

THE SCENE OF THE CRIME

Written by

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This is the Valleyglen Retirement community. A few blocks of small houses filled with retired seniors.

Norma (72) and Frannie (73) sit on garden chairs outside of the greenhouse. It is a beautiful, warm spring day. A true crime podcast plays from an iPad sitting between them.

PODCASTER

Locals still believe that John Robinson got away with the crime. Despite rumors and community push the tollburg murders have yet to be solved 35 years later. (Outro music) CrimeGrime will return next week with a new gruesome episode.

FRANNIE

It's like they weren't even trying!

NORMA

Those poor people.

FRANNIE

The clues were practically being dangled in front of those putz investigators!

NORMA

They deserve answers!

FRANNIE

If we'd a been on the case it'd have been solved 35 years ago!

NORMA

We certainly would've tried harder!

They both sit in the silence as the outro music ends. JANETTE (75) comes rushing into their peaceful beat.

FRANNIE

Oh Janette, we just heard the end of the-

JANETTE

It happened again!

NORMA

What happened again?

FRANNIE

Did they cancel Swing Dancing tonight?

JANETTE  
Someone stepped on Mr. Elkson's  
petunias!

FRANNIE  
Again??

NORMA  
Again.

Janette eagerly shakes her head.

JANETTE  
That means it wasn't an accident  
last time.

FRANNIE/NORMA  
It's a crime scene!

Their eyes light up. Janette begins to walk to the base of her backyard fence. Norma and Frannie slowly get up to follow her. From that vantage point they can see several houses in the complex, including Mr. Elkson's front yard.

His petunia's in a sad crushed state.

NORMA  
Oh it's just gruesome!

JANETTE  
A terrible tragedy.

FRANNIE  
Unbelievably cruel. What are we  
looking at?

JANETTE  
Most of the scene is unhelpful, but  
the perpetrator wasn't as careful  
as they thought.

FRANNIE  
Oh yeah?

JANETTE  
One perfectly contained footprint.  
Checked against mine it looks about  
a size 10. Little x shaped  
patterning.

FRANNIE  
Oh, we've got you, you son of a  
bitch.

NORMA

Who could've done such a thing?

Just as the other two take in this question. Lennard (75) walks by their backyard.

LENNARD

Hello Jannie.

JANETTE

Hi Lennard.

Janette seems distracted at first, barely paying him mind, then suddenly she turns to the others. They look at each other with understated glee.

JANETTE (CONT'D)

Oh Lennard dear! What shoe size do you wear?

LENNARD

Wouldn't you like to know.

JANETTE

Oh you dirty dog, I would!

LENNARD

Accompany me to game night, I might just tell ya.

JANETTE

Why, Lennard!

FRANNIE

Enough with the small talk, answer the question!

He gives her a look.

LENNARD

Last I checked size 9.

The woman exchange glances.

NORMA

Hm, and Lennard, what do you think about Mr. Elkson?

LENNARD

I didn't know I was stepping into the interrogation booth.

Frannie gives him a glare.

LENNARD (CONT'D)

Quiet, but a nice man. Always has a card under his sleeve.

JANETTE

Thanks, Lenny. You better be ready to play to win on game night!

He tips his hat to her and continues his walk.

JANETTE (CONT'D)

Well it wasn't him.

FRANNIE

What's the motive? There's got to be a motive.

NORMA

Oh there's always a motive! CrimeGrime taught us that.

JANETTE

Who would've had any ill will towards Mr. Elkson?

As the ladies talk they move back into their comfortable garden chairs, just a few feet from the fence. Janette opens the door to the greenhouse and goes in.

NORMA

I mean, this is a malicious crime. A serial petunia crusher!

JANETTE

If anyone can find them, it's us.

Janette exits the greenhouse with a large flip file. Inside are details on every member of the ValleyGlen community. She pulls out a list of everyone's names.

JANETTE (CONT'D)

Who strikes us as an enemy to Mr. Elkson, and plants everywhere?

Norma and Frannie look at the list intently. Frannie's eyes shoot up to a house across the street.

FRANNIE

Marie! Marie and Mr. Elkson have had a little fling going for a while.

NORMA

Yes! And he spends so much time  
with those petunias-

FRANNIE

Time she wishes was spent with her.  
It's always the jaded lover! Case  
solved.

Frannie leans back with a smile. A beat.

JANETTE

Now wait a second. They planted  
those together. It was their little  
spring project.

NORMA

I do suppose Marie isn't a size 10.

FRANNIE

Darn. I might've gotten a little  
too eager.

JANETTE

We got to think logically through  
every possible suspect.

The three turn back to the list, and then at the  
neighborhood.

NORMA

What about Franklin? His roses  
always fall second to Mr. Elkson's  
petunias in the spring gardening  
contest.

FRANNIE

Yes! And being desperate to win he  
sabotaged the competition.

Janette pulls out whatever info they have on Mr. Elkson.

JANETTE

Hm. I seem to remember him being on  
a cruise with his children this  
week.

She checks some sort of calendar.

JANETTE (CONT'D)

Right there. Yes indeed. He's out  
of town. Couldn't have done it-

FRANNIE  
Couldn't have. Damn it. That  
bastard. I'm lucky to see my kids  
once a year.

NORMA  
Oh they care, they just get busy.

Frannie begins to awkwardly shuffle with the papers. Janette  
grabs her hand and squeezes it. The two smile at one another.

JANETTE  
Besides, your Sally has been a  
little pain the ass since she was  
born!

NORMA  
Janette!

Frannie laughs.

JANETTE  
Who wants a cruise when we can  
solve a crime!

FRANNIE  
The neighborhood wouldn't know what  
to do without us.

NORMA  
They would just be lost!

JANETTE  
This would've had to been done in  
the cover of night.

NORMA  
Who's up late enough to do this?

Kathleen, walks by the backyard.

KATHLEEN  
Morning ladies!

NORMA  
Oh Kathleen! Where were you last  
night?

FRANNIE  
The night of March 27th?

They turn to her with expecting grins.

KATHLEEN  
What are you three up to?

JANETTE  
Nothing really.

Kathleen gestures over to Mr. Elkson's yard.

KATHLEEN  
Does this have to do with a certain  
someone's flowers?

FRANNIE  
Wouldn't you like to know.

KATHLEEN  
Well if it did I might have a  
little information for you.

FRANNIE  
Oh yeah?

KATHLEEN  
Who wants to know now?

Kathleen straightens and walks away with pride.

JANETTE  
She would.

The three shake their heads, returning to the options.

NORMA  
The cover of night...Oh, I know!  
Harrison sleepwalks! Always has.  
Maybe last night he was having one  
of his dreams. Perhaps he thought  
himself a king, defending his  
castle. And the petunias were poor  
townspeople. They rioted on castle  
walls and were taken out by the  
militia. Tragic.

Janette and Frannie stare at her in confusion.

NORMA (CONT'D)  
What?

FRANNIE  
Norma. Harrison died 3 months ago.

JANETTE  
We were at the funeral. You made  
the pasta salad.



NORMA

Oh. I suppose he did, didn't he.  
Hm.

Norma pounds this.

JANETTE

Well maybe it was an accident?

NORMA

Someone doesn't just CRUSH petunias  
like that by accident! Did you even  
look the crime scene?!

JANETTE

I-You're right. My apologies.

Norma shakes her head. They sit in silence for a moment.  
JERRY (85) walks by and stops at the gate.

JERRY

Good morning ladies.

FRANNIE/JANETTE/NORMA

Good Morning/Good Morning  
Jerry/Hello

JERRY

It's a lovely morning for a walk,  
isn't it?

FRANNIE/JANETTE/NORMA

Just perfect/Beautiful/Divine

JERRY

Would one of you happen to know  
whose this is?

He holds up a small gold bracelet.

JERRY (CONT'D)

I found it on a table over by the  
rec room.

FRANNIE

No, but we can certainly find who  
it belongs to!

JERRY

Oh good. I knew I came to the right  
bunch.

Jerry opens the gate and walks a few steps to where they are  
seated. He hands Frannie the bracelet.

JERRY (CONT'D)  
 You girls always know where to  
 look.

He pats her on the back and heads out.

FRANNIE  
 Bye Jerry.

Janette gestures for the bracelet. Frannie hands it to her.

JANETTE  
 Now whose could this be?

Janette holds it up, and then drops it in the mud.

JANETTE (CONT'D)  
 Darn it.

FRANNIE  
 You know it looks awful gaudy.

NORMA  
 Kathleen would wear something like  
 that.

FRANNIE  
 Oh Norma! You didn't! She would.

Janette reaches down for the bracelet while they speak. The bracelet fell in Jerry's footprint. A size 10 footprint with a little x shaped pattern.

She jumps up from her seat with more energy than expected and compares the print to her feet. The other two take note.

JANETTE  
 It's a perfect match!

FRANNIE  
 It was Jerry?

NORMA  
 Jerry?

JANETTE  
 Jerry!

NORMA  
 But why?

JANETTE  
 I didn't even know he and Mr.  
 Elkson talked.

FRANNIE  
I've only ever seen them play cards  
together on Tuesdays.

NORMA  
Cards?

JANETTE  
That's it!

FRANNIE  
What's it?

JANETTE  
Mr. Elkson is known to cheat at  
cards!

NORMA  
I have heard the gentlemen  
complaining. He always seems to  
have the right card.

FRANNIE  
So the bushes were some sort of  
payback for cheating at cards?

JANETTE  
Probably done in a fit of rage  
after another night of losing.

Janette sits back down.

FRANNIE/JANETTE/NORMA  
Huh?

FRANNIE  
Well should we tell Mr. Elkson  
who's at fault?

NORMA  
Yeah?

JANETTE  
I think crushed petunia's are a  
just punishment for a dirty card  
swindler.

NORMA  
No one likes a cheater.

FRANNIE  
Damn right!

JANETTE  
Another case solved.

Janette closes the file with a sense of accomplishment.

A beat.

JANETTE (CONT'D)  
How did the Tollburg murders turn  
out? Who dunnit?

FRANNIE  
They never solved it! After 35  
years!

NORMA  
Can you believe it?

JANETTE  
We'd a had it solved in no time!

NORMA  
They should've called us!

FRANNIE  
You bet they should've.

FADE OUT.