

LAST CALL AT SHORTY'S SPEAKEASY

Written by

Tom Stohlgren

Writer:
tjstohlgren@gmail.com
(970) 217-4498
Representation:
Eleni Larchanidou, LL.M.
Literary & Talent Manager
managerelenilllm@gmail.com
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FADE IN:

INT. SPEAKEASY - NIGHT

POV of a POLICE CADET'S (30s; male) body cam shows his flashlight beam entering a dark, rather ordinary candle store. He pauses to look around finally seeing one of the large shelves is a door into the dark corridor, propped half-open by the body of EMMA IRONS (24), a beautiful model in a skinny black dress, white gloves, and white silk scarf.

His flashlight and body-cam in the corridor pause on two signs. One big sign reads, "Shorty's Speakeasy." A small sign behind the door reads, "Abandon all hope, ye who enter here."

The Police Cadet hears fighting and wrestling in the bar beyond the corridor and tries to RACE into the dark bar, but he trips on Emma's shoulder and falls flat on his face on top of Emma's body with his face between Emma's legs.

He pops up, and RACES into the dark bar to see unlit candles on every table and at the bar.

The Police Cadet's actions and words are fast and furious.

POLICE CADET

Nobody move! This is the police!

In a dimly lit windowless noir hipster bar, the Body-cam shows a plainclothes DETECTIVE DAYO WATERS (35; black female) trying to break up a wresting match between SAMANTHA (SAM) DARLING (35; white) the seductive blonde bar owner wearing a women's tuxedo, and BARBIE DALLINGER (35), a tough-looking Asian woman wearing a short, 1930s waitress uniform. It looks like a fight to the death.

Two dozen Patrons (and Extras; all well-dressed snobs), who look like dark shadows in the bar, ignore the Police Cadet and move around to get a better look at the wrestlers. Many Patrons are live-streaming flash videos on their smartphones. The Patrons (and Extras) always look and sound like upper-class, pretentious snobs.

DETECTIVE

I said, everybody freeze!

The Detective pushes Barbie off Sam, but Barbie spins like a professional wrestler and goes right for Sam's throat.

The Detective turns to see the Police Cadet and yells at him.

DETECTIVE (CONT'D)

They sent me a Police Cadet for
backup?

The Police Cadet SCREAMS and points toward the front door.

POLICE CADET

There's... There's... There's a
dead woman wedged in the doorway!

The Detective is busy pulling apart the wrestlers.

DETECTIVE

We'll get to her in a minute. The
Chef was murdered in the kitchen.

The Police Cadet turns to see the open door to the kitchen.
On the ground is CHEF WILBER (40s), face down wearing a
chef's coat covered in blood.

The Police Cadet SCREAMS again.

POLICE CADET

I'm all that's left. All the
uniforms are at the gang war a few
blocks away! No C.S.I. Teams will
be available for days.

The Detective yells.

DETECTIVE

I said, everyone freeze, or I'll
Taser your asses!

The wrestlers ignore the Detective and dive toward each other
as Patrons look on. They wrestle again.

The Police Cadet turns his body cam to see two bartenders,
VICTORIA (25) a gorgeous Latina, and MAX (22), a handsome
black man, peeking over the bar at the wrestlers while wiping
the bar down with towels. Max wears a tight tailored Hawaiian
shirt that accentuates his muscular build. They don't
interfere with the brawl.

Looking at the wrestlers from the bar with a suspicious sneer
is DASH ROCKFORD (25), a wealthy real estate mogul, in a
stylish tailored suit and black scarf.

The fight goes on, and from another angle from the Police
Cadet's body-cam, we see PROFESSOR ROBBY BOND (40), looking
on with interest. He wears a brownish tweed jacket over a
green sweater vest and a bright yellow scarf.

KATINA JACKSON (25), a powerful black woman, stands in front of the Professor. She wears a sharp tan business suit and matching spiked heels and scarf.

The Professor takes advantage of the poor lighting and gropes Katina's butt and she immediately sends a debilitating elbow to the Professor's side.

BETO RUGGIO (30), a new-age mobster in a black suit and blue silk shirt, tan patent leather shoes, and a tan scarf tries to sneak out the front.

The Detective turns to see Beto sneaking out.

DETECTIVE (CONT'D)
Stop that suspect from leaving!

Police Cadet attempts to stop Beto, but he sees a beautiful Redhead (22) at Beto's table and is immediately smitten.

Beto sees this a second before the Police Cadet slips on a slippery floor onto his back.

The lights go on the bar, and it's a little lighter.

The Detective pulls her taser gun and ZAPS it in the air.

DETECTIVE (CONT'D)
I said, everyone freeze!

The Police Cadet feels his body for injuries. His eyes are open wide in fright as he pops up.

The Police Cadet's body-cam shows Beto heading back to his booth and pauses at the Redhead.

The Police Cadet turns toward the women's room where the body-cam shows water seeping under the door.

A flash of flame lights up the kitchen.

The Detective races into the kitchen. We HEAR a fire extinguisher putting out a fire.

The Detective RACES back into the bar carrying a fire extinguisher. She smiles at the Police Cadet.

DETECTIVE (CONT'D)
Glad you could finally make it,
Police Cadet. I need you to take
statements.

POLICE CADET
Who's the primary suspect?

The Police Cadet and the Detective pull Sam and glare at her.

The Detective slowly glares at the Patrons and staff, then points to the big sign behind the bar reading, "Vote for Shorties for America's Favorite Speakeasy."

DETECTIVE

All of them!

The Detective looks around the bar with a worried look.

DETECTIVE (CONT'D)

Do I smell gas?

FADE TO BLACK.

EXT. SPEAKEASY - NIGHT

Three widely scattered couples approach a small corner candle shop. The sign reads: "Sam's Candle Shop, wink wink." It's a bad part of town.

SUPER "One hour earlier."

Dash catches up to Katina who is a few steps ahead of him. Dash has to dodge a Homeless Beggar leaning against the wall of an old hotel.

DASH

Katina, I thought that was you.

Katina turns to see Dash but walks a little faster. She's unhappy.

KATINA

You have reservations for the midnight seating too? Don't sit with me. I might be meeting someone.

DASH

Who?

KATINA

Literally, anyone else.

Dash looks across the street to see Professor Bond trying to catch up with Emma who is five steps ahead of him heading to "Sam's Candle Shop."

PROFESSOR BOND

Hey, Emma, wait for me.

DASH
(whispers to Katina)
Looks like the Professor is on the
prowl tonight too.

Emma walks faster.

EMMA
I can take care of myself,
Professor. You'd better watch out
for that lunatic Katina across the
street.

The Professor freezes when he turns to see Katina and Dash.

PROFESSOR BOND
My two least favorite people.

EMMA
I'm sure they say the same about
you. You've put on a few pounds.

Emma sees Beto strolling with a beautiful Redhead (25) in a
long green coat toward the shop. Beto yells to Emma.

BETO
Hey, Emma, are you coming to
Disgruntled Employees Night, too,
or are you just drumming up
business with those soft hands of
yours?

EMMA
Eat shit and die, Beto!

The Redhead glares at Emma.

The three couples stop before entering the Candle Shop.

KATINA
Why doesn't everyone mind their own
business tonight?!

DASH
(eyeing the Redhead)
Except you, my dear. When you get
tired of Beto, the mobster wannabe,
drop by my table.

Beto gets in Dash's face.

BETO
Any time, slumlord!

They almost come to fisticuffs, when Sam unlocks the front door.

SAM
Reservations for the midnight
seating? Please come in.

They enter the small candle shop.

INT. CANDLE SHOP - CONTINUOUS

Sam points to a variety of candles for sale.

SAM
I know you've all been here before,
but it's customary to select a
candle for your table or seat
before entering. However, a local
fire ordinance prohibits the
lighting of candles in this old
building.

KATINA
I ain't paying twenty bucks for a
stupid candle I can't light...

SAM
(interrupts)
We know power goes out randomly
three or four times per hour.
That's how Shorty's got its name.
(sinister laugh)
Welcome to the dark side.

PROFESSOR BOND
I've been here often. The power
goes out for a minute or so. It's
caused by faulty wiring dating back
to the Prohibition days from
1935...

SAM
That's 1920 to 1933, Professor.
Pick any candle. It will be added
to your bill.

They scan the candle options. The labels read, "Bugsy Siegel
Citronella", "Lucky Luciano Lavender," "Al Capone Lemone,"
"Elliot Ness-café."

BETO
I'll go with the Al Capone Lemon,
again.

Beto picks up the candle.

SAM
It's pronounced, Le-MONE.

BETO
Whatever.

The Professor grabs a candle.

PROFESSOR BOND
I'll take the "Eliot Ness Cafe."
Coffee scented.

Dash picks up two Lucky Luciano Lavender candles.

DASH
I'll buy an extra for the beautiful
lady.

He winks at the Redhead. Beto is furious.

SAM
Follow me, please.

The others grab candles as Sam opens a bookshelf of candles
and a secret door opens to a corridor to the Speakeasy.

The Patrons all see the big sign that reads, "Shorty's
Speakeasy," and the small sign behind the door that reads,
"Abandon all hope, ye who enter here."

PROFESSOR BOND
I believe that quote is from none
other than William Shakespeare.

KATINA
It's from Dante's Inferno.

PROFESSOR BOND
I beg to differ.

SAM
(laughs)
Beg all you want, Professor. Your
former grad student is right.

They HEAR jazz music from the 1920s, cocktail shakers
shaking, glasses clinking, and 15 Extras (various types, but
all wealthy and well-dressed) mumbling and drinking.

INT. SPEAKEASY - CONTINUOUS

Beto and the Redhead grab an open booth.

Katina joins two male Extras at one booth.

Professor Bond grabs a booth with a female Extra. She appears disinterested in him from the start.

Emma sees Max at the bar and takes a barstool right in front of him.

MAX

What can I get ya, Emma?

Emma smiles.

EMMA

The regular.

MAX

Our version of sex on the beach.

Max goes to work like a pro. He adds three liquors to a tall thin glass and drops in a large ice cube.

MAX (CONT'D)

The Machine Gun Kelly Blood and Sand, but hold the Cherry liquor.

(he winks at Emma)

Instead, we use a pinch of Mahlab, from Greece, the zest from a seed kernel of St. Lucie cherries.

EMMA

(smiles, flirting)

I see.

MAX

It's a very lengthy process to crack open the cherry pits.

Max carefully zests a cherry pit as Emma teases him seductively.

EMMA

Maybe you'll let me work it off.

Victoria glares at Emma then Max, who is smiling.

Across the bar, Dash drops his extra candle off in front of the Redhead before grabbing a barstool in front of Victoria.

VICTORIA
What can I get started for you,
Dash?

DASH
What have ya got?

Victoria rolls her eyes in disgust as Max snickers at Dash.

VICTORIA
(sarcastic)
Why don't I make you our most
expensive cocktail, a Rum Flip?

She goes to work adding light and dark rum over a large ice cube in a short glass. Dash exchanges glares with Barbie with an iPad in her hands, who is taking orders from Katina's booth.

VICTORIA (CONT'D)
Now, we add a sprinkle of saffron,
which at \$1000 per pound allows me
to charge \$35 for this drink.

Dash's head spins to Victoria as she adds a floater of a dark liqueur.

DASH
What's that?

VICTORIA
Prune juice liqueur. So we call it
a Rum Runner Flip!

Dash takes a sip.

DASH
It's quite good, Vicky.

VICTORIA
Call me, Victoria, Dash. We've been
over this groundwork.

Dash smiles and lifts his glass to toast, Sam.

KATINA
(angry)
Twenty bucks for a cocktail?

DASH
(laughs to Sam)
I just paid thirty-five bucks for
my Rum Runner, Sam!

SAM
 (winks)
 Drink up, Dash.

Barbie races over to Max and Victoria. Barbie has her back to Dash.

BARBIE
 Max, I need a Tony Soprano, and a
 Baby Face Nelson Brandy Blazer,
 extra hot for Booth 3. A Dirty
 Harry Gin Martini and three glasses
 of Chardonnay, the good stuff for
 Booth 4.
 (to Victoria)
 For Booth 5, I need three John
 Dillinger Corpse Revivers.

VICTORIA
 Got it. Absinthe makes my heart
 grow fonder.

BARBIE
 The Professor wants his Americano,
 hold the vermouth, and pour two
 Chardonnays, the cheap stuff, for
 Sam and me.

VICTORIA
 Coming right up.

BARBIE
 I hope Chef Wilber is sober and
 ready in the kitchen. We need a
 boatload of appetizers, ASAP!

Barbie hits the send button on her iPad.

Everyone can tell CHEF WILBER (40s) has been drinking. He
 slurs every other word loudly from the kitchen.

CHEF WILBER (O.C.)
 Got it. Two soups. Three Tuscan
 tomato-basal, two salmon tortillas,
 and four skins of potatoes.
 (mumbles slurring)
 I didn't know potatoes had
 foreskins.

The hustle and bustle of an active bar fill the air. So does
 loud Professor Bond from his booth with the uninterested
 female.

PROFESSOR BOND
I find it curious that Shakespeare
never wrote about speakeasies.

The lights in the bar suddenly go out. The Patrons gasp.

SAM
Welcome to Shorty's Speakeasy.

The Patrons laugh nervously.

The lights go back on.

SAM (CONT'D)
You see, that wasn't bad and that's
been happening since my great-
grandpa bought the place!

The Patrons cheer as they shoot selfies of themselves.

Barbie delivers two large plates with comically small Tuscan
tomato and basil appetizers on them to Beto and the Redhead.

BARBIE
How are the drinks?

Beto is stunned by the small servings of food.

Several Extras race over to take photos of the tiny
appetizers while laughing and pointing.

BETO
(sarcastic)
You could've served this on a tea
saucer.

As Barbie leaves to fetch more food she smirks.

BARBIE
Take it up with Chef Wilber.

Redhead glares at Beto, who then smiles to act cool.

BETO
Did he cook these in an oven or
over a candle? And bring my
gorgeous date a cup of your
lukewarm coffee and your scalding
French Onion Soup.

Emma yells from her seat at the bar.

EMMA

I'd like a cup of that French onion soup, too.

Emma winks at Beto without the Redhead seeing it.

Beto winks back to Emma, which the Redhead sees and responds with a glare.

LATER

Barbie delivers the two cups of scalding soups to the Redhead and Emma, using oven mitts.

BARBIE

Be careful, the bowls are hot.

Emma flashes her white gloves on her hands, but the Redhead touches the hot cup and burns her finger, and SCREAMS.

REDHEAD

Ow!

An Extra snaps a selfie with the Redhead in the background screaming and shaking her burnt finger.

BARBIE (O.C.)

Told you it was hot!

Barbie brings a tiny order of Potato skins to the Professor's table. The female extra now sits at the bar.

BARBIE (CONT'D)

Did your date switch seats when the lights went out?

The Professor glares at the small servings.

Again, Patrons wander over to photograph the appetizers.

PROFESSOR BOND

She said she was on a diet, but this might be considered fasting.

Barbie exits to the cash register as the Professor pontificates.

PROFESSOR BOND (CONT'D)

(loudly)

Fasting goes back to Neanderthals.

KATINA

No proof of that either, Professor.

He glares at Katina.

Sam glares toward the kitchen and whispers angrily to Barbie. Barbie whispers angrily back at Sam. Many Patrons notice, but especially Dash, who snaps a selfie with Sam and Barbie whisper-arguing in the background.

BARBIE

Everyone knows it's the biggest night of the year and that drunken asshole Wilber is sabotaging our bar!

SAM

It's my bar, now! Don't forget it!

Barbie makes a fist with her hand but sees Dash is listening in.

DASH

Anything I can do not to help, Sam?

Barbie glares at Dash as she heads to the kitchen.

As Barbie disappears into the kitchen, the lights go out again.

The talking and drinking go on.

Thirty seconds later, the lights come on and Barbie is delivering tiny salmon tortillas to Katina in the corner booth, with three Extras staring at the small servings.

KATINA

We ordered salmon, not a canned sardine!

Sam stomps into the kitchen.

Seconds later, we hear her SCREAM!

SAM (O.C.)

Call 9-1-1! Police and ambulance!
Chef Wilber just committed suicide!

Max, Victoria, and Barbie race to the kitchen.

Every patron is calling 9-1-1.

LATER

Sam, Max, Victoria, and Barbie are back to work helping customers as though nothing has happened.

The Detective storms in, freezes, looks around, puts her hands on her hips, and rolls her eyes in disgust. All eyes are on her.

DETECTIVE

I'm Detective Dayo Waters. The uniforms are busy tonight with gang violence, so all you got is me.

(looks around)

I heard about this place. Twenty-buck cocktails in the ghetto. Nobody leaves 'til I say so. Who's the manager?

Sam steps up from behind the cash register.

SAM

I'm the owner, Samantha Dallinger. I found the... you know... Chef Wilber... in the kitchen.

DETECTIVE

Show me!

SAM

(to the crowd)

The bar remains open.

The Patrons toast their glasses.

The Detective turns and glares at the snobbish, uncaring Patrons.

SAM (CONT'D)

But food service is curtailed.

The crowd CHEERS louder and carries on.

Emma glares at her empty cup of soup on the table.

EMMA

The food service should have been curtailed years ago!

Detective Waters glares at Emma and the crowd again as she enters the kitchen behind Sam.

DETECTIVE

(mumbles)

If the meek inherit the earth, the pretentious gotta be the first to die. God, I hate snobs!

INT. SPEAKEASY KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

Sam remains close to the kitchen door as the Detective investigates the scene.

The Detective studies Chef Wilber's body with a massively bloody wound in his lower back, but no knife in sight.

She looks under counters and stoves, and under Wilber's body, but doesn't see a knife.

She takes out her notebook and looks around.

DETECTIVE
The Vic's full name?

SAM
Chef Wilber. Just Wilber.

DETECTIVE
No last name?

The Detective puts on latex gloves and removes Chef Wilber's wallet and examines it.

SAM
He thought he'd be one-name famous
like Madonna or Beyonce.

The Detective stands back and stares at the body.

DETECTIVE
It's Beyonce Knowles. Somebody
entered from the bar and stabbed
him in the back.

SAM
He was drinking heavily and
probably suicidal.

The Detective glares at Sam.

DETECTIVE
It's physically possible to give
oneself a knife wound in the lower
back, but it's highly unlikely.
This wound suggests the knife was
twisted several times after
insertion, and that would have been
excruciatingly painful and
difficult.
(looks at the blood stain)
The knife was wiped clean on his
coat. Then, it was stolen!

Sam is stunned and nearly frozen, as the Detective examines the back "delivery door," which is locked.

SAM

What are you saying?

DETECTIVE

This is a homicide, Ms. Dallinger!

(eye to eye)

How and when did you find him?

SAM

The lights went out like they do, occasionally. That's how Shorty's Speakeasy got its name. For safety reasons, I check on the cook and the gas lines after longer-than-expected outages.

DETECTIVE

(mumbles)

No murder weapon?

(louder to Sam)

How often do the outages occur?

The Detective looks around for the murder weapon.

SAM

Sometime two or three times a day. Sometimes two or three times an hour. We never know. Thirty seconds to a minute each time. The last one was about a minute so I checked on the kitchen. I found Chef Wilber and screamed.

DETECTIVE

Who else came into the kitchen tonight?

SAM

(sadly)

Our two mixologists, Max, Victoria, and our waitress Barbie.

DETECTIVE

Mixologists?

SAM

Bartenders.

DETECTIVE

At twenty bucks a pop, you'd better give 'em good titles! I'll need to get statements from each of them.

SAM

I'll send in Barbie. She's been a little unstable lately.

(whispers)

And, between you and me, she despised Chef Wilber.

Sam exits the kitchen as the Detective looks perplexed at her.

Moments later, Barbie steps in, sees Wilber, and starts to snicker.

DETECTIVE

You're Barbie?

BARBIE

Barbie Dallinger.

DETECTIVE

Related to Samantha?

BARBIE

We were married for four and a quarter years. I was half-owner of Shorty's until we separated.

DETECTIVE

Wow! And you changed your name to Dallinger?

BARBIE

An easy change when I married Sam. I was born Bei Wang, which in this country sounded like I needed a male escort service.

(smiles)

I loved Barbie dolls as a child. Prayed to them, actually. Didn't help.

DETECTIVE

The owner kept you on the payroll after your divorce?

BARBIE

Divorce isn't final yet. She kept me hired as a below-minimum-wage waitress. And I do her books.

DETECTIVE
You're an accountant?

BARBIE
No, her bookie. Sam's quite the gambler. It's fun watching her lose so much money because I hate her guts.

DETECTIVE
I see. But because the divorce isn't final, this place is still legally half yours.

BARBIE
I suppose so.

DETECTIVE
When did you interact with Chef Wilber tonight?

BARBIE
Before his shift. He was tipping a few tequila shots, but he seemed fine. I fetched some food orders, and I ran in after Sam found him and screamed.

DETECTIVE
Not when sending him food orders.

BARBIE
(shows her iPad)
I send them as text messages to his smartwatch.

The Detective examines the smartwatch still on Wilbur's hand.

DETECTIVE
Would anyone want to kill him?

BARBIE
Everyone that worked with him or ordered his awful food. He was a difficult man and a worse cook.

DETECTIVE
Why would Samantha keep him employed?

BARBIE

Only guy I know who cooks for minimum wage, free drinks, and the title 'Chef.' But, especially Sam who had her heart set on winning the Best Speakeasy in America contest tonight.

DETECTIVE

Send in Max the bartender.

BARBIE

Mixologist.

DETECTIVE

Bartender.

Barbie exits and Max enters. He sees Wilber and shrugs.

MAX

Hope the next cook's better!

DETECTIVE

Did you hold any grudges against Mr. Wilber?

MAX

No. He was the worst cook in a five-state area and a lousy drunk who stole our tequila.

DETECTIVE

Stole?

MAX

One drink is provided. He takes ten. Not the cheap stuff. Top shelf stuff!

The Detective looks at her notebook.

DETECTIVE

Huh? Send in Victoria.

Max exits and Victoria enters a moment later.

VICTORIA

I've got nothing to...

The lights go out. The kitchen is pitch black.

DETECTIVE

What the hell?

VICTORIA

Stay calm. Sam turned all the gas off when she found Wilber. You're safe.

They wait a few seconds later.

The lights go on and the Detective has her taser gun aimed at Victoria's heart.

Victoria screams and throws up her arms.

The bar becomes silent as the Detective holsters her taser gun.

DETECTIVE

Go tell them we're fine.

VICTORIA

Should I come back?

DETECTIVE

Did you kill him or know who did?

VICTORIA

No. But the cheap bastard charged us for meals.

DETECTIVE

You're free to go. I've got to find something.

Victoria exits as the Detective snoops around. She turns Wilber over to see French Onion Soup on the crotch area of his white pants.

She stares at the soup, then turns Wilber back over onto his stomach.

She sees a pot of French Onion soup on the stove.

DETECTIVE (CONT'D)

Huh!

INT. SPEAKEASY - LATER

The Detective enters to a noisy crowd with lots of uncaring smiles.

She shakes her head in disgust as she looks behind the bar for the knife. She yells over the crowd noise.

DETECTIVE

Don't any of you care that the cook
is dead?

The crowd is SILENT for a moment then goes back to drinking
and carrying on.

The Detective looks around the tables and barstools closest
to the kitchen before fanning out in the restaurant.

She stops at Beto's table and stares at the large plates.

Beto makes a tiny square with his fingers.

BETO

The appetizers were so small, I
qualified for food stamps.

Beto's date looks away embarrassed. The Detective doesn't
smile.

DETECTIVE

Do you come here often and know the
Chef?

BETO

I used to work here.
(loudly)
As a bartender!

Max and Victoria sneer at Beto, who speaks louder.

BETO (CONT'D)

This place has been raided more by
the Health Department than by
Elliot Ness and the G-men.

The Detective glares back at Sam.

DETECTIVE

Huh!.

The Detective stares at the Redhead's empty bowl of soup.

DETECTIVE (CONT'D)

French Onion?

The Redhead nods, 'yes.'

DETECTIVE (CONT'D)

How was it?

REDHEAD

Hot and unmemorable, like my date.

BETO

I heard Wilber used to wipe his feet before stepping out the backdoor. It was cleaner in the ally.

DETECTIVE

How do you know so much about the allies around here?

BETO

I've got friends in low places.

The Detective look at the Redhead in pity.

DETECTIVE

Ah! You poor thing.

BETO

Guilty as charged.

(nervous)

I mean, not guilty. Not Charged.
You know what I mean!

The Detective moves on to the Professor's table.

PROFESSOR BOND

I'm Professor Bobby Bond from the college. Can I be of assistance? Did you know that prohibition ushered in an era of extremely low crime in the country?

DETECTIVE

That's just not true. How well did you know Samantha Dallinger and Chef Wilber?

The Professor turns defensive and pompous.

PROFESSOR BOND

Long enough to know that many of my former graduate students worked here and didn't like it, and the so-called chef over-salted his appetizers, and over-sugared his desserts. Capital offenses in my book.

DETECTIVE

Somebody else thought so too.

As the Detective steps away, the Professor panics and yells.

PROFESSOR BOND

You mean he was murdered! We're stuck in here with a killer? I want to get out of here!

Emma turns from her barstool with her eyes open wide.

The Professor stands to leave, but the Detective leaps to push him back down into his seat. The room turns silent. The Detective speaks calmly but with conviction.

DETECTIVE

No one leaves 'til I say so!

She moves on to Katina's table with Two male extras. Katina speaks loud enough for all to hear.

KATINA

Don't pay Professor Plump-head there no mind. When I was his grad student, he told us prohibition didn't help organized crime!

DETECTIVE

What did you tell him?

KATINA

My research showed how different mob families agreed to divide up territories, work out shipping systems, fix prices, and do all sorts of things that cartels will do. The mob flourished during prohibition!

The Detective glares back at the Professor.

DETECTIVE

You were right. What did he do?

KATINA

He kicked me out of his history class.

DETECTIVE

The weasel! How well did you know the cook?

KATINA

I worked here for a time. Hated him, but everybody did! Never used enough salt.

DETECTIVE
Know anybody who wanted to harm
him?

Katina's eyes wander to Barbie then she looks down at the
table. Barbie glares back at Katina.

KATINA
(whispers)
Everybody, I guess.

The Detective glances at Barbie, but moves to Emma's barstool
and sees her white gloves and empty soup cup.

DETECTIVE
How was the French Onion soup?

EMMA
I hated it, and the portions were
too small.

DETECTIVE
Huh!

The Detective moves closer to Victoria at the bar.

DETECTIVE (CONT'D)
What did you think about the cook?

VICTORIA
I hated him. Like everyone else. He
groped me with his eyes every day.

DETECTIVE
With his eyes?

VICTORIA
He knew if he tried anything I'd
poke his eyes out with an ice pick.

Victoria flips an ice pick from behind her back and catches
it with her outstretched hand.

DETECTIVE
Can you do that with a knife?

VICTORIA
Why do you ask?

DETECTIVE
(rolls her eyes)
No reason.

The Detective turns to Max, who smiles.

MAX

Same answers here, but I would have
used a cocktail torch.

Max lights up a handheld butane cocktail torch and tosses it
between his hands.

DETECTIVE

What's that thing for?

Max grabs a block of cherry wood and lights it up. He puts it
next to an Old Fashion cocktail and covers it with a glass
dome.

MAX

It adds an unforgettable smoky
flavor to our Old Fashions.

DETECTIVE

While allowing new-fashioned
prices, no doubt.

(looks at Dash)

You're up next, slumlord!

Dash glances at Sam and Barbie before responding
sarcastically.

DASH

I'd never say anything that would
harm the potential income from one
of my most cherished rental
properties.

DETECTIVE

But you wouldn't impede my
investigation...

Dash squirms on his barstool and glances nervously at Sam,
Barbie, Victoria, and Max.

He jumps up from his barstool.

DASH

I gotta go to the bathroom!

The lights go out!

The Detective SCREAMS.

DETECTIVE

Nobody move or I shoot!

Everyone but the Detective seems to move as shadows in the
dark room. We HEAR the loud sound of feet stomping.

The Detective aims her taser gun around the room. It's clear some Patrons (the Extras) dove to the floor.

The sound of footsteps continues. Victoria yelps.

VICTORIA
Oh, I'll kill you for that!

DETECTIVE
I said, nobody move!

Emma SCREAMS by the front door.

DETECTIVE (CONT'D)
(yells)
I said, nobody move!

BARBIE
This is all your fault, Sam. Trying
to win that stupid best-bar contest
tonight!

Barbie dives at Sam and they wrestle and grunt in anger.

BEGIN MONTAGE

We see rapid vignettes of the opening scene as if in fast-forward speed.

-- POV of the Police Cadet tripping on Emma's shoulder and falling flat on his face on top of Emma's body with his face between Emma's legs.

-- He pops up, and RACES into the dark bar. He barely sees unlit candles on every table and at the bar.

POLICE CADET
Nobody move! This is the police!

-- Sam and Barbie are wrestling to the death.

-- Two dozen Patrons (and Extras) move around to get a better look at the wrestlers.

DETECTIVE
I said, everybody freeze!

-- The Detective pushes Barbie off Sam, but Barbie spins like a professional wrestler and goes right for Sam's throat.

-- The Detective turns to see the Police Cadet and yells at him.

DETECTIVE (CONT'D)
They sent me a Police Cadet for
backup?

The Police Cadet SCREAMS and points toward the front door.

POLICE CADET
There's... There's... There's a
dead woman wedged in the doorway!

-- The Detective is busy pulling apart the wrestlers.

DETECTIVE
We'll get to her in a minute. The
Chef was murdered in the kitchen.

-- The Police Cadet turns to see Chef Wilber's coat covered
in blood.

-- The Police Cadet SCREAMS again.

POLICE CADET
I'm all that's left. All the
uniforms are at the gang war a few
blocks away! No C.S.I. Teams for
weeks.

-- The Detective yells.

DETECTIVE
I said, everyone freeze!

-- The wrestlers ignore the Detective and dive toward each
other as Patrons look on. They wrestle again.

-- The Police Cadet turns his body-cam to see the bartenders
and Patrons.

-- The fight goes on.

-- The Professor takes advantage of the poor lighting and
grotes Katina's butt and she immediately sends a debilitating
elbow to the Professor's side.

-- Beto tries to sneak out toward the front.

-- The Detective turns to see Beto sneaking out.

DETECTIVE (CONT'D)
Stop that suspect from leaving!

-- Police Cadet attempts to stop Beto, but he sees a
beautiful Redhead at Beto's table and is immediately smitten.

-- Beto sees this a second before the Police Cadet slips on the slippery floor on his back.

-- The lights go on the bar, and it's a little lighter.

-- The Detective pulls her taser gun and ZAPS it in the air.

DETECTIVE (CONT'D)

I said, everyone freeze!

-- The Police Cadet feels his body for injuries. His eyes are open wide in fright as he pops up.

-- The Police Cadet's body-cam shows Beto heading back to his booth and pauses at the Redhead.

-- The Police Cadet turns toward the women's room where the body-cam shows water seeping under the door.

-- A flash of flame lights up the kitchen.

-- The Detective races into the kitchen. We HEAR a fire extinguisher putting out a fire.

-- The Detective RACES back into the bar carrying a fire extinguisher. She smiles at the Police Cadet.

DETECTIVE (CONT'D)

Glad you could finally make it,
Police Cadet. I need you to take
statements.

POLICE CADET

Who's the primary suspect?

-- The Police Cadet and the Detective pull Sam to her feet and handcuff her.

-- The Detective slowly glares at the Patrons and staff, then points to the big sign behind the bar reading, "Vote for Shorties for America's Favorite Speakeasy."

DETECTIVE

All of them!

The Detective looks around with a worried look.

DETECTIVE (CONT'D)

Do I smell gas?

The Detective RACES to the kitchen.

INT. SPEAKEASY KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

The Detective steps over Wilber's body to find a gas burner turned on high without a flame.

She shuts it off and storms back into the bar.

INT. SPEAKEASY - CONTINUOUS

The Detective glares at everyone. Barbie quits her attack on Sam, but both are breathing hard and remain angry.

DETECTIVE

Police Cadet, shoot anyone who
moves while I check out the person
in the doorway.

MAX

It's Emma Irons. She was sitting
right in front of me a few minutes
ago. She's a regular.

The Detective stops when she sees water leaking under the women's bathroom door.

She ducks into the bathroom door and exits seconds later and yells to Sam.

DETECTIVE

Better call a plumber. Someone has
clogged a toilet with paper towels.

Sam is angry.

SAM

Sabotage! Who did it? Arrest
somebody!

Sam is photographed by several Extras as she stomps toward the bathroom.

Sam freezes as she looks toward the corridor to the front door and sees the Detective standing over Emma's body.

SAM (CONT'D)

Oh my God! It is Emma!

The Patrons (and extras) rush past the Police Cadet to get a better look and to take photographs with their phones.

DETECTIVE

Police Cadet! Stop them and get
them back to their tables!

The Police Cadet pushes past the crowd and pushes them back into the center of the bar.

POLICE CADET

Nothing to see here. Stay back.

DASH

There is something to see! Is Emma dead?

The Detective looks down to see a large, heavy candle by Emma's head, and it looks like the secret door from the candle shop crushed her chest as she tried to leave.

The Detective feels for a pulse. Nothing.

The Detective shakes her head in disgust as she walks slowly back to the crowd.

DETECTIVE

I want all of you to return to the seats you had at the beginning of the night.

No one moves.

The Detective takes out her taser gun and waves it.

DASH

Okay, but tell us what's going on!

DETECTIVE

(to Dash)

In a minute.

(to the Police Cadet)

Police Cadet, call for the coroner, and have them use the back door for Vic #1, and the front door for Vic #2.

(to Sam)

This is officially a murder investigation.

Everyone gasps, including the Police Cadet who is on his radio.

POLICE CADET

Dispatch, this is Police Cadet Red Smiley with Detective Dayo Waters at Shorty's Speakeasy. Two victims. Please send the coroner immediately...

A stressed, effeminate male DISPATCH OFFICER (30s) interrupts the Police Cadet.

DISPATCH OFFICER (V.O.)
Your little bodies will have to
wait, Dearie! Every Coroner in the
tri-county area is at the gang
shootout. We'll call you when they
get a break!
(mumbles)
Geez! What a night! Where's my
Tylenol?

The Police Cadet looks helplessly at the Detective, who points to Emma.

DETECTIVE
Get photos of this vic. Bag the big
red candle by her head as evidence,
and we'll move both vics into the
walk-in fridge.

Sam is furious.

SAM
The hell you will! There's
thousands of dollars of food in
there!

The Professor laughs as he points to mini-appetizers on a huge plate.

PROFESSOR BOND
That shouldn't take up much room at
all.

Beto laughs and high-fives the Professor.

The Detective points a finger and threatens Sam.

DETECTIVE
I don't think you want to impede a
murder investigation or add to your
arrest report.

SAM
Arrest report?!

DETECTIVE
(points to the kitchen)
The chef slipped on French Onion
soup that was all over the floor
before he was stabbed in the back.
(MORE)

DETECTIVE (CONT'D)

Indications were he was drunk at the time and allowed to carry on his duties.

The crowd gasps.

DETECTIVE (CONT'D)

(points to Emma)

Someone sabotaged a toilet in the ladies' room just before Emma Irons slipped on your wet floors, or struck in the head with a huge candle, and crushed by your secret doorway from the candle shop.

The crowd gasps.

DETECTIVE (CONT'D)

We're going to need full toxicology reports on both victims to determine if intoxication contributed to their demise. And we've got to keep them cold to delay rigor mortis or this place is going to stink to high heaven!

POLICE CADET

I'll get the bodies to the fridge.

BARBIE

I'll help.

(glares at Sam)

I know my way around cold meat!

Barbie and the Police Cadet disappear into the kitchen.

Dash laughs and shakes his head.

The Detective glances at her notebook as she approaches Dash at the bar.

DETECTIVE

Is there something funny, Mr. Dash Rockford, the landlord who benefits from all this?

Dash turns serious.

DASH

Benefits?

DETECTIVE

You're the slumlord millionaire. If this establishment goes under, you'll put up a high-rise condo complex.

DASH

How did you...?

DETECTIVE

County records.

Dash points to the sign above the bar.

DASH

I'm just here for the contest.

DETECTIVE

Even if they win their Best Speakeasy in America contest tonight, you've got investors lined up to buy this dump and tear it down.

Sam charges Dash from behind but stops short of choking him.

Barbie and the Police Cadet exit the kitchen to pick up Emma's body at the front door.

SAM

Dash killed Emma. I saw him follow her into the women's room the first time the lights went out.

DETECTIVE

The murder happened at the front door...

Sam points a finger at Dash.

SAM

And he probably plugged up the toilet too!

As Barbie and the Police Cadet drag Emma's body past them into the kitchen, Dash turns sad.

DASH

I was in love with her. Emma was a hand model until she burned her hands on the French Onion soup here. She lost her job and has been wearing gloves ever since.

Max points to a tiny empty soup bowl on the bar.

MAX

She ordered the French Onion soup again tonight. Right here! Close to the kitchen, where...

The Detective leaps close to Max.

DETECTIVE

The Chef slipped on soup. Did you see her eat the soup?

MAX

No, but she could have eaten it in the dark when the lights went out.

The Professor speaks up sorrowfully from his table.

PROFESSOR BOND

I had an... appointment... with her gloves later tonight.

ALL

Ewww!

The lights go out again.

DASH (O.C.)

I told ya, I gotta pee.

DETECTIVE

Everybody freeze!

PROFESSOR BOND

She'd never miss an appointment.

The Detective tries moving in the dark toward the Professor, but it's clear many people are moving around.

Everyone HEARS and SEES the Detective's taser gun ZAP the air.

DETECTIVE

Nobody moves or I shoot. I need to talk to the Professor.

They all HEAR a man (Dash) struggling to breathe by the men's room door.

The Detective turns to stare toward the men's room, but it's pitch black.

DETECTIVE (CONT'D)
What was that?

We HEAR feet shuffling everywhere.

We HEAR the Police Cadet walking in from the kitchen then tripping and falling to the floor.

POLICE CADET
That's just me. I tripped.

The lights come on and we see the Police Cadet on the floor on top of Barbie who is face down.

Barbie's head is pointed toward the men's room where she sees Dash choked to death by his own red necktie.

Barbie SCREAMS and points to Dash as the Police Cadet hops up not knowing about Dash.

The Detective sees Dash, and races to him.

She checks for a pulse. Nothing.

She turns to see Sam back at the cash register looking on with a horrified stare.

DETECTIVE
(glares at the crowd)
Everyone stay right where you are!

The crowd starts to drink and carry on loudly.

DETECTIVE (CONT'D)
(yells)
Don't any of you care that this man is dead?

The crowd is silent for a moment before drinking and carrying on.

DETECTIVE (CONT'D)
(mumbles)
You people are the most pretentious, uncaring...

POLICE CADET
(interrupts)
I don't think we have any more room in the fridge.

The Detective glares at the Police Cadet.

DETECTIVE

Get statements from the people closest to the men's room. What did they hear or see that could help us find his killer. Anything at all.

(to Sam)

Lock the front door.

(yells)

No one leaves. Got it?

The Patrons (and extras) keep drinking, carrying on, and taking photos, videos, and selfies and live-streaming them on social media.

The disgusted Detective puts on latex gloves, loosens the red necktie, removes it, and places it in an evidence bag.

DETECTIVE (CONT'D)

We may find DNA evidence on the necktie...

VICTORIA

I touched it.

ALL

Ewww.

DETECTIVE

And, why?

VICTORIA

I pulled him in for a kiss across the bar the first time the lights went out. Every mixologist does things like that to increase tips.

Max and Victoria are ready to fight behind the bar.

MAX

I don't. And you have a distinct advantage because the bar has more male Patrons than female Patrons!

Victoria grabs a cocktail shaker and shakes it provocatively, as Patrons and extras whip out their phones to video the fight, especially Katina who steps to the front of the crowd.

VICTORIA

You flex your guns and shake your booty. You were jealous of Emma. Dash stole your handy woman!

Max looks up at all the cameras taking videos from him. His eyes open wide toward at Katina's (POV) phone.

Victoria and Max push each other.

The Detective breaks up the fight with her taser gun ready.

DETECTIVE

Are you people nuts?!

(to Katina, who keeps
filming)

We have three dead bodies here, and
one or more of you may be killers!
What the hell are you doing?

KATINA

Live-streaming like everybody else.
The more publicity the bar gets,
good or bad, the greater the odds
of winning Best Speakeasy in
America.

Beto sneaks in with his phone on video.

BETO

It's a popularity contest across
social media. Could you hold up
that evidence bag?

The Detective sees Beto's POV with Dash's body behind her.
She is disgusted and angry.

DETECTIVE

You people are...

Sam is staring at her phone and throws her hands up yelling.

SAM

We're up to 27th place! Next round
is on me.

The crowd CHEERS.

SAM (CONT'D)

Well drinks only, of course.

ALL

Ewww!

The crowd pushes their way to the bar.

ZAP! The Detective fires her taser gun in the air.

DETECTIVE

Back to your seats! We have three
murders to solve.

The Patrons put away their phones and grumble as they return to their seats.

POLICE CADET

I think Chef Wilber slipped on the soup on the kitchen floor and accidentally stabbed himself with the knife as he fell.

DETECTIVE

(scoffs)

How do you accidentally stab yourself in the back?

POLICE CADET

I think Emma Irons walked past the wet floor by the ladies' room and slipped running out the door, hitting her head on the candle as she fell and got stuck in the secret door.

The crowd nods and mumbles in approval.

DETECTIVE

Another accident?

Again the crowd nods and mumbles in approval.

POLICE CADET

And Dash's death was a suicide with his skinny red tie.

DETECTIVE

(scoffs)

The ends of his tie were behind him!

POLICE CADET

It's just a theory.

The crowd CHEERS the Police Cadet.

DETECTIVE

Two accidents and suicide?

BARBIE

It was fashion suicide if nothing else. Skinny ties are so 2020.

The Detective turns on the Police Cadet and reads from her iPad.

DETECTIVE

It says here that you washed out of
the police academy twice before
this third trial.

The Police Cadet puts his arms out and knocks a tall cocktail
glass to the floor.

POLICE CADET

They said my problem was
correctable.

Barbie grabs a broom and dustpan.

DETECTIVE

Clumsiness.

BARBIE

Happens all the time around here.
(points to Dash)
Not all the murders, but glasses
breaking.

The Detective shakes her head in disgust.

DETECTIVE

Carry poor Mr. Rockford to the
fridge.

BARBIE

Yes, sir! I mean, Ma'am.

POLICE CADET

We're on it!

Barbie and the Police Cadet share a moment and smile, before
carting Dash to the kitchen.

The Detective returns to the Professor's table. Everyone else
goes on drinking, with Sam delivering well drinks to each
table.

DETECTIVE

How well did you know Emma Irons?

The Professor looks away embarrassed.

PROFESSOR BOND

After she burnt her hand a few
years back, a lot of us regulars
chipped in, shall we say, to help
her make ends meet.

Victoria and Max are behind the bar in at their stations, both glaring at the Professor.

Beto is back at his table looking very suspicious by looking away and down. The Detective sees this and wanders over to Beto's table.

DETECTIVE

Do you have something to chip in,
Mr. Beto Ruggio, the new-age
mobster in the hood?!

The Redhead's eyes open wide.

BETO

We were business associates,
nothing more.

Victoria stomps over to the Professor's table.

VICTORIA

This is the perv you're looking
for, Detective. He always grabbed
my butt when the lights went out,
didn't you, Professor?

The Detective returns to the Professor's table but addresses Victoria.

DETECTIVE

That's a serious accusation,
Victoria!

Victoria glares at the Professor.

VICTORIA

I'd know his squeeze anywhere!
Every time he's here it happens. He
races over from his table, and
sneaks behind the bar...

(she makes a double
squeezing motion with her
hand)

Always with a double squeeze!

Sam yells from across the room.

SAM

I caught him once behind the bar
when the lights came on. He claimed
he dropped his handkerchief.

VICTORIA

He didn't want to leave DNA on my skirt with his sweaty palms!

ALL

Ewww!

The Patrons take videos of Victoria's backside.

Everyone HEARS a SLAP and turns to see the Redhead had just slapped Beto. His face is sideways and red.

REDHEAD

You told me she was your chiropractor straightening out your back, not your front! And her white gloves were to prevent COVID!

BETO

I didn't get COVID, did I?

The Redhead throws her drink into Beto's face.

The Patrons are busy live-streaming the fight.

REDHEAD

And you won't get it from me either!

Sam smiles as she checks her phone.

SAM

We're up to 26th place!

The crowd CHEERS and takes photos.

The Redhead gets up and goes to sit at the Professor's table, which is the only table with an open seat.

The Professor smiles, but the Redhead glares at him with her hand up ready to slap again.

Barbie bursts through the kitchen door with a large tray of thick, steaming bratwursts on small appetizer plates.

The Police Cadet is behind her with a similar tray full of brats.

BARBIE

Who wants a free wiener?

Everyone turns to Barbie and many raise their hands, including the Professor and Max who are waving madly.

Barbie turns to Sam.

BARBIE (CONT'D)

They were sitting outside the
fridge, gonna go bad, and were easy
to microwave. It's a wiener-wiener
situation as they say.

The crowd CHEERS, as Sam sneers at Barbie.

DETECTIVE

Nobody says that!

Barbie is racing toward the Professor's table when the lights
go out.

We HEAR Barbie and the Police Cadet trip and drop all the
plates of brats.

Everyone GROANS in the pitch dark.

DETECTIVE (CONT'D)

(yells)

Nobody move! I'm serious this time.
Every time the lights go out,
somebody gets killed! Stay put, or
I shoot!

Seconds later the lights come on. Everyone is looking around.

SAM

That wasn't bad!

DETECTIVE

No one died, if that's what you
mean.

Barbie and the Police Cadet are on the floor surrounded by
brats and broken ceramic plates.

Sam yells as she fetches a broom and dustpan from the
kitchen.

SAM

This happens every night. No cause
for alarm.

Everyone is taking photos of the latest catastrophe, shaking
their heads in sorrow.

BARBIE

I must have slowed up with my
platter.

POLICE CADET

I must have sped up with my platter
and collided with you. Can you ever
forgive me?

DETECTIVE

(mumbles)

These people are more concerned
about the free brats than the dead
bodies!

The Police Cadet pulls Barbie up and they share a moment.

POLICE CADET

Can we microwave up some more
brats?

BARBIE

(smiles)

You bet we can!

Barbie races to the kitchen, but the Detective angrily stops
the Police Cadet.

DETECTIVE

Your waitressing days are over. Get
me contact info and statements from
every patron.

POLICE CADET

Yes, Ma'am!

Sam hands the broom and dustpan to the Police Cadet and he
starts cleaning up his mess.

The Detective yanks the broom and dustpan from his arms and
hands them back to Sam.

DETECTIVE

(to the Police Cadet)

Get me those statements!

(to Sam)

You can hire him if he bombs out of
the Academy again.

The Police Cadet smiles and heads to the Redhead.

Sam yells to Max.

SAM

Max, get your butt over here and
clean this mess up!

Max snarls as he takes the broom and dustpan.

The Detective follows Sam back to the cash register.

DETECTIVE

I thought I might ask you a few more questions.

SAM

Fire away!

DETECTIVE

So far, none of the Patrons I've spoken with have nice things to say about your staff or your bar, and many of them worked here in the past. How do you explain that?

Sam leans in to whisper.

SAM

This is a rags-to-riches bar. Many of our Patrons grew up poor, worked here during school, and now like to flaunt their newfound wealth in their old neighborhood.

DETECTIVE

An "in your face" display of ingratitude?

SAM

Exactly.

DETECTIVE

Instead of donating to charity? That's disturbing.

SAM

They are their own charities. And only charities.

Sam points to the contest sign.

SAM (CONT'D)

And they like to win.

DETECTIVE

They consider themselves winners?

SAM

You got it!

DETECTIVE

And you?

In the b.g., the Police Cadet is trying to make time with the Redhead.

SAM

I feel the same way.

Sam looks at her phone and is elated. She yells.

SAM (CONT'D)

The spilled trays of bratwurst put
us up to number 25 people!

The crowd CHEERS.

Barbie races in from the kitchen with another platter of bratwurst. She sees the Police Cadet flirting with the Redhead and turns angry.

She slams a small plate of the wieners on the bar in front of Max, then storms over to the Professor's table, pushing the Police Cadet out of the way with her hips. She glares at him.

She slams a small plate of brats at the Professor's table and nearby tables.

The Police Cadet sheepishly moves to interview Katina.

The Professor eyes the wiener and the Redhead with a devilish grin.

The bar is festive and noisy once again, and Patrons are live-streaming photos of the free wieners.

The Police Cadet squeezes into the booth where Katina sits with two male Extras.

Barbie glares over at the Police Cadet, who shrugs his shoulders like he doesn't understand.

The Police Cadet pulls out a notebook and speaks only to Katina.

POLICE CADET

Name and address. For the record.

KATINA

Katina Jackson. My address and
phone number are unlisted.

The Police Cadet looks away puzzled. Then glares back sternly.

POLICE CADET
We could do this the easy way or
the hard way!

KATINA
Do you mean with my arms and legs
tied to the bedposts?

The Police Cadet is flustered.

POLICE CADET
I didn't say...

KATINA
(interrupts)
Can I write my phone number on your
hand?

The Police Cadet glances over at the Detective who is now in
a quiet corner interviewing Barbie.

Katina pulls out a BALLPOINT PEN from her purse that reads
"Shorty's Speakeasy."

ACROSS THE ROOM

DETECTIVE
I've observed your antagonistic
behavior around Sam, Dash before he
died, a few of the Patrons
including the Professor and Katina,
and me.

BARBIE
If you don't have specific
questions for me, I have a lot of
work to do.

Barbie takes a step away, but the Detective cuts her off.

DETECTIVE
I don't get it. You were married to
Sam for over four years. What is
your strange new attraction to the
Police Cadet that I'm seeing and
everyone has noticed?

BARBIE
Fair question.
(pauses to think)
I mean, look at him.

The Detective and Barbie glance at the Police Cadet who is
having his hand written on by Katina.

BARBIE (CONT'D)
He's clumsy physically. I'm clumsy socially. He likes everybody. I don't like anybody.

DETECTIVE
Except him? And Samantha in the past.

BARBIE
Maybe opposites attract.

DETECTIVE
Who is killing these people in your bar?

Barbie gets angry.

BARBIE
How the fuck should I know? That's your job!

Barbie stomps over to Katina's table, while the Detective looks on.

Barbie glares at Katina, then smiles at the Police Cadet.

BARBIE (CONT'D)
She didn't kill anyone. The newly rich never want to lose it!

POLICE CADET
Newly rich?

KATINA
I just got a nice inheritance.
(yells at the Professor)
Sure don't need a Master's degree from some hack Professor!

The Police Cadet turns to the Professor, as Barbie glares at Katina.

BARBIE
All you'll get from this one is an STD.

Katina glares at Barbie as she stomps toward the kitchen.

The Detective's eyes follow Barbie.

Beto yells to Barbie before she enters the kitchen.

BETO

Hey, Barbie! Maybe you can whip us
up more of those foot-long!

Barbie yanks her head around to yell at Beto.

BARBIE

(sarcastic)

Anything for you, Beto Ruggio.
Though nobody loved foot-long as
much as your mother!

Beto stands ready to charge Barbie, but she disappears into
the kitchen and Beto freezes as the Detective shoots him an
evil glare and the lights flicker off and on (twice).

Everyone is looking up and around the bar with the strange
electrical surges, but the lights remain on.

Katina marches over to Beto, who sits back down.

KATINA

Can't you just leave us and the
neighborhood alone?

The Detective wanders close to listen in.

Beto folds his hands like a scolded schoolboy as the
Detective approaches.

DETECTIVE

Is this man bothering you?

Beto glares at her, but Katina speaks sternly to both of
them.

KATINA

I came into a little bit of money
last month when a rich uncle died.

DETECTIVE

Good for you!

KATINA

The first two people to visit me
were Dash who doubled my rent, and
Beto who offered...
(uses finger quotes)
"protection!"

The Detective glares at Beto.

DETECTIVE

You're in the protection business?

(whispers)

Do you know that falls under the
Organized Crime Control Act of 1970
as a felony with some crime bosses
getting 100-year sentences?

We see the Professor leaning in to listen to the Detective.

BETO

There's no proof.

PROFESSOR BOND

You'll need proof, Detective. Not a
single mobster has been convicted
under...

DETECTIVE

Tell that to the Genovese and
Colombo leaders, Tony Salerno and
Carmine Persico who received 70-
year and 39-year sentences, and the
heads of three crime families who
got 100-year sentences in the
1980s.

Katina pulls out her phone and shows a short video to the
Detective. We HEAR Beto's voice and see the Redhead secretly
taking a video of them all in the b.g.

BETO (V.O.)

Let's say you pay me two bills a
month and I make sure nobody harms
you or your nice house that my
colleague Dash just doubled the
rent on!

The Detective hands Katina a business card.

DETECTIVE

Email me that video right now so it
doesn't get...

(uses finger quotes)

"lost."

Katina emails the video and smiles at Beto.

KATINA

Done.

DETECTIVE

(to Beto)

That's old-school racketeering.

(MORE)

DETECTIVE (CONT'D)

Bye-bye, Beto. I'll be back to ask you about your relationship with your very close colleague, Dash Rockford. You just moved up on my list of suspects.

The Detective and Katina leave the table.

Sam smiles at her phone, elated by the new publicity.

SAM

Thanks, Beto. You're live-streamed confession just moved us up two spots to 23rd place for the Best Speakeasy in America!

The crowd CHEERS and drinks up.

The Professor yells out to Victoria, Max, and Sam behind the bar.

PROFESSOR BOND

During the real Prohibition, bartenders were hunted down like rats and tortured in the streets.

Sam glares at the Professor.

SAM

Not true again, Professor!

The lights go out and stay out.

DETECTIVE

No one moves. Police Cadet, watch the front door!

POLICE CADET

You got it, Detective!

We HEAR a body crash to the floor.

SILENCE

POLICE CADET (CONT'D)

Just me, Detective. I tripped on something.

DETECTIVE

No one else move. Every time the lights go out something bad happens.

We HEAR the pitter-patter of feet.

DETECTIVE (CONT'D)
Freeze, or I'll shoot.

Several Extras dive to the floor.

SAM
What was that?

BARBIE
I don't know.

VICTORIA
We're in trouble. Max, duck!

KATINA
Don't come near me!

The lights go on.

Several Extras stand up and return to their seats.

DETECTIVE
You could have just stayed seated.

PROFESSOR BOND
Maybe they didn't want to be hit by
two million volts from the
Detective's taser gun!

BETO
(sarcastically)
Maybe they needed protection.

Victoria and Max stand back up behind the bar.

VICTORIA
Is everyone okay?

The Police Cadet checks his arms and legs.

POLICE CADET
I'm fine.

BARBIE
Thank God.

Barbie, the Redhead, Katina, and Victoria all take a step or two toward the Police Cadet. They see each other walking toward the Cadet and quickly return to their spots.

POLICE CADET
I just tripped.

He looks down and sees that his shoes are untied.

POLICE CADET (CONT'D)
Should have used double knots.

SAM
Hey, nobody was killed.

She looks at her phone in dismay.

SAM (CONT'D)
We dropped back to 28th place.

ALL
Ewww.

The Professor stares at a giant bratwurst in front of him at his table.

PROFESSOR BOND
Where did that thing come from?

BARBIE
We had two left so I brought them out to you and Max.

Everyone turns to Max to see him bite the tip of a giant bratwurst on a fork.

ALL
Ewww.

Sam takes a video of Max to live-stream.

SAM
I still have to charge you for the meal.

MAX
(disgusted)
After you exploit my homo-erotic image on live-streaming, of course.

Sam glares at Max.

MAX (CONT'D)
I didn't get a meal break tonight, Sam!
(to Barbie)
Thanks for watching out for me, Barbie.

Barbie waves at Max, then walks in a sexy way to the Police Cadet.

BARBIE
Can I get you anything, Sailor?
Anything at all?

POLICE CADET
I'm on duty.

Barbie turns and struts to the kitchen.

BARBIE
That's a shame.

The lights go out again.

DETECTIVE
(yells)
Nobody move. You know the drill.

We HEAR footsteps all around the bar.

DETECTIVE (CONT'D)
I said, nobody move or I'll shoot.

POLICE CADET
Actually, you didn't say "or I'll
shoot" the first time.

DETECTIVE
I'm saying it now!

We still hear footsteps, and one person, the Professor,
gagging.

DETECTIVE (CONT'D)
What the hell is going on over by
the Professor's table?

POLICE CADET
I'll check it out.

We HEAR the Police Cadet fall to the floor.

POLICE CADET (CONT'D)
Ow!

The lights come on and we see the Police Cadet is on the
floor again.

Everyone sees this and laughs and giggles while taking photos
and videos until they see the Detective pointing to the
Professor whose head is bent forward and his forehead rests
on his empty bratwurst plate.

The Detective races over to lean him up and take his pulse.

The Professor's mouth is open and we see a bratwurst obstructing his throat.

The Detective pulls the Professor to his feet and begins the Heimlich maneuver with three abdominal thrusts that do nothing.

The Detective slaps the Professor three times (hard) on the back. On the last slap, a thick bratwurst chuck is dislodged from his throat.

The Professor MOANS.

The Extras turn their phone cameras to the Professor, who is barely breathing.

DETECTIVE

Put those phones away, now!
Somebody bring him some water!

The Police Cadet and Sam RACE to the Professor's table where the Redhead looks on in horror from the other side of the table. Barbie brings a glass of water.

DETECTIVE (CONT'D)

(to the Redhead)
What happened here?

The Redhead has trouble speaking.

REDHEAD

I don't know. The lights went out
and I ran to the ladies' room.

DETECTIVE

In the dark?

REDHEAD

I had to go.

POLICE CADET

Was the toilet still clogged?

REDHEAD

I don't know. I was scared to
flush. I ran straight back.

DETECTIVE

You didn't wash?

ALL

Ewww!

REDHEAD

You said you were going to shoot!

DETECTIVE

(looks at the Police
Cadet)

Did the Police Cadet get your
contact information in case we have
further questions?

The Redhead winks at the Police Cadet, which infuriates
Barbie.

REDHEAD

He insisted on getting my age,
height, and weight.

The Detective glares at the Cadet, then turns to Beto.

DETECTIVE

Did you see or hear anything?

BETO

I went to the men's room.

The Detective yells to everyone.

DETECTIVE

Does anybody listen here?

SILENCE

The Professor speaks weakly.

PROFESSOR BOND

I... I... took a small bite of my
bratwurst before the lights went
out.

The Detective puts on latex gloves and picks up a large chunk
of bratwurst.

POLICE CADET

Looked like a pretty big bite, to
me.

PROFESSOR BOND

(looks away)

It wasn't that big when I swallowed
it.

The Detective gets in his face.

DETECTIVE
What are you saying?

PROFESSOR BOND
I always take small bites due to an
acid reflux condition.

ALL
Ewww!

SAM
That wasn't a small bite! Admit it,
moron!

The Professor glares at Sam and then looks away.

PROFESSOR BOND
I took a small bite, the lights
went out, and that's all I remember
until I came to. I can't explain
it!

The Detective studies the man. She sees a small drop of blood
on the side of the Professor's neck.

DETECTIVE
Did you poke your neck with a fork
or something sharp?

PROFESSOR BOND
I don't remember.

The Detective DASHES toward the kitchen.

DETECTIVE
Police Cadet, come with me. Sam and
Barbie, watch the Professor. Don't
let him eat anything!

SAM
Got it.

BARBIE
Is water okay?

DETECTIVE
(yells)
More water, the better!

The Detective and Police Cadet disappear through the kitchen
door.

INT. SPEAKEASY KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

The Detective starts clearing a food prep table.

POLICE CADET
What are you going to cook?

DETECTIVE
I'm going to cook our killer's
goose. Find me a roll of butcher
paper and a black marker.

The Detective clears the table and the Police Cadet returns
with a roll of white butcher paper.

The Detective spreads out the butcher paper and draws a box
in each of the four corners of the table.

In the upper-left box, she writes "Chef." In the upper-right
box, she writes "Dash." In the lower-right box, she writes
"Emma." In the lower-left box, she writes "Prof."

POLICE CADET
Ah! A victim and suspects board.

DETECTIVE
You got it. Who wanted to kill the
Chef?

POLICE CADET
Everyone.

DETECTIVE
But, if he was sabotaging the
speakeasy and the contest...

The Detective puts two circles near the middle of the table
and writes "Sam" in one, and "Barbie" in the other.

POLICE CADET
It's not Barbie.

DETECTIVE
She co-owns the bar until her
divorce is final.

POLICE CADET
Her divorce?

DETECTIVE
From Sam!

POLICE CADET
 But Sam's a...
 (sadly)
 Oh...

The Detective draws a dotted line from Sam and Barbie to the Chef.

DETECTIVE
 But Sam and Barbie had other
 saboteurs at the bar for the big
 contest tonight!

The Detective draws a dotted line from Sam and Barbie to Dash.

DETECTIVE (CONT'D)
 Dash had plans to sell the property
 and wipe them out of business.

The Detective draws a dotted line from Sam and Barbie to Emma.

DETECTIVE (CONT'D)
 And Emma plugged the toilet in the
 ladies' room.

The Detective draws a dotted line from the Professor to Emma.

DETECTIVE (CONT'D)
 But she was a sex worker who could
 have been blackmailing any number
 of the customers here tonight,
 including Beto, Dash, the
 Professor, and others in the bar.

The Detective draws new circles for Beto and "?" And draws dotted lines from all the males (except the Chef) to Emma.

POLICE CADET
 (looks away)
 Better put me up there.

The Detective is shocked.

POLICE CADET (CONT'D)
 She was gentle and reasonably
 priced.

DETECTIVE
 She was dead when you walked in.

The Police Cadet smiles.

POLICE CADET

Thank God!

The Detective adds two circles for "Victoria" and "Max" with lines to all the victims.

DETECTIVE

They might have been doing the dirty work for Sam and Barbie, and Victoria hated the Chef and Professor for being gropers!

POLICE CADET

I wouldn't rule out anyone who had the sleaze-ball, Dash, for a landlord.

The Detective adds a circle for "Katina," then draws more dashed lines to Dash from Emma.

The Detective and Police Cadet study the diagram.

The Detective turns to the Police Cadet.

DETECTIVE

Get me the names of everyone who had Dash for a landlord, had sex with Emma, or was paying Beto Ruggio for protection. I'm going to have a serious talk with Sam and Barbie.

The Police Cadet races out the kitchen door as the lights go out again.

We HEAR the Police Cadet crash to the floor and the footsteps of many other Patrons (and extras).

INT. SPEAKEASY - CONTINUOUS

The Detective bursts through the kitchen door with her taser gun drawn. It's dark, and the Police Cadet is moaning at her feet.

DETECTIVE

(yells)

Nobody move! If you did move, return to your seat or I'll arrest you for impeding an investigation.

POLICE CADET

I think I twisted an ankle.

DETECTIVE
Break out flashlights! Everyone.

Many Patrons turn on their flashlights on their smartphones.

SAM
Remember not to light your candles.

BARBIE
(sarcastic)
Nobody carries lighters or matches
around anyway! That's so last
century!

The Detective helps the Police Cadet up and looks around
suspiciously.

MAX
Beto!

The flashlights turn to Beto whose head is on the table. We
see a "smoking" cocktail glass.

ALL
Ewww!

The Detective races over to Beto with the Police Cadet
limping behind her.

She feels for a pulse. She's angry.

DETECTIVE
He's got a pulse, but it's very
weak. Police Cadet, call for an
ambulance!

ALL
(relieved)
Ahh!

The Police Cadet turns to call 9-1-1.

POLICE CADET
Send an ambulance to Shorty's
Speakeasy on...
(he's interrupted)

The Detective stares at the smoking glass.

DETECTIVE
What the hell was he drinking?

POLICE CADET

The ambulance will be here after
the shootout cases down the street.
Thirty minutes or so.

The Detective feels for Beto's pulse again.

DETECTIVE

Thirty minutes? He's fading
quickly. Is there a doctor in the
house?

PROFESSOR BOND

I have a Ph.D., but...

DETECTIVE

(interrupts)

A doctor who can actually help
somebody?

SILENCE

Max races up to Beto.

MAX

He ordered a Smokin' Cold Old
Fashioned so I made him one. It
comes with a warning napkin.

DETECTIVE

What's in a Smokin' Cold Old
Fashioned?

MAX

The regular: 2 ounces of top-shelf
Bourbon, 1 sugar cube, two dashes
of Angostura bitters, and dry ice.

The Detective is angrier.

DETECTIVE

Dry ice? That's a solid form of
carbon dioxide. Dangerous to touch,
let alone drink! That could kill
someone.

SAM

It's all the rage!

POLICE CADET

Does it really smoke?

BARBIE

It bubbles and chills the drink perfectly. Super cool.

MAX

It's supposed to be sipped! He looks like he chugged it! I just dropped it off before the lights went out.

Victoria yells from the bar in a snarky voice.

VICTORIA

The napkin explains it all! It clearly states to sip the drink slowly after the smoke dissipates.

MAX

Everyone knows if he were to consume one of those pellets, it could stick to his esophagus, produce carbon dioxide, and he'd choke to death.

The Detective uses her smartphone flashlight to search high and low for the napkin.

SAM

It's all right there on the napkin!

DETECTIVE

I don't see a napkin.

MAX

It was under the glass when I gave it to him.

The Detective checks his pulse.

DETECTIVE

He's gone.

The Professor, Katina, Victoria, Sam, and Barbie cheer.

As the lights come back on they stop cheering, but many Patrons turn off their flashlights and start taking photos and videos for streaming.

The Detective glares at each of the people who were cheering.

DETECTIVE (CONT'D)

What was that about?

SAM

He was a thug who demanded protection money.

BARBIE

Everybody hated him.

PROFESSOR BOND

Or feared him.

KATINA

The scumbag deserved it!

VICTORIA

I had to split my tip money with him.

MAX

So did I, but I kinda liked him. He tipped really well!

DETECTIVE

I want to speak to each of you!

SAM

If he chugged that drink, it was suicide!

REDHEAD

(sadly)

He seemed very depressed after Dash and Emma died. He lost his two best friends in one night.

The Detective walks over to the Redhead. The Professor sits across from her drinking a tall glass of water.

DETECTIVE

And you came here with him tonight, didn't you?

The Redhead holds back tears as she looks up at the Detective.

REDHEAD

He saw me walking here alone at night and escorted me into the club. He was charming and chivalrous.

VICTORIA

He was horny.

REDHEAD

We hadn't met before tonight. I left his table after he tried to touch me.

DETECTIVE

Where?

REDHEAD

Under the table.

The Detective rolls her eyes.

DETECTIVE

No! Where did he try to touch you?

The Redhead looks away. She shivers at the thought, but she uses two fingers of a hand to make a walking motion across the table as she swings her beautiful legs out for all to see.

REDHEAD

You know! He started at my kneecap, then slowly drifted up my inner thigh...

ALL

Ewww!

DETECTIVE

Okay. We get the idea.

But the Redhead continues to walk her fingers slowly across the table toward the Professor, whose eyes open wide with a devilish grin on his face.

REDHEAD

It tickled, at first...

DETECTIVE

That's enough.

The Detective turns back to Beto, as the Redhead spreads her legs a bit.

The Redhead turns violent toward the Professor.

REDHEAD

So I tossed my drink in the bastard's face.

She grabs the Professor's tall glass of water and tosses it in his face.

REDHEAD (CONT'D)
I'd like to press charges against him.

The Detective looks back at the angry woman.

DETECTIVE
He's dead!

REDHEAD
Not Beto! The Professor who has been undressing me with his eyes half the night!

Sam brings the Professor a bar towel to wipe his face. The Patrons live-stream more photos and videos.

SAM
(to the Redhead)
You'd be safer at the bar.

REDHEAD
(sarcastic)
You think so? They just killed a man with a cocktail!

Sam checks her phone.

SAM
I'm sorry about Mr. Beto Ruggio, but we're back up to 26th place for the Best Speakeasy in America.

The crowd goes wild with CHEERS.

SAM (CONT'D)
The next round is on me. Well drinks only. Nothing Smokin' Cold!

DETECTIVE
(to the Police Cadet)
Let's get poor Mr. Ruggio to the fridge.
(to the crowd)
The Kitchen is off-limits to everyone, staff included.

BARBIE
(to the Police Cadet)
Cadet Red Smiley, could you heat up some breadsticks on your way out?

The Detective glares at the Police Cadet.

POLICE CADET

They shouldn't be drinking on empty
stomachs. They'll be driving home
soon.

The Detective rolls her eyes as they lift Beto out of his booth and begin carrying him to the kitchen. The Police Cadet has his feet.

INT. SPEAKEASY KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

The kitchen is much brighter than the bar, and as they carry Beto to the refrigerator, the Detective spots a tiny drop of blood on Beto's neck.

DETECTIVE

Quick! To the fridge!

They shuffle quickly to the fridge. The Police Cadet drops Beto's feet and opens the fridge.

We SEE the Chef, Emma, and Dash on the floor as the Detective and Police Cadet squeeze in Beto.

POLICE CADET

What's your hurry? He's dead.

The Detective takes out her phone flashlight and examines the tiny blood spot on Beto's neck.

DETECTIVE

The Professor had a tiny blood spot
on his neck and didn't remember
poking himself.

The Detective examines Dash's neck.

DETECTIVE (CONT'D)

Yep!

The Detective examines Emma's neck and moves further into the fridge to examine the Chef's neck.

DETECTIVE (CONT'D)

Huh!

The Police Cadet moves further into the fridge and bends down to examine the Chef's neck.

Suddenly, the lights go out again.

DETECTIVE (CONT'D)

Damn lights!

POLICE CADET
What are we looking at?

DETECTIVE
Each of the victims has a...

The door to the dark fridge is slammed shut with the Detective and Police Cadet inside.

The Detective races to the door. The Police Cadet trips on a body trying to do the same.

The Detective forces her weight against the door.

It doesn't open.

The Police Cadet joins her to push.

POLICE CADET
Let me help.

Nothing.

The Police Cadet keeps trying, while the Detective tries to make a phone call.

DETECTIVE
No service in here! How about your phone?

The Police Cadet is shivering as he tries to use his phone.

POLICE CADET
No service. We're trapped like rats!

DETECTIVE
(sadly)
We have a single killer out there, and he or she wants us dead!

POLICE CADET
Single killer? You mean...

DETECTIVE
(interrupts)
That's right! A serial killer!

The Police Cadet grabs a leg of lamb and starts pounding on the fridge door and yelling.

POLICE CADET
Let us out! Let us out!

DETECTIVE

(sadly)

No one can hear you. They'll bust down the front door and by the time they find us, everyone will be gone!

They sink to the floor in despair.

DETECTIVE (CONT'D)

I should have seen it!

The Detective and Police Cadet hang their heads in despair.

LATER

The Detective and Police Cadet are shivering in the cold.

The Detective hugs the Police Cadet to keep him warm. They share a moment.

POLICE CADET

You're a smart Detective. You'll figure this all out.

DETECTIVE

(smiles)

Thanks for your confidence and your help all night long.

SILENCE

The lights go on.

The door opens.

We see Barbie looking confused at the Police Cadet.

BARBIE

When the breadsticks never came out of the kitchen, I got worried about you!

They leap out of the fridge.

INT. SPEAKEASY KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

DETECTIVE

Good thing. Somebody locked us in!

POLICE CADET

We could have froze to death like the Donner Party.

The Detective sees two armed POLICE OFFICERS (#1 and #2) at the backdoor.

DETECTIVE
When did you get here?

POLICE OFFICER #1
Just before the lights went out.

POLICE OFFICER #2
Two more officers are guarding the front door.

POLICE CADET
Nobody looked for us in the fridge?

The Police Officers shrug.

DETECTIVE
At least nobody escaped, right?

The Police Officers look at their phones.

POLICE OFFICER #1
Everyone is interested to see if they win the Best Speakeasy in America Contest.

POLICE OFFICER #2
They're moving into the top ten now!

BARBIE
The place is going wild out there, come see!

The Detective is angry as she enters the noisy bar. Music is blaring.

INT. SPEAKEASY - CONTINUOUS

DETECTIVE
Four bodies in the fridge and all you care about is the stupid contest?

Sam is elated.

SAM
We're up to eighth place!

The Patrons are live-streaming photos of the police officers.

The crowd CHEERS, as do the two armed officers guarding the front exit.

The Detective walks to the middle of the bar and yells.

DETECTIVE

No more photos or videos until I
conclude my investigation.

Everyone GROANS, even the Police Cadet and police officers from the kitchen and front door.

DETECTIVE (CONT'D)

I'd like to remind you that you
cannot leave. Officers are posted
at both exits.

SAM

Are they free to drink?

The angry Detective slowly turns and glares at Sam, Barbie, Victoria, and Max.

DETECTIVE

Let me remind you that twisted
personal goals often become motives
for murder. Let me walk you through
the murders one by one.

Everyone GROANS.

DETECTIVE (CONT'D)

No one cared for Chef Wilber. Sam
and Barbie thought he was shrinking
the size of food orders to lose the
contest.

PROFESSOR BOND

Many Patrons resented his small
portions.

Everyone nods 'yes.'

DETECTIVE

Chef Wilber also groped Victoria
and stole tequila from Max, but he
slipped on French Onion soup, and
there were only two people who
ordered the soup.

Everyone gasps.

DETECTIVE (CONT'D)

Emma, who ended up dead, and Beto ordered it for his date, at the time...

The Detective points to the Redhead.

REDHEAD

I didn't drink it! I assumed he did when the lights went out!

POLICE CADET

So, either Emma or Beto could have waited for the lights go out to toss their soup at the Chef in the kitchen before stabbing him with the knife!

DETECTIVE

(sadly)

But we never found the knife.

In a corner booth, Katina holds up the knife.

KATINA

Here it is!

Everyone turns to see Katina whose hand shakes in fright.

KATINA (CONT'D)

I heard it slide along the floor the last time the lights went out. It hit my shoe. I bent down to pick it up like someone dropped a silverware knife. I didn't kill the Chef, but my fingerprints are all over the handle now.

DETECTIVE

Why didn't you turn it in to a police officer or me?

KATINA

(yells)

I got scared. Black people with bloody knives get shot around here!

The Cadet approaches Katina with an evidence bag.

POLICE CADET

The killer's fingerprints and the person who slid the knife to you should have left prints on it, too.

KATINA

I bet they were smart enough to
wipe them off. What do you think,
Cadet?

The Detective rolls her eyes at the Cadet.

POLICE CADET

Oh, yeah.

Everyone nods 'yes.'

PROFESSOR BOND

Of course, Katina could have stolen
the soup from Emma or Beto, thrown
it at the chef, and knifed him in
the back.

ALL

Ewww!

BARBIE

Or it could have been Emma or Beto
who killed the Chef.

DETECTIVE

Then who slid the knife under
Katina's table?

The Detective marches toward the entrance.

DETECTIVE (CONT'D)

What we know for sure is that Emma
was killed soon after.

SAM

After she clogged up my toilet.

DETECTIVE

(to Sam)

Hardly a motive for murder, alone,
but she could have been sabotaging
the bar to lose the contest, which
could hurt your bottom line!

(points to Barbie)

And your bottom line as half-owner
of the joint until your divorce is
final!

The crowd gasps!

DETECTIVE (CONT'D)

But it was Professor Bond who was
secretly in love with her.

The crowd gasps!

BARBIE

Emma wouldn't have anything to do with him. She called him a stalker.

ALL

Ewww!

DETECTIVE

He sent her a text message just before she was killed. What did it say, Professor?

The Professor looks away.

DETECTIVE (CONT'D)

Professor.

PROFESSOR BOND

I asked her to marry me.

ALL

Ewww.

POLICE CADET

By text message?

DETECTIVE

And her reply?

PROFESSOR BOND

She sent me three "eat-poop" emojis.

DETECTIVE

Don't feel bad Professor. I saw a text on Dash's phone where Emma sent him a text that simply read, "My heart and hands have belonged to another for two months now."

Sam's eyes open up as Barbie leaps to tear Sam apart.

BARBIE

Two Months? That's when you broke up with me and filed for divorce.

Sam fights off Barbie.

The Cadet tries unsuccessfully to break up the fight.

DETECTIVE

(yells)

She wasn't talking about Sam!

Barbie freezes and glares at the Detective.

MAX

It was me. Emma told me Dash and Beto would kill me if they found out.

POLICE CADET

So you killed them first?

The crowd gasps.

MAX

I didn't kill anybody.

DETECTIVE

Dash was strangled not far from the bar and you served Beto that drink with dry ice in it.

MAX

Dash could have killed me. I'm a lover, not a fighter.

VICTORIA

I can attest to that!

Max smiles at Victoria and they share a moment

MAX

I assumed Beto killed Dash because he was Emma's manager.

DETECTIVE

Pimp?

MAX

I couldn't say anything or he would have had me killed.

The crowd nods, 'yes.'

DETECTIVE

And the smoking cold cocktail?

MAX

I served it to Beto dozens of times over the past two years. He knew not to chug it! Somebody forced it down his throat.

Everyone GROANS like they doubt Max as the Detective strolls over to the Professor's table.

DETECTIVE

That brings us to the only failed murder attempt of the night.

The Professor looks up bewildered, as Katina stands and yells at the Professor.

KATINA

He choked on his own wiener!
Attempted suicide after killing all the people who doubted his intelligence: the Chef, Emma, Dash, and Beto.

The Professor yells at Katina.

PROFESSOR BOND

That's absurd! No one doubts my superb intellect related to Prohibition. You're the only one who hated me enough to kill me. And you hated Dash for doubling your rent, and Beto for hitting you up for protection like Tommy Soprano. Plus, you had the Chef's murder weapon in your bloody hands!

Everyone scoffs, infuriating the Professor.

POLICE CADET

No one here believes Katina would kill anyone. She just inherited a ton of money. She wouldn't do anything to jeopardize that!

The Cadet moves in to hug Katina. They share a moment.

BARBIE

(sarcastic)

Yes, but she saves a lot of money with Dash and Beto gone!

KATINA

Lots of people were out to kill Beto the mobster and Dash the slumlord! We all just got lucky tonight.

The crowd CHEERS.

DETECTIVE

And Emma could have been
blackmailing lots of the men here
tonight.

The Professor points at Katina.

PROFESSOR BOND

But it was Katina who tried to kill
me for throwing her out of my
History Department and denying her
sexual advances!

The crowd gasps.

DETECTIVE

Remind us again, Professor. What do
you remember about your choking
incident?

PROFESSOR BOND

I don't remember taking a bite of
that bratwurst! I passed out! The
next thing I know, the Detective
was pounding me on the back like a
jackhammer!

Everyone laughs.

DETECTIVE

I had to ask myself why it was that
you didn't end up in our makeshift
morgue in the fridge.

PROFESSOR BOND

Because you saved my life.

Everyone starts to cheer and applaud, but the Detective
raises and waves her hands to stop the applause.

DETECTIVE

I think it was more.

PROFESSOR BOND

Good timing? Luck? A coincidence?

DETECTIVE

I don't believe in luck or
coincidences.

PROFESSOR BOND

Timing then?

The Professor stands.

The Detective's voice turns sinister as she circles him like prey. All eyes are on them.

DETECTIVE

Let's talk about that.

(glares at him)

We can never tell when the lights go out or how long the outages will last.

POLICE CADET

Of course, the outages did last long enough for four murders.

The Detective glares at the Cadet, who looks away.

DETECTIVE

Thanks for reminding us, Police Cadet Smiley!

(to the crowd)

So the electricity outage lasts at least long enough to run from any seat in here to either exit. So, why didn't the killer escape after murdering people?

Everyone looks around suspiciously at each other.

DETECTIVE (CONT'D)

My point is, the killer wanted to kill again.

SAM

(upset)

Do you suspect a serial killer? Here? With us now?

ALL

Ewww!

The Detective circles around the Professor.

DETECTIVE

One way a killer could divert attention from himself is to act like a victim!

PROFESSOR BOND

That preposterous! I'm leaving!

The Professor takes a step toward the front exit, but the two armed Police Officers raise their taser guns.

The Police Officers exit from the kitchen with their taser guns drawn too.

The Professor freezes as the Detective cuts off his exit and turns to speak to the Officers.

DETECTIVE

You officers can all return to the station. The Cadet and I have this situation well in hand.

SAM

Leave the delivery door in the kitchen open. That's an emergency exit in case of fire. It should never be locked.

The officers depart, two by the back, and two by the front.

The Detective stands between the Professor and the front door.

DETECTIVE

I never checked your mouth to see if that bratwurst was halfway down your throat.

POLICE CADET

He could have been faking it!

The crowd gasps.

DETECTIVE

The murderer couldn't drink very much and remain effective. What were you drinking tonight?

PROFESSOR BOND

An Americano.

The Detective turns to Max and Victoria.

DETECTIVE

What's in an Americano?

MAX

One and a half ounces of Vermouth.

VICTORIA

One and a half ounces of Campari.

Sam moves closer to the Cadet in the center of the room.

SAM

A splash of soda water.

BARBIE

On the rocks with a slice of orange.

MAX

Except the Professor requests his Americano without Vermouth.

VICTORIA

So it's half the alcohol of an already wimpy drink!

MAX

No one wants to make Americano great again.

The Professor has a guilty look.

PROFESSOR BOND

I have to keep my mind razor-sharp and laser focused.

DETECTIVE

Like the kitchen knife that you used on Chef Wilber?

The Professor's eyes open wide.

The lights go out.

DETECTIVE (CONT'D)

Freeze! Or I'll shoot!

We HEAR three sets of footsteps running.

We HEAR the Cadet trip and take someone down to the floor with him. We also HEAR a small REMOTE CONTROL device slide toward the front door.

POLICE CADET

Ow.

SAM

Damn it!

We HEAR two other sets of footsteps running.

INT. SPEAKEASY KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

It's pitch dark except for a dimly lit red Exit sign above the delivery door.

The Detective is stabbed in the neck with a ballpoint pen.

DETECTIVE

Ow!

The Detective tackles the Redhead (who we can't see well enough to identify).

They fight. We HEAR the Detective's taser gun get knocked out of her hand.

We HEAR the Detective and Redhead hitting each other with pots and pans which then go clanging to the ground.

The fight continues. The Detective yells.

DETECTIVE (CONT'D)

Lights!

INT. SPEAKEASY - CONTINUOUS

The lights go on.

The Patrons SEE Sam holding a remote control for the lights.

The crowd GASPS, then they look around suspiciously as they here fighting in the kitchen.

Everyone stares at the door to the kitchen as the fight goes on.

INT. SPEAKEASY KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

The Redhead pushes the Detective to the floor. The Detective who wears a thick, ugly plaid knitted scarf with a ball point pen stuck in the neck area.

The Redhead leaps to the back door to find it locked.

The Redhead turns to see the Detective aiming her taser gun at her.

DETECTIVE

(whispers)

You almost got away with it!

INT. SPEAKEASY - SECONDS LATER

Anxious moments as the fighting is over in the kitchen and everyone stares at the kitchen door.

Noticeably absent in the bar are Barbie, Victoria, Max, the Professor, and Katina.

Everyone looks worried as they look around the bar.

Barbie stands up from behind the cash register and glares at Sam holding the remote control device.

The crowd GASPS.

Victoria and Max rise from behind the bar and adjust their clothing.

The crowd GASPS.

Katina exits the ladies' room as the Professor exits the men's room.

The crowd GASPS.

The Redhead (handcuffed) and Detective barge in from the kitchen to see everyone taking photos, selfies, and videos of the Redhead who tries to hide her face.

The Police Cadet is toward the front entrance and enters wearing a powder blue scarf, which he takes off and hands to Victoria with a smile (they share a moment).

Sam sheepishly holds a remote control device.

Barbie glares at Sam and the remote control device, then leaps at Sam and they start fighting again.

Many Patrons capture the wrestling match in live-streaming rather than the Redhead in handcuffs.

BARBIE

This whole electricity outage thing
has been a sham?

SAM

I should have told you. It was for
the business! They renovated the
electrical circuits ten years ago
to keep the refrigerator, cash
machines, and smoke detectors
working all the time, so I had them
hook me up with a remote for the
overhead lights.

BARBIE
You're a liar and a cheat! Our
Patrons will hate you forever.

They both see that the Patrons keep drinking, laughing, and taking videos.

SAM
Or not!

Barbie is ready to punch Sam in the jaw.

BARBIE
You're a cheat in my book, and you
owe me two bills on the five-game
football parlay bet I booked for
you this morning..

Sam looks smitten with Barbie, and Barbie freezes.

SAM
You placed that huge bet for me
even though we were arguing all
day?

BARBIE
(smiles)
I'm an honest bookie! And you
finally won big!

Sam moves in kissing close to Barbie.

SAM
How much?

Barbie moves closer to Sam.

BARBIE
Rent for another year!

Sam hugs and kisses Barbie and the crowd CHEERS and drinks like crazy.

The Police Cadet waves his arms to stop the cheering.

POLICE CADET
Hold it down, everyone! I want to
hear what tipped off the Detective.

All eyes and cameras are back on the Detective, who is unwrapping the ugly scarf from around her neck.

DETECTIVE

I need an evidence bag for the scarf and a separate one for the syringe made to look like an ordinary ballpoint pen.

The ballpoint pens reads, "Shorty's Speakeasy."

The crowd gasps as the Detective demonstrates the hollow hypodermic needle extruding from the pen.

POLICE CADET

You were right! What you told me in the fridge.

DETECTIVE

Each of the murder victims had a small hole on the side of their neck. It's why I had us quickly wrap scarfs around our necks before we guarded the exits.

POLICE CADET

She gave the murderer plenty of hints that the end was near and that escape was the only option.

DETECTIVE

I wasn't entirely sure who it was until she tried to stab me with this pen on the way out.

The Detective glances at the Redhead's hands.

DETECTIVE (CONT'D)

She didn't have time to put on gloves so her fingerprints will be on the pen, and whatever substance she used will be on my scarf. I'm guessing it's a fast-acting knockout drug with what nurses call Milk of Amnesia, which allowed her to kill her unsuspecting victims, who were often much larger and dumber than her.

(pointe to her ugly scarf)
That scarf saved my life.

The Patrons point to the scarf.

ALL

Ewww!

The Detective smiles smugly.

PROFESSOR BOND
You knew it wasn't me all along?

DETECTIVE
I was looking for a criminal
mastermind! No offense, Professor,
but you never impressed me enough
to be a serial killer.

The Professor smiles.

BARBIE
What motive could the Redhead have
for murdering all those people?!

DETECTIVE
The victims were all arrogant,
pretentious snobs who everybody
secretly hated.
(laughs)
That made everybody in here a
potential victim!

The crowd gasps.

POLICE CADET
She could have gone on killing all
night!

KATINA
Who slid the kitchen knife under my
table?

Silence.

DETECTIVE
This Redhead did it! She wanted to
frame you for all the killings,
especially the Professor's death.

The Professor's eyes open widely.

Sam is angry and yells as she checks her phone.

SAM
We dropped to 51st place in the
Best Speakeasy in America Contest.
We're probably out of the running!
(softly to Barbie)
I'll need your help to restore the
speakeasy's reputation.

BARBIE
I want a full partnership, medical,
dental, and mental!

SAM
Deal!

They hug and kiss.

SAM (CONT'D)
Drinks are on the house. Well
drinks, of course.

The crowd CHEERS and goes back to drinking as if nothing happened.

The Detective pushes the Redhead toward the Professor's table where The Detective grabs the Redhead's green purse and dumps the contents on the table.

A dozen more ballpoint pens that read, "Shorty's Speakeasy."

A business card reads, "Anti-Gentrification League: Keep your hands off our ghetto or we'll kill you!"

Victoria and Max glare at her.

VICTORIA
I knew she was bad. She ordered
coffee all night.

MAX
Cheapest thing on the menu for
\$9.95!

The crowd shakes their heads in disappointment at the Redhead.

The Police Cadet puts on latex gloves and puts the purse and contents into a large plastic evidence bag.

DETECTIVE
Let's go! You're coming with us!

The Detective and Police Cadet glare at the Redhead before heading to the front door, the music is blaring, and wild drinking and flirting are everywhere.

The Cadet smiles at phone number written on one of his hands.

POLICE CADET
I can't wait to come back here as a
regular police officer. I've got
dates lined up.

The Cadet smiles at Katina.

REDHEAD
(to the Cadet)
Let me give you my number. Can I
borrow a pen from your bag?

The Cadet starts to dig into an evidence bag, but the Detective stops him and glares at the Redhead.

DETECTIVE
You have the right to remain
silent...

REDHEAD
(interrupts)
Yeah, yeah, yeah.
(beat)
The Chef burned my finger, Emma was
a ho, Dash was a slumlord, and Beto
was a thug! Nobody liked any of
them.
(yells)
And the owners and the rest of them
are lucky I ran out of ink!

The Redhead turns to see she is being live-streamed by everyone.

DETECTIVE
(to the Redhead)
What part of 'the right to remain
silent' did you miss?

The Detective looks around at the pretentious snobs, but whispers to the Redhead.

DETECTIVE (CONT'D)
We're not that lucky! They, and
you, are capable of reproducing!

POLICE CADET
(to the Redhead)
Can I visit you in prison?

The Detective pushes the Redhead toward the exit.

Everyone HEARS Sam yell from inside the bar.

SAM (O.C.)
We won! We won! Best Speakeasy in
America!

The crowd CHEERS!

SAM (CONT'D)
(yells)
Last call!

The Detective shakes her head in disgust.

We HEAR glasses clanging in toasts and cocktail shakers shaking.

FADE OUT.

THE END