

Fighting Couple:

MAN: I'm tryin' to explain what happened, if *she* would just let me talk—

WOMAN: I'm only interrupting you because you keep making things up.

MAN: I haven't even said anything yet! Besides, how can you still be mad at me and carrying on with this attitude when an old lady is dead?

WOMAN: Oh, don't think that dead old lady is going to get you out of explaining why you've been working late with *Chrissy* every night this week.

MAN: This is not the time, *Patrica*. And I already explained to you, *Chrissy* was assigned to my team, and she's the only one who is worth a damn in that department. I told you to come sit and read a book while we worked if that would make you feel better.

WOMAN: You only said that because you *knew* that I wouldn't want to come down there and sit around while you read some papers.

MAN: That's your choice. Anyway, back to what we're talking about right now, *Patricia*, our *dead neighbor*...

WOMAN: Yeah, I guess you're right. Poor, Mrs. – What was her name?

MAN: Ms. Smith... Don't you pay attention to anyone besides yourself?

WOMAN: Yes! Of course I do. I just forgot her name because I'm a little bit *traumatized* after all of this.

MAN: *Traumatized?!*

WOMAN: Yes, *Robert*. I am traumatized.

MAN: Well, then you just sit down and shut up while I explain what happened...

Back to what I was saying. Ms. Smith lived across the street from us. She never came out of her apartment much, and when she did we rarely talked to her. Mostly she just went over to visit the neighbor next to her. All I remember happening is *Patricia* throwing my briefcase outside – which had some very important papers in it by the way – and me running out to collect them before they blew away. You know, there was some sensitive information on those. Contracts and whatnot–

WOMAN: The day they trust *you* with important information is the day that pigs fly, and I didn't see any flying swine today. It was probably just more evidence of you cheating that you didn't want me to find.

MAN: You see how she talks to me?! Anyway, we were outside fighting, which I am not proud to admit. And next thing I know a car comes screeching around the corner, out of control, and drove right into Ms. Smith's front window.

WOMAN: We never saw it coming. But I have to admit, the car looked a little familiar.

MAN: You can't tell two cars apart except by looking at the price tag, and even then you only remember the expensive ones.

WOMAN: Well, maybe you'd find out how much I know if you spent some time with me. – Like I said, the car had been around here once or twice before. I saw it while I was weeding out front, but it would just drive around and then leave. I remembered it because it had a bumper sticker that said, "Shit Happens," and you don't see many of those around. I mean, it's not the '90s anymore.

MAN: A man almost dies, and you want to criticize his bumper sticker?

WOMAN: A man who mowed down poor Ms. Smith with his tacky bumper stickered-vehicle.

MAN: Fair enough.

WOMAN: That's all we know. Now, if you'll excuse us, we have some talking to do between ourselves.

Officer:

Well, I already took the report you see, but if you really need to know what happened, for the sake of your article I guess I can go over it again. You'll make sure to say my name in the article, right? It's Officer Jeff Johnson. You know how to spell Johnson? You sure? Because I can spell it for you; it's J-o-h-n-s-o-n.

Anyways, I got the call when I was three blocks away investigating a robbery. We figured out that it was just a false alarm, and I was getting back into my car when I heard the call over the radio. I responded, since I was so close and everything, and headed on over to the residence. When I got here, I saw Mr. and Mrs. Meyer arguing in the street, but not quite in the middle. Moreso just at the end of their driveway, but they were yelling pretty loud, you see. People were peeking out of their windows to watch it happen. We'd been called here before on account of their arguments. Mrs. Meyer always seems to be picking the fights; just like a woman, am I right?

So, as I'm pulling up to investigate the domestic disturbance report, I park my car and gather my equipment to walk over to them. Wouldn't you believe it, in the one moment I looked down at my gear, that car went flying through Ms. Smith's front window. I didn't even see it coming – and I'm trained to be aware of my surroundings – so I doubt she even knew what hit her. Just BAM! Killed on impact. The scene wasn't as bloody as I thought it would be though.

Of course, I immediately called for backup. You know, my blood pressure hasn't been so great lately, so I didn't want to handle this thing on my own. After calling it in, I got out of my car and jogged over to the home, but it was a slow jog, so some neighbors arrived on the scene before me. Don't you worry though, I got that driver and I gave him the strictest DUI test I ever gave anyone. But he passed it and gave me his testimony.

It was a few more minutes before the backup arrived, and some news crews weren't far behind. Well, I'm sure you can imagine it was pretty easy to lose track of the driver in the midst of all of that going on. I'm not proud of it, mind ya, but it's my duty to report that's what happened. Oh, we found him again. It turned out he'd just gone across the street to get a little bit of breathing room. I saw a blonde wave to him as she crossed the street into the crowd of officers and newspeople.

You can find all of that in the report though. Didn't leave out a single detail about the event. The body is bagged, the car is towed, now all that's left for today is to notify the next of kin. The Coroners will take care of that though. All in a day's work.

Coroner:

As far as our cases go, this one has been pretty close and shut. According to the preliminary report. Of course, we're still waiting on *conclusive* findings from the medical examiner, but we're sure those will back up everything we know up to this point, after consulting with all departments involved with the case.

Ms. Smith, Ms. Aberdeen Smith, was killed at 10:04pm, October 4th by driver Ernest Norbden. Mr. Norbden was driving his 1999 Tahoe down Muenster St. when he realized he had lost control of his breaks. He pressed down on the pedal, but there was no response from the automobile. In an attempt to bring the Tahoe to a halt, he began to intentionally swerve from one side of the street to the other to try and decrease his speed. However, he was moving so fast that when he swerved to the left, it took him down the cul-de-sac that Ms. Smith lived on, Pecorino Way. While swerving and trying to establish control of his vehicle, Mr. Norbden ran into the front window of Ms. Smith's home. She seemed to have been very close to the window, as if she were peering out of it during the time of the crash, because the car hit her as though she were the first obstacle it encountered before being slowed to a halt. Eventually, the thing that stopped it was a giant cat scratcher pole that stretched to the ceiling. There is still no sign of a cat.

From what we can tell, Ms. Smith was killed at the moment of impact, and we're nearly certain that's what the medical examiner's report will show, though, we won't have that for a day or so.

Car Driver: All I can tell you is what I told the police. I was driving my car, and turned around that corner. Sure, maybe I was going a little faster than I told the cops, but not much faster. When I pushed the brake pedal, nothing happened. Then I slammed on it and still nothing happened, and that's when I went crashing into the front window.

I feel bad about this, I mean, I really do. Never killed anyone before. But at least she didn't have much more time on her clock, right? I heard one of the policemen say she was in her 80s or something – or maybe he was saying she was going to turn 80 – either way, it doesn't matter. What I'm saying is that, I feel bad, truly, I am upset.

But she was an old lady.

Okay, back to what happened. Like I said, I lost control and just crashed. Honestly, I can't believe I'm only coming out of this with a few scrapes. It was intense! A rush of adrenaline. Anyways, when the car hit the window, I also heard a big thud and felt the car bump. When I opened my eyes, there she was, broken in half, bleeding on the hood of my car.

I've never seen this woman before in my life, honestly.

You know, the cops are looking my car over right now, trying to figure out where everything went wrong. I'm pretty sure I know the cause though. It was my crazy ex, Sheila. I'm telling you, she cut my brakes and I just didn't realize it. Where I park my car is on the top of that hill right over there. So by the time I get to this corner, I'm rolling at a pretty steady pace. You know, about 40 miles per hour. That's why I couldn't stop.

It was definitely Sheila though. It had to be. She's totally nuts. You know, we've been broken up for weeks and I still see her driving around here; it's like she's following me, or something. As a matter of fact, I should go over there and tell the officers that. I do feel bad about killing that old broad though. Never seen her a day in my life.

Daughter: It still doesn't feel real. None of this does. Are we even here right now? One minute, I'm sitting at home, doing some needlepoint, and the next minute I'm getting a knock on my door telling me that my mom is dead. And not just that she's dead, but that she was hit by a car in her own home? What kind of sense does that make?! Who gets hit by a car in their own entryway. I keep wondering if there's a person who can answer all of these questions for me, but there doesn't seem to be one.

From what I've been told by the officers, my mom was standing right next to her window, that's why the impact from – I'm sorry, I just need a moment – the impact from the car was so deadly– I still can't wrap my head around it.

Back to what I was saying, I only know what the officers told me. They said that the car didn't even make an attempt to stop. It was as though the man sped through the window on purpose. Can you even imagine?! It's so horrifying. My poor mother.

No, it's true that I hadn't seen her in a few years; we hardly spoke. My mom had this way of pushing herself into other people's lives, a little bit too much. I needed to distance myself from her for a little while. But then, a little while turned into a few years, and I feel bad about it, I really do. Especially now. She didn't deserve to be run over and smashed up like that. No one deserves that.

I told her she didn't need to live here in the slums, with all of these other *people*. She wasn't rich, but she had enough money to buy a bigger house or something. When I called once, we talked about it, but Mom insisted that she was staying because this is where her friends were, and she liked how busy everything was. She said there was always something to look at and she loved it.

I'm sorry, can we continue this later? I can't do this right now. I mean, look at me. I'm still in so much shock I can't make the tears come, is that normal?

Adjacent Neighbor: Mrs. Smith was one of my greatest friends. I can't explain to you how upset I am. And in the front of her own home. It's unthinkable, really. We have been neighbors for the last 10 years, and had tea every day at the same time.

She'd always tell me about all of the new gossip that she'd picked up – Oh! How she lived for gossip! I could always count on her to have a fresh, new story or two every day, whether it was something about the neighbors, some public scandal, or someone in her family. You see, her family rarely visited her. In fact, I can't remember the last time her daughter came by. I probably wouldn't even recognize her if I saw her now. I think her name was Shelly, or Sheila? Something like that. Anyways, that was her only daughter. She seemed like a nice girl every time we spoke.

Then again, of course I'd expect Mrs. Smith to have a well-mannered child. She herself was so proper all of the time. Eating all of her meals with multiple forks and spoons. I used to always ask how she lived this way – everyone our age is on a fixed income, you know. She'd just say she'd invested wisely, and even if I needed any help, there was nothing to worry about, that she had lots of money.

You know, she was *my* best friend, but I think I was also hers too.

Wait a minute – is that the driver over there? Talking to the police? I could swear that I've seen him around here before. Of course, I wouldn't swear on the Lord's good name, but I know I've seen his face before. I just can't place him...

Oh yes, but back to Mrs. Smith. Why are you so interested in her life, anyway? She was a very private person, you know. She loved to find out what was going on in other people's lives because secretly I think it gave her a reason to not talk about her own. If she got everyone talking about the latest gossip and conspiracies, then they wouldn't ask her what was going on in *her* world. Sad, because she really was an extraordinary woman.

But yes, I'd have to describe her as nosy, when you put it that way. She was always telling me stories about things she'd seen that day, or who had been fighting in the middle of the night. You know, she had enough money to move out into a wonderful home of her own – that's what she always used to tell me – but she said she liked being around the people. Truth be told, I think they entertained her, but I think she also felt a little safer being among friends. A few times when I got her talking about herself, Mrs. Smith mentioned that some people were out to get her money. I'd always ask who, but she would just change the subject as soon as I did.