



**THE WAY A DOG LEAVES**

**A ONE ACT BY**

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## Characters

Police Officer #1, *Female in mid-30's who fills the "bad cop" stereotype, smaller in stature with brown hair in a low slick bun.*

Police Officer #2, *Male in late-40's who fills the "donut/good cop" stereotype, balding with reddish hair that accentuates his weight and pale skin.*

Criminal, *Male in early-30's who appears handsome despite his exhaustion and unkempt appearance. Messy brown hair with stubble on his face, wearing a thin pale green t-shirt.*

## Scene 1

*Police Officer #1 and Police Officer #2 sit across from Criminal in a dark and damp looking interrogation room. A single lightbulb hangs over the steel table, casting shadows across the confused looking Criminal. Police Officer #1 sits alert, fingers tightly wound along the edge of the table, her face twisted into a furious expression. Police Officer #2 leans back in his chair, his thoughts somewhere else as he lazily picks his fingernails.*

POLICE OFFICER #1    Sir, for the last time, do you know why you are here?

CRIMINAL            I told you, I don't know.

*Criminal scratches head.*

POLICE OFFICER #2    Look kid, we haven't got all day. And my partner here is going to get all upset if you don't start talking.

*Police Office #2 points a thumb casually towards Police Officer #1*

POLICE OFFICER #1

*Disgusted by Police Officer #2's comment. Shakes head and rolls eyes before composing her hands on the table.*

Sir, can you at least tell us where you were the night before the incident?

CRIMINAL           The incident?

POLICE OFFICER #1

*Annoyed by Criminal's purposeful confusion*

Your incident in the park Sir!

CRIMINAL           I don't think that was an incident.

POLICE OFFICER #1   Sir I-

POLICE OFFICER #2   She means where were you last night. That's all kid.

CRIMINAL           Fine. I was at Shailene's.

POLICE OFFICER #1   The jazz club?

CRIMINAL           The jazz club.

POLICE OFFICER #2   Why were you at the jazz club, kid?

CRIMINAL           Well, it was a curious sort of reason why.

POLICE OFFICER #1   Sir, get to the point and stop dodging our questions.

CRIMINAL           Do you want me to answer or not?

POLICE OFFICER #1   Tell us why you were at the jazz club!

CRIMINAL

*A creepy sort of smile spreads across his face*

I was meeting a girl.

POLICE OFFICER #2

*Smiles and laughs knowingly*

Ahhh haaa. Nice location to meet someone pretty. What did she look like?

POLICE OFFICER #1

*Holds right hand up*

That is incredibly inappropriate. We are in the line of questioning.

*Police Officer #2 sighs but winks at Criminal while while casually nodding.*

POLICE OFFICER #1 Please continue sir.

CRIMINAL Well, I met up with this girl, quite a peculiar one, I might add. She wore this trashy looking red slip in an attempt to be provocative, but I never find that sort of thing attractive anyway. I meet her at half past nine at the bar, but when I approach her she has mascara streaked tears all over her face. When I ask her what on earth is the matter with a woman who shows up to a date at half past nine in a skimpy unattractive red slip with mascara streaked tears all over her face and she informs me that her dog had died and that “actually this dress is very flattering” before storming off.

POLICE OFFICER #1 Get to the point, Sir .

CRIMINAL Miss, why are you always so urgent to get to the point?

*Police Officer #2 laughs before Police Officer #1 shuts him down with a look.*

POLICE OFFICER #1    Because I am the police officer who is trying to get to the point of your mistake!

CRIMINAL            So you think it was a mistake?

POLICE OFFICER #1    What?

CRIMINAL            A mistake, you think what I did was a mistake? Because it wasn't.

POLICE OFFICER #2

*Laughs.*

I sure hope that was no mistake. You scared off the entire park!

CRIMINAL            Well, I didn't scare them on purpose...

POLICE OFFICER #2    Then what the hell were you doing in a-

POLICE OFFICER #1    You said the woman's dog had died.

CRIMINAL            Ah yes, the dog had died. What funny things dogs are, the concept of having full sized animals in our home; animals that we bathe, feed, and love. A ridiculous idea that only leads to great pain when they pass and leave us yet again alone. But poorer than we once were.

*Pauses for a moment.*

Sir, do you have any dogs?

POLICE OFFICER #2

*Smile relaxes into sorrow. Speaks in a soft voice.*

I had a dog.

CRIMINAL            Do you regret loving this dog?

POLICE OFFICER #2    No, not even for one second.

CRIMINAL            I would.

POLICE OFFICER #1

*Sees opportunity to bring the conversation back on track.*

Why would you regret it?

CRIMINAL            Because everything we love leaves us at some point.

POLICE OFFICER #1    Is that why you were so rude to the woman you were meeting?

CRIMINAL

You catch on quickly, Miss.

*Smiles and lets his eyes fall to his hands before looking up in a theatrical sort of way.*

The woman exits in an over dramatic flourish, leaving me at the bar wondering why I am again alone at Shailene's at half past nine. I started thinking about how life is easier when you are the one to leave. Not in the petty way a woman leaves her husband after an argument or in the petulant way a child stomps to his room after being denied something. In the way a dog leaves. Quietly. Humbly. Leaving behind fond memories of a strong character and soft fur, until after a while all that can be recalled about you was your name and your favorite chew toy.

So naturally I gathered my things and left the bar. The only sensible thing to do after a thought like that is to put one's affairs in order and say goodbye to the few people that would miss you when you're gone.

POLICE OFFICER #2

*Completely transfixed.*

But you are still here.

CRIMINAL I wouldn't have been if you hadn't arrested me.

POLICE OFFICER #1 Sir, are you saying you intended to kill yourself?

CRIMINAL If that's the way you choose to phrase it.

POLICE OFFICER #1 Is that why you were carrying that bar of chocolate?

CRIMINAL Yes, I read somewhere once that they can pass that way. Quietly. Humbly. Falling prey to the dimwittedness their very owners dote upon.

POLICE OFFICER #2 My dog passed that way.

CRIMINAL I bet it was painful for the dog, wasn't it?

POLICE OFFICER #2 Yes, I suppose so.

CRIMINAL That's because the theobromine found in the cacao plant shuts down the system and produces extreme muscle tremors, seizures, vomiting, and internal bleeding. Eventually after suffering through the pain caused by such severe symptoms the heart stops. That is no noble death. But yet pet owners around the world praise the passing of their loved ones, rebranding the tragedy as quiet and humble. Which is why after I put my affairs in order and said goodbye to the few people that would miss me when I was gone, I acquired a bar of chocolate and went to the park to enjoy it.

POLICE OFFICER #1

*Taken aback.*

Sir?

CRIMINAL        Yes?

POLICE OFFICER #1    Why the dog collar?

CRIMINAL        What do you mean why the dog collar?

POLICE OFFICER #1

*Stands up and haughtily paces the room.*

After hearing your sob story that my partner has obviously fallen for (*Gestures towards Police Officer #2 who looks up in surprise.*) I don't believe it. I don't believe that you had some fucking existential reason for the disturbance you caused. But what you put on your dog collar was even more horrifying.

CRIMINAL        You mean the message?

POLICE OFFICER #1

*Angry, stops pacing.*

Yes I mean the message!

CRIMINAL        I thought it was kind of funny...

*Police Officer #2 laughs and nods his head knowingly.*

POLICE OFFICER #1

*Composing herself.*

Sir, you think "pet me" was funny?

CRIMINAL        Well, when you say it like that it makes me sound like a pervert.

POLICE OFFICER #2    Kid, that's exactly what you sounded like.



CRIMINAL            I meant it in more of a “enjoy me while I last” kind of way.

POLICE OFFICER #1    So you still intended to kill yourself?

CRIMINAL            I guess so...

POLICE OFFICER #1    Then why not write something else on the collar?

CRIMINAL            Like a suicide note? That’s way too lavish for me. Remember, I wanted to leave quietly and humbly.

POLICE OFFICER #1

*Sits down angrily.*

Sir, out of all of the attempted suicides I have dealt with during my career, yours has been the least quiet and humble.

CRIMINAL            I think ingesting an entire bar of chocolate and waiting patiently to die is quiet and humble.

POLICE OFFICER #1    Well the children and families who saw you mimicking symptoms of theobromine poisoning after coming to the park dressed in a dog costume didn’t think it was so quiet and humble. Especially when you decided to relieve yourself in front of the entire park!

CRIMINAL            To be fair, I didn’t have anywhere else to go.

*Police Officer #2 hysterically laughing.*

POLICE OFFICER #1    You could have used many of the available public restrooms.

CRIMINAL            To die like a dog you must act like a dog. If that means defecating in public it means defecating in public.

*Police Officer #2 still laughing.*

CRIMINAL            I was going to be dead by the time I got caught anyways.

POLICE OFFICER #1    But here we are.

CRIMINAL            But here we are.

*An awkward pause ensues. Criminal lets his shoulders slump as he stares fixedly at the table. Police Officer #2 stops laughing suddenly and then resumes his pose at the beginning of the scene. Police Officer #1 stares directly at Criminal, hands composed assertively on the table.*

POLICE OFFICER #1    The woman in the red slip, Sir, do you know that she was found dead in her apartment shortly after 11pm?

CRIMINAL

*Looking up suddenly.*

The woman from Shailene's?

POLICE OFFICER #1    Yes, Sir.

CRIMINAL            Oh... how sad.

POLICE OFFICER #2    I guess she had a similar idea, kid.

CRIMINAL            I guess so.

POLICE OFFICER #1    What I meant by that (*Casting a dark look in Police Officer #2's direction*) was that even though she did not go “quietly” or “humbly” as you so rudely call it, she has people who are missing her. People who are crying for her and blaming themselves for how she died. So in order to leave this world you don't have to pretend to be something that dies just to be remembered as the simple thing they once were. That's not how nature works. We are born and then we die, really there is no more than that. You will be remembered the way you will be remembered.

CRIMINAL            That's exactly the point, Miss.

POLICE OFFICER #1    Are you contradicting yourself?

CRIMINAL            At the beginning of this questioning you asked me to get to the point.

POLICE OFFICER #1  
*Getting more and more agitated.*  
Are you contradicting yourself?!

CRIMINAL            But I guess you got to the point before I did.

POLICE OFFICER #1    I have had enough!

*Police Officer #1 stands up and storms out of the room, obviously upset by the conversation. Police Officer #2 looks up in surprise. Criminal watches Police Officer #1 go with a smile on his face.*

CRIMINAL

*Talking to Police Officer #2.*

Do you see how she left the room?

POLICE OFFICER #2 Yes I do.

CRIMINAL I wanted her to leave us in the angry way she did.

POLICE OFFICER #2 Why?

CRIMINAL So I could leave like this.

*Criminal stands up and runs towards Police Officer #2, trying to get past him and escape. Police Officer #2 cries out and a fight ensues. Eventually during the scuffle the lights flash and a loud bang is heard. When the lights turn back on Police Officer #2 is standing over Criminal with gun extended, panting and shocked by what he just did. Criminal lays on the floor in a pool of blood.*

POLICE OFFICER #2

*Shakily turns on walkie-talkie and speaks into it.*

I need back up in here, I need back up.

CRIMINAL

*Gasp.*

Officer? Excuse me Officer?

*Police Officer #2 runs over and tries to stop the bleeding.*

CRIMINAL Do you think this is quiet and humble?

POLICE OFFICER #2

*Has stopped listening and is whispering into his walkie-talkie.*

I need back up now!

CRIMINAL

*Sighs and moves his head away from Police Officer #2.*

Officer, please Officer, do you think the way humans put their pets to sleep... Do you think that is quiet and humble?

POLICE OFFICER #2

*Panting and looking away from Criminal, lost in thought. Finally processes Criminal's words and turns to speak to him.*

Yes I suppo-

*Criminal is lying dead on the floor, his head turned away from Police Officer #2. Police Officer #2 stares shocked at Criminal, and slowly slumps even closer to the floor. Tears well in his eyes. After a brief moment, the lights suddenly go out.*