

## ACT I, Scene 1

(NEWSCASTER appears in a spotlight.)

## NEWSCASTER

The following program contains scenes of graphic violence.  
Viewer discretion is advised.

(Spotlight dims to black. A beat, then...<BLAM!> a jarring musical shot sounds as two figures appear, lit by a flashbulb \*FLASH\* of light. The figures are frozen in a macabre tableau: one figure slices the throat of another. Darkness, a beat, then, <BLAM!/\*FLASH\*> a second tableau: a sinister figure drags a limp body by the ankle. Darkness, a beat, then, <BLAM!/\*FLASH\*> a third tableau: an attacker swings an axe at a screaming victim. Darkness, a beat, then, <BLAM!> all three tableaux are illuminated. The figures turn and look directly into the audience. **1. Why the Hell Are You All Still Here?**)

## CHORUS

WHY THE HELL ARE YOU ALL STILL HERE?  
DON'T SAY WE DIDN'T WARN YOU  
WHEN THE STORY MAKES YOU SICK

## MELBA

THE FELLA CLEARLY SAID

## MALCOLM

THERE'D BE GRISLY SCENES AHEAD

## CHORUS

YOU FIGGER THAT A TRIGGER WARNING  
OUGHT TO DO THE TRICK

WHO CAN TELL WHY YOU'RE ALL STILL HERE?

## GERRY

NEED SOME DRAMA TO DISTRACT YOU FROM THE  
BLEAK AND BLACK ABYSS?

BLANCHE

D'JA COME TO RECONNOITER?

CAL

GET ROPEDED IN BY A FRIEND?

CHORUS

COMPELLED BY SCHADENFREUDE?

LORDY, HELP ME COMPREHEND

WHO'D DELIBERATELY SUBJECT THEMSELVES TO THIS?

(**1b. Lucy's Mind.** As if in answer, LUCY appears: dishevelled, late 30s, wearing ratty pyjamas. Lucy's living room is in disarray. There are tax forms and receipts piled on every surface, a whiteboard filled with numbers and equations, and a vintage television set with rabbit ears. LUCY works feverishly.)

NEWSCASTER

The killing spree continues in Barnabas Bay. A third body was discovered this morning - dismembered and reconstructed into a set of grotesque novelty lamps.

LUCY

What's that?

NEWSCASTER (a perfect echo, as if in response)  
A set of grotesque novelty lamps. Two fishnet stocking leg lamps, a pair of less conventional fishnet arm lamps, and a fifth creation which, based on crime scene photos, is an affront to both human decency and home decor. Police are at the scene.

SETTING:

The scene of the crime.

(Chief of Police, Mae SHEPHERD enters. She strides past the police tape, held at either end by CHORUS members. Officer CAL Sutter tails mousily behind. One look at the gory scene and he immediately turns to leave.)

CAL

Nope!

SHEPHERD

Show a little backbone, Sutter.

CAL

I think I see one by the radiator.

SHEPHERD

You were trained for this.

CAL

I got my certificate through correspondence.

(SHEPHERD examines the leg lamp shade.)

SHEPHERD

Hold on--

CAL (panicking)

I've given out four speeding tickets--

SHEPHERD

Get over here.

CAL

Last winter, I reupholstered the chairs at the station.

SHEPHERD (reading)

9-8-12-4...Another number cipher. Damn it!

## **2. Lousy at Sums**

SHEPHERD (Cont'd)

I WAS TOP OF MY CLASS IN FORENSICS  
I KNOW FINGERPRINTS  
LIKE THE BACK OF MY HAND  
SO SUE ME  
IF I'M LOUSY AT SUMS

GIVE ME A GUN  
AND WATCH ME SHOOT OUT THE SUN  
BANG!  
GIVE ME A ROW OF DIGITS  
AND I'M ALL THUMBS

SHEPHERD (Cont'd)

I SWEAR, IF SOME  
BEAUTIFUL-MIND-GOOD-WILL-HUNTING-  
RAIN-MAN MATH EGGHEAD ROLLED IN AND  
MADE SENSE OF THIS MESS,  
I'D GIVE 'EM A SLOPPY KISS ON THE  
GODDAMN MOUTH!

CAL

Not exactly by the book...

SHEPHERD

Get me some light in here.

(CAL pulls the cord on the leg lamp. It lights up.  
SHEPHERD stares at CAL. CAL realizes the impropriety of  
what he's done, and slowly - without breaking SHEPHERD's  
withering gaze - yanks the cord again.)

NEWSCASTER

With no solid leads, the police are completely in the dark.

(Lights out in sync with Newscaster's "...in the dark."

SETTING:

LUCY's Living Room.

LUCY (mumbling)

Six...seventy-one....seven, five...seven, thirty...

CHORUS

SIX SEVENTY-ONE  
SEVEN, FIVE, SEVEN, THIRTY

(There's a knock at the door. Lucy doesn't notice.  
Another knock - more insistent. ALDO enters: late 30s,  
frazzled, carrying his four-month-old daughter, Izzy.)

ALDO

Hey! What the hell?

LUCY

What are you doing here? I thought we were meeting for brunch.

ALDO

We were! I was holding our table for an hour and a half!

LUCY

What time is it?

ALDO

I think the waiter spit in my coffee. It tasted a little... something extra. (*wincing*) Ah! My shoulder. Here.

(HE passes Izzy to Lucy. LUCY awkwardly holds the baby with arms outstretched.)

LUCY

Wait - No! - What? (*beat, then unimpressed*) Hello. Elizabeth.

ALDO

You're a natural. (*Beat*) Next time you go down a rabbit hole, set an alarm.

LUCY

It's been busy. I have three returns due on Monday.

ALDO (*surveying Lucy's notes*)

Nah. That's not what this is.

(ALDO picks a figurine off the counter.)

LUCY

Can you not? That's a limited edition Crime Scene: Coroner's Report collectible.

ALDO

How old are you?

LUCY

Don't remind me.

ALDO

Happy belated, forty-face.

LUCY

Another step towards the gaping abyss of nothingness.

ALDO

Easy - I'm two months behind you.

LUCY

You're happily married with a kid, and a great job.

ALDO

My job's not that great.

LUCY

What have *I* accomplished? *(beat)* Do you mind--*[takin her]*

ALDO

You exposed that Valedictorian voting scandal in undergrad.  
Your fantasy bobsled team is undefeated. After meals out, you  
never need a calculator to figure out the tip.

LUCY

I'm the toothpick of the swiss army knife.

ALDO

Did Amber wine and dine you?

LUCY

We're...no longer together. Can you--? *[take her]*

ALDO

You broke up? *(LUCY remains frozen, arms awkwardly  
outstretched)* Oh my God, fine! Give her here. *(LUCY gratefully  
returns the baby.)* I'm sorry about Amber.

LUCY

It's nothing.

ALDO

What happened?

LUCY

She vanished. Like a *wraith*. Look.

(*LUCY hands ALDO her phone.*)

ALDO

Five missed calls. From me.

LUCY

Read Amber's last message. Everything's normal, then Ffft!  
Gone. I thought she'd been abducted. Or mangled in a car  
wreck. I phoned her mom.

ALDO (reading the texts)

Ummm...she's clearly trying to end things.

LUCY

*Barbara* had to tell me the relationship was over.

ALDO (still reading)

I'd call this a textbook break-up message.

LUCY

Amber was a *sphinx* who spoke in *riddles*!

ALDO

I liked her.

LUCY

I've moved on.

ALDO

I can see that.

LUCY

Three murders in Barnabas Bay...

ALDO

*Murders?!?* That's what this is about?

LUCY

There's a connection. The numbers...My brain is itchy.

CHORUS

SIX SEVENTY-ONE

ALDO

Hey! I got you a present.

*(LUCY snaps out of it. ALDO hands Lucy a gift bag. LUCY withdraws a vintage denim fanny pack.)*

Remember? Grade Five? The Fannypals! In retrospect, that was a terrible gang name. I can see that now. Look! I bought myself one too! I've already put dipes and wipes in mine.

LUCY

I suppose I could hold my taser in this.

ALDO

Taser?

LUCY

I've been living on my own since I was nineteen.

ALDO

That loft with the raccoon babies.

LUCY

No, that was my second place. The loft had silverfish.

ALDO

Hello, by the way! *(ALDO hugs Lucy)* I've hardly seen you since Izzy was born.

LUCY

I noticed.

ALDO

Look inside the fanny pack.



(LUCY pulls out two gift cards.)

LUCY (reading)  
Placid Pelican Earth Spa. What's this?

ALDO  
It's a new eco-retreat in Kentville. Hella's out of town until Thursday. You never use your vacation days. I thought we could get away. I'd kill for a massage. Let me text you the address.

LUCY  
The address...

ALDO  
There's actually something important I want to talk to you about.

LUCY  
The address!!!

ALDO  
Shhh! She's finally sleeping.

LUCY  
I've been focusing on dates! Fool that I am! Tax codes! Home addresses! Eight oh one!

(The CHORUS reappear. The marimba underscoring resumes.)

CHORUS  
EIGHT OH ONE

LUCY  
Which would mean... (*SHE flips through her notes*)...thirty-two?

CHORUS  
THIRTY TWO

LUCY

Thirty two! And could it be?...no! One twenty-seven?

CHORUS

ONE TWENTY-SEVEN.

LUCY

One Twenty-Seven! This is unbelievable! I, Lucy Treyer, have single-handedly cracked the Barnabas Bay murders!

ALDO

*(beat)*...Huh?

LUCY

Remember the first victim's address?

ALDO

Of course not.

LUCY

801 Erikson. How was the judge killed?

ALDO

Wasn't he stabbed with a bunch of pens and pencils?

LUCY

Correct. 801 Erikson. What's line 801 on a personal tax form?

ALDO

How would I possibly--?

LUCY

Stationary Expenses. Pens and pencils.

ALDO

Okay....?

LUCY

Second victim: Thirty-three McKercher Lane. Line 33 on a tax form? Cleaning supplies. Victim number two--

ALDO

--was force-fed a mop. But that's gotta be a coincidence.

LUCY

Victim three. 127 Ralston. Line 127? Lighting expenses.

ALDO

She was the one made into those awful lamps.

LUCY

Precisely!

**(3. Tax Murderer)**

ALDO

What a minute...

YOU MEAN TO TELL ME THERE'S A  
...TAX MURDERER  
TERRORIZING THE TOWN  
I HEARD YOU RIGHT? THERE'S A  
....TAX MURDERER  
GLAD I WAS SITTING DOWN

LUCY

I'm going to be famous.

ALDO

YOU MADE A CONNECTION  
EVERY COP ON THE CASE  
SOMEHOW HAPPENED TO MISS  
IF NOTHIN'S CERTAIN  
BUT DEATH AND TAXES  
HOW CAN YOU BE CERTAIN 'BOUT THIS?

LUCY

I've been an accountant for *sixteen* years. The pattern's so obvious once you see it. Pack your bags!

ALDO

What?

LUCY

You said Hella's gone for a few days?

ALDO

Yeah. She pumped so much breast milk her nipples were like--

LUCY

Aaah! Stop! NO! You want a change of scenery? Let's go to Barnabas Bay!

ALDO

Are you kidding me?!? That's way too dangerous! Just tell the police your theory.

LUCY

They wouldn't take me seriously. I need proof. Don't worry - we'll be discreet. A little recon. Maybe a stakeout!

ALDO (glumly)

But - what about the eco-retreat?

LUCY (not listening)

We'll solve the case from the shadows! *Then* we'll hand it over.

ALDO

...birchbark foot scrub?... organic peat mud bath?...No?

LUCY

We're gonna solve a murder! The two of us!

(Izzy wakes and makes a sound. **4. Tax Murderer - Outro**)

ALDO (resigned)

The three of us.

LUCY &amp; ALDO

WE'RE GONNA CATCH US A  
....TAX MURDERER

LUCY

IT'S LIKE A DREAM COME TRUE

LUCY &amp; ALDO

WATCH YOUR BACK MISTER  
TAX MURDERER

YOU'VE GOT SOME KARMA COMIN' TO YOU

ALDO

IF I BOUGHT A BAT TO FIGHT OFF  
A KILLER IN THE STREET,  
WOULD I CALL THE BAT A WRITE-OFF,  
AND KEEP THE RECEIPT  
FROM THE STORE WHERE I BOUGHT IT  
IN CASE I  
SHOULD NEED IT  
YOU KNOW - FOR AN AUDIT?  
...FORGET IT.

LUCY

Forgot it.

LUCY & ALDO

WE'VE GOT A LEAD  
AND THE KILLER DOESN'T HAVE A CLUE  
NOW THE TAX MURDERER'S  
GONNA PAY  
WITH INTEREST DUE