



A Murder Mystery Pack
by
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Customer Taster

Lights, Camera, Murder

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Siddlington Studios is shooting the latest British blockbuster, 'A Bittersweet Affair', and competition winners have been invited along for a day to watch the filming and to see what goes on behind the camera. The cast and crew have been working on the film for a few weeks and tensions are running high. Old flames, jealous lovers and past tragedy are just a few of the extras to make an appearance. Will the competition winners get to see more than just their favourite film stars and will everyone make it safely to the end of the day...

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About the murder mystery pack

Lights, Camera, Murder is a scripted murder mystery event that will also require some background character knowledge to enable the cast to answer questions put to them by their audience.

There is a cast of nine as well as one narrator who will guide your audience and help organize the questioning sections of the evening.

The murder evening is intended to be run in a hall with a stage or suitable acting area, with tables around the hall for your audience. The set up is much the same as you would have for a quiz evening, i.e. teams of say 6-8 people per table. Each table has a set of table clues to read through and will also have the opportunity to ask questions as the evening progresses.

What's included?

The full pack includes

- Organiser's Overview containing
 - Plot and Character overview (*included in this taster*)
 - General staging notes (*included in this taster*)
 - Character backgrounds (*sample in this taster*)
 - Props list
 - Overview of the Table Pack (audience material), showing the clues and red herrings (*sample in this taster*)
 - An evening plan with approximate timings (*included in this taster*)
 - Example questions
- The full script (*sample in this taster*)
- Table Pack - material for distribution to the audience
 - A set of table clues
 - Character profiles (*sample in this taster*)
 - Accusation sheet
- Script title page for 'A Bittersweet affair' (the characters supposedly have copies of the script)

Plot Overview and Cast

Today is Saturday 12th November 2005 and the action takes place at Siddlington Film Studios on the set of a new British romantic Comedy, 'A Bittersweet Affair'. Your audience are all competition winners who are here for a day on a film set. They have been watching some of the rehearsals and are set to meet some of the stars of the film and even appear in a crowd scene later in the evening. There are some old and new stars in this movie, a bit of jealousy and rivalry, a neurotic writer, a worried studio owner, a handful of technicians and an awful lot of egos for the director to deal with ... and that's without a room full of fans watching every move and listening to every word. It's little wonder that tempers are frayed.

The cast consists of:

Sam Harrison, American Hollywood actor and film star, playing Peter

Carrie Evans, famous Hollywood actress and film star, playing Diane

Jamie Powell, up and coming British Actor playing Grant

Victoria Keane, young theatre actress making her big break into films, playing Leanne

Jenny Maxwell, director

Tony Garrick, co-owner of Siddlington Studios

Sandy Weaver, hair and make-up

Jane Taylor, the Studios publicity officer

Karl Peters, author and screenplay writer

Narrator, one extra person to ensure the smooth running of the evening

Jenny has been rehearsing the big weepy scene where Diane is accidentally shot and dies in Peter's arms. Jane is trying to keep the audience amused and explain what's going on, without getting in the way. Karl is concerned that some of the actors are trying to change his script and Tony has dropped by to see how things are going. There is definitely some tension in the air. Carrie has been threatening to blackmail Sam, but he's called her bluff; Jamie is currently seeing Carrie, but has he started to believe some of the stories about her? Jenny blames Carrie for her brother's suicide and Tony is worried that Carrie is about to tell his wife about his affair with Victoria; Sandy hates Carrie for stealing Jamie away from her.

The stage is set for tragedy. Jenny calls them all back for a proper take, but someone has switched the gun and Carrie is really shot. Who had the motive and the opportunity? It seems that they all did.

Everyone is quick to accuse someone else, but it transpires that Sandy had finally had enough, switched guns and then sat back to watch her ex-lover gun down her love rival.

General Staging Notes

Casting & Rehearsal

Choose your performers and issue them with a copy of the entire pack.

You should hold as many rehearsals as you feel comfortable with.

The first rehearsal should concentrate on reading through the pack and familiarising yourselves with the characters, backgrounds and format of the evening, before moving on to a read through.

Subsequent rehearsals should be used for moving or blocking the action. This may need to be revised to suit your venue.

It is impossible to rehearse the question sections of the evening as you can never tell exactly what people will ask, however have a read through the example questions sheet as this details some of the questions we have encountered in the past.

Facilities required for the performers

You will need a separate and private room in which to change and base yourselves when not required on stage. The victim will also use this room after being murdered.

The performers should also be given the same food as the audience.

It is always a good idea to visit the venue a few weeks before the performance to enable you to tailor the action to suit your venue

Hall layout and event format

This murder evening can be performed in any space that is big enough to hold your audience and an acting area big enough to hold nine people comfortably. The audience members are your competition winners and sit at tables which can be scattered around the hall. Make sure you allow room between the tables for the cast to move freely around the hall. You can dress the set as elaborately as you wish or not at all. It is also fun to ask your audience to enter into the spirit of the evening so make sure your cast is happy to mingle when the action allows. You could also style your tickets appropriately.

Suggested timetable

7:30 pm	Guests arrive and are seated.
7:45 pm	Once all have arrived; the Narrator will explain the format of the evening
7:55 pm	Curtains open to reveal Sam, Carrie and Jamie.
8:00 pm	Act One
8:25 pm	End of Act One, Narrator wraps up and supper is served
9:15 pm	Cast returns and Narrator organises questioning
9:25 pm	Act Two
9:35 pm	End of Act Two and short break
9:45 pm	Cast returns and Narrator organises questioning
9:55 pm	Short break while guests complete Accusation forms
10:05 pm	Cast call for a spokesman from each table to read their accusation
10:15 pm	The big reveal
10:30 pm	End

Character backgrounds including motive and opportunity

The Film

'A Bittersweet Affair' is all set to be the latest British blockbuster to come out of Siddlington Studios. Adapted by Karl Peters from his own novel, this RomCom tells the story of forbidden love of a skinny latte. Siddlington Studios have managed to secure the services of two big Hollywood names as well as some promising British talent.

In partnership with Satin Chocolates, who just happen to manufacture a chocolate bar called Bittersweet, the Studios have offered a prize of A Film Star For A Day to anyone lucky enough to find a special ticket in their chocolate bar. Lucky winners will spend the day at the Studios, meet some of the stars, enjoy a tour of the Studios, watch some of the filming and even appear in the film as an extra in one of the scenes.

Carrie Evans

A household name with a string of hit movies behind her, as well as a string of love affairs with most of her leading men, and some of her leading women. She has been married and divorced four times and rumour has it that she is on the lookout for number five. She has a reputation as a bit of a man-eater and her weekend parties are legendary. She seems to be on the gossip pages every week and is quite open about her love life and revels in shocking people. None of this seems to have hurt her popularity, but there are plenty of former lovers who still hold a grudge about the way they were treated. She has just started seeing Jamie and is happy to flaunt her new love in front of everybody. Carrie is playing the role of Diane in this film.

Sam Harrison

Sam is American and a bit of a matinee idol, handsome and debonair. He has a squeaky clean image and has been married to his childhood sweetheart, Carol-Ann, for years. He has been in the business for a number of years and made his name in Hollywood as the young romantic lead in his younger days followed by a number of successful Westerns. He has worked with Carrie on a few occasions and she has made several passes at him, however he has turned her down every time. He is happily married and is not interested in having a fling with anyone, least of all Carrie. She has threatened to tell his wife that they have had an affair, but he has called her bluff as he doesn't think she would go through with it. He has been friends with Sandy for a couple of years, but it's purely platonic. Sam is playing the role of Peter in this film.

Motive: Worried that Carrie might go to his wife with lies about an affair ... and that his wife might believe them.

Opportunity: Was part of the scene when the shooting takes place, but could have found the key and made the switch, although it would have been tight.

Victoria Keane

Recently moved from a small travelling theatre company into the film industry. She met Tony while touring and he paid her lots of compliments and promised her a glittering career in the movie business. She fell for his charms and left the theatre company to start her new career ... and an affair with Tony. They have managed to keep the affair quiet, but Carrie somehow found out and confronted Victoria about it. She called her a talentless little slapper and threatened to go to the press with the whole story. Victoria is petrified of getting bad publicity. She is planning on dumping Tony now that she has made it. Vickie is playing the role of Leanne in this film.

Motive: Only just started out in the movies and is scared that Carrie is going to expose her affair with Tony and destroy her career before it's even begun.

Opportunity: Although she may have had time to find the key and exchange the gun, she didn't know about Carrie's threat to expose her until that day and so wouldn't have access to a real gun.

(Continued in the full pack.)

Table Pack

Several elements need to be distributed to the audience sleuths at the start of the event. These are a mixture of background information, murder clues (and red herrings) and “housekeeping”.

A couple of the elements are presented as Word documents so that they may be customised with pictures of the cast (and, for fun, other people).

Information Pack

PDF containing:-

Introduction Sheet	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Overview of the event. (No clues!)
Satin Chocolates	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Letter to a lucky winner of the competition
Siddlington Studios	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Letter to a competition winner detailing what they have won
Studios Takeover	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Newspaper report of Tony Garrick and Brian Taylor taking over the studios• Brief history of the studios and their plans for the future
Director's Death	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Report on the suicide of Dan Maxwell (Contains clues)
Jane's Letter	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Letter from Jane to Carrie (contains clues)
Accusation Sheet	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• For the audience to formalise their suspicions.

Customisable Elements

Three separate Word documents:-

The Twenty Minute Interview - Carrie Evans	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• (Contains clues)• <i>Requires a photo (in character) of Carrie</i>
Gossip Page	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Behind the scenes report from the set of 'A Bittersweet Affair'• Contains clues and red herrings• <i>Requires a photo, but not of a member of the cast!</i> (A couple of supposed celebrities at a supposed spa resort. If you can get a suitable picture of a couple of members of your audience in advance, so much the better!)
Your Cast	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• A very short biography of each of the cast members• <i>Requires a photo (in character) of each cast member</i>

Lights, Camera, Murder

Script Extract

Act One

(The lights in the main hall dim leaving only the curtains lit. Narrator steps through the curtains and addresses the audience.)

Narrator: Good evening ladies and gentlemen. You join us this evening at Siddlington Studios where filming of the new British blockbuster, 'A Bittersweet Affair', is taking place. You are all winners of a competition run by Satin Chocolates to be a Movie Star for the Day. In a few moments a representative of the studios will welcome you and explain a bit more about your big day, however all is not as it seems. At some point this evening a crime will be committed and it will be up to you to solve it, so make sure you watch and listen very carefully. On your tables you will find numerous items, which may or may not help you. You will get the chance to ask questions as the evening progresses, but I will give further instructions later on. I think they're just about ready for us, so good luck.

(The Narrator goes back off stage and a few moments later the curtains open to reveal Sam, Jamie and Carrie. Sam is centre stage facing Jamie who is stage right and is pointing a gun at Sam. Carrie is standing next to Sam, pleading with Jamie.)

Carrie: For God's sake Grant, think about what you're doing. This is insane.

Jamie: Stay out of this Diane, this is strictly between me and Peter.

Carrie: But you've got it all wrong, it's not how it looks at all. Please Grant.

Sam: It's okay Diane, Grant won't be doing anything silly. Now hand over the gun and let's talk about this like adults.

Jamie: Silly? I'll show you who's the silly one.

Carrie: No Grant!

(Carrie steps in front of Sam just as Jamie fires the gun. The bullet hits her instead of Sam and she staggers back into Sam's arms. There is a moment of stunned silence, then Jamie rushes across the stage to join Sam who has laid her on the floor and is kneeling over her.)

Jamie: My God! What have I done? Diane?

(Sam looks up at Jamie and then out into the audience.)

Sam: Someone call an ambulance, I think she's dead.

Jenny: **(From off stage.)** And cut!

(Jenny enters from stage left and crosses to the actors.)

Jenny: Okay, good rehearsal everyone, we'll do that for real a bit later. Sandy, can you do something with Jamie's make-up? He looks like a ghost out there. Sam and Carrie, can I have a quick word please?

(Everyone else now appears on stage and starts to look busy. Jenny takes Sam and Carrie towards the back of the stage where she gives notes and goes over some of the scripts and her ideas etc; Sandy approaches Jamie, but instead of waiting to be made up, he crosses to speak to Tony and hands him the gun. Sandy watches him go and then begins to fuss around, tidying up and checking that people are okay; Tony has followed Victoria onto stage, but she is ignoring him. He is intercepted by Jamie and they stand chatting, however he keeps a keen eye on Victoria; Karl enters with his head deep in the script. Victoria stops him and they have a brief conversation. Karl keeps glancing at Carrie; Jane is one of the first to arrive on stage, looking slightly flustered and carrying her trusty clipboard, which she refers to constantly. While all of the above is going on behind her, she steps forward and speaks to the audience, indicating the relevant people as she speaks about them.)

Jane: Hi everyone. I hope you're all enjoying yourself so far. My name is Jane and I work in the publicity department here at the Siddlington Studios. It's my job to look after you and make sure you all get the movie star treatment. As you've just seen, we're working on the big weepy scene of the film at the moment, but later on we'll be filming the ballroom scene and we'll be asking you to dress up and join us in front of the cameras. Okay, as you know this film is called 'A Bittersweet Affair' and it's the brainchild of Karl Peters, that's him over there. I'll see if he can spare us a few moments. Karl?

(Jane waves and calls until Karl can ignore her no longer. He excuses himself and joins Jane at the front of the stage.)

Jane: Hello Karl, I was just wondering if you'd be able to say a few words about the film to our competition winners?

Karl: Oh right ... erm ... okay. Well I suppose basically it's a comedy stroke love story set in the steamy world of coffee importing. My script is a story of unrequited love over a large skinny latte. There are a few twists and turns, plenty of laughs and of course a surprise ending, but I don't want to give too much away otherwise you won't come and see it.

(Karl then shrugs at Jane and walks back across the stage, studying his script.)

Jane: Oh right, well there we are then. That was short and sweet, wasn't it? Now then, the lady at the back there is Jenny Maxwell, our director. The two people with her need no introduction of course, Sam Harrison and Carrie Evans. They play the two lead roles, Peter and Diane.

(Tony is about to leave the stage when he spots Jane speaking to the audience and so crosses over to join her.)

Tony: Hi Jane, are these our lucky winners? Well, hi everyone and congratulations. I'm Tony, Tony Garrick and I'm co-owner of the Siddlington Studios. I hope you're enjoying your day with us? Jane here has a few surprises lined up for you I'm sure and I hope you'll enjoy dressing up later and joining us in the ballroom. Oh, I hope I haven't given anything away?

Jane: No, no. They all know what we've got in store for them.

Tony: That's good. Well, I'd better go and lock this gun away. I've been lumbered with the task of gun-master for the film, can you believe?

(Tony nods to the audience and the exits stage right with the gun. Victoria and Jamie are now chatting.)

Jane: Right, let's see, who else is there? Ah, Jamie and Victoria are our new stars in the making. This is a big break for both of them and I'm sure you'll be hearing a lot more of them in the coming years. And that just leaves Sandy. She's been with the studios for years. She's our chief makeup artist, but her talents don't start and end with a lipstick. She also helps out with props, setting scenery, wardrobe and even making the tea when need be. She's a real diamond.

(Sandy is still staring at Jamie and she jumps guiltily when she hears her name. She joins Jane at the front of the stage.)

Sandy: Hello Jane. **(She glances nervously at the audience.)**

Jane: I was just telling everyone how you hold the studio together. Care to say a few words?

Sandy: **(Blushing and nervous.)** Oh well, I guess so. Erm, hello everyone, I'm Sandy. I ... er ... well, I do most things really, apart from act of course. You won't catch me in front of the cameras, oh no ...

(While Sandy is speaking, Carrie notices that there is an opportunity to bask in some limelight, so she excuses herself from Sam and Jenny and heads straight for the front of the stage, almost pushing Sandy and Jane aside as she does.)

Carrie: Hello everyone, I'm Carrie Evans. But of course you don't need me to tell you that. I'm pleased that you could make it along to my little picture today, I do so enjoy meeting my adoring fans.

(Jane tries to interrupt, but there's no stopping Carrie once she's in full flow.)

Carrie: Yes, it's you that make it all worthwhile.

(Sam notices what's going on and moves forward taking Carrie by the arm.)

Sam: Come on now Carrie. These folks don't want to spend the day listening to you. They're here to see a movie being made.

(Carrie huffs and flounces off to join Victoria and Jamie.)

Jane: Sam, now you're here, I wonder if you wouldn't mind saying a few words to our guests. I need to make sure the caterers are all set. **(She exits stage left during Sam's speech.)**

Sam: Sure, be glad to. Hi guys. I hope Jane is looking after you. Are you having a good time? Well, that's just swell. This is the third time I've made a film here at Siddlington and I must say, I hope it's not my last. Yes sir, this is one fine film studios. **(He beams at the audience as he speaks.)** Now don't you go taking any notice of people like Carrie who think they're so high and mighty, we're all just here doing our jobs, nothing special. Nice meeting you all.

(He smiles again and then heads off to speak to Tony who is just returning from stage right. They are deep in conversation as they slowly move across the stage and exit stage left. Karl suddenly notices that Jenny is on her own and so calls her and they head down stage to have their conversation.)

Karl: Jenny, I wonder if I can have a quick word about that last scene?

Jenny: Yes Karl, what is it this time?

Karl: Well, I can't help noticing that some of the action and dialogue don't match the script. I thought you were going to speak to the actors and make sure they stopped taking liberties with my words. After all, I spent a long time working on this and ...

Jenny: Yes, yes Karl, so I did. Tell me what you think has been altered, I thought we were pretty much word perfect.

(Karl produces his scripts and proceeds to point out various parts as he speaks.)

Karl: Well, for a start Peter is supposed to say give me the gun not hand over the gun and I'm sure we decided that Diane was going to move towards Grant during her dialogue rather than stand next to Peter the whole way through.

Jenny: Yes, we did, but I asked the guys to do it this way for that last rehearsal so I could see the effect of playing it as a static scene. As for the words, I'll speak to Sam again about it, but I'm sure we can overlook such a small discrepancy just this once?

Karl: But that's just it, it's not just this once. **(Jenny shakes her head and turns to walk towards Victoria, Jamie and Carrie. Karl follows her still waving his script.)** It happens all the time. I've spent a long time over this script and ...

(Jenny joins the group and Carrie spots Karl walking towards her. She splits from the group and grabs Karl by the arm, leading him downstage.)

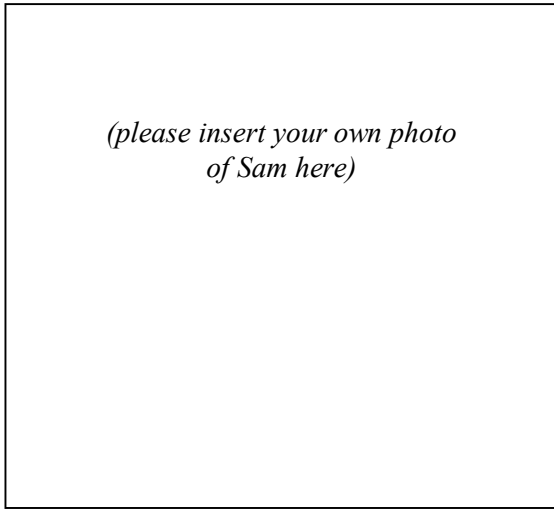
Carrie: Why Karl, whatever is the matter? Have we been messing with your script again?

(Karl is completely lost for words as she speaks to him. He has a crush on her and is too embarrassed to know what to say, other than to mumble a few incoherent words. Carrie is still holding his arm, but now stroking it too and leaning in close to speak to him.)

Carrie: Come on Karl, you can tell Carrie. You can tell Carrie anything at all.

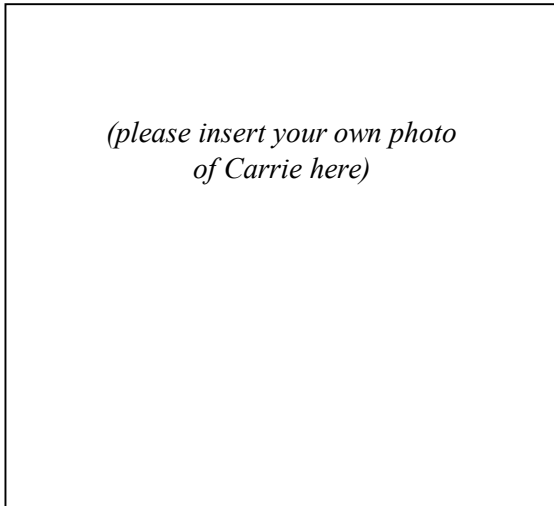
(Continued in the full pack.)

Your Cast (1) *(sample)*



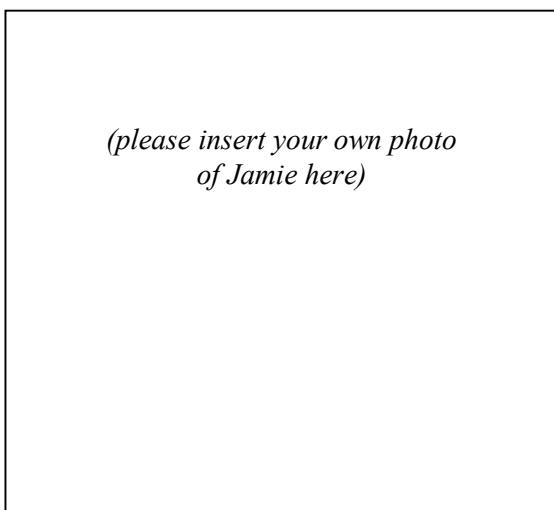
Sam Harrison

Sam needs no introduction to anyone who has seen a film in the last 20 years. He has a string of hit movies behind him and is loved by fans and colleagues alike. He has left to glamour of Hollywood and crossed the pond to play the role of Peter in 'A Bittersweet Affair'



Carrie Evans

Carrie is also a household name with a long list of hit movies, and husbands, behind her. Adored by her fans and her male co-stars she seems to appear in the gossip columns every week and her weekend parties are legendary. Carrie has returned to England to play Diane in 'A Bittersweet Affair'



Jamie Powell

An up and coming British actor, Jamie is tipped for a glittering career in the film industry. This is Jamie's third film and his second with Siddlington. He has been "in the business" for a number of years and has worked on a couple of films as a stuntman. Jamie is playing Grant in 'A Bittersweet Affair'