clothes as well.

FLENNER

Can I help you, maam?

MARY

Yes, I came for my purse.

Oakton hands her the purse.

OAKTON
You'll have to sign for it.

FLENNER
Maam, could you have a seat? We'd like to ask you a few questions.

MARY
I'll be late for my country line dancing class.

FLENNER
Just take a minute.

She sits. Oakton holds out his gun.

OAKTON
Would you like to hold my gun?

FLENNER
Stow it, Oakton.

Oakton pockets his gun.

FLENNER
Maam, at roughly eight o'clock last Monday night, were you tearing into the blood soaked flesh of one Sandra LaBute with a pair of finely honed Fiskar weeding and light pruning shears?

OAKTON
Standard questions, maam. We have to ask everyone.

MARY
Hmm, let's see. I don't think so. Last night I was having Chinese.

FLENNER
Is that right.

MARY
Moo Goo Gai Pan at Flop Sings.

OAKTON
Me likey-likey.

FLENNER
Flop Sings on Ventura?

MARY
No, Santa Monica.

OAKTON
Okay, you can go.

FLENNER
One more thing. Would you care to explain the five quarts of human blood and excrement you have splattered on your blouse, undergarments and upper limbs?

MARY
Hangnail.

OAKTON
Happens to everybody.

FLENNER
Oakton, got a sec?

They walk downstage.

FLENNER
So, what do you think?

OAKTON
That hangnail's a tough thing. Hurt like the Dickens. Say Flenner, answer me this.

FLENNER
Yeah?

OAKTON
You think a girl like her and a guy like me could...you know?

FLENNER
You're a few chromosomes short of a full strand, pal.

They return upstage. Mary is holding a severed arm.

FLENNER
Maam? Care to explain the severed arm?

MARY
Some guy said I could have this.

FLENNER
Some guy? What guy?

MARY
Gary...the pizza guy.

OAKTON
Generous guy, that Gary.

She puts the arm in her purse and stands.

MARY
Well, if there are no more questions, I'll just be going.

OAKTON
I'll call you a cab.

FLENNER
Not so fast, maam.

OAKTON
Flenner, what gives?

FLENNER
Mary Parsnip of 1919 LaJoya Boulevard, I'm placing you under arrest.

OAKTON
What the...

MARY
Say...

OAKTON
Huh?

FLENNER
For the grisly murder of Sandra LaBute and fifteen other similarly executed body choppings by the homicidal maniac better known as The April Fool's Killer.

MARY
What gave me away?

FLENNER
Flop Sings on Santa Monica doesn't serve Moo Goo Gai Pan on Mondays. I stop in at Flop Sings regularly for the Peking Duck and sex with their illegitimate, underage daughter.

OAKTON
That's good cop work.

Mary stands and faces Oakton.

MARY
Well Sergeant, I guess I'm going up
the river till I'm a little old
hatchet murderer. Too bad, I think
you and me might have made a pretty
good team...romantic-wise, I mean.

OAKTON
Really?

The only emotional line in the play.

MARY
No, dick-head. April Fools!

She pulls the shears from her purse and stabs at him. Lights
out. Music up.

Flenner stands downstage.

FLENNER
Well, another murder put to bed.
It's not easy keeping the peace in
the City of Angels. But it's a job.
A job I do well. Cause I'm a good
cop.

Oakton enters wearing a bandage on his ear.

OAKTON
You ever think I'll be as good a
cop as you, Flenner?

FLENNER
I doubt it, Oakton.

OAKTON
How's that?

FLENNER
There's three things you need to be
a good cop, Oakton.

OAKTON
They are?

FLENNER
Bravery...

OAKTON
Yeah.

FLENNER
Dedication...

OAKTON
Yeah.

FLENNER
And a sharp mind.

OAKTON
Oops, rule me out.

FLENNER
I already did.

OAKTON
I'm just glad I found my car keys.
They smell like a sewer.

FLENNER
And I'm just glad you got over your
Turrets Syndrome.

OAKTON
Fuck you.

BLACK OUT

THE END