



# This Business of Murder!

*A Murder Mystery Entertainment By*  
**Mike Standing**



*Published by Lazy Bee Scripts*

**Customer Taster**

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*Sir Alan Sweetener is not a very nice boss, so when he announces he is going to sell the family business to an asset-stripping company, everyone (including his own family) has a motive for murder.*

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# This Business of Murder!

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## Customer Taster

### ***About this taster and the full pack***

The full pack should provide everything you need to stage your own Murder Mystery.

This Business of Murder is a murder/mystery designed to be played by 10 actors plus Presenter (the Master of Ceremonies) and one non-speaking extra (who might be doubled by the Presenter).

The actors perform two formal scenes, then mingle briefly with the audience, taking audience questions.

The audience try to solve the mystery.

There are three possible endings, with a different guilty party in each.

The mystery is assumed to be performed on a stage, with the action interspersed between courses of the audience's meal.

### ***The Full Pack Includes:***

#### **General notes**

**The main script, including three endings** (extract in this taster)

**Additional Character Information** (in this taster)

**Props List** (in the organiser's overview)

**Timing Guidelines** (in this taster)

**"Whodunnit" sheets** for guests to complete (separate document)

### ***Suggested Timings***

All timings are for guidelines only!

7.00 Meet and greet; pre-dinner drinks

7.30 Prologue

7:32 Serve starters

7.45 Act One

8.15 Main Course

8.45 Act 2 and Presenter's summing-up

9:20 Dessert; suspects mingle with the audience

9:35 Audience complete whodunnit forms

9:40 Coffee

9:45 Denouement and prize-giving

Other timings could be accommodated. Agreeing the timings with your caterers, will help the event to run smoothly! (Whilst revenge and gazpacho soup are best served cold, other dishes may be less accommodating.)

## Character Profiles

### *Sir Alan Sweetener*

I'm Alan Sweetener, part owner, Managing Director and Chairman of 'Sweeteners Sweet Things', a confectionery company founded by my grandfather over eighty years ago. We make luxury sweets and chocolates and I've been in charge of the company since my father died last year. I own the company with my two sisters Victoria and Constance, and to be brutally honest, they are both a bit simple and shouldn't be allowed anywhere near a box of chocolates, let alone a boardroom! Luckily, our dear father left me in control of their finances, but just recently they've started to question the legality of their situation and trying to upset my plans for the company. I consider myself a reasonably fair but tough boss, and I won't stand for any nonsense from my employees.

I've been feeling a little unwell lately, stomach cramps, feeling sick, etc., but my secretary tells me it's probably only stress, and I do hate doctors.

Oh, by the way, it is not just 'Alan' but 'Sir' Alan!

### *Victoria Sweetener*

I'm Victoria Sweetener, and with my dear sister Constance, try and think up new, exciting recipes for our own brand of chocolates. At the moment we are working on a new line exclusively for a certain section of the public, and a sample box will be sent up to Alan from the production line. Of course, Alan always has to test them first – but I bet you anything that he won't like these! Connie and I were brought up in a very strict household, and I've always had to look out for her as she gets a little bit confused at times, but we both worry sometimes what Alan is up to and what direction he is taking the company in.

My hobbies, (**with Connie**) are mainly focused on gardening, especially plants of an exotic nature. At the moment we have a big problem with bindweed and have had to get some really strong weed-killer to it!

I'm very interested in reading, especially Crime fiction and books about real-life murders! Oh, and fairly recently I've completed a home study course in 'The art of Confectionery'. Well that's what my Certificate says anyway. I must confess that I do like to add a few mystery ingredients of my own!

### *Constance Sweetener*

Hello, I'm Constance! Or Connie, to my sister Victoria, and brother, Alan. I'm Victoria and Alan's sister. Oh, I've said that already! Silly me! Victoria always looks out for me and helps me when I get into a muddle. I don't really do much except help Victoria with the recipes for the chocolates, although one of my main responsibilities is to make sure Alan gets his two 'special' chocolates every day – he especially likes the 'Ginger and Orange Surprise' one that we make. He has one in the morning and one in the afternoon.

I have a secret love who works in the sales office and that's Toby. He's only been here for about two months and his past is a little bit of an unknown, but I don't care, it was a case of love at first sight! I'm sure he loves me, in fact I'm certain of it! My dream is to have him live with us and then I could make his breakfast for him every day – and make sure he was neat and tidy before he left the house. Of course, I would choose all his clothes from the very best shops... And... and I'd better stop now before I say anything silly!

### ***Nick Brewer***

I'm Nick Brewer and I'm supposed to be Sir Alan's right-hand man – but I'm very often kept in the dark about the decisions he tends to make. I'm the accounts manager – but here again, Sir Alan is always interfering and trying to manipulate the figures for his own ends. He calls it 'creative accounting', but I think he's up to something and has been for several months. Mind you, he has been a bit under the weather lately so perhaps that's why he's been like he has. I'm also the personnel officer *and* in charge of the health and safety department.

I was really annoyed when my old friend and colleague, Brian Adamson was sacked by Sir Alan ten months ago after a regrettable incident involving a business deal that went wrong. Personally I don't think Brian was at fault but Alan, as usual, managed to shift the blame!

I'd like to tell you more about recent events concerning the company, but I've only recently come back to work after a short spell in hospital – I have what they call 'Infectious Endocarditis' and I'm on a special long-term course of penicillin based anti-biotics. They are really strong stuff, and I have to be really careful I don't overdose! I also suffer from diabetes type one, which doesn't make life any easier as I have to inject myself every day.

### ***Hannah McCanna***

I'm Hannah McCanna and I'm married to Bill, and we have two children. I say 'children', but they are both at University – Jamie in his second year and David in his first, so things are a little bit tight financially, to say the least. Bill is a self-employed Courier and he delivers business packages all over the County. He suffers from Asthma quite a lot and he has to take time off every so often.

I'm the purchasing manager and it's my job to source the packaging and raw materials that go to make our lovely chocolates and sweets look so attractive. I think I'm quite good at my job and Sir Alan doesn't interfere much in my department – although there was one occasion last year when we had a blazing row over some supplies I had purchased from companies based in Hong Kong and Shanghai, which were offering really good discounts and terms. Sir Alan didn't like the idea of deserting our usual supplier, but in the end he had to concede. I think it was a case of the 'old boys' network to be honest. He actually hasn't spoken to me much since then – just the odd grunt occasionally! Still, we must be grateful for small mercies, mustn't we?

### ***Stella Remington***

I'm Stella Remington, and I'm the 'Production Manager'. That means that I'm in charge of the production line, making sure that we meet our order commitments and that our line staff are fully trained and kept busy. It is also my responsibility for the ingredients that go into all our products are of the correct quality and measure, making sure that no 'foreign bodies' get into the system. I don't have much to do with 'Sir' Alan, but I do get some strange requests from time to time from his dopey sisters, usually about recipes they've invented for a new range of chocolates. I live with my boyfriend Danny, and he works at the local Casino – it's called the 'Starlight Club'. Luckily, it's only five minutes away from here so I can sometimes nip out to see him when I'm not busy – or when no-one is looking! Some people say that I can be officious and abrupt – but I don't think so!

### ***Angela Darling***

I'm Angela Darling and I'm temporarily in charge of the Marketing department as the previous Manager, Brian Adamson, was sacked ten months ago after a bad business deal turned into a fraud scandal which involved him, his son-in-law Steve Wood, and Sir Alan. Brian always denied being involved and was never charged, but Steve was sent to prison for five years. Brian never worked again and it completely destroyed him. In the company it is termed as 'The Sweetener effect'. Still, I don't mind, because when Brian went, Sir Alan asked me to temporarily take over the role as Manager with a strong possibility of promotion. But that was ten months ago and nothing has been done about it yet! I believe I'm good at my job and I hope Sir Alan will eventually recognise my abilities and the valuable contribution that I make to his company.

I live on my own, except for two, big, boisterous cats which I adore. Oh, and I've recently bought a new car and moved into a new flat, although my new neighbours now tell me they've had problems with vermin in the area – probably rats. No-one seems to be doing anything about it, so I suppose I'll have to get something myself to get rid of them.

### ***Karen Underwood***

I'm Karen Underwood – Sir Alan's secretary. I've only been here six months, but I've settled in okay thanks largely to Nick Brewer who helped me get the job. He's actually an old friend of my father who also used to work here, but he's not been very well for a few months now, and I have to look after him at home.

I used to work at the General Hospital in the Pharmacy, but the hours didn't suit me for looking after dad. I like to keep my private life private, if you know what I mean, and I don't socialize with the others much as I haven't got much in common with any of them.

### ***Toby Juggle***

I'm Toby Juggle. Yes alright, I know it's a funny name, but I'm used to it! I was teased mercilessly at school and I'd like a pound for every stupid, hurtful comment that's been directed at me. I can't think what possessed my parents to do this to me, but I can only guess that as they were Dutch they didn't realise what they were doing. Anyway, my parents obviously didn't like what they produced and when I was two, they promptly abandoned me to an orphanage and left for a hippy commune somewhere in India. They were never seen again. So you see, I've had to make my way through life all on my own and by my own efforts – perhaps this is the reason I don't make friends very easily. Although having said that, I've managed to make two friends in the shape of the two 'Mad' sisters, Victoria and Constance. They are both totally bonkers and I'm sure 'Sir' Alan would love to get rid of them, but they seem to like me well enough and I know they regard me as a sort of protégé – which is fine by me. I've only been here two months but I've settled in quite well. I work in the sales office at the moment but find the job a bit mundane at times. I'd like something a bit more challenging really and I was thinking of leaving, but I may stick around for a while – I think something BIG is going to happen, and soon!

# This Business of Murder! - Script Extract

(The action takes place in the boardroom at ‘Sweetener’s Sweet Things’ confectionery factory.)  
(There is a large conference table Down-stage Right. with 1 large chair & 4 other chairs behind it. There are a further 3 chairs across the stage Down-stage Left. A drinks cabinet stands Up-stage Left. With water, glasses, cups and saucers and a small coffee machine with milk, sugar etc. There are framed portraits of Sir Alan, his father and grandfather around the walls and 2 pictures of the company’s first sweetshop. There is 1 door Up-stage Right to the private office and 1 door Up-stage Left.)

## The Prologue

(Suitable theme music is playing. The House lights go down and as the curtains open on an empty stage, stage lights go up and the music fades.)

(The Presenter enters and addresses the audience.)

**Presenter:** Ladies and Gentlemen, good evening to you all and welcome to our Murder Mystery Evening here at ‘Sweetener’s Sweet Things’ Confectionery factory. This, (**Indicates the set**) is the Boardroom where Sir Alan Sweetener ‘sacks’ his poorest performing employees on a regular basis. [*Optional opportunity for a topical joke.*] In a moment you will be served with your starter, but first, in the event of the fire alarm sounding, please make your way to the nearest exit. Please do not worry about Sir Alan or his employees - they will already have left the building! Ladies and Gentlemen, we will come back to this scene in a little while, but for now, I need to give you some information about your role. We know that at some point, one of the characters in the play will be murdered. Later on in the proceedings, you will be asked as to who you suspect the murderer is, why they were murdered, and how it was done. You will do this as a team – the team consisting of the members of each table. Each table will need to elect a team captain. You can do this now or during the main course. But for now I understand that your starters are ready. (**The Presenter exits.**)

(House lights up – stage lights down – play theme music, then fade –curtains remain open.)

## Starters served

(When the starters are finished and cleared away, play theme music, the house lights dim, stage lights up, the music fades.)

## Act 1

(The curtains are already open. Angela enters alone, looking furtive and proceeds to listen at the ‘private’ office door. She has coffee, sugar etc. in a shopping bag and moves to put them on the drinks table. She is then joined by all the others, except Sir Alan and Karen who will enter late! The cast come forward one at a time and introduce themselves after which they take their places. Victoria has a magazine, Constance has knitting which she will do all through the first act. Victoria steps forward and addresses the audience.)

**Victoria:** Hello, I’m Victoria Sweetener, sister to dear Constance. Our brother Alan runs the

company and we just do as we are told, basically – although we do attend meetings and try to have our say. (**Sits 2nd chair Down-stage Right.**) *Connie! Your turn!*

**Constance:** (**A bit nervous.**) Hello, I’m... I’m... Constance! Yes, that’s right, Constance. I’m Victoria and Alan’s sister. (**She looks to Victoria for reassurance.**) We both have a friend who works in the sales office, and that’s Toby. He’s very nice and we both secretly would like to take him home and look after him, (**getting carried away**) and in the mornings we could cook him breakfast, and dress him in lovely clothes, and comb his hair and... And...

**Victoria:** (**Calling out.**) Connie...? Connie...? That’s enough dear. Come and sit down. (**Constance sits 1st chair Down-stage Right next to Victoria.**)

**Nick:** Hello, I’m Nick Brewer and I’m supposed to be Sir Alan’s right-hand man - but he always makes me sit on his left for some reason! Oh, I’m also the accounts manager and in charge of the ‘health and safety’ department. (**Sits behind table, Second Left.**)

**Hannah:** Hi, I'm Hannah McCanna and I'm married to Bill, and we have two children. I'm the purchasing manager and it's my job to source the packaging and raw materials that go to make our lovely chocolates and sweets look so attractive. **(Sits on one of the chairs Down-stage Left.)**

**Stella:** I'm Stella Remington, and I'm the 'Production Manager'. I live with my boyfriend Danny, and he works at the local Casino – it's called the 'Starlight Club'. **(Abruptly.)** Some people say that I can be officious and abrupt – but I don't think so!

**(Stella sits Down-stage Left with Hannah.)**

**Angela:** Hello, I'm Angela Darling and I'm temporarily in charge of the Marketing department as the previous Manager, Brian Adamson, was sacked ten months ago after a fraud scandal which involved him, his son-in-law Steve Wood, and Sir Alan. I live on my own, except for two big boisterous cats which I adore. Oh, and I've recently bought a new car and moved into a new flat, although my new neighbours now tell me they've had problems with vermin in the area – probably rats.

**(Angela sits Down-stage Left with Stella and Hannah.)**

**(Toby now addresses the audience.)**

**Toby:** Hi, I'm Toby – Toby Jugge. Yes alright, I know it's a funny name, but I'm used to it! I work in the sales office at the moment and although I've only been here two months, I've managed to make two friends in the shape of the two 'Mad' sisters over there!

**(Toby waves to Victoria and Constance – they wave back excitedly.)**

**Toby:** I'm not a manager, so I'm not invited to this meeting so, bye... **(He exits Up-stage Left.)**

**(Sir Alan Sweetener enters from the 'private' office – as he approaches centre stage, the others stand.)**

**All:** **(Loudly, like children.)** *Good morning, sir Alan!*

**(Sir Alan turns to face them, then 'sits' them down with a gesture from both hands.)**

**Sir Alan:** **(To audience.)** I'm Alan Sweetener, part owner, Managing Director, and Chairman of 'Sweeteners Sweet Things', a confectionery company founded by my grandfather over ninety years ago. I've been feeling a little unwell lately, stomach cramps, feeling sick, *et cetera*, but my secretary tells me it's probably only stress, and I do hate doctors.

**(He starts to go, but stops and shouts at the audience.)**

**Sir Alan:** Oh, by the way, it is not just 'Alan' but 'Sir' Alan to you lot! Just you remember that! **(He sits down behind table at centre.)**

**(The door opens and Karen enters – she has various shopping bags and a rucksack)**

**Karen:** **(Arriving in a rush.)** Hello everyone, I'm Karen Underwood – Sir Alan's secretary. I've only been here six months, but I've settled in okay thanks largely to Nick Brewer who helped me get the job. He's actually an old friend of my father who also used to work here, but he's not been very well for a few months now, and I have to look after him at home. I used to work at the General Hospital in the Pharmacy, but the hours didn't suit me for looking after Dad. Sorry I'm late but I missed the bus and so I 'phoned for a taxi and when it turned up the driver was foreign, Albanian I think. He said his name was Zamir, but he was okay, and then my favourite necklace broke and the beads went everywhere. But Zamir was very charming and helped me find all the pieces – he said not to worry too much as it only looked a cheap Oriental one anyway. I told him not to be so cheeky! And then I tripped coming up the stairs and of course my bag split open...

**Sir Alan:** **(Interrupting.)** Yes, Yes, never mind all that nonsense, pull yourself together and get over here!

**Karen:** **(Stands at end of table, still fussing.)** Sorry, sorry everyone!

**Sir Alan:** Yes, yes! Sit down for heaven's sake!

**(Karen sits at the end of the table next to Nick – she opens the laptop.)**

**Sir Alan:** Now, listen everyone, and don't interrupt. I've asked you all here...

**Victoria:** **(Interrupting.)** Where's Toby gone? I can't see him.

**Constance:** No, I can't see him either.

**Victoria:** I do like Toby, he's like a breath of fresh air.

**Constance:** I like him too – in fact, I think I love him.

**Victoria:** } **(Together.)**

**Constance:** } Yes, we both love him! Is he going to come back?



**Sir Alan:** No, I'm afraid not. Now, if you could both be quiet- we must get on. I've asked you all here because...

**Victoria:** Why? Why isn't he here – we want to know!

**Victoria:** } (Together.)

**Constance:** } Yes, we want to know *now*!

**Sir Alan:** Will you be quiet! You're embarrassing yourselves as well as me! If you can't keep quiet I'll have to ask you to leave.

**Victoria:** Very well, but it's under protest.

**Constance:** Protest.

**(Sir Alan glares at them.)**

**Sir Alan:** Karen, get me a glass of water for my stomach powders will you?

**Karen:** Shall I put the powder in for you Sir?

**Sir Alan:** Yes. When you've done that get me some strong coffee – and don't forget I take three sugars! Then you can take notes.

**Karen:** Yes Sir Alan. **(Looking round.)** Shall I get coffee for everybody?

**Sir Alan:** Certainly not! They can have coffee in their own time! Now then, I've asked you all here because I have an important announcement to make, and it will affect all of you. **(Pause.)** I've decided to sell the company!

**(There is an outcry from everyone along the lines of “What? Sell the company?”, “Why?”, etc.)**

**Stella:** What does this mean for us? What about the money we all put into the company two years ago?

**Angela:** Yes we all put in equal amounts to help out when it looked like we were going bust. We trusted you and your father with that money, and to keep to the agreement!

**Sir Alan:** Most of the money you all put in helped to pay off the debts we had at the time, and very grateful we were, but it was only a verbal agreement – between you and my father – nothing to do with me. When my father died last year the agreement sort of died with him, and in any case I think you'll find you agreed that you would allow us to use the money as we saw fit, and none of you would see any return for at least five years and that if any of you left the company, then your share would be forfeit. It was designed so that everyone who invested would be motivated to take the company forward.

**(Karen brings Sir Alan his water – he looks at it suspiciously then drinks half the contents.)**

**Stella:** Huh! Designed to give you more opportunity to waste money. Our money!

**Sir Alan:** Waste? I don't know what you are talking about. It's all in the accounts.

**Nick:** Ah, I've been meaning to talk to you about that, Alan. When I was checking your figures, I found a discrepancy in the Pension fund, I am extremely...

**Sir Alan:** **(Interrupting.)** Not now Nick. Now isn't the time!

**(Karen brings Sir Alan his coffee.)**

**Nick:** But I think you should know that...

**Sir Alan:** **(Interrupting.)** I SAID, NOT NOW!

**Karen:** **(Thinking it's her that's in the wrong)** Oh, sorry!

**(Karen starts to take the coffee away)**

**Sir Alan:** Not you, you stupid woman! Nick, where did you find her? **(Meaning Karen.)** She's totally useless!

**(Sir Alan takes his coffee – Karen is visibly annoyed.)**

**Hannah:** Hold on a moment. What's all this about the pension fund accounts?

**Sir Alan:** Nothing for you to worry about, I'll make sure the fund is as it should be.

**Hannah:** As it should be? Why, what's happened?

**Stella:** More like, what have you done? What's he done Nick?

**Nick:** Alan? Do you want to tell them, or shall I?

**Sir Alan:** I... Er... May have borrowed a small sum out of the pension fund for an important investment opportunity – it was going to come back threefold.

**Nick:** But it didn't?

**Sir Alan:** No. It was all rather unfortunate. The company I invested the money in went bust a month later. It wasn't my fault.

**Hannah:** What are we talking about here? How much did you lose?

**Sir Alan:** (Quietly.) All of it.

**Hannah:** What!? I didn't quite catch that!

**Sir Alan:** All of it! Damn it!

**Hannah:** All of what? How much have you stolen from the pension fund?

**Sir Alan:** I haven't stolen anything – just... Borrowed it.

**Hannah:** How much!?

**Nick:** About half, isn't it Alan?

**(Sir Alan nods – everyone is getting exasperated.)**

**Angela:** So what possessed you to 'borrow' from the pension fund? That's illegal, isn't it?

**Sir Alan:** It's perfectly normal business practice. Lots of companies have...

**Stella:** Rubbish! It's only normal business practice if you're someone like Robert Maxwell, and look what happened to him!

**Angela:** Yes, you should have left that fund alone – it's our money after all!

**(The meeting erupts, with people shouting "Yes! What are you doing about it?", "How many more lies?", etc.)**

**Sir Alan:** LISTEN! There's only room for one loud-mouth in my company – and that's me! If you just listen and don't interrupt, I'll tell you. Things haven't been going well as I'm sure you are all aware, sales are down, costs are rising rapidly, the wage bill is going through the roof...

**Angela:** What!? We haven't had a pay rise in three years!

**Hannah:** No. None of us – all except you lot of course!

**Karen:** I haven't had one!

**Sir Alan:** (Ignoring Karen.) By that remark, I presume you mean myself and my sisters?

**Hannah:** Well, yes – you are the ones who supposedly run the company.

**Constance:** (All innocence.) Do we?

**Victoria:** Yes dear.

**Constance:** (Simple.) Oh, that's nice.

**Sir Alan:** Shut up, will you! None of us has had an increase in salary in that time either.

**Stella:** No – but you've all had a big fat bonus – three years running.

**Constance:** Have we?

**Victoria:** (Frowning.) Hmm. I don't think so.

**Sir Alan:** I SAID SHUT UP! But that's always considered separate. It's what I'm entitled to – it's all perfectly legitimate.

**Angela:** Entitled to? Legitimate? It's just a joke! You can pay yourself what you like!

**Sir Alan:** Well, I suppose that's true – but within reason of course - always within reason. In fact, if you look at the figures you'll see that percentage wise, year-on-year, my bonus actually decreased in value.

**Stella:** Eh? I can't believe what I'm hearing!

**Victoria:** Oh, you should my dear. He comes out with this sort of thing all the time.

**(There is an awkward silence.)**

**Hannah:** So where does all this leave us? Who are you proposing to sell the company to?

**Sir Alan:** Well, I don't know if I can tell you just yet, the deal isn't finalised.

**Hannah:** But I think we have a right to know!

**Sir Alan:** As I say, it's not a done deal yet and nothing has been signed, but if you really must know, the company in question is Blackrock International Holdings.

**Angela:** Blackrock International Holdings? Who are they? They're not in the Industry are they?

**Nick:** No, they're a private equity company who look to restructure, then sell the business on, ready for a likely stock-market floatation.

**Hannah:** I've heard of them. They own the 'Candy Corner' chain, our biggest rival.

**Nick:** I believe they also last year bought out Pickering confectionery – but they folded soon after. There were rumours of asset stripping, all the staff of course ended up down the job-centre.

**Angela:** I don't like the sound of that.