

DEAD MEN ☀
DON'T GET ☀
DESSERT ☀ ☀

A Murder Mystery Party Pack

By Steve Clark and David Lovesy



in association with



Customer Taster of the Pack

Published by Lazy Bee Scripts

Dead Men Don't Get Dessert!

The city of Chicago, 1929. A top secret meeting of the leading gangsters and criminal minds of the city has been organised by Sal Capone. The objective: to sign a syndicate pact to combine forces and unite against the Feds. But the arrival of PI Mike Slammer, a gumshoe hated by all the gang leaders present, changes the course of the evening. Slammer has an alarming revelation about an undercover Federal agent among the gathered fraternity but is murdered before he can give the name. Which of the felons was the murderer?

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This is a Customer Taster of the full pack

The full Murder Mystery Pack is intended to be used at a sit down meal where the principal characters will act out a set of events and arguments to the assembled guests.

Please remember from the outset that the pack is intended for an **improvised performance**. There is no script or set lines included for the cast to learn. Instead, your cast is expected to use the information included in the pack, develop their 'back stories' further and, staying completely in character throughout, improvise the action, dialogue and arguments themselves. This means that your performers are less constrained and restricted, can react and interact with the audience and guests at will and should have a lot more fun!

The full document includes:

A Plot Overview.

General Staging Notes on how best to plan and stage your Murder Mystery event.

Overview of the Characters (including suggested costumes and 'props') .

A Plot Narrative to show how plot should flow and how the events should be woven in.

An Appendix containing summary **Character Back Stories** on each character.

The full pack includes an accompanying **Downloadable Resources pack** of Adobe Acrobat. PDF image files allows you to produce additional materials and resources that will help bring the event to life and enhance the plot.

These also include:

Printable **Table Cards** to list the key characters to assist the audience.

Printable **Business cards** for Mike Slammer, PI.

A number of Printable **Newspaper Headlines** to accompany the plot.

Printable 'who dunnit' **Solution Sheets** for your guests to complete.

If the full pack is purchased you can feel free to customise the details of the scenario. Names and titles of the characters are more fixed if you choose to use the resources provided, but should not cause any problems for you.

This murder mystery is a light hearted affair and is intended to be as daft and silly as possible; a comic entertainment rather than a serious Agatha Christie style detective story.

The plot subject, the secret pasts of the characters and the characters themselves are designed for laughs! **All** six characters have been given motives and reasons to commit murder...

As such there are no complicated or involved clues for the audience to have to try and deduce or follow!

Plot Overview - *excerpt for Customer Taster*

Chicago 1929. It's the night that the four leading gangsters in the city are going to form a crime syndicate. Gangster supremo **Sal Capone** has put on a dinner - at the end of which signatures will go onto a contract which will bind the mobsters together and create an impenetrable crime ring which will bring Chicago to its knees, smash the competition and drive off the Feds.

Other prominent guests include:

Dolores Van Harl – Sal Capone's moll.

'English' Langham – A British hoodlum who runs the city's gambling dens

Mickey 'The Boy' Malloy – One of the city's leading booze smugglers.

Mrs Brown – Chicago's leading female hit 'man'.

Janice 'Legs' Parker – Cousin of the infamous Bonnie Parker.

As Capone gives his opening speech the evening is interrupted by **Mike Slammer**, a gumshoe who has been a thorn in the side of each and every mobster over recent years. As Slammer is about to be killed by all of them simultaneously, he reveals that he has come along this evening to unmask one member of the group who is about to betray the rest to the Feds. Obviously the members of the syndicate are keen to find the polecat in the henhouse, so they allow Slammer to sit with them.

There is a fair bit of mudslinging between the mobsters and molls and the PI, and Slammer sits back and enjoys the ride – taking every opportunity to rake up old wounds and let the gangsters implicate themselves further and further in shady dealings. Unfortunately, after the main course as Slammer is just about to...

Improvisation and performance

Improvisation

As already explained, there is no set script for this Murder Mystery scenario. Your performers are expected to improvise their dialogue, interactions and behaviour based on their back stories and knowledge of the plot and their interpersonal relationships. This is not as daunting as it sounds! Your performers need to get into character and remain in character throughout. All conversations with guests should be as the character they are playing.

If guests start asking you questions that you don't know the answer to then you can simply make excuses and walk away or steer the conversation in a different direction.

You don't have to admit your feelings outright, but can hint at your relationships with the other characters, make passing comments about your reaction to something to trigger a response and a question.

The most common difficulty is when someone slips up and gives the wrong info from their back story (and guests will sometimes probe into your 'past' in depth). Sometimes this is not of consequence but other times it could be important, a date, a place or something that your character should know too. If when quizzed you give the wrong corroborating account of events, this can lead to red herrings as the guests think you are lying deliberately. Therefore, if possible, if you realise you have let slip something on the spur of the moment that is nonsense, try and draw the other character (s) aside in time and tell them the new story. And if you don't have time to do so, and you get 'caught' out, make light of the

situation and play for a laugh; 'Have we really been married for 5 years and not 8, well it seemed like even longer to me...!'

You will find there is plenty of opportunity to whisper in corners with the other performers (and when out of the room) to check tactics, prompt actions and arguments ('right, we need to reinforce our hatred of one another, let's go and have a fight in the middle of the room'). This is often necessary to keep things on track!

The Arguments

The arguments that are used to move on the plot, reveal motives and skeletons in the closet and the complexities of the characters' inter-relationships can be split into two types:

Public: The confrontational / explosive challenge as one character rounds on another to contest something that has been said or announced. These can be very public and devoid of subtlety and a slanging match over the tables and even across the room often develops. Once these start the guests will quickly fall silent and pay attention.

Private: These are the type that build from a quiet conversation into a row as things are said that should not be or revelations are made. These can be more subtle. The characters start talking together, beside a table of guests and get louder and more heated as things develop. Gradually the whole room is drawn into the conversation.

In general the arguments only need to be staged once but if the venue is very large or there is a lot of back ground noise from the guests you can stage the argument and then move to another area of the room to continue the quarrel (repeating the salient points once more) .

General Staging Notes

Casting / rehearsal

Your chosen performers should be issued with a copy of the entire pack.

You should hold as many rehearsals as required depending on the experience of the performers (2 or 3 recommended) .

The first rehearsal should concentrate on reading through this pack and getting a feel for how the event is structured and the role that each character has to play in the plot.

Before the second rehearsal the performers should further prepare their back stories. We provide example stories in the full pack Appendix and you can use these, expand on them, or write new ones.

As it is impossible to rehearse the whole event without that all important audience to react to, you should concentrate on cementing motives and the order and content of the arguments. These can be rehearsed by the performers, more to prove they can improvise and keep up a convincing performance than word for word content!

Facilities required for the performers

The performers need a separate private room for their use. They will use this prior to the event to get changed and prepared and will use the room during the event where they can exchange notes and discuss any change of tactics. The murder victim will also use this room once deceased!

The performers will eat at the same time as the audience. Food for the deceased victim can be brought to the main table and then sent away (and taken to the private room!) for extra comic effect.

Recommended event format

The evening works best if structured round a sit down meal. If the event is being staged in an hotel this may be a formal served multi-course meal, but if this was being staged in a hall or private venue you could lay on a simpler meal or even a table buffet. However guests should have a table to sit at to watch and enjoy the action.

Pre-dinner drinks

Before moving to the seated area, we recommend pre-dinner drinks. This gives an opportunity for the guests to mingle and more importantly to meet the characters informally before the action begins (see **Meet and Greet** below) .

Dining area:

Top table: set for 6 places, used by the principal characters. Positioned in a central location so that all the other guests can see the action. Ideally a clear area in front of this table should be provided to give space for the actors to perform freely.

Tables for the other guests. Depending on facilities and space it is recommended that the tables are spaced to give room for the actors to move around and between them and so be able to interact with the guests.

Although structured around a meal, there is no predefined timing for the action and the courses. If this is a restaurant based event then the serving staff should just be instructed to serve the courses as normal and not wait for any events / action (this saves upsetting the chef!).

As a broad guide your event should run as follows:

7.30 to 8.00	Meet and greet	Pre-dinner drinks
8.00	Sit down and Sal's speech	Starters
8.10	Mike Slammers entry and revelations	
8.30	Arguments begin	Main course
8.50	dies
9.00 to 9.30	Ongoing revelations	Dessert
9.40 to 9.55	Wrapping up!	
10.00	Solution sheets distributed	Coffee
10.15	Prize giving and denouement	

Since the event has a gangster theme, you should encourage the audience to come dressed for the occasion in Gangster and Molls attire to add to the atmosphere! The principal characters should also be dressed for their roles. Although the evening has been designated a weapons' free zone – all the character are carrying the tools of their trade, just in case!

Example of an Overview of a Character

Sal Capone

Male: Playing age 40s.

Costume: Gangster pinstripe suit, hat, shirt and tie. He also packs a pistol!

Sal is the most feared gangster in the district (but no relation to Al Capone, oddly enough!) . His speciality is extortion and protection rackets and he has most of the city's police force in his pocket. He has set up this proposed crime syndicate, and it is his party this evening. Mike Slammer has been a thorn in Sal's side for some time, although Slammer has been unable to make anything stick on Sal, he has often put a crimp in Capone's rackets.

Example of the Plot Narrative

Meet and Greet

All the guests are members of Chicago criminal fraternity and should be encouraged to come dressed for the occasion! Since the event is designated a weapon free zone, both 'English' and Malloy will pat down and check other guests throughout the evening – just in case! The key characters need to introduce themselves and each other to the assembled guests before the event really kicks off (see **General Staging Notes** above for how best to do this).

The characters should arrive over the space of 15 minutes during this informal section (Recommended order: Malloy and Janice, Mrs Brown, 'English' and finally, making a bit of an entrance, Sal Capone and Dolores) . Slammer interrupts later...

They should introduce themselves to the guests, and interact with one another. They can make throwaway remarks about the other characters, sowing the seeds for any mistrust, dislike and personal conflicts. It is important that during this opening session the characters get to mingle and introduce themselves with all of the guests to ensure that everyone feels involved and gets a feel for what is going on!

Guests should then be invited to take their seats for the meal.

Example for opening speech

Once the guests are seated for the meal, **Sal Capone** opens with a speech to the assembled guests welcoming them to the event. His speech must include:

- A welcome to the guests.
- An introduction of the other principal characters for anyone who's missed them.
- A summary of the local situation. 'Business' is under threat with the Feds, who seem untouchable and can't be bribed, hitting all of their operations. Everyone has suffered and there are real concerns for the future.
- He also refers to the threat of a rival crime syndicate *and more...*

Arguments before the murder

After the revelations, the performers should feel free to move about and work the tables and not stay sat at the top table. The characters should mingle and engage in dialogue with the other guests, expressing their amazement and reaction.

While this is going on, there are predefined arguments and heated discussions which should take place. This can be done at the top table, in the area in front of the table or anywhere around the room (if the venue is very large then the arguments can be held twice or more at different points around the room if necessary).

Sal is furious that his carefully planned meeting has been thrown into jeopardy by...

There are further revelations which must come out in counter accusations and argument..

Motives...

Finally - Who Dunit?

... announces that it is clear that the murderer is in the room. True, of course they are all crooks, but only one of them committed the crime tonight! Can the audience / guests identify the suspect! The local cops are hopeless anyway!

Solution forms (and pens) are distributed to the guests and the performers retire to their room to give the guests time to complete their forms. After giving the guests 10 minutes or so to make their deductions, the forms are collected and the characters in the privacy of their room select the winner and the booby prize!

Example of additional printed materials



GANGSTERS HOLD TOP SECRET MEETING

"Don't tell anyone it's happening" warns Mob Boss

NEW CRIMINAL SUPERGROUP ON THE CARDS?

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LISTERINE

POLICE BAFFLED - AS USUAL

By Alfred Lingle

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