# [LAW & ORDER: SPECIAL VICTIMS UNIT: Warren Leight Previews Carisi and Barba’s Courtroom ‘Boxing Match’](https://www.givememyremote.com/remote/2021/01/05/law-order-special-victims-unit-barba-svu-return-carisi-warren-leight/?utm_campaign=shareaholic&utm_medium=twitter&utm_source=socialnetwork&s=09)

January 5, 2021 by [Marisa Roffman](https://www.givememyremote.com/remote/author/marisa/)



***LAW & ORDER: SPECIAL VICTIMS UNIT — “Guardians and Gladiators” Episode 22003 — Pictured: Peter Scanavino as Detective Sonny Carisi — (Photo by: Virginia Sherwood/NBC)***

[LAW & ORDER: SPECIAL VICTIMS UNIT](https://www.givememyremote.com/remote/category/law-order/svu/) kicks off its 2021 run with a bang, as former [ADA Rafael Barba’s (Raúl Esparza)](https://www.givememyremote.com/remote/2020/12/03/svu-season-22-barba-return-raul-esparza/) help is requested on a case during the January 7th hour, “Sightless in a Savage Land”…and it quickly spirals into Barba signing on to be the defense counsel.

“Over time, the politics of the DAs office wear down many ADAs,” executive producer [Warren Leight](https://www.givememyremote.com/remote/2019/09/20/law-order-special-victims-unit-warren-leight-reflects-on-the-unexpected-lewis-arc/) teased via email. “And Barba’s departure certainly was not without conflict.”

Though Barba briefly appeared [on-screen in season 21](https://www.givememyremote.com/remote/2020/02/07/about-last-night-greys-anatomy-a-million-little-things-law-order-special-victims-unit-and-more-2/), his official exit was in season 19’s “The Undiscovered Country”; in the episode, Barba’s move to mercy-kill a dying infant led to his trial (and subsequent acquittal), and, ultimately, his decision to leave his job.

“We’d written earlier that Barba had been involved in political work [last year;](https://www.givememyremote.com/remote/2020/02/07/about-last-night-greys-anatomy-a-million-little-things-law-order-special-victims-unit-and-more-2/) now that the election is (we hope) over, it was time for him to find a new purpose,” Leight said. “Many lawyers sell out and join a major firm, others go straight-up pro bono (say, working for the Innocence Project), but Barba I think both misses the action, and likes the attention that this particular case brings.”

Complicating matters is that Barba’s seat at the defense table puts him directly at odds with his old friend—and current ADA—Carisi (Peter Scanavino).

“When we wrote and prepped the script, we talked about the Carisi/Barba scenes as rounds of a boxing match,” Leight revealed. “One fighter, more or less, trained the other. Now they are in the ring, neither wanting to give an inch. Director (and EP) Norberto Barba brought a pugilistic approach to each round.”

The stakes are high for both men: [Carisi has often struggled with his place as an ADA](https://www.givememyremote.com/remote/2020/12/17/svu-season-22-spoilers-interview-warren-leight/) after working at the 1-6 for so many years, while Barba’s last time in a courtroom was when his own freedom was on the line.

“Emotionally, I think it’s obviously more loaded for Carisi than Barba–it’s never easy to go up against your mentor,” Leight acknowledged. “But Barba, too, has something to prove. He left the DA’s office under a cloud, and he comes back, seeking if not revenge, at least closure.”

But on a lighter note, Barba isn’t the only familiar face in the hour: “Old friends will return throughout the year. Next up, Fin’s former partner Phoebe Baker, in a great turn by [Jennifer Esposito](https://www.givememyremote.com/remote/2019/02/13/law-order-special-victims-unit-brothel-photos/). She’ll return in time for [New Year’s Eve](https://www.givememyremote.com/remote/2020/12/17/svu-season-22-spoilers-interview-warren-leight/).”

***LAW & ORDER: SPECIAL VICTIMS UNIT, Thursdays, 9/8c, NBC***

**RELATED:**

* [LAW & ORDER: SPECIAL VICTIMS UNIT Boss Previews Tension Between Carisi and the Squad, Kat and Garland’s Struggles](https://www.givememyremote.com/remote/2020/12/17/svu-season-22-spoilers-interview-warren-leight/)
* [Christopher Meloni Shares First Photos of Elliot Stabler’s SVU Return](https://www.givememyremote.com/remote/2020/12/08/svu-stabler-return-of-the-prodigal-son/)
* [LAW & ORDER: SPECIAL VICTIMS UNIT: Raúl Esparza Sets Season 22 Return](https://www.givememyremote.com/remote/2020/12/03/svu-season-22-barba-return-raul-esparza/)
* [SVU Boss Shares First Rehearsal Photo From ORGANIZED CRIME Crossover](https://www.givememyremote.com/remote/2020/12/02/svu-photo-stabler-benson-reunion-2021/)
* [LAW & ORDER: SPECIAL VICTIMS UNIT: Wentworth Miller Books Season 22 Return](https://www.givememyremote.com/remote/2020/11/17/wentworth-miller-svu-season-22-return/)
* [Mariska Hargitay and Christopher Meloni Reunite Ahead of LAW & ORDER Collaboration](https://www.givememyremote.com/remote/2020/07/19/mariska-hargitay-chris-meloni-reunion-2020-svu-organized-crime/)
* [Christopher Meloni Teases LAW & ORDER: ORGANIZED CRIME and the Benson-Stabler Reunion](https://www.givememyremote.com/remote/2020/07/07/law-and-order-organized-crime-chris-meloni-benson-stabler-reunion/)
* [NBC Renews LAW & ORDER: SPECIAL VICTIMS UNIT for 3 More Seasons](https://www.givememyremote.com/remote/2020/02/27/nbc-renews-law-order-svu-season-24/)
* [Dick Wolf on What He’s Learned About Expanding Television Franchises](https://www.givememyremote.com/remote/2020/01/06/dick-wolf-franchises-fbi-most-wanted/)
* [Neal Baer Reflects on Robin Williams’ LAW & ORDER: SPECIAL VICTIMS UNIT Guest Spot](https://www.givememyremote.com/remote/2019/09/20/authority-robin-williams-svu-neal-baer/)
* [LAW & ORDER: SPECIAL VICTIMS UNIT: Michele Fazekas and Tara Butters Look Back at ‘Fault’](https://www.givememyremote.com/remote/2019/09/20/law-order-special-victims-unit-fault-interview-michele-fazekas-tara-butters/)

*Follow* [*@GiveMeMyRemote*](http://twitter.com/givememyremote) *and* [*@marisaroffman*](http://www.twitter.com/marisaroffman) *on Twitter for the latest TV news. Connect with other TV fans on* [*GIVE ME MY REMOTE’s official Facebook page*](http://www.facebook.com/GiveMeMyRemote)*.*

*And be the first to see our exclusive videos by subscribing to our* [*YouTube channel*](https://www.youtube.com/user/GiveMeMyRemoteTV)*.*

*As an Amazon Associate we earn from qualifying purchases made through links/ads placed on the site.*

### **RELATED POSTS**

* [LAW & ORDER: SPECIAL VICTIMS UNIT Exclusive Clip: Jennifer Esposito’s Phoebe Shares Insight into the Squad’s NYE Case](https://www.givememyremote.com/remote/2021/01/07/law-order-special-victims-unit-nye-svu-phoebe-return-video/)
* [LAW & ORDER: SPECIAL VICTIMS UNIT: ‘Sightless in a Savage Land’ Photos](https://www.givememyremote.com/remote/2021/01/06/law-order-special-victims-unit-sightless-in-a-savage-land-photos/)
* [LAW & ORDER: SPECIAL VICTIMS UNIT Boss Previews Tension Between Carisi and the Squad, Kat and Garland’s Struggles](https://www.givememyremote.com/remote/2020/12/17/svu-season-22-spoilers-interview-warren-leight/)
* [LAW & ORDER: SPECIAL VICTIMS UNIT: Raúl Esparza Sets Season 22 Return](https://www.givememyremote.com/remote/2020/12/03/svu-season-22-barba-return-raul-esparza/)
* [LAW & ORDER: SPECIAL VICTIMS UNIT: ‘The Long Arm of the Witness’ Photos](https://www.givememyremote.com/remote/2021/01/20/law-order-special-victims-unit-the-long-arm-of-the-witness-photos/)