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by Michael Logan



To the Slammer

Linda Dano joins *Guiding Light* in a killer role

"This is going to be the toughest challenge of my career," says **Linda Dano**. The Emmy-winning diva (*Another World*) and QVC fashion expert will return to soaps April 15 as a jailed murderess on CBS' *Guiding Light*. But it's not the role that'll be hard for her. It's the ban on bling. "I'm okay with the \$8.99 prison wardrobe, but I don't know what it's like to act without earrings," cracks the glamour gal. "I'm not even sure I can!"

Dano will play Lena Kendall, a failed actress turned killer who shares a cell with heroine Harley Cooper. Played by Beth Ehlers, Harley will be convicted of murder on *GL*'s March 28 episode. But all is not what it seems: Viewers will quickly learn that Lena is in cahoots with someone in Springfield and has been set up to keep tabs on Harley.

TOP: YOLANDA PEREZ; BOTTOM: JONATHAN EILEY



Dano and late husband Frank Attardi

After the six-week *GL* gig, Dano will produce and star in a fashion makeover pilot for SoapNet, and host SoapNet's red carpet Daytime Emmy coverage (May 20). She'll then tackle the title role in "Mame" at the famed Bucks County Playhouse outside Philadelphia (June 8 through 19). "I've never done a play, much less a musical," notes Dano. "I don't know what possessed me to say yes. I'm either fearless...or nuts."

Don't let the jokes fool you, for under this merry facade lies a sad lady. Last September, Dano's husband of 26 years, ad executive Frank Attardi, died of lung cancer, and her mother, Evelyn, died just nine days later. Understandably, the actress went into an emotional tailspin, but when she was recently diagnosed as clinically depressed she decided to go public. Dano is spearheading a depression awareness campaign called Support Partners (www.depressionhurts.com), which is aimed at people suffering from depression and those who want to help them.

"My life is a pretense," confesses the 61-year-old star. "Oh, I still seem like the same old Linda—I laugh, make jokes, keep busy—but I carry around this second skin of deep sorrow that makes me not want to get up in the morning. Many people live this way, and many

have done it for so long they don't even know they're depressed."

Support Partners will provide free guidebooks on symptoms, medical resources and support groups. "This isn't about me selling drugs," says Dano, who has declined to take meds for her

own condition. "It's about me saying, 'Talk!' Go to a friend, a doctor, a support group and tell the truth about what you're living. Sharing is the single thing that can help us all."

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