

= Leave It to Beaver ( Veronica Mars ) =

" Leave It to Beaver " is the twenty @-@ second and final episode of the first season of the American television series Veronica Mars . Series creator Rob Thomas wrote the story , and collaborated with Diane Ruggiero to write the teleplay . The season finale was directed by Michael Fields , and was first aired on May 10 , 2005 in the United States on UPN .

The finale concludes the storyline of Lilly Kane 's murder , as Veronica Mars ( Kristen Bell ) finally discovers the identity of the murderer after investigating the mystery with her father Keith Mars ( Enrico Colantoni ) throughout the season . Thomas said that the finale was more ambitious than the average episode , requiring a larger budget and more filming than usual . " Leave It to Beaver " was watched by 2 @. @ 99 million American viewers on its original airing . Critical reaction to the episode was generally positive , and several critics praised Thomas ' use of red herrings .

= = Background = =

The first season revolves around Veronica 's investigation of her best friend Lilly 's murder . Prior to the murder , Veronica was dumped by her boyfriend , Duncan Kane ( Teddy Dunn ) , who was also Lilly 's brother . After Lilly was killed , Veronica 's father , County Sheriff Keith Mars , accused Lilly 's father , popular software billionaire Jake Kane ( Kyle Secor ) , of being involved in the murder . This provoked Neptune 's wrath and Keith 's ousting as sheriff in a recall election . Veronica 's mother , Lianne Mars ( Corinne Bohrer ) , developed a drinking problem and left town . Veronica 's " 09er " friends ? wealthy students from the fictional 90909 ZIP code ? forced her to choose between them and her father ; Veronica chose her father .

After being voted out as sheriff , Keith opens a private investigation agency , Mars Investigations , where Veronica works part @-@ time . Veronica helps her father solve cases and conducts her own investigations on behalf of friends and acquaintances at school . Veronica discovers new evidence which suggests that Abel Koontz ( Christian Clemenson ) , the man imprisoned after confessing to Lilly 's murder , is innocent . As Veronica delves deeper into the murder case , she also works on other investigations , seeks her mother 's whereabouts and deals with the aftermath of being drugged and raped during an " 09er " party . Things get more complicated when Veronica falls into a relationship with Lilly 's ex @-@ boyfriend Logan Echolls ( Jason Dohring ) , who for a time held Veronica partly responsible for Lilly 's death and went out of his way to harass her .

In the previous episode , Keith proves the innocence of convicted murderer Koontz , who had falsely confessed to murdering Lilly . Veronica , who believed that she had been raped the previous year at a party , discovers that she and Duncan had sex while under the influence of GHB ; Duncan left that next morning because he believed Veronica was his sister . Veronica spends time with her boyfriend Logan in his pool house , but discovers a hidden video system linking to cameras focused on the bed . Veronica is shocked and goes home , only to find her mother Lianne has returned from rehab .

= = Plot = =

When a reporter writes an article about Koontz 's innocence , Duncan demands the truth from his parents , Jake and Celeste Kane ( Lisa Thornhill ) , who tell him that they arrived home one night to find Duncan covered in blood and holding Lilly 's body . Cassidy Casablancas ( Kyle Gallner ) tells Veronica that on the weekend of Lilly 's murder , he had gone surfing in Mexico with Logan and Dick Casablancas ( Ryan Hansen ) ; however , Logan had driven back to Neptune to see Lilly . Veronica and Keith discover that a shot glass Logan bought is on the evidence record of Lilly 's bedroom and car . Talking to Keith on the phone , Veronica suggests that Logan is the murderer , and their conversation is overheard by the leader of the Latino biker gang PCHers , Eli " Weevil " Navarro ( Francis Capra ) , who had a relationship with Lilly .

Keith ends his relationship with Wallace 's mother Alicia Fennel ( Erica Gimpel ) to give Lianne a second chance . Because Celeste refused to pay the \$ 50 @, @ 000 reward for finding Duncan ,

Keith sues the Kanes , who agree to pay if Veronica signs away any future claim to their estate . Once Veronica signs , Keith shows her the DNA test that proves he is her father , meaning Veronica never had a claim of the estate . Logan is arrested , and once released he angrily breaks up with Veronica for providing the evidence against him . Logan then explains that when he saw Lilly after returning from Mexico , he knew their relationship was over and wrote a letter which he left in her car .

Veronica realizes that Logan 's letter was never found , and searches Lilly 's room during a dinner party at the Kane 's household . Duncan enters the room and they discover several videotapes which show Lilly having an affair with Logan 's father , Aaron Echolls ( Harry Hamlin ) . Veronica believes that Lilly found the tapes and refused to return them , which angered Aaron and he killed her ; Duncan arrived home to find Lilly dead and had an epileptic fit , at which time Jake and Celeste returned home . While an unseen person watches them from a closet , Veronica calls Keith and tells him that she will bring home the tapes , noting that Aaron is at the party . Before she leaves , Veronica tells Duncan that they are not related . Meanwhile , Logan is drunk and stands on a bridge railing . Weevil and the PCHers arrive and they initiate a fight .

While driving home , Veronica discovers Aaron in the back seat of her car and crashes into a power pole . Although both are knocked unconscious , Veronica awakens first and distributes the tapes around a nearby house . Aaron traps Veronica in a fridge , and when Keith arrives , he lights it on fire . Keith is burnt freeing Veronica , and Aaron is hit by a truck while trying to escape . The police arrive and Keith and Aaron are taken away on stretchers as Aaron is read his rights . Jake vows to see Aaron fry for his actions and is also arrested . Keith wakes up in hospital to find Alicia by his side . Veronica arrives home and tells her mother to leave before Keith comes home ; she knows that Lianne is still drinking and did not finish her rehab . Lianne packs her bags and steals the \$ 50 @, @ 000 settlement check from the Kanes before she leaves . Veronica dreams about her and Lilly floating on a pool raft in a pool full of flowers , and they say their final goodbyes . Veronica wakes up and answers the door , and tells the unseen person , " I was hoping it would be you " .

= = Production = =

The first season of Veronica Mars features a different " case of the week " each episode , and the season @-@ long mystery of Lilly Kane 's murder . In addition to developing a separate mystery for each episode , the writers also had to provide clues that would lead to the murder 's resolution in the season finale . The murder mystery plot was planned from the beginning of the season and the killer 's identity remained the same throughout production . Thomas said that at the beginning of the season , " I know the broad strokes , I know who did it , I know how it was done , I know the big arcs , but we 're always filling in the details . Those are week to week . It 's a week to week challenge in the writers room figuring out how much information we want to dole out to the audience . "

Although series creator Rob Thomas always planned on Harry Hamlin 's character Aaron Echolls as the murderer , this reveal almost didn 't happen because Hamlin was almost unavailable to shoot the season finale due to a movie he had booked in Australia . However , he decided to continue on Veronica Mars instead .

Although the season 's plan was changed very little , Thomas said that Logan became a much bigger character than anticipated . Thomas attributed this to Jason Dohring being an engaging performer , and the crew wanting to write scenes for him . While the budget for each episode was around \$ 1 @. @ 7 million , an extra \$ 400 @, @ 000 was spent for the finale . Filming was extended by one full day with the first unit and an extra three days of filming with the second unit . Thomas promised that there would be " more action than you 've ever seen on Veronica Mars . "

Speaking about the episode 's filming , Thomas said , " our final Lilly moment is just beautiful . I think Veronica and Lilly saying goodbye to each other is what people want to see . As much as who killed Lilly Kane . " For the finale , Thomas promised " 80 percent total satisfaction . People will know who killed Lilly Kane . And there won 't be that twist at the end that ' perhaps they didn 't do it . ' I 'm not going to be leaving people like that . However , at the end of the episode , it gives us a pretty big cliffhanger question as well . "

= = Reception = =

= = = Ratings = = =

" Leave It to Beaver " was watched by 2 @. @ 99 million American viewers on its original airing , ranking number 98 out of 112 in the weekly charts . This was an increase over the pilot , which was viewed by 2 @. @ 49 million American viewers . The first season averaged 2 @. @ 5 million viewers per episode .

= = = Reviews = = =

Jesse Hassenger of PopMatters found the finale to be " breathlessly paced " . However , the writer was also dissatisfied with the cliffhanger , and hoped that the second season would not increase the series ' focus on Veronica 's relationships . Hassenger wrote , " so far , the series has eschewed the relationship angst so common in other teen @- @ centric shows ; Neptune hearts get broken , yes , but the show never stoops to that will @- @ they @- @ or @- @ won 't @- @ they dynamic . Veronica is that rare television character who 's too interesting for love triangles . " Filip Vukcevic of IGN thought that while the resolution of the murder was satisfying , it could have been better ; " I liked the way everything played out , but I didn 't get the Sixth Sense moment I was hoping for . I wanted the season finale to blow my mind , instead all it got out of me was , ' Ah , I see . That 's cool . ' " Vukcevic wrote that the pace of the season increased exponentially , and was at its best during the final episode . Both reviewers praised Rob Thomas 's use of red herrings . Vukcevic felt that " as the finale approaches you are led to believe that the murderer could be any one of several different people - not any easy thing to pull off convincingly . What makes good TV is audience participation . If you feel for a character or are puzzling out a mystery , you 're involved . And when you 're involved , you 're having a good time . " Hassenger cited Lianne , Duncan and Logan as the main red herrings .

Mike Duffy of the Detroit Free Press included the episode on his list of " 12 season finales you won 't want to miss " , citing " great writing , a merrily dark sense of humor and Bell 's self @- @ assured smart @- @ girl charm " as the main reasons to watch . Screenwriter and director Kevin Smith praised the " seat @- @ of @- @ your @- @ pants " season finale , writing that it managed to " thread the needle with the Lilly Kane murder so well , it never feels marginalized or played out over 22 episodes " . Smith compared the year @- @ long murder mystery to that of Twin Peaks , stating that " unlike Peaks , when the murderer is revealed and the storyline wrapped up in the final [ episode ] , it doesn 't feel like the show 's outlived its relevance ; thanks to the crisp writing , the deft fleshing @- @ out of the Mars universe and the endearing cast , you ? re left wanting Veronica 's story to continue . "

Price Peterson , writing for TV.com , gave the episode an extremely positive review , writing that it was " stellar ? just a perfect hour of television and a fantastic end to the season . I still can 't believe how well they pulled off the mystery . I did NOT see Aaron Echolls as the killer . " Rowan Kaiser of The A.V. Club gave a glowing review , praising the Keith @- @ Veronica dynamic , the conclusions to the story arcs , and the final sequence after it is revealed that Aaron is the murderer . " It ? s also an interesting choice to have the reveal come about two @- @ thirds of the way through the episode , and have the episode end with a dramatic chase and fight scene . Veronica has so rarely been in direct personal danger that having Aaron Echolls chase and capture her , and having Keith show up for a brutal fight and rescue , is jarring . And I think it is effective . " Television Without Pity gave the episode an " A " .

Give Me My Remote listed the episode as the third best episode of Veronica Mars , writing " everything about this episode is superb , from the plotlines , to the stunts , and the performances . Kristen Bell , in particular , churned out gut- wrenching , Emmy- worthy scenes . " IGN ranked the episode as the best episode of Veronica Mars , writing " Once you realize Aaron is the one , you 're

glued to your seat for the rest of the episode , possibly hiding behind a blanket . Getting to this reveal was worth the season @-@ long wait . " BuzzFeed listed the episode as the second best episode of the series , calling it " one of the most intense , thrilling , and emotional episodes of the show . " On a similar list , TV Line ranked the episode as the fourth best episode of the show .