

Who **Killed** Rob **Cockyn?**

by
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Customer Taster

Who Killed Rob Cockyn?

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Rob Cockyn is in serious financial trouble.

His chain of fish and chip restaurants, largely financed by loans from business associates and an ex-lover, is facing bankruptcy. Rob has been forced to call a creditors' meeting. But has he had his chips?

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Who Killed Rob Cockyn?

*'T' said the Sparrow, 'with my bow and arrow.'
But which little bird is the Sparrow?*

Overview

Who Killed Rob Cockyn? is a Murder Mystery designed to be played by 7 actors plus a Master of Ceremonies. The actors perform two formal scenes, then the audience receive additional written clues from which they try to solve the mystery, before a speech by the investigating officer reveals the guilty party.

Characters:

Rob Cockyn: A businessman of dubious repute, who is running out of options.

Frances Drake: An investor and ex-lover, who suspects Rob was unfaithful. Will she be able to winkle the truth out of him? Or will her efforts flounder?

Jenny Wren: Another investor, and a close friend of Frances. Did she skate on thin ice, and have a fling with Rob? Or is this just a red herring?

Gus Hawke: A Cockney fish fryer, who sold up his business in order to invest with Rob. How far will he go to become a sole trader again?

Jack Dawe: Another former fish shop owner and angry investor. Will he take drastic action to save his battered reputation?

Kitty Wake: Jack's partner, who also invested with Rob. Will she do anything now she realises her *plaice* is with Jack?

Detective Inspector Peregrine Falcon: The investigating officer, who reveals the solution at the end.

Master of Ceremonies: Introduces the players, and provides 'further evidence'.

Structure

The full murder mystery pack contains:-

- The Organiser's Overview (extract included in this document) including character overviews, notes on setting, a rough guide on how to structure your event, and a props list.
- Act One and Two, to be performed by the actors (extract included in this document).
- Five pieces of written evidence for the audience to examine (extract included in this document).
- "Accusation sheets" for the audience to enter their solutions.
- The solution.

Production Notes

Setting

The action takes place during the evening of 11th January 2015 in the lounge of Frances' house in the quiet village of Whiting, deep in the heart of Widdleshire.

There are sufficient chairs for 5 to sit down, a side table with six glasses. Also on the same table (or another one, if there is room on the stage) is a land-line phone. There is one door in and out of the room, and French windows.

Timing guide

The following options give some idea of how various scenarios might be run. Act One takes roughly 10 minutes and Act Two roughly 12. The rest depends on the complexity of your catering and the enthusiasm of the audience for questioning the cast.

Option 1: Stage play (no meal)

7.30	Act One
7:40	(After very brief interval) Act Two
7:55	Distribute the evidence sheets
8:05	Interrogation of cast by audience
8:25	Distribute 'accusation sheets'
8.45	Collect accusation sheets; brief interval
9.00	The Solution and Prize-giving.

Option 2: Single course/buffet

7.00	Meet and greet; pre-dinner drinks
7.30	Act One
7:40	(After very brief interval) Act Two
7:55	Distribute the evidence sheets; meal or buffet
8:20	Interrogation of cast by audience
8:40	Distribute 'accusation sheets'
9.00	Collect Accusation sheets; (option to allow a final assault on the buffet)
9.10	The Solution and Prize-giving.

Option 3: Two courses

7.00	Meet and greet; pre-dinner drinks
7.30	Act One
7:40	Distribute the first three evidence sheets, serve main course
8.00	Act Two
8.10	Distribute the remaining evidence sheets, serve dessert
8:30	Interrogation of cast by audience
8:50	Distribute 'accusation sheets', serve coffee
9.10	Collect Accusation sheets; brief interval
9.20	The Solution and Prize-giving.

Option 4: Three courses

7.00	Meet and greet; pre-dinner drinks
7.30	Act One
7:40	Distribute the first three evidence sheets, serve starters
8.00	Act Two
8.10	Distribute the remaining evidence sheets, serve main course
8:30	Interrogation of cast by audience
8:50	Distribute 'accusation sheets', serve dessert
9.10	Collect Accusation sheets, serve coffee
9.20	The Solution and Prize-giving.

How to Structure Your Event

A suggested format for the evening could be as follows:-

Introduction by the Master of Ceremonies, who gives an overview of the evening's entertainment.

Act 1 takes around 10 minutes.

Act 2 takes around 12 minutes.

(At least a minute is needed between the two acts to allow for the removal of the corpse and a bit of re-setting.)

Distribution of the written evidence either takes place after the two acts or if part of the meal is served after Act One, part of the evidence could be served at the same time.

After the conclusion of the play, the Master of Ceremonies calls the suspects back on stage and invites the audience to put questions to them. This session can be as long as the company chooses, assuming the questions keep coming. There is no additional evidence to convey as part of the interrogation; the cast should respond based on the script, the character overviews and (whatever they can be assumed to know from) the written evidence. The murderer is allowed to dissemble; the rest of the cast should tell the truth without revealing the solution.

The Master of Ceremonies then invites the audience to complete a 'whodunnit' sheet, naming the guilty party and providing supporting evidence drawn from the action on stage and/or the written clues.

Allow twenty minutes for all the answers to be submitted.

As soon as all the answer sheets have been submitted, the cast/director/Master of Ceremonies must quickly review them all, and select the best answer. There may also be a number of wildly inaccurate or humorous answers, and the Master of Ceremonies may wish to keep a few of those aside to share later with the audience.

Once the winning answer has been selected, the Master of Ceremonies will ask all the suspects to return to the stage, and require the guilty party to reveal themselves. Inspector Falcon will then explain the solution to the audience – it will take around four minutes to deliver. After this, the Master of Ceremonies reads out a selection of the wrong or humorous answers, at his or her discretion, followed by a formal announcement of the winner, and the presentation of a prize to the winner(s) if desired.

Who Killed Rob Cockyn?

Act 1

(As the curtains open, Rob is alone on stage. He is pacing up and down, having a lively conversation with someone on his mobile phone. He is clearly a man under pressure.)

Rob: Listen! I didn't ask for this meeting, did I?... .. It is *not* a crisis! We're just having a slight cash flow problem, that's all... .. Yes, I do think four hundred grand constitutes a *slight* cash flow problem... Okay, okay! If you all insist on having this stupid meeting, I can't stop you, can I?

(Enter Frances, obviously in a bad mood. She is carrying a full decanter. She stops and stares at Rob. He sees her, and gives her a weak smile and a wave.)

Frances: (Angry) Idiot!

(She looks daggers at him, bangs the decanter down on the table and walks out.)

Rob: No, that was just Frances, I'm at her place now... .. Of course she is, she's an investor, isn't she? Same as you... .. no, I told you before, I moved out... a couple of weeks ago... Because she thought I'd been having it off with... Well that's none of your business, is it?

(Enter Frances again, carrying a bowl of peanuts, which she puts down next to the glasses. Rob sees her.)

Rob: I've got to go... (He looks at his watch.) ... About quarter past... .. Yes, the meeting's still at eight thirty!... How late?... Why did the police phone you?... Okay, tell me later. (He switches the phone off, and puts it in his pocket.) As if I care! That was Jenny.

Frances: (In mock delight.) Great!

Rob: She's on the way, but she might be a bit late.

Frances: Fabulous!

Rob: (Pointing to the bowl.) What's in there?

Frances: (Still angry.) Nuts!

(Exit Frances in a huff.)

(Rob's mobile rings again, and he answers it.)

Rob: Rob Cockyn... Hello mate!... .. Yes, the meeting's still on at half eight... What do you mean, late?... How late?... A puncture?... Where?... I know it's in a tyre, you fool, I mean where are you now?... Your driveway?... Okay, we'll see you as and when. (He ends the call.)

(Enter Frances.)

Rob: That was Jack.

Frances: (Sarcastic) Whooppee!

Rob: He's had a puncture, and he'll be late.

Frances: So?

(Rob's mobile rings again, and he answers it.)

Rob: Rob Cockyn... Oh, it's you... The police?... No, they haven't called me... What alarm?... At the High Street shop?... Well you're the closest, you go... .. Okay, so you'll be late for the meeting. Just do it! (He switches the phone off, and pours himself a drink.) That was Gus.

Frances: (Still sarcastic.) Terrific!

Rob: He's had a call from the law. The burglar alarm's going off at the High Street shop.

Frances: Wow!

Rob: He's going to check it out.

Frances: Great!

Rob: So he'll be late as well.

Frances: Spiffing!

Rob: Are you going to spend the whole evening speaking one word sentences?

Frances: Maybe!

Rob: What's up? You've been grumpy ever since I got here!

Frances: Grumpy? (Pause) *Grumpy?* Five weeks ago I find out you've lost my money in some half-arsed financial suicide mission – and you wonder why I'm *grumpy?*

Rob: But I haven't.

Frances: Haven't what?
Rob: Lost your money. **(Pause)** Well, not all of it.
Frances: I lent you a hundred grand.
Rob: I know!
Frances: So how much is left?
Rob: In round figures?
Frances: Yeah!
Rob: You mean exactly?
Frances: Yeah!
Rob: Well... Nothing in cash, obviously. It's all tied up in the business.
Frances: Funny, isn't it? The only time I think you're lying is when your lips move!
Rob: But...
Frances: **(Interrupting)** Let me make one thing perfectly clear. I want my money back. And if I don't get it...
Rob: But you will! You *all* will!
Frances: You're moving your lips again!
Rob: Just trust me.
Frances: Huh!
(Exit Frances.)
(Rob is getting himself another drink, when his mobile goes off again. He answers it.)
Rob: Rob Cockyn... Oh, not you as well!... .. Yes, the bloody meeting *is* at eight thirty...
(Enter Frances, carrying a bowl of crisps.)
Rob: **(Still on the phone.)** Broken down?... What's wrong with it?... **(Holding the phone away from his ear)** ... There's no need to shout... no, I know you're not a mechanic... Hello?... Hello? **(He switches the phone off.)**
Frances: Who was that?
Rob: Kitty.
Frances: What did she want?
Rob: She's broken down. She's waiting for the AA. Do you think I should go and see to her?
Frances: I think you've 'seen to her' quite enough, don't you?
Rob: But that's all over now.
Frances: **(Angry)** Do I look as if I care? No, you stay here where I can see you. I don't want you doing a runner! **(She moves to the French windows.)** It's still raining. I'm going to open the French windows. God knows, we could do with some fresh air in here! **(She opens the French windows.)**
Rob: I was going to get some lights rigged up out there, wasn't I? It's pitch black at this time of the year.
Frances: Is that what's uppermost in your mind right now? Outside lights?
Rob: Well no, but...
Frances: Oh good! Because there is the small matter of us all going bust! Or had you forgotten?
Rob: I *will* sort all this out, you know. Nobody's going to lose a penny.
Frances: **(Pretending to stare out of the windows.)** Oh look! There goes a flying pig!
(Exit Frances.)
Rob: **(Going to the door, and calling out after her.)** Just you wait! I'll get us *all* out of this! I've got a plan.
Frances: **(Offstage)** I'm not interested!
Rob: **(Still calling after her.)** You would be, if you knew what it was. **(He closes the door and comes back centre stage, and talks to himself, smiling.)** But I'm not going to tell you, am I?
(The land-line phone rings. Rob picks it up.)

[In the full Murder Mystery pack, the action continues!]

Evidence I

*Extract from The Widdleshire Gazette and Herald
Dated 1st July 2014*

NEW FISHY BUSINESS IN WIDDLESHIRE

By Restaurant Critic Mike Rowave

Lovers of good fish 'n' chips in the area will have a choice of some fresh 'plaices' to go from next month. Local entrepreneur and fish fryer Rob Cockyn is opening three new shops, offering both eat-in and takeaway options, in three prime locations in the town. They will all bear the catchy name Cod Save Us.

These state-of-the-art restaurants will be run by Rob, together with two of his new business partners, Gus Hawke and Jack Dawe, both experienced fish fryers who previously ran fish and chip shops in the area.

Rob gave me an exclusive look round the High Street premises, and I must say I was impressed by the professional look of the newly equipped shop. Rob tells me he and his partners have spent a small fortune on the shops, and it certainly shows.

The shops are all due to open their doors for business on Monday 7th July, so we'd 'batter' get ready!