

[2.13]Retirement Is Murder

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A Note On The “Weeping Lotus” Murder...{Mike Lee}

It's a familiar dramatic device for a retired cop to keep mementos of the one case he never solved, and Martin is no exception.

The name “Weeping Lotus,” naming the victim in his case after a flower, is an obvious homage to the celebrated “Black Dahlia” murder in 1950's Los Angeles. The Dahlia was a struggling actress named Elizabeth Short, who was kidnapped, murdered, and dismembered in secret, then the parts of her body were strewn over an abandoned lot. To this day the killer has never been identified.

James Ellroy's “The Black Dahlia” is a highly readable pseudo-history of this horrible crime - just bear in mind that he makes up his own culprit.

Martin's “Weeping Lotus” murder is referred to intermittently through Season One and the preceding episodes in Season Two but this episode apparently shows that the writers felt they had carried this gag as far as it would go.

References:

- [\[1.04\]](#) I Hate Frasier Crane
 - [\[1.06\]](#) The Crucible
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Transcript {David Langley}

Act 1

RETIREMENT IS MURDER

Scene 1 - Frasier's Apartment

Fade in. Frasier is gazing out the balcony door, drinking sherry. Martin and Daphne are at the table wit a bunch of files.

Frasier: Ah, yes. Another beautiful Saturday night. The moon is full, the city lights are twinkling, lovers steal kisses in the

park... and here, Chez Crane, my father and his assistant sit hunched over twenty year-old photographs of a murdered hooker. [*raises his glass*] Life is a banquet.

Daphne: I enjoy looking at your father's old case. Just because you have no plans tonight, don't spoil our harmless fun. You know, there's nothing we Brits like better than a grisly murder and a nice hot cup of tea.

Martin: Uh, listen Daphne, I got a lot of work to do here, so if you don't mind...

Daphne: Oh, excuse me. I didn't know I was bothering you.

Martin: Oh, I'm sorry, it's this damn case. I feel like the answer to who murdered Helen is right here. I just can't see it.

Frasier: Dad, you're obsessing. You stare at these grisly pictures day after day, night after night. Come on, why don't we go out and see a movie?

Martin: No, thanks.

Frasier: Let's go get a pizza.

Martin: Nah.

Frasier: Let's get tattooed. [*Martin thinks about it, then shakes his head.*] Oh! This is ridiculous. It's a beautiful night and I'm not going to miss it. I'm going to go out and take a long walk and I'm not going by myself.

Eddie runs out with his leash.

Martin: He likes the rhododendrons on the north side of the park.

Fade out.

Scene 2 - KACL

Fade in. Frasier is on the air with Marjorie.

Marjorie: [v.o.] And I just wanted to thank you, Dr. Crane. Because of your advice, I've conquered my fear of heights. I, I took it slowly, gradually going higher and higher, until here I am, right now, having lunch at the top of the Space Needle!

Frasier: Marjorie, congratulations. I am so proud of you.

Marjorie: I mean, when I think of how you... [*she screams loudly*]

Frasier: God, what's wrong? What happened?

Marjorie: I just looked down.

Frasier: Well, Marjorie, don't do that. Look at your luncheon companion, look at your menu, but don't look down. You're only feeding your fears when you do that.

Marjorie: Maybe I wasn't ready for a window table.

Frasier: No, no, no. Of course you are, of course you are. You can beat this thing.

Marjorie: You're right, I can, Dr. Crane, if I just... [*she screams again*]

Frasier: Do not look down!

Marjorie: No, I didn't. My check just came.

Frasier: Oh, well, Marjorie, we're just about out of time now. Call me tomorrow, will you? Well, that's it for today folks. Stay tuned for Bob "Bulldog" Briscoe. This is Dr. Frasier Crane, KACL 780, talk radio.

He switches off, Bulldog comes in, wheeling his trolley.

Bulldog: Hey, Doc.

Frasier: Bulldog.

Bulldog: I caught the first hour of your show today. If that chick whining about sexual harassment called my show, I'd say "Listen doll, you don't want people snapping your bra,

don't wear one."

Frasier: Brilliant in its simplicity.

Bulldog: [to Roz] Hey, how's this sound, hardbody: You, me, Sonics, Nicks, tonight.

Roz: Sorry Bulldog, but I'm already going. I have season tickets.

Bulldog: Oh, we can still get together afterwards.

Roz: Only if I smash into your car in the parking lot.

Bulldog: Why is it the ones who want it the most put up the biggest struggle?

Roz: Because, when I do finally give in, I want us to enjoy it all the more.

Bulldog gives her a kind of hopeful look.

Roz: That is, if I'm not too distracted by the fact that every man on Earth has died. [*stalks off*]

Bulldog: Almost had her there.

Frasier: Yes, it could have gone either way.

Bulldog: Ah, well, with my pull I can get those anytime I want.

He tosses the tickets down, Niles comes in.

Niles: Hello, Frasier.

Frasier: Oh, oh, Bulldog, have you met my brother Niles? Niles, this is Bulldog Briscoe.

Niles: Oh, oh, oh, just the man I want to talk to. As a sports expert I'm sure you can tell me why none of the local media carry the Ivy League squash standings.

Bulldog: [*bursts out laughing*] Whoa! Another one just like you. Some gypsy put a curse on your family? Well, I gotta run. See you later, Miles.

Niles: It's, it's Niles.

Bulldog: Like it matters.

Niles: Well, you ready for our boys night out at La Cochon Noir?

He puts his hand down and accidentally honks Bulldog's horn.

Frasier: Yes. But Niles, I've been wondering: Would you mind if I asked Dad to join us?

Niles: Remember the last time we took Dad to a four-star restaurant? He had a miserable time. The restaurant lost a whole star.

Frasier: Yes, it's just I'm trying desperately to come up with some way to get him out of the house. He's off on one of his "Weeping Lotus" binges again.

Niles: We've tried distracting him before. We've taken him everywhere from the arboretum to the zen garden. [*thinks*] Wait a minute, the zen garden is at the arboretum. Good lord, is it possible we've only taken him one place?

Frasier: [*spotting the tickets*] Oh, Niles, Niles, this is it, this is it. The basketball game!

Niles: Basketball?

Frasier: Yes, yes, I can get another ticket from the promotional department. Oh, this is perfect. Just imagine how excited Dad will be to go to a game with his two sons. My God, it's the archetypal male bonding ritual!

Niles: Couldn't we just go into the woods, kill something and have done with it? [*off Frasier's glare*] All right.

Frasier: Come on Niles, look, it'll give you a chance to see the Tacoma Dome.

Niles: [*as they walk out*] I've already seen it. They had a home show there, once. You know, that's where I got that idea to stencil a grape arbor on our Wilkes dresser.

Frasier: I'm a Teamster compared to you.

Fade out.

STRANGERS IN A STRANGE LAND

Scene 3 - The Tacoma Dome

Fade in. Niles and Martin are in their seats. Niles is looking around.

Salesman: Peanuts! Peanuts here, peanuts!

Martin: Niles, the game is that way.

Niles: I know, I'm just calculating our escape routes in case of fire or urban unrest. Maris taught me that.

Martin: You love her, don't you?

Niles: Yes I do. Why?

Martin: It just helps to know that.

Frasier comes over with snacks.

Frasier: Here we are: one beer, and two glasses of wine. I'm sure it's good, Niles, they opened a fresh box when they poured it.

Niles sniffs the glass, reels, and puts it down without drinking.

Martin: What are you guys doin' drinkin' wine at a ball game? You should be drinkin' beer.

Niles: Dad, I only drink beer when I eat German food. Which is to say, never. [to Frasier] Did you notice where the facilities are when you were up?

Frasier: Yes, Niles, it's just as you feared: communal urinals in the mens room.

Niles: Oh, fine. What am I supposed to do about my shy kidneys?

Frasier: So, Dad, aren't these great seats, huh?

Martin: Yeah.

Frasier: What's the matter with you?

Martin: Uh, nothin'. Let me borrow your pen a minute, will ya?

Frasier: [handing it over] What for?

Martin: Well, I was thinking about that ballistics report and I just want to make a note so I won't forget it.

Frasier: Dad, the whole idea of coming here tonight was to get your mind off of the case. Listen I've done some reading. It seems the key for the Sonics is to stop Starts from penetrating and dumping the ball off for easy baskets.

Niles: Stop Starts? That sounds funny. Stop Starts. Stop Starts, stopstarts, stopstarts...

Frasier: Oh, shut up, Niles!

Martin: It makes no sense.

Frasier: Well, Dad, it's not my theory, I'm just quoting some sports writer.

Martin: No, I mean Helen. She was tall. She was five feet seven. Yet the bullet entered on a downward trajectory.

Frasier: Dad, please try to participate. Ooh, look! They're starting the wave! Ooh, it's coming this way, it's coming this way!

The wave comes, Frasier jumps up with it, Martin and Niles don't move. Niles is putting on a headset.

Frasier: That was fun, wasn't it? Oh, look, there's a peanut guy! [calling out] Peanuts!

A bag of peanuts is thrown into Niles's lap. He throws it back and forth.

Niles: How dare you! Stop it! That hooligan is pelting me with peanuts! From the look of that tray, he's come prepared. Stop it!

Frasier: Stop it, that is for me!

Martin: I gotta go make a call.

Frasier: Oh, Dad, this isn't about the case, is it?

Martin: Yeah.

Frasier: Well, Dad, look, you've been working on it for twenty years, how come you're so obsessed now?

Martin: Look, when Helen was murdered, I made a promise to her mother. I said that no matter how long it took, I'd find the killer. Well, I had a call from her last week, and she's an old lady now, living in a home somewhere and, I don't know, she just doesn't seem to have a lot longer to go, and it just kind of lit a fire under me to get this thing solved. So, I appreciate your bringing me here, but I gotta make this call. I'll be back in a couple of minutes. [*He gets up to go to the phones.*]

Frasier: Okay, Dad. I understand.

Martin leaves. A man comes down and sits beside Niles.

Fan: Boy, the traffic tonight is murder. [*to Niles*] Hey pal, what's the score?

Niles: West Side Story.

The man and Frasier both look confused, Niles makes a little "conducting" gesture. Fade out.

Act 2

Scene 1 - Frasier's Apartment

Fade in. Martin and Daphne are again poring over the "Weeping Lotus" material.

Martin: You know what's always bugged me? This picture of the crime scene. The way Helen's written "help." Why would she do that?

Daphne: Well, I suppose the word "howdy" would have been a bit too cheery under the circumstances. [*She goes to the kitchen.*]

Martin: But it makes no sense: anybody who could read "help" in the dirt could also see Helen lying there.

Frasier and Niles come in the front door.

Frasier: Evening, Dad.

Niles: Hey, Dad.

Martin: Oh, listen, thanks again for the ball game. It was great.

Frasier: Oh, God, it was a pleasure, Dad. I'm only sorry you couldn't join us for dinner afterwards. La Cochan Noir gave us a late seating for a fabulous dinner.

They go to the liquor shelf.

Niles: It was an exquisite meal, marred only by the lack of even one outstanding cognac on their carte d' vijastite.

Frasier: Yes, but think of it this way, Niles: what is the one thing better than an exquisite meal? An exquisite meal with one

tiny flaw we can pick at all night.

He hands Niles a brandy.

Niles: Ah... quite right. To impossible standards. [*They clink glasses.*]

Frasier: So, Dad, any progress on the case?

Martin: Nah, I'm beat. Sometimes it's better to just get a good night's sleep and start fresh in the morning. Good night, fellas.

Frasier: Night, Dad.

Niles: Don't forget: brush your teeth and say your prayers.

Martin: [*laughing*] That's what I used to say to you guys when you were kids, didn't I?

Frasier: No, you didn't.

Martin: Oh. I meant to.

Niles: We knew that.

He leaves. Daphne comes from the kitchen with a mug of tea.

Frasier sits at the table.

Daphne: Hello.

Niles: Hello, Daphne

Daphne: How was your dinner?

Niles: It was fine, except for one small flaw.

Daphne: Oh, just the way you like it. I see you're a bit intrigued by that yourself.

Frasier: Yes, well it's been a while since I've gone over this. Who are these guys?

Daphne: Oh, just some of the principal players in our little drama. [*she passes over a photo*] That's Detective Shelby, the vice cop who found the body.

Niles: Who is this menacing little mono-brow?

Daphne: Oh, that's Robbethai, a logger. An ex-boyfriend of Helen's. He used to come down from the mountains every couple of months and disappear with her.

Niles: If you ask me, he's the murderer.

Daphne: Impossible, he's got an air-tight alibi.

Niles: What is it?

Daphne: He was killing somebody else at the time. But you have to admit, this case has it all: sex, greed, jealousy, revenge, a monkey, hatred, deception...

Frasier: Wait, wait, wait...

Daphne: What?

Frasier: A monkey?

Niles: Yeah. This is a snapshot of the murder victim with her pet monkey, Koko. He was given to her by another boyfriend, Clive Brisbane.

Frasier: Well, why wasn't Brisbane a suspect?

Daphne: Well, he was, but several witnesses saw him at the racetrack at the time of the murder.

Niles: Excuse me, is that Clive Brisbane the animal trainer?

Daphne: That's right. Brisbane's Amazing Apes. They opened in Las Vegas for Englebert Humperdink.

Frasier: Yes, it's easy to forget there was a time when Las Vegas wasn't the tacky place it is now.

Niles: You know, I actually caught Brisbane's act on a trip to Las Vegas during college. Those apes were amazing! One minute, they'd be staging a living tableaux of George Washington crossing the Delaware, the next they'd be shooting suction cup arrows at Brisbane's lovely assistant's derriere.

Frasier: You know, there is a way that Brisbane could be the killer, and still have his horse track alibi hold up. Daphne,

Niles, I present you with... the killer! [*He turns around a photo of a chimpanzee.*]

Daphne: A monkey was the trigger man?

Frasier: Just play along with me here. They're capable of shooting arrows, why not a gun?

Daphne: But why would Brisbane have her killed?

Frasier: [*getting up*] Because, because she jilted him for someone else.

Daphne: Robbethai, the logger!

Frasier: Exactly! My God, we've done it!

Daphne: No, you've done it, Dr. Crane!

Frasier: Well, yes! But you were standing very close by. Wait a minute. Are we saying here that a murder was committed by a monkey?

Niles: It's not so very farfetched! It could be Brisbane's diabolical homage to the Edgar Allan Poe story "Murders in the Rue Morgue." It's all about an orangutan who goes about the rooftops of Paris murdering people. Wait 'til we tell Dad his case has finally been solved! Dad! Dad!

Frasier: No. Niles, Niles, wait, wait. It's still just a theory. Even if we are right, just think how Dad would feel, knowing we cracked a case he couldn't solve in twenty years.

Daphne: Oh, dear, you're right.

Frasier: Wait. It's merely serendipity that I stumbled into this. Why can't it happen again? I simply rearrange the photos in a way that Dad will see the connection. All right, we've got Koko, the gun, and Helen.

Martin comes from his room.

Martin: What is it? No, hey, Frasier! What are you doin' over there?

Frasier: Sorry Dad.

Martin: No, no, no, I got these all set out the way I want 'em. This one goes up...

He stares at the photos as the others look hopefully at him.

Martin: I'll be damned.

Frasier: Something wrong?

Martin: Look at that!

Frasier: What?

Martin: Well, I never thought it would just leap out and bite me like this. I think I may have solved this pain in the ass case.

Niles: You have?

Frasier: Dad, Dad, that's wonderful news!

Martin: Oh, no, no. Don't get too excited. I mean, this is kind of farfetched. I mean, it's a long shot, but, it's beginning to make sense to me.

Frasier: Here, lay it all out for us.

Martin: No, no guys, please, just give me a little privacy, will ya? I just gotta do some thinking.

Niles: No problem, Dad.

Daphne: I was just going to bed meself. Night, all.

Niles: [*turning to stare after her*] Goodnight, Daphne.

Frasier walks over to stand by Niles.

Niles: Oh, look at him. Do you see the sparkle in his eye? Oh, Frasier, he's like a little kid at Christmas.

Martin: Oh, geez, what happened to my entry wound close-ups?

Frasier: Fa-la-la-la-la-la-la-la-la-la!

Fade out.

USE A MONKEY, GO TO JAIL

Scene 2 - Frasier's Apartment

Fade in. Daphne is sitting on the couch, Frasier enters.

Frasier: Hello Daphne.

Daphne: Hello.

Frasier: Is Dad home?

Daphne: Nope, I haven't seen him since he knocked me up early this morning.

Frasier, putting his coat up, slows and turns.

Frasier: What?

Daphne: Knocked me up. Woke me up. It's an English expression. What does it mean here?

Frasier: Oh, something else. You'd definitely be awake for it, though. [*He heads for the sherry.*]

Daphne: He was headed down to the station house to present his theory.

Frasier: Oh, dear God, I wish he hadn't done that. You know, I've been turning it over in my mind all day. The more I think about it, the goofier it sounds. I mean, a MONKEY. Let's hope they didn't laugh him out of the station, be one hell of way to end a thirty year police career.

Daphne: Oh, now, now, Dr. Crane, it's not the most outlandish theory in the world.

Frasier: You're right, I could have said it was a trained giraffe. I suppose it killed her by spitting a bullet at her, thus explaining the downward trajectory.

Martin comes in the front.

Martin: Hey, guys.

Daphne: Hello.

Frasier: Hi, Dad.

Martin: I don't suppose we've heard anything from the station house, huh?

Daphne: Not yet.

Martin: I was afraid of that. I mean I knew my theory was a bit iffy, but when I told the guys they looked at me like I'd lost my mind.

Frasier: Geez, they didn't ridicule you, did they?

Martin: Oh, no, they always treat old timers with respect. They said "I'll check it out." Just like I used to when some nutbag'd come in there with aluminum foil in his hat claiming the Martians were trying to steal his brain waves.

Daphne: I'm sorry, Mr. Crane.

Martin: Oh, I don't know what I was thinking of. I've been walking around all afternoon just trying to figure out how I came up with such a half-assed theory.

Frasier: Dad, it wasn't your fault. I did it.

Martin: You killed her?

Frasier: No. But I did plant that ridiculous idea in your head. Remember last night when you came in, so upset that I was rearranging your pictures? Well, I rearranged them in a specific way so that you would... come to the same conclusion I did.

Martin: So you had the idea first?

Frasier: I can't tell you how terrible I feel.

Martin: Ah, don't blame yourself. You might have put the aluminum foil in my hat, but I walked right into the station wearin' it.

The doorbell rings.

Daphne: I'll get it.

She opens the door. A man in casual clothes comes in.

Frank: Hiya, Marty.

Martin: Hey, Frank. Frasier, Daphne, you remember Frank Hollings from the precinct?

Frank: Hey Marty, we gotta talk.

Martin: Frank, about that theory of mine...

Frank: I can't for the life of me figure what you were thinking.

Martin: I know, I know. I just feel so stupid, wasting your time.

Frank: It cost us a whole afternoon, and five detectives' time. And all we got to show for it is... heh, heh, we got the bastard!

Martin: I was right?

Frank: Hey, you don't believe me, ask these derelicts.

He opens the door and a bunch of cops, some in uniform, come in with beers. They are all congratulating Martin: "Hey! Way to go, Marty!" "Marty, you still got it! "And it only took you twenty years!"

Daphne: Oh, Mr. Crane, I'm so proud of you.

Frasier: Oh, that's amazing, that's wonderful! [*as a man spills beer on the couch*] Oh, that's suede!

He and Daphne rush to the kitchen to get towels.

Cop: So Marty, how did you do it?

Martin: Well, you know, for years, I thought it was Robbethai, the logger. And then I thought, well, maybe it was Brisbane the animal trainer, but I was wrong.

Frank: How did you finally decide that it was Detective Shelby?

Martin: Well, I kept lookin' at that picture, and it kept buggin' me, you know? Why was she trying to write "help" in the dirt and then it came to me! She was trying to write the killer's name, "Shelby." Only she must've died before she finished the "b" and, and somebody must've kicked dirt over the "s."

Frank: Well, you nailed him all right. We pulled him in for interrogation and he cracked like a nut.

CUT TO - the kitchen.

Daphne: Oh, I'm sorry I ever doubted you. But, then, you yourself were beginning to wonder if a monkey could really commit a murder.

Frasier: Well, I may have momentarily doubted it, but from time to time I have to be reminded to trust my gift.

They leave. Cut to - the living room as they enter.

Martin: So, did you call the girl's mother yet?

Frank: Nah, we left that for you. After all, you were the guy who solved this thing.

Martin: Ah, well, actually, I can't take all the credit for it, right Frasier? Come on, get over here.

Frasier: Now, now, Dad.

Martin: Nah, come on, don't be shy. I'm proud of ya. You know, I was a cop for thirty years and it took my son with his Ph.D. mind to crack this baby.

Daphne: Of course, I was standing next to him at the time.

Frank: So, tell us about it, Frasier.

Frasier: Oh, no.

They all shout encouragement.

Frasier: All right, I hate to toot my own horn, but, if it will make Dad happy. I suppose it was my expertise in human behavior, combined with a lifelong enthusiasm for the Rwandan lowland gorilla that first set me thinking about the monkey.

Everyone looks confused.

Frank: I'm not sure I'm following you.

Frasier: Perhaps I'm going too fast, I'll go slower. The key was when I figured out if Brisbane could teach a monkey to impersonate George Washington, then surely he could teach a monkey to cock a revolver, sneak up a fire escape, lie in wait for Helen, pump her full of lead and then make his getaway, perhaps even still wearing the revolutionary war regalia in order to confuse any chance witnesses. In fact, oh and this is way out there, but geez, maybe you should check to see if there were any local bank robberies at the time that were committed by a short, hairy man wearing a powdered wig.

There is a long silence.

Martin: You think the monkey was the killer?

Daphne: When I said I was standing next to him, I was really most of the way across the room. [*She leaves.*]

Frasier: Well, wasn't he?

Martin: No, it was Shelby.

Frasier: Who's Shelby?

Martin: He was a vice cop. He was in love with Helen.

Frasier: Oh. Well, that was my second choice.

Everyone bursts out laughing.

Frasier: Can I freshen anyone's drink?

Frank: Help me out here, Frasier. What did you think the monkey's motive was? Jealousy? Or maybe he just did it for the insurance money.

Cop: Hey, hey, hey. Do you think we should put a tail on that monkey?

Another: If that monkey did it, he'll swing for this.

Frasier: Yes, yes, that's all very funny.

Martin: Oh, come on, Frasier you can take a joke, can't you?

Frasier: Well, I suppose I can, yes. Oh, wait! I've got one. Who do you suppose the monkey will get to defend him? Clarence Darrow?

Everyone is stone silent and confused.

Frasier: The Scopes Monkey trial... You know, Darwin's theory of evolution... It was turned into a Pulitzer Prize-winning novel, "Inherit the Wind." [*giving up, to a cop*] Is that gun loaded?

Fade out.

Credits:

Frasier comes in the front door. Daphne is sprawled on the couch, red stains on her face and clothes. Eddie is sitting on the table above her, a gun in his mouth. Martin comes out with a bottle of ketchup and he and Daphne burst out laughing. Frasier makes a "Ha-ha" face.

Guest Appearances

Guest Starring

RON DEAN as Frank
BILL GRATTON as Leo
HALE PORTER as Al
RANDY KOVITZ as Fan

Guest Callers

MARY STEENBURGEN as Marjorie

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