

WHO IS LANA FINDLAY?

A Short Script
Written by

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FADE IN

EXT. THE MORRISON'S HOME - MORNING

An upper scale, four bedroom, three-garage home. Nestled in the heart of modern suburbia.

INT. MORRISON HOME - KITCHEN

MICHAEL MORRISON (30s), pours a pot of coffee into his travel mug. Picks a piece of lint from his suit lapel. Catches his reflection in the convection oven door. Checks his teeth.

His wife SARAH (30s), enters. Still in her nightgown.

SARAH
I'll have some of that.

Michael pours her a cup.

MICHAEL
You missed breakfast.

Michael slides the cup across the counter.

MICHAEL (CONT'D)
Not getting dressed?

SARAH
I thought I might have a bath later.

Michael nods. Checks his watch.

Sarah turns her head to the doorway, where a small luggage bag rests.

SARAH (CONT'D)
Going somewhere?

MICHAEL
Toronto. For three days. I told you.

SARAH
Right, Toronto.

Michael moves around the counter. Holds her.

MICHAEL
Are you okay?

SARAH
Yeah. Fine.

MICHAEL
You're keeping up the regiment?

SARAH
What?

MICHAEL
Doctor Henkel said it's important
you don't miss any days.

Sarah squirms out of his grip.

SARAH
God! Do you want to start to
counting my meds now? But of course
you can't, because that would
require you to actually be around
part of the time.

MICHAEL
What do you want? I don't have a
choice where the company sends me.
Clear-Water has accounts all across
the continent.

SARAH
(relents)
Fine, then go if you have to.

Michael tries his best to calm things down.

MICHAEL
C'mon, let's say goodbye right.

SARAH
I'm sorry. I don't know what's
wrong with me.

Michael cups Sarah's face with his palms.

MICHAEL
There's nothing wrong with you.
(beat)
I'll call you when I land okay.

Sarah nods. Tries a smile. Michael kisses her first on the
forehead, and then a quick one on the lips.

MICHAEL (CONT'D)
Why don't you go shopping? Treat
yourself. That always makes you
feel better.

Sarah keeps her smile up.

SARAH
Good idea.

INT. KITCHEN - DAY - LATER

Sarah, still in her nightgown, sits on a stool. Stares into space. The sound of a vacuum cleaner jolts her awake.

INT. LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

The housekeeper ROSA (50), vacuums a rug. Sarah enters. Rosa flicks the high powered machine off.

ROSA
Do you need something Ma'am?

SARAH
I'm going to take a bath now.

ROSA
Okay ma'am. Have a good soak.

Rosa flicks the vacuum back on.

INT. BATHROOM

A dozen scented candles illuminate the luxurious white tiled room. Steam rises from the large claw-foot bathtub.

Sarah turns off the faucet. Takes off her nightgown, and slips into the hot water. Releases a deep relaxing sigh.

Except for the muffled whine of the vacuum, it's blissful.

Sarah reaches for her I-pod. Puts on her headphones.

Classical music soars. Sarah closes her eyes. Drifts away.

OVER BLACK

Classical music continues to play.

And then another sound... A loud gurgling noise. The bathtub is draining.

Sarah opens her eyes.

Sitting on the edge of the tub is a MAN dressed all in black, wearing a ski-mask. He's also pointing a gun at Sarah's head.

He lifts his gloved fingers to his mouth -- "Shhhh"

Sarah eyes widen, ready to scream.

The masked man quickly cocks the trigger. Shakes his head.

Sarah understands. Take off the headphones.

SARAH
What do you want?

The masked man speaks slowly, subdued, almost monotone.

MASKED MAN
What everyone wants. To be happy.

Every second the tub continues to drain, leaving Sarah more exposed. The whine of the vacuum continues OS.

MASKED MAN (CONT'D)
Are you happy Sarah?

SARAH
What?

MASKED MAN
Are you?

SARAH
Please, whatever you --

MASKED MAN
Answer me.

SARAH
Yes, yes, I'm happy.

He pushes the gun closer.

MASKED MAN
Tell me the truth.

The water continues to drain. Sarah frightened:

SARAH
What do you want me to say? I mean,
no, you're right... I'm not
happy... I'm not happy at all.

MASKED MAN
And why do you think that is?

The water has completely drained. Sarah lies naked, trembling. She covers what little she can.

The masked man stands over her. Gun still pointed.

MASKED MAN (CONT'D)
Find Lana Findlay.

SARAH
Who?

The masked man steps back, toward the door.

MASKED MAN

I'm going to leave now. Don't
scream. I don't want to have to
shoot your housekeeper.

(beat)

Innocents shouldn't have to suffer.

The masked man turns the doorknob. Opens the door.

MASKED MAN (CONT'D)

Find her.

The masked man slips away, closing the door behind him.

Sarah catches her breath. Tries to compose herself.

INT. LIVING ROOM

Rosa is still vacuuming away. Sarah, wearing her robe, bursts
into the room.

SARAH

Rosa!

Rosa turns. Sees the panicked look on Sarah's face. Switches
off the vacuum.

ROSA

What is it Mrs. Morrison?

Sarah doesn't know where to start.

SARAH

Didn't you see...

ROSA

See what ma'am?

Sarah looks all around. There is nothing out of place.

She walks to the window. Looks out upon the peaceful street.

Rosa, worried, steps forward.

ROSA (CONT'D)

Ma'am..?

CUT TO:

SARAH'S DAYDREAM

Sarah sits on a kitchen stool, clutching a coffee cup.

TWO DETECTIVES wander about the home, chatting quietly.

DETECTIVE 1
You find anything yet?

DETECTIVE 2
Nope.

DETECTIVE 1
See the medicine cabinet?

DETECTIVE 2
How could you miss it?

Sarah looks into the living room. Stares at a UNIFORMED COP, who is talking privately with Rosa. She overhears the detectives in the other room.

DETECTIVE 1
Warm tub. Music... She probably
fell asleep, and dreamed the whole
thing.

BACK TO REALITY

Sarah turns, faces Rosa.

SARAH
It's nothing.... I'm fine.

Rosa isn't buying it.

ROSA
Are you sure?

SARAH
Yes, I'm sure.

ROSA
Let me know if I can get you
anything.

SARAH
I will.
(pretend smile)

INT. BEDROOM - DAY

Sarah closes the door behind her. She takes her laptop to the bed. Flips it open.

Types the name of Lana Findlay on several sites: Facebook --
Linkedin -- Twitter - but no matches seem to make any sense.

Sarah, stumped, thinks a beat. Types.

WEB PAGE: The City Newspaper main page.

Sarah moves the cursor toward the

OBITUARIES

Sarah clicks on the page. Types Lana Findlay.

She scrolls through the results, searching...

And then she finds it.

LANA FINDLAY.

Sunny, beautiful. Taken suddenly at the age of 24. Only two months ago.

Sarah stares at her picture. Reads down.

INSERT

Lana will be sorely missed by: Lisa Busker, Fred Busker, etc

Sarah switches to another site. The online yellow pages.

Types Lisa Busker.

INSERT

Fred Busker, 241 Evergreen Way...

INT. LIVING ROOM - DAY

Sarah, fully dressed, keys in hand, addresses Rosa.

SARAH

I'm going out now. Don't worry
about dinner, I don't know when
I'll be back.

ROSA

Okay ma'am. Take care.

INT. SARAH'S CAR - DAY

Sarah drives across town.

EXT. SUBURBAN HOME - DAY

Sarah stands outside 241 Evergreen way. She walks up the front step. Rings the bell.

LISA (28), opens the door.

LISA

Hello.

SARAH

Are you Lisa Busker?

LISA

Yes.

SARAH

Hi. Ummm, I'm not sure where to start. I'm here about Lana Findlay.

Lisa tenses up.

LISA

What is this about?

Sarah ponders what to say.

SARAH

I'm just looking for someone who knew her.

LISA

Why, did you know Lana?

SARAH

Yes, for a little while. I've been, uh... overseas. I've just returned, and when I heard the news, I just couldn't believe it.

Lisa becomes warm. Smiles.

LISA

Lana had a lot of friends.

Lisa opens the door, gestures Sarah inside.

LISA (CONT'D)

Come in.

SARAH

Were you close to Lana?

WOMAN

I'm her older sister.

Sarah enters. Lisa closes the door.

INT. LIVING ROOM

Lisa and Sarah sit side by side. Lisa scrolls through her tablet, showing pictures to Sarah.

LISA

This is us back in the day.

INSERT PICTURE

An outside barbecue party. Lisa and Lana, smiling, laughing.

LISA (O.S.) (CONT'D)
 She was always the prettiest girl
 at the party. Funnest too.

ANOTHER PICTURE

Same party. Lana smiling. A MAN (20), bushy blonde hair,
 flashes bunny ears behind her.

LISA (O.S.) (CONT'D)
 There's Lana and Joey. God he was
 heartbroken.

ANOTHER PICTURE

A big close-up of Lana. Sunglasses and a huge smile.

Sarah looks up from the screen.

SARAH
 Can you tell me what happened?

Lisa puts down the tablet. Prepares herself.

WOMAN
 It was a freak accident. She was up
 on a step ladder hanging a picture.
 She must have slipped... she fell
 backwards. Hit her head... She just
 bled to death, right there on the
 floor.

SARAH
 God. I'm sorry, that's awful.

LISA
 Two lives gone. Just like that.

SARAH
 Two.

LISA
 Lana was pregnant. She was only in
 her first trimester. She hadn't
 told anyone. Not even me.

SARAH
 Who was the father?

LISA
 I don't know. As far as I knew she
 wasn't dating anyone.

SARAH
 You mean no one came forward?

Lisa shakes her head no.

SARAH (CONT'D)

Who found her?

LISA

Joey did. He'd been calling her all day. Finally he went to check on her. He peeked in the window and... there she was.

SARAH

(questioning)

Joey.

LISA

Joey Newsome. Lana's best friend.

SARAH

Right, Joey... of course.

This raises an eyebrow from Lisa.

LISA

You didn't know Lana very well did you?

SARAH

Uh, no. Actually we had uh, just become friends.

LISA

Oh, you must work at Clear-Water?

Sarah sits frozen. Tries to remain calm.

SARAH

That's right.

LISA

Shame, she was only there for a year. Lana was sure going places.

Sarah swallows hard. Eyes welling up.

SARAH

She certainly was.

Sarah breaks down. Begins crying.

Lisa, surprised, rushes over to console her.

LISA

It's okay, it's okay... I'm sorry, I didn't realize how close you two were.

Sarah cries in her arms.

EXT. MECHANIC GARAGE - DAY

A back alley. Several large open bay doors. A busted car in each one. MECHANICS in overalls, covered in grease, buzz about the garage.

Sarah approaches a passing mechanic.

SARAH

Excuse me, can you tell me where I can find Joey Newsome?

MECHANIC

(points)

Last stall.

Sarah walks toward the last bay door.

Two feet stick out from under the raised frame of a car.

SARAH

Joey Newsome.

JOEY (O.S.)

One and only.

SARAH

My name is Sarah Morrison. If it's all right, I'd like to talk to you.

JOEY (O.S.)

Sounds like you already are.

SARAH

Lisa Musker told me where I could find you.

JOEY (25), slides out from under the carriage.

JOEY

This about Lisa Findlay?

SARAH

Yes.

JOEY

I've got a break in a hour if you feel like waiting.

EXT. MECHANIC GARAGE - DAY

Next to the shop, a worn down picnic table rests on the hot asphalt. Sarah and Joey sit across from each other.

Joey lights a cigarette. Pops a can of coke.

JOEY

So what do you want to know?

SARAH

I want to know what you think happened that day.

Joey takes a long drag first.

JOEY

You know the cops thought I did it at first. I call 911, and they lock me up. It was only after they had the time of death, and checked my alibi that they let me go.

SARAH

And once they determined it was an accident.

JOEY

This wasn't any accident. Lana didn't hang pictures up. You know who hung up all the pictures in her place? Me. She always had terrible balance. Vertigo or something.

SARAH

Maybe that's why she fell.

Joey stares coldly. Takes another drag.

JOEY

If you really thought she fell then you wouldn't be here.

Sarah doesn't say anything.

JOEY (CONT'D)

Lisa tell you she was pregnant?

SARAH

Yes.

JOEY

Lana loved kids. She would of made a great mother...

(blows smoke)

...But she always had terrible taste in men.

SARAH

Do you know who the father is?

JOEY

The real question is - do you want to know who the father is?

SARAH

(pause)

I want to know.

JOEY

When Lana first told me about him, she swore me to secrecy. She didn't want anyone knowing, especially Lisa. I guess she was ashamed.

SARAH

Why?

JOEY

Because he was married.

SARAH

And you think this man murdered Lana?

JOEY

I don't know. But I know some people are capable of some very nasty shit.

SARAH

If you have suspicions like this, why didn't you tell the police?

JOEY

Once the coroner ruled it as an accident, I knew even if he went to trial that he'd get away with it.

SARAH

So what do you want to do next?

JOEY

That's up to you.

Sarah sits... and then her phone rings.

JOEY (CONT'D)

You gonna answer that?

Sarah checks it. A picture of Michael on screen. It goes to voice-mail.

JOEY (CONT'D)

Anyone I know?

SARAH

I've got just one more question.

JOEY

What?

SARAH

How did you get into my house?

Joey reaches in his pocket. Pulls out a single house key. Places it on the table.

JOEY

I took it off her key-chain right before the police showed up.

(points)

That's your security code isn't it?

Attached to the key, is a small white sticker with numbers.

Sarah picks it up.

SARAH

That's one of our spares. How did you know she had it?

JOEY

Lana told me. I guess they had some sort of weekly ritual going on there. Tuesdays and Thursdays. Those are the days you meet with your therapist, and your housekeeper is off. Rosa right?

Sarah is seething. Digs her nails into the table.

SARAH

I don't understand? If you hated him so much, why go to all this trouble? Why not just shoot him in the first place?

JOEY

I was going to. I wanted to. I even drove by your place a few times.

Joey looks at Sarah, closely.

JOEY (CONT'D)

But then I started to think about you... and how much you didn't know. It made me sick to think that you might actually mourn him.

SARAH

And you couldn't have just told me?

JOEY

The word from your husband was that you spend most of your day in some kind of drugged up stupor.

Sarah bites her lip.

JOEY (CONT'D)

It was important that you took me seriously. I needed you to find out for yourself. You might not have believed it otherwise.

SARAH

You're a pretty strange guy Joey.

JOEY

Yeah, that's what Lana used to say.

INT. MORRISON HOME - NIGHT

It's dark, quiet. Only the kitchen light is on.

Sarah sits waiting. Hears the front lock turn over. Smiles.

MICHAEL (O.S.)

Hello. I'm home.

Michael enters, carrying his bag over his shoulder.

MICHAEL (CONT'D)

There you are.

He flicks on another light. Puts his bag down.

MICHAEL (CONT'D)

Why are you sitting in the dark?
Where's Rosa?

SARAH

I gave her the night off. So, how was your trip?

MICHAEL

It was fine, a little bumpy on the way home, but other than --

Michael sees Sarah's fingers crossed. Looking stern.

MICHAEL (CONT'D)

Why are you looking at me like that?

SARAH

No reason. My love.

Michael takes off his overcoat. Folds it over a stool.

MICHAEL

Are you all right?

SARAH

Fine.

MICHAEL
Nothing wrong?

SARAH
What could be wrong?

Michael starts getting frustrated.

MICHAEL
Here we go. You're off your meds aren't you? That's why Rosa's gone. Have you been like this since I left? God Sarah, I told you what the doctor's said --

SARAH
I'm not off of them.

Michael shuts up.

SARAH (CONT'D)
I haven't missed a single pill.
(beat)
I'm perfectly balanced.

Michael nods, knows something is up.

MICHAEL
Then do you want to tell me why you're acting like this?

SARAH
Like what, like I'm crazy?

Michael brushes her off, is about to walk away.

SARAH (CONT'D)
Tell me Michael...

Sarah pushes a photograph across the counter. The close-up of Lana. Sunglasses and smiling.

SARAH (CONT'D)
Do you know this woman?

Michael turns white as a ghost. Shell shocked. Frozen.

SARAH (CONT'D)
Her name was Lana Findlay.

MICHAEL
So? Is that supposed to mean something to me?

SARAH
It should.... You killed her.

MICHAEL

Are you out of your mind?

SARAH

Out of my mind. I used to think so.
Sit down and I'll tell you all
about it.

MICHAEL

Sarah I --

SARAH

Sit!

Michael sits down on the stool.

SARAH (CONT'D)

One year ago Lana Findlay gets a
job at Clear-Water. In your
department. At that same time I
begin to notice all these old
habits forming. You constantly
being late, more trips than usual,
a complete lack of sex drive. And
then when I confronted you about
these things, what did you say?

Michael sits quietly.

SARAH (CONT'D)

You said it was all in my head.
Paranoid delusions you called them.
The best thing about being married
to a person with any prior
psychiatric problems, is that you
can get away with practically
anything. After all, you're not the
insane one. No, you thought you
could have it all. Bang some young
grad student without a care, but
then you didn't count on her
getting pregnant. What happened
Mike - a quickie in the kitchen,
and you just couldn't be bothered
to wrap it, or did you just
calculate the numbers and take a
shot? Either way you fucked up.
Because once you found out Lana
wanted to keep it the baby, you
knew you were in trouble. Sure, you
could leave me and run off with
her, but then you'd be losing all
my money. I don't think divorce
courts look very favorable on
husbands who cheat on their
mentally unstable wives with a
college cheerleader.

(beat)

SARAH (CONT'D)

So you had no choice. Maybe it started with some yelling, and then you pushed her a little too hard. She falls back on the table. Hits her head. And instead of calling 911, you think now's my chance. You stage the scene. Pull out a stepladder. Move a few pictures around. Wipe the scene of any prints. All while that poor girl is bleeding to death, with your baby in her. Is that the reason why you hate me so much, because I couldn't give you any children, so you had to take it out on her?

Michael doesn't answer. Glances out the window for any passing onlookers.

SARAH (CONT'D)

Then I started thinking about all those other times in our marriage when you seemed so distant. When I wasn't sure if you loved me anymore. And what was your answer? More doctors to treat my condition.

(beat)

Seven years. Tell me Michael, how many Lana Findlay's have there been?

Sarah places her hands down on the counter, like a lawyer finishing summation.

MICHAEL

Can I speak now?

SARAH

Yes.

Michael slowly takes off his suit jacket. Loosens his tie.

MICHAEL

I don't know what's gotten into you, or where you've got any of these preposterous ideas from.

He folds his jacket over the counter. Takes off his tie.

MICHAEL (CONT'D)

But now you tell me, If you really think that I'm capable of doing something like that once...

Michael takes a step toward her.

MICHAEL (CONT'D)
...Then what makes you think that I
wouldn't do it again?

SARAH
Oh that's the thing Michael... I'm
certain you would.

A creak on the floorboard behind him. Michael turns around to
find Joey, pointing a pistol at him.

JOEY
Not so fast.

MICHAEL
Who the hell are you?

JOEY
Shut up.

Michael takes a look at Joey again.

MICHAEL
I know you. You're Lana's psycho
friend. The one who could never get
her.

SARAH
No he's not.

Michael turns to Sarah.

SARAH (CONT'D)
He's an older black, Oh let's not
do that, older white guy, with jet
black hair, and tattoo's up and
down his arms. And a nose ring.

JOEY
The nose ring is a good touch.

SARAH
Thanks.

MICHAEL
What is this?

SARAH
You think you're the only one who
can manufacture a crime? I'm going
to say someone was waiting outside
when you came home. He broke in
demanded cash and jewels. You tried
to fight him. He shot you in the
head, and then ran out the door. I
tried to call 911, but it was
already too late.

JOEY

And since you did such a good job distancing yourself from the other crime, they'll never put the two together.

Michael is getting very nervous now. Turns to Sarah.

MICHAEL

They'll force you to take a polygraph!

SARAH

My psychiatrist would throw that out on day one.

JOEY

And no forensics gonna lead to her.

Michael scrambles his brain, trying to come up with something. Finally, he pleads...

MICHAEL

Sarah, you can't do this! I love you!

SARAH

You're a pig.

Sarah steps aside. Motions to Joey.

SARAH (CONT'D)

You ready?

JOEY

Oh, I'm ready.

Joey aims the gun at Michael's head.

MICHAEL

Don't!

JOEY

This is for Lana.

FADE TO BLACK.

And then, a LOUD BANG.