


It's All In The Writing

By Pam Hardin



All Creatures Great . . . And Not So Great

All Creatures Great... and Not So Great aired in the magical third season of *Moonlighting* in which nearly every episode explored Maddie and David's relationship and slowly brought them closer together. It is a perfect example of what made *Moonlighting* great. The episode seamlessly mixes comedy and drama, from the opening scene in the office with David ogling a woman through a telescope to the later scene in the church where David chastises Maddie for insisting that they lead a priest to a woman he has been listening to in confession.

The stories of the many *Moonlighting* script revisions have become legendary. As Charles Eglee discusses in his interview with *Moonlighting Strangers*, this episode began as a strikingly different story than the one that aired. Originally titled, *Our Father, Who's Not in Heaven*, some of the basic elements of the story were there from the beginning. The original story was about a priest who believed he was falling in love with a troubled woman who was coming to him for confession. However, from there, that early story goes in a completely different direction from the one that aired. That script spends a great deal of time having Maddie and David following the woman through a park in a paddleboat, and then to a race-track. As they follow her, they realize she is involved with a man

connected to the underworld. Because of her "connections," they disagree about whether they should tell the priest they found her. Contrary to the way the episode aired, David believes they should tell the priest the truth because he "can't lie to a priest." On the other hand, Maddie was initially looking for a happy ending. After discovering the woman's connection to the underworld, Maddie decides they should tell the priest they didn't find her in an attempt to make him forget her.

They do decide to tell him, but, before long, the woman ends up dead, and Maddie and David must tell the priest. The police believe that the man she was involved with is a prime suspect in the murder because of his history. But, in an unusual plot twist, while wandering around a church, David ends up in a confessional, and inadvertently hears the priest confess that he is the killer! In "confession," the priest admits that he went to the woman's apartment to declare his love, but was deeply hurt by her rejection, and hit her in a moment of passion. David decides to confront the priest with what he heard. When the priest tries to escape, a chase ensues up to the bell tower of the church, and the priest falls to his death. With the priest dead, David then tells the police that the priest was the murderer so that the woman's mobster boyfriend is not falsely accused. The final version

of the story that aired changes the names of all the characters and omits the mob references. Most importantly, it introduces the idea that the woman's husband and his mistress conspired to make it look as if the wife committed suicide, leaving the priest completely blameless.

As with many of the best *Moonlighting* episodes, the case is only a vehicle to explore the real story going on between Maddie and David. The opening scene is one of the funniest opening scenes of the show. It is completely rewritten and much improved from the opening scene in the original version, in which David does a stand up comedy routine for the office. Maddie and David then argue about appropriate joke material for the office and what is "offensive." In the final version, Maddie catches David "ogling" a woman out the window through a telescope. He agrees to give her the telescope, but then immediately switches to binoculars as soon as she closes the office door. This leads Maddie to demand that he apologize to his "victim," only to find out that the woman not only enjoys the attention, but also flirts back with David over the phone. Watching David and the woman flirt with one another irritates Maddie to no end, and she angrily snatches the phone from David's hand, yelling, "Tramp!" into it before slamming it down. David,

of course, is delighted to see her so jealous, and sarcastically asks Maddie, "What was that number again?" This opening seems to fit better with the rest of the episode as aired because it indirectly deals with David and Maddie's relationship in a very subtle way.

As they start to argue, the priest comes into the office to present the case. From here, the story delves into Maddie and David's differing views on religion and faith. The episode *In God We Strong Suspect* from the second season revealed that, contrary to what viewers might expect, David is the one who has religious faith while Maddie does not. *All Creatures...* explores the topic further. Maddie and David's initial meeting with the priest cleverly leads back to a very funny discussion in the car about "introspection" where we find out that while David thinks confession is "a great invention," Maddie has seen a psychiatrist. David's reaction to this news by looking right into the camera is priceless, and, again, another example of how *Moonlighting* interwove comedy with drama so well.

In the episode as aired, Maddie and David go to the priest and inform him that they found the woman he is looking for, but that she is married. Maddie and David leave him trying to decide how to handle this news. David is furious that Maddie was so adamant about telling the priest that they found the woman. After they have an argument at the church and David leaves, Maddie decides to try confession after all. Her heartfelt speech to the priest in the confes-

sional gives us one of our brief glimpses that Maddie, despite her protests, really does care about David. She tells the priest that David is "weird, but there's something inside him. A gyroscope or something." In typical *Moonlighting* fashion, as she is pouring her heart out, the priest falls asleep, just as Maddie told David that her psychiatrist had done in one of their sessions. This scene is one of the best of the episode, and was not in the early version. It seems to have replaced the earlier scene in the paddleboat in which Maddie tries to talk to David about knowing "where you stand in a person's life." On the surface, the lines seem to be referring to the priest, but, of course, they also apply to her and David. What made the confessional scene so much more effective than that original one was that it seemed much more in character for Maddie to be so honest in private than directly to David.

Interesting to note is that, despite the many changes from the early version of the story to the one that aired, many of the same lines remained in the script. However, in several cases, lines were changed from Maddie to David or vice versa, particularly those about whether they should tell the priest that they have found the woman. The early version of the script has Maddie speaking many of the lines David spoke when the episode aired. Initially, she was the one with reservations about telling the priest that they found the woman he was seeking. By the time the episode aired, the roles were reversed and David was the one

who argues that they may be "leading the priest into temptation." This is consistent with how David reacted in *In God We Strongly Suspect*, when we find that he does believe in God, and is very upset to find out that Maddie does not. It's another indication that David may not be just the wild party guy he seems to be. Similarly, Maddie's last speech to David in the office reveals that she might not be as self-assured as she comes across outwardly. When she admits that she did go to confession and that David is the closest person to her in California, we see how much influence he does have over her, and how much she does care about him. Unfortunately, he never hears this because, just like the priest and her psychiatrist had done, David falls asleep as Maddie is talking to him.

Lastly, what would a classic *Moonlighting* episode be without a chase scene? The chase scene in this episode includes some of the funniest lines by David, naturally full of sexual innuendo, and complete with religious music to add to the absurdity of it all. As they chase the murderer, David falls on top of Maddie several times with classic lines such as "Right attitude, wrong position" and later "We gotta get one of those illustrated manuals." Add in a sideline story about Bert and Agnes' growing romance, and this episode has all the elements that made *Moonlighting* so brilliant.

Beginning on the next page is a scene from *Our Father, Who's Not in Heaven (All Creatures...)* that used *I'm A Girl Watcher* differently than what made it to air.

Script excerpt courtesy of Pam Hardin.