

# Dying for Chocolate



*A Delicious  
Mystery*



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DYING FOR CHOCOLATE

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Cover by Sindy Szymanis



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Juanita Rose Violini

Mystery Factory



# Dying For Chocolate



## Scenario:

**Coco Carmel**, owner of *Cherish Chocolates*, is searching for the New Face of Romance for her new line of chocolate, *To Die For*. Cold, hard cash is Coco's bottom line. With carob candy starting to take a market share, it's time to eliminate the competition. Secret ingredients & suggestive liaisons swing this delicious mystery into a sugary smuggling operation.

**Roy Bean**, the Carob Cowboy, sells soy and carob products. Roy wants to infiltrate Coco's organization to steal her secret ingredient for his 'healthy' candy. When not pushing the virtues of carob, Roy battles with the 'demon chocolate' that once destroyed his life.

**Crème Carmel**, Coco's cousin and business partner, thinks soy and Roy suck. Crème wants Roy gone. She wants some changes made at *Cherish Chocolates* and they don't include the cheap imitations. Blood is thicker than carob butter.

**Chip Ripple**, quality control expert at *Cherish Chocolates* wants to take over the company. Chip sees Roy as just another inferior element to be eliminated from the mix. Chip wants Roy gone. Let chocolate be chocolate.

**Roxanne the Rapper**, aka The Chocolate Wrapper, wants revenge. Roy was hers until he gave her an ultimatum, which she refused. Then Roy decided to chase after Coco and her secret ingredient and Roxanne decided she wants Roy gone. One good rap deserves another.

**Dr. Damien Hoover**, when golfing, wants Coco back in his future. He also wants to keep his past in his past. Roy is a threat to both. Doc wants Roy gone. Dead men tell no tales.

**Gunther Legume**, Roy's bitter sweet brother and owner of *The Family Jewels Gem Importers & Emporium*. Has sibling rivalry erupted between the Bean boys?

If you've ever loved anything, come join the fun as this motley group melts down. Dress like a lover, practice your pick-up lines, and polish up your come-hither looks. Who knows what you might win. It will be a mouth-watering evening to die for!



## Characters:

### **\*ROY BEAN: The Carob Cowboy & Victim**

Roy is sly. Roy is tricky - but he hides it well. Roy is also known as the Carob Cowboy and is the owner of *Carob Confections*. He is wooing Coco, trying to win her heart and his way into her recipe box. Coco is getting rich because of a secret ingredient and Roy wants it. He tells her that if they team up they'll rule the world of bon bons, but he really wants to rule the candy world by himself. Chocolate is evil.

**Roy's Secret:** Roy is a chocoholic. He hails from the wealthy 'LeGume Family', famous for their gem importing business, *'The Family Jewels'*. A few years ago Roy began selling off precious stones to support his addiction. The family found out and kicked him out.

**Costume Suggestion:** As western as you want to go; whole hog or accessorize. Cowboy hat, boots, belt, chaps, etc. Moustache or some other description of facial hair and hair style that can easily and quickly be changed to turn into Gunther. Can be played as a redneck or a playboy health nut.

### **\*GUNTHER LEGUME: Jewelry Store Owner** \* dual role played by same actor

Operates *'The Family Jewels'*, a retail outlet for the LeGume Group's importing business. Gunther has recently been robbed. He came in just as the thief was finishing up and managed to tear the shirt off the thief's back before (s)he got away. Working with the assistance of the crime lab, one of the stains on the shirt was identified as *Cherish Chocolates* chocolate. Gunther has come to get his diamonds back.

**Gunther's Secret:** Gunther is Roy's brother.

**Gunther's Motive:** Roy has stolen from *'The Family Jewels'* before and might be doing it again. If Roy makes off with the inventory the business will go under. He must be stopped.

**Costume Suggestion:** Business suit or upscale clothing with jewellery: flashy piercing, tie clips, cuff links, earrings, etc. Personality emphasis can vary widely between punk, stiff-upper lip, flamboyant, or whatever is the most fun.

### **ROXANNE THE CHOCOLATE RAPPER: Roy's ex & Murderer**

Roxanne wants revenge on Roy. He asked her to do the impossible and give up chocolate. Roxanne refused and Roy moved on but not before she told him that Coco had a secret ingredient in her chocolates. He doesn't know what it is but he can tell it makes Coco a lot of money. Roxanne's furious at being flipped off. That's why she's going to help Chip get the *Cherish Chocolates* back and get rid of Roy doing it..

**Roxanne's Secret:** Roxanne is the murderer. She knows about Roy being a recovering chocoholic and about Coco's smuggling diamonds in her chocolates. Roxanne is using the information to entice Roy into falling off the wagon and making sure he bites the big one.

**Roxanne's Motive:** Roy has jilted Roxanne. She feels betrayed by him

**Costume Suggestion:** Individual. Something funky or punky or Goth or street smart or hip or retro or any combination of the above and then some. Roxanne is a performer. She's got 'it' and she flaunts 'it'. Can be an opportunist, a society drop out or a political reformer.

### **COCO CARMEL: Famous Chocolatier & Owner of *Cherish Chocolates***

Coco likes a risk. She risked her heart, just a little, falling in love with the dashing Swiss Doctor Damien Hoover but the good Doctor appeared to have a problem with commitment so she cut him loose. Coco is about to release a new line of truffles and is looking for new faces to be featured on the box. She wants people to be distracted by the outside so they don't look too closely at what is inside.

**Coco's Secret:** Coco is using her chocolates to smuggle stolen jewels, her 'secret ingredient,' out of the country.

**Coco's Motive:** Roy is getting too close to discovering Coco's smuggling activities. He must be stopped.

**Costume Suggestion:** Glamorous and attention-getting; could be over the top in sequins or understated with the little black dress. Go with whatever flatters the actress playing Coco. Ditto personality; flashy or coy, the hammer in the velvet glove. Something fun but brainy.

### **CRÈME CARMEL: Coco's Cousin & Business Partner**

Taking risks is what Crème loves to do, but risks that are smart and calculated - not foolish rushing-in type risks. To her, joining Cherish Chocolates with Carob Confections isn't a risk. It's just plain dumb. A smart risk is the side business that she is involved in with Coco and the Dr. but even that is starting to look unprofitable. She lost her shirt in the last job she did with them.

**Crème's Secret:** Crème is a cat burglar who steals the jewels that are smuggled out in Coco's *Cherish Chocolates' Special Collection*. She just about got caught on her last heist when she robbed *'The Family Jewels'* – Gunther's store.

**Crème's Motive:** Roy could spoil the smuggling scheme she is part of & she hates carob.

**Costume Suggestion:** Something dark black, blue or maroon and fairly form fitting maybe with a cape. Something that a cat burglar might wear, so no frills or big sleeves, etc. Classy. Personality is physical; athletic/dancer and the 'strong silent type' or arrogant, proud, look at me!

### **CHIP RIPPLE: Quality Control Expert at *Cherish Chocolates***

Chip is all that's left of the original company after his father, Fudge Ripple, lost Cherish Chocolates to Coco Carmel in a poker game. Coco would have fired him but Crème thought he was kind of cute so she saved his job for him. He knows everything that goes on at Cherish Chocolates and doesn't like it. Chip wants the company back, unblemished, and he wants Crème at his side but he's too shy to ask her.

**Chip's Secret:** Chip is Roxanne's brother. He's told her about the 'secret ingredient' which are the stolen jewels being smuggled out but Chip would never do anything with that information.

**Chip's Motive:** Roy could interfere with his getting control of Cherish Chocolates.

**Costume Suggestion:** Lab coat or clothes that are white and say quality control. Scientific. A 'superman in disguise' type. Anguished with unpredictable bursts of passion. Could be bookish or absent-mindedly inventive.



### **DR. DAMIEN HOOVER: Plastic-Surgeon**

Doc loves love as much as he loves a good golf game and a good deal. Almost. Coco was his love and Crème took care of the 'good deals' but the Carmel cousins haven't been going well for Doc lately. Coco wouldn't play second fiddle to a bunch of clubs and left him. Crème is talking about ending a profitable venture they have been working on together because she lost her shirt in the last deal. Roy is interfering in both areas of his life. Doc turns to alcohol under stress and he is very stressed.

**Doc's Secret:** He is a fence. He arranges for buyers to purchase the jewels that Crème is stealing and Coco is shipping in her chocolates. He used to fence for Roy as well.

**Doc's Motive:** Roy knows that Doc is a fence and can blow the whistle on him at any time. Doc doesn't want his jewel smuggling partnership with the Carmel cousins to be interrupted.

**Costume Suggestion:** A doctor. Polo shirt or tweed jacket or some 'man of the world' outfit who carries a golf club in one hand and a cocktail glass in the other.

## The Performance

*This is an interactive murder mystery improv script. Lines do not need to be memorized, which saves a lot of time and allows for a minimum number of rehearsals. Each of the scenes in the script tells you the purpose of the scene. Sample dialogue is given. It's all about sharing the information required in each scene, rather than how the actors say it. They can memorize the few lines, if they wish, to start things off, but it is not necessary.*

**ACTORS can make a CHARACTER CHEAT SHEET:**

- Write a list of abbreviated bullet points on a card or in a small notebook to refer to just before each scene. Don't get caught looking to it and don't let anyone get their hands on it. Base your bullet points on the items listed for your character.
- Note any evidence/props you need to have on your person at the start of each act.

## ACT ONE: Pleased to Meet You!

This takes place during the cocktail hour or reception. The purpose of each scene is stated to make this easy to use this as an improv script or as a regular script. The dialogue can be memorized or used as a springboard to improv acting and audience participation. The core of each scene may be elaborated on and embellished depending on time available.

*Director - see Performance Notes*

### Act I Scene I: GETTING TO KNOW YOU: Welcome, Mingling, Gossip & Backstabbing

#### *Actors' Notes:*

*Characters are warm and welcoming; chatting up the audience and giving out background information... and start to gossip, backstab and get quirky. All gossip, slander & backstabbing is vague at this point.*

*Actors mingle, introducing themselves and 'chatting-up' the audience. They point out the other characters, drop some gossip, then say nice things about them – at least to start with. As they are leaving a conversation they drop some little piece of slander which will cause raised eyebrows but no serious accusations yet.*

*Occasionally actors will mingle with each other in groups of two or three, shouting, then dropping their voices in surprise when they realize that they are attracting attention.*

*Conversations can be led in the direction of the theme: which famous couples/lovers they admire; chocolate is heavenly; chat about favourite suggest new flavours; tuna chocolates, etc.*

*This is what the characters talk about specifically in **DYING FOR CHOCOLATE**:*

#### **ALL:**

- Looking for lovers. Isn't it thrilling that business woman of the year, Coco Carmel, is present scouting out people looking for two new faces to use on the packaging of her new line of chocolate 'To Die For'?

- Rumour has it that Coco is going to the lucky couple tonight and offer them a lucrative contract. Will it be you? Would you like your face on a box of chocolates that are sold internationally?

### **ROY:**

*Tries avoiding Roxanne and her tray of chocolates. Once in a while she corners him. He really wants one and it is taking all his strength to 'just say no'.*

- Woos Coco and everyone else about the ever increasing popularity of soy over dairy and the merits of merging Coco's company, *Cherish Chocolates*, with his company, *Carob Confections*.
- It's pro-choice, providing people with the two options under one label. Roy insists he has never eaten chocolate. It is not healthy and a healthy lifestyle is so important!

### **COCO:**

- Searching for the 'new face' for her new line of Chocolates. It's wonderful to be the head of the company and final decision maker.
- Extols and emphasizes the virtues of chocolate; its use as an aphrodisiac, its ability to produce euphoria and its significance in combating PMS (Primitive Mood Swings).
- Chocolate is the one thing in life you can trust. Trust is so important!

### **CRÈME:**

- How *Cherish Chocolates* was just a tiny go-nowhere company until she and Coco took it over and took it international.
- She and Coco, her cousin and only relative, got the failing business by chance, can't really talk about the details, and made it boom. Even though they may have some differences, family loyalty has seen them through. Family loyalty is so important!

### DOC HOOVER:

- Loves golfing and everything aristocratic. Praises Coco and her company like there is no tomorrow. She is an amazing woman.
- Every man should be so lucky as to have one. Long distance relationships are nice, too. Either with the same woman or not necessarily, but those others don't mean anything.
- Chocolate is the answer to everyone's problems and prayers and Coco is the answer to his. She is his true love. True love is so important!

### ROXANNE:

*Walks around with a tray of chocolates, occasionally offering them to people (and pointing to which one they can have) and frequently offering them to Roy. He is trying to avoid her. You can tell he wants the chocolate and it is taking all his strength to 'just say no'.*

- How she is breaking into the rap and song writing business and is going to be performing one of her original raps soon.
- Chats up the wonders of chocolate. Chocolate is everywhere, for everyone and goes with everything. Chocolate is unconditional, just like love should be. Unconditional love is so important!

### CHIP:

- Informs folks that Cherish Chocolates actually started as a 'Mom & Pop' operation.
- He worked in quality control, with the previous owners, but he won't go into details. Every ingredient that goes into Cherish Chocolates is the finest.
- With something as important as chocolate you don't want to go gambling your company's reputation. Reputation is so important!

## Act I Scene II: MOTIVES REVEALED: Altercations with Victim-To-Be

*Director - see Performance Notes*

*Actors' Notes:*

- Each character has an argument with the victim revealing their motive for wanting the victim dead
- Each interaction ends with an obvious threat to the victim.
- This final threat is a cue for the next person to start their threatening interaction with the victim.

### **ON MIC:**

#### **Opening Speech:**

#### **COCO & CRÈME:**

#### **PURPOSE:**

- *Welcome people to the introduction of Coco's new line of chocolate, To Die For, and to encourage people to try out for the New Face of Romance.*
- *CRÈME is unhappy about working so much.*

**Coco:** "Welcome Chocolate Lovers! Let's hear it for chocolate! Yahhhahahhahh!  
I'm so happy to see so many of my old friends and enemies here and I'm  
feeling positive that tonight ... I'll find the New Face of Romance!"

**Crème:** "We're very excited to be unveiling *To Die For* and we know it's going to  
make us billions of dollars, so those of us at the company who are  
underpaid can quit our second jobs and concentrate on doing what we  
love best - Chocolate! Yahhhhh. Who loves chocolate, shout it out!"

*Roy Interrupts*

**Roy:** "Or carob! Who loves carob? (*Probably will be met by silence or hecklers*) I  
can't hear you? Eating healthy is just ... well ... it's just GOOD FOR YOU!"

**ROY & ROXANNE** (*Sauntering around with her tray of chocolates*):

PURPOSE:

- *Roxanne is surprised that Roy, who says he hates chocolate, is there. She tries to tempt him.*
- *They used to go together but have split up. They fight.*
- *Roxanne threatens Roy.*
- **CLUE:** *Roxanne knows that Roy is a sucker for chocolate.*

**Roxanne:** "What are you doing here Roy. You said you hated chocolate. But I know you don't."

**Roy:** "I'm here because chocolate and carob can rule together. Coco is a smart business woman and if she's really smart she'll merge with me. "

**Roxanne:** "I'll merge with you Roy. I'll even write a rap for you about your little carob cookies. Come on, Roy. Change your mind about chocolate and me. You know you want to."

**Roy:** "I will never change my mind about chocolate or about you, Roxanne. I have self discipline. I can control my animal urges."

**Roxanne:** "Oh Roy. Relax. Just one. If you have self-discipline you should be able to stop at one. Or you can just let that animal out." (*Roxanne takes a chocolate and eats it enticingly while making kissy noises at him.*)

**Roy:** "Stop it! Lips that touch chocolate shall never touch mine. You'll never be able to tempt me again. Never! You and chocolate have lost all of your appeal for me. Stop trying to tempt me!"

**Roxanne:** (*Loses it.*) "You stop it! You stop it! Stop insulting me! Take it back. Say you're sorry or I'll make your life so miserable you'll wish you were dead. Dead Roy! You hear me – DEAD!"

*Coco interrupts*

**Coco:** "Both of you stop it! This is a gathering for lovers, not fighters."



### ROY & COCO:

#### PURPOSE:

- *The rumoured existence of a secret ingredient. Coco and Roy argue over it and Roy becomes extremely pushy. Coco threatens him.*

**Roy:** *(Goes over to Coco)* "Come on Coco. What's your secret ingredient? I know you have one. You can tell me."

**Coco:** "Well I can't tell you! It wouldn't be much of a secret then would it, Roy?"

**Roy:** "It's ok. You can trust me. But uh, I understand, because of the company you keep *(looks over knowingly at Dr Hoover who shouts out 'Hey')* that you might have some trust issues. You just can't trust people who like chocolate."

**Coco:** "I like chocolate Roy. I guess that means you can't trust me."

**Roy:** "You're different Coco. Tell me your secret ingredient. It might work in my carob candy too. We could rule the world together. *(Is running out of patience)* Just tell me what you put in your ingredients. Tell me now."

**Coco:** "Chocolate Roy! The secret ingredient in my chocolates is CHOCOLATE!!!! Yes. It would make your lousy carob products sell better if you put chocolate in them."

**Roy:** *(Getting in her face)* "Stop making fun of me and tell me what you're adding to the chocolates!"

**Coco:** "Back off Roy. I need some space here! Back off or you won't live to regret it!"

*Doc interrupts.*

**Doc:** "Leave her alone cowboy. *(To Coco)* You know who he is don't you? His name wasn't always Roy Bean."

### ROY & DOC:

#### PURPOSE:

- *Roy has a different name*
- *Doc has a secret in his past. They argue over Coco and get into a fight.*
- *Doc threatens Roy.*

**Roy:** "You're just jealous because Coco prefers me over you. I'm the better man and she knows it."

**Doc:** "It doesn't sound like you're on the favorites list anymore. In case you missed it, cowboy, she just threatened you. Or maybe I should call you Roy. Or maybe I should call you ..."

**Roy:** (*Quickly interrupts him*) "I wouldn't talk if I was you Doc. You have a few secrets of your own (*waves a piece of paper in Doc's face*) that you might want to stay that way."

**Doc:** "No man is an island Roy, don't forget that. That's why your family kicked you out."

**Roy:** "Coco will never kick me out. She's just a little mad right now because she knows I'm right. Carob is going to take over the world with or without the secret ingredient. If she's smart she'll hook up with me before it does. Cause there's no second chances with the Carob Cowboy. Right Roxanne. (*Roxanne throws a chocolate at him*) And if you know what's good for you, you'll stay away from Coco or I'll spill the beans on you."

**Doc:** "I'll be spilling a few 'beans' of my own, Roy BEAN! You better keep your mouth shut or I'll shut it for you! For good!"

*Crème interrupts.*

**Crème:** "Coco will get rid of Roy if I have anything to do with it."

### ROY & CRÈME:

#### PURPOSE:

- *Background on Roy's past with his family*
- *Crème doesn't want him butting in on her family. They argue.*
- *She threatens him.*

**Crème:** "Take a hike Roy. Soy and carob are cheap imitations and my family is only interested in the real thing."

**Roy:** "Carob is the real thing. Play nice with me Crème, or I'll have to play dirty."

**Crème:** “*Cherish Chocolates* is a family business and you aren’t family.”

**Roy:** “I like *Cherish Chocolate* and I'm not leaving any time soon. I might be family one day and then ...you're the one who will be gone.”

**Crème:** “Never. My family will be true to me, not like yours. We know your family kicked you out but I don't remember why. Why did they kick you out Roy? OH YES! You STOLE from them didn't you? Jewels wasn't it? From your family's '*Family Jewels*' jewelry store. Amateur.”

**Roy:** “I’m a changed man and I’m here to stay. Get used to it or whatever your second job is will become your first and ONLY job.”

**Crème:** *Cherish Chocolates* will be my ONLY job. No matter what it takes. You’ll be dead before you’re part of our family, Roy Bean!”

*Chip interrupts.*

**Chip:** “Listen up Cowboy, Crème’s right. We don’t want you here.”

### **ROY & CHIP:**

#### **PURPOSE:**

- *Hints that Chip want the company for himself.*
- *Chip attacks Roy and his reputation as a womanizer. They scuffle.*
- *Chip threatens Roy.*

**Chip:** “I may not be part of the Carmel family but this company is as important to me as if it was my own. I'm in charge of quality control and believe me, you aren't the right quality for this company! And the way you treat women. How could you show your face here?”

**Roy:** “I know a thing or two about quality and I know a thing or two about where you learned about quality, so don't push me, Chip Ripple. I’ve made mistakes and I’ve made amends. My reputation is fine.”

**Chip:** “Try telling that to the women you’ve wronged.”

**Roy:** “I haven’t wronged any women, they’ve just been the wrong women.”

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**Chip:** "You destroy whatever you come in contact with. Keep your cheap carob candy away from *Cherish Chocolates*."

**Roy:** "I'll do what I please, when and where I please, with whom I please."

**Chip:** "And nothing would please me better than you not being here. Keep away or something bad will happen to you. You will become a victim of the Ripple Effect!" (*They start to push and shove each other.*)

*Roxanne interrupts with her tray of chocolates.*

**Roxanne:** "Boys Boys! Have some chocolate. Chocolate makes everything better."

### Act I Scene III: MURDER!!! Characters Reveal Their Dark Sides

*Director - see Production Notes*

*Actor Notes:*

- At the end of the altercations the victim dies a long, drawn-out, melodramatic, painful death.
- Designate who will 'remove' the body or how it will be removed.

**COCO:**

PURPOSE:

- *Takes control of the space talking about how fortunate she is and how much she loves chocolate and lovers.*

**Coco:** "I'm so happy that it's my destiny to create the world's best chocolate. Chocolate and Love. Unrequited love, Illicit love and love of chocolate. I just love to talk about them."

*[Recommended time to insert a song. Choose an upbeat song that can be loosely tied into a love or chocolate theme or reflects what's happening. Just sing the first verse or two - not the whole song –. It slows the mystery down too much. Create a cue line that includes the song title. Start music - start singing. "There's nothing I like better than to give people something to talk about."*

### COCO

**Suggested SONG: 'LET'S GIVE THEM SOMETHING TO TALK ABOUT'**

**COCO** "And now I'd like to present Roxanne the Rapper giving us her own original 'Chocolate Rap'! Let's give it up for Roxanne."

**Roxanne** *appears, and takes 'centre stage' and performs The Chocolate Rap.*

PURPOSE:

- Give Roy time to disappear and put on his face mask, grab a gun and the bag for loot.

### Roxanne's Ode to Chocolate

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Oh -ho, I love chocolate so  
Even though I know  
Where it's going (slap thighs and butt) to go

I don't really care though  
How big my butt is gonna grow  
Cause Chocolate is better than  
Loving from any man

Chocolate, Chocolate, Oh chocolate

Oh yeah I love chocolate  
be it cold or hot  
when it's on my lips  
I just can't stop  
gonna feel it slide  
in my mouth  
warmin' my body from north to south

The smell of chocolate  
makes me feel so high  
moves a tear to my eye

Better not get between my chocolate and I  
Or you'll be kissing my booty good bye!!

Chocolate, chocolate!!

**Roy dies:**

*On the last line or after applause Roy bursts on the scene, guns blazing (always shoot off cap guns pointed into the air) with a mask on, but still obviously Roy. He is holding an empty sack and demands:*

**Roy:** "PUT THE CHOCOLATE IN THE BAG. PUT THE CHOCOLATE IN THE BAG AND  
NOBODY GETS HURT!"

*He approaches some of the guests, demanding chocolate from them, then quickly over to the display and starts stuffing chocolate into his mouth. He pops in a chocolate that is hiding a huge diamond and starts to choke. He dies a long melodramatic death while the others look on.*

**EVERYONE:**

**PURPOSE:** *A chance to have some theatrical fun.*

**Roxanne:** "But Roy - you don't like chocolate."

**Coco:** "My chocolates! Stop! Get away from those chocolates."

**Crème:** "It doesn't look like he likes them. What an insult! Wait. Is that an allergic reaction?"

**Chip:** "We use only the finest ingredients. He knows nothing about quality."

**Roxanne:** "Doctor Hoover, do something! It looks like he's choking."

**Dr. Hoover:** "I'm not that kind of a doctor. I do liposuction. I don't do choking."

*Roy falls, gets up, stumbles across half the room, falls, gets up, stumbles around some more, rolls around, gets up, falls, and finally dies at a place convenient for the rest of the cast or some of the service staff to haul off the body – so that they don't have to carry him too far. Roy is dead.*



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**Coco:** "Well it looks like I won't have to worry about competition from carob anymore.

Not that carob ever was any competition."

**Dr. Hoover:** "I guess the Family Jewels are safe now."

**Crème:** *Starts to search the body.* "Roy said he never ate chocolate, but look at this! He was a member of Chocoholics Anonymous." *(Puts the card on the clue table.)*

**Chip:** *Also searches the body.* "Obviously he lied. I knew he was a bad person." *Finds the letter from Doc Hoover on Roy and during the break puts it on the clue table.*

**Roxanne:** "Let's eat *(or whatever comes next).*"

*(Body is carried off. Clues and murder weapon are put on the clue table. Background music starts and it's time to eat.)*

**BREAK:** No performing for approximately 20 – 30 minutes to allow people time to begin enjoying dinner. The items from Roy's pocket, including his Chocoholics Anonymous card and letter from Doc Hoover regarding Roy's mother, are put on the clue table. Actor playing Roy gets into costume as Gunther.

## ACT TWO: Shut Your Mouth!

*Director - see Performance Notes*

### Act II Scene I: MISSING PERSON ARRIVES: Backstory & Some Evidence Revealed

PURPOSE:

- *To introduce Gunther and reveal the newspaper article on the robbery at The Family Jewels.*
- *Coco tries to distract him from his troubles and calm him down.*

**GUNTHER LEGUME** enters demanding to talk with whoever is in charge of Cherish Chocolates. There's something rotten going on in that company and he's going to get to the bottom of it.

**GUNTHER & COCO with Chip & Crème adding their comments:**

**Coco:** "You seem to be looking for me. I'm Coco Carmel, owner of Cherish Chocolates. Is there a problem?"

**Gunther:** "Yes! There's a problem. There's a big problem, which you may or may not be aware of. When was the last time your kitchen was inspected?"

**Coco:** "Just after the cockroaches moved out. What do you think, idiot? Why we have it inspected all the time. Otherwise we wouldn't be the Number One chocolate company."

**Chip:** *From the sideline:* "Are you saying our kitchen is dirty? Are you? Because if you are I can mop it with your head."

**Gunther:** "Acting a little touchy, aren't you? Whoever you are. Do you work there? Are you bonded? *Turns back to Coco.* Are your employees bonded? How do you know you can trust them?"

**Coco:** "Bonded? We a chocolate company, sweetie, not a cleaning service."

**Crème:** "We trust each other. We're family. Oh, I recognize you now. Don't worry. Our family is nothing like yours." *(Stage spits onto the floor.)*

**Gunther:** *(Pulling The Crime Scene Scoop out of his pocket and getting enraged)* "I've been robbed! Last night someone broke into my store and made off with the famous Hopeless Diamond! And I almost caught the thief, too! Here, read this! *(Selects member from the audience to read the news article on the microphone and after the scene makes sure the paper gets put on the clue table.)* I believe that the crook is in this room!"

**Coco:** "You own The Family Jewels? So, you're a business man. Diamonds and chocolate go so well together. Maybe we should talk about branding. Or romance. Or diamonds."

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*[Recommended time to insert a song. Something that shows Coco trying to distract Gunther from the robbery. Create a cue line that includes the song title. Ex: "Diamonds are a girl's best friend you know." Start music - start singing. If no song is desired then go to next scene.]*

### EVERYONE

**Suggested SONG: DIAMONDS ARE A GIRL'S BEST FRIEND**

### DOC & ROXANNE:

#### PURPOSE:

- *Doc can't believe Coco hasn't come running to him since Roy, his rival, has died and he knows that she really does love him.*
- *Roxanne doesn't believe in love anymore.*

**Doc:** "Look at her! I can't believe she's giving Gunther all that attention. First she was too busy with Roy and now she's too busy with his brother. But I'm sure she loves me."

**Roxanne:** "Forget it Doc. There's no such thing as love."

**Doc:** "Not only does she love me, in a few years she's going to need me. Look at those hips. They're just cellulite waiting to happen."

**Roxanne:** "Liposuction doesn't get rid of cellulite."

**Doc:** "What do you know? I'm the doctor here, not you. I can't believe Coco is making a pass at Gunther. Maybe it's only business. Do you think it's only business?"

**Roxanne:** "It's definitely only business because there is no such thing as love. Romance is for sissies and the only thing you can count on is chocolate. Coco knows that. Why do you think she got *Cherish Chocolates*? Because she believes in romance? HAH! That woman doesn't have a soft bone in her body. But you're right about those thighs. Could be some softness happening there."

*Coco interrupts.*

**Coco:** "Excuse me! You don't need to be here any longer. You've done your little ditty, you can go now."

### **DOC & COCO:**

#### **PURPOSE:**

- *Doc tries to convince Coco of his real feelings, and that she's got to come back to him.*
- *She refuses.*
- *Hints that they have some kind of a sideline together.*

**Doc:** "Coco baby. I love you so much. You look so good standing beside my golf trophies. Come back to me."

**Coco:** "Fat chance Doc. You seem to be under the mistaken impression that we were ever together in the first place. A little hanky panky is not true love. We are strictly business."

**Doc:** "But we trust each other. If there's trust, there's love."

**Coco:** "If there's trust, there's business. Shouldn't you be heading back to your private clinic in Switzerland soon?"

**Doc:** "Come with me Coco. You might like to get out of the country for a while, especially now."

**Coco:** "Don't tell me what to do. I'm the one in charge here. You should just go home."

**Doc:** "My home is where ever you are. But since you've been giving me the cold shoulder, I don't have a home."

*[Recommended time to insert a song. Something that shows Doc's heartbreak. Create a cue line that includes the song title. Ex: "Since you threw me out I've been living in the Heartbreak Hotel." Start music - start singing. If no song is desired then go to next scene.]*

## DOC HOOVER

**Suggested SONG: HEARTBREAK HOTEL**

### DOC & CRÈME:

#### PURPOSE:

- *Doc and Crème also have a sideline but Crème wants out.*
- *Doc objects.*
- *Maybe it's the same sideline with Coco.*

**Crème:** "Coco is right. It's time for you to go back to Switzerland, Doc. And stay there."

**Doc:** "Stay in one country? I never do that. I always go back and forth. I love to travel."

**Crème:** "Cherish Chocolates doesn't want you around anymore. But I hear the Swiss make a pretty good chocolate. Go drum up some business there."

**Doc:** "Are you crazy? I can't believe you want to give up a good thing Crème Carmel. We have a great, uh, investment together."

**Crème:** "No. You have a great investment. I lost my shirt in that last job and I want out."

**Doc:** "No! You don't mean it. I can't believe you would give up such a lucrative sideline."

**Crème:** "That's because you're not taking any risks. I'm the one taking all the risks and you're the one gaining all the profit. It's over I tell you. Over! I need to slow down and enjoy life more."

*[Recommended time to insert a song. Something that shows Crème is tired of her current lifestyle. Create a cue line that includes the song title. Ex: "I'm always in a hurry." Start music - start singing. If no song is desired then go to next scene.]*

## CRÈME

**Suggested SONG: I'M IN A HURRY**

## Act II Scene II: I KNOW WHAT YOU DID: Altercations, Threats, Evidence Revealed

### GUNTHER & CRÈME:

#### PURPOSE:

- *Gunther confronts Crème about being a cat burglar, breaking into his shop and leaving behind the chocolate smeared shirt.*
- CLUE: *Chocolate smeared shirt & Lab Report*

**Gunther:** *(Waving shirt in Crème's face.)* "Is this the shirt you lost?"

**Crème:** "Ewww. Don't go waving someone else's dirty laundry in my face. That's repulsive. Besides, I wouldn't be caught dead in something like that."

**Gunther:** "I almost caught you alive in it. I grabbed it off the thief that was stealing my diamonds! Admit it. It was you, wasn't it?"

**Crème:** "I'll never admit that! It was probably your crazy brother again. Before he died."

**Gunther:** "I had my hands on the thief and I can tell you it was not Roy! Roy was never built like that. *(Said in a way that suggests he really liked how the thief was built.)* It was definitely a woman ... who felt a lot like you look. And I've had the chocolate smear tested *(shows Lab Report)* and there's no doubt that it is Cherish chocolate!"

**Crème:** "Good. Cherish chocolate is very popular. Even thieves eat us. Obviously the fellow, or female, has good taste."

*Chip interrupts.*

**Chip:** Of course Cherish chocolates taste good. I guarantee the quality of the ingredients myself. *(Going over to Roxanne)* Roxanne, I hope that there is something that you can guarantee me.



### **CHIP & ROXANNE:**

#### **PURPOSE:**

- *Misdirection. Lead people into thinking that Chip & Roxanne were a couple.*
- *Chip is worried that Roxanne has been indiscreet with the news about Cherish Chocolates' secret ingredient.*
- *Roxanne doesn't care.*

**Roxanne:** "What's that, Chippy?"

**Chip:** "I hope you can guarantee me that that little secret conversation we accidentally had hasn't gone any further than you and me. You know I love you Roxanne, but sometimes I worry that you don't think things through."

**Roxanne:** "You're worried about me being indiscreet? That's an insult Chip - especially coming from you."

**Chip:** "You haven't told anyone I told you about the secret ingredient, did you?"

**Roxanne:** "Only Roy. I only told him that there was one. I didn't say what it was."

**Chip:** "Roy! How could you ever have gotten involved with that carob cowboy clown. He was everything our values disdain."

**Roxanne:** "What about Crème? You'd like to hook up with her, wouldn't you?"

**Chip:** "Yeah, I would."

**Roxanne:** "And you talk about my bad taste! The only thing that has good taste around here is the chocolate."

*Creme interrupts.*

**Creme:** "Did I hear my name?"

## Act II Scene III: SUSPECTS CONFRONT EACH OTHER: Remaining Evidence Revealed

### CHIP & CRÈME:

#### PURPOSE:

- *To cast suspicion on Chip and Crème. He plans to take over Cherish Chocolates and let her run the company.*
- *Crème can have complete control of anything she wants.*
- *Crème wonders about Roxanne interfering Chip says he will handle Roxanne.*

**Chip:** "I can't stop thinking about you, Crème, and I don't like the way that Gunther was talking about you. I'm going to take over Cherish Chocolates and I want to give you complete control of marketing and sales. You won't have to work a second job anymore."

**Crème:** "You'd do that for me? That's awfully sweet of you. But Coco, the slave driver, will never give up Cherish. And it's not quite that easy for me to get out of my second job. Besides, I don't think Roxanne will let you get too close to me."

**Chip:** "Don't you worry about Roxanne. I'll take care of her. What is it exactly that you do for a second job, Creme?"

**Crème:** "Oh ... it's along the lines of an import / export business. Mostly exporting."

**Chip:** "Why that's exactly what you do with Cherish Chocolates; send them all over the world. But still - you shouldn't have to do it if you don't want to."

**Crème:** "That's so sweet of you. Tell me again what you would do for me."

*[Recommended time to insert a song. Something that shows Chip's feelings for Creme. Create a cue line that includes the song title. Ex: "Crème, for you, I'd walk five hundred miles." Start music - start singing. If no song is desired then go to next scene.]*

### CHIP

**Suggested SONG: 500 MILES**

### CHIP & COCO:

#### PURPOSE:

- *Background info on Cherish Chocolate's previous owners, the Ripple Family.*
- *Reveals the 'secret ingredient' of Coco's.*
- *Chip confronts Coco. He declares that Coco's new chocolates "To Die For" are killing people and it's time she got out of the business.*
- *Coco denies that her chocolates killed anybody.*
- *CLUES: Autopsy report, Bill of Sale and Deed of Ownership for Cherish Chocolates.*

**Chip:** *(Pulls the autopsy report from his pocket and shows Coco.)* "I have a copy of the autopsy report here. Roy died because of your *secret ingredient!*"

**Coco:** "You're the one in charge of quality control!"

**Chip:** "You've been using the chocolates to smuggle diamonds! You've destroyed the business because you have no ethics!"

**Coco:** "Roy died because he was a glutton! You're just bitter because your family didn't know how to make a dollar. *(Pulls out the Bill of Sale and Deed for Cherish Chocolates.)* Well everyone, you should know that the 'Mom & Pop' who started Cherish Chocolates were Chip's Mom & Pop. That's why he's trying to make me look bad. Because his father lost the business to me in a poker game and Chip never got over it. Even though I let him keep his job and gave him a raise. You ingrate. You and your sister should be thanking me instead of attacking me."

*Roxanne interrupts.*

**Roxanne:** "We don't owe you anything Coco. You turned our family business into a front for diamond smuggling and even worse, it looked like you were going to start selling carob!"

# Mystery Factory - DYING FOR CHOCOLATE – Juanita Rose Violini

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## GUNTHER & ROXANNE

### PURPOSE:

- *Gunther and Roxanne bond over chocolate.*
- CLUE: *Roxanne's Chocoholics Anonymous card.*

**Gunther:** *(Bending over and picking something up from the floor.)* “Hey Sweetheart, you dropped this.”

**Roxanne:** *(Snatching it from him.)* “Mind your own business.”

**Gunther:** “Come on, honey. I understand. Chocolate is where it’s at. I’m a chocoholic too and I wouldn’t have it any other way. I don’t even want to stop.”

**Roxanne:** “ Well, I used to be a member. That’s where I met Roy. But I decided that I didn’t want to give up chocolate for mocklate. I wouldn’t have it any other way either. Not like your brother. He wanted me to change.”

**Gunther:** "And yet he couldn't change himself. Roy was always such a jerk."

**Roxanne:** "You're his brother."

**Gunther:** "I am nothing like my brother, sweetheart. You know, you're the only one here who's any fun. And you seem to be the only honest one as well. You really have an effect on me."

*[Recommended time to insert a song. Something that shows how Gunther feels about Roxanne. Create a cue line that includes the song title. Ex: “Since the first time I saw you I've felt like a ball of fire.” Start music - start singing. If no song is desired then go to next scene.]*

## GUNTHER

**Suggested SONG:     GREAT BALLS OF FIRE**

**BREAK:** If wanted or needed. Dessert served.

## ACT THREE: Whodunnit?

*Director - see Performance Notes*

### Act III Scene I: FINAL FINGERS POINTED: Accusations, Denials, Call for Solutions

Detective or sibling starts things off by accusing one of the characters of killing ... the victim. The suspects rotate through accusing one another and denying the accusations. Evidence of secrets revealed.

#### PURPOSE:

- *The characters all accuse each other of murder and deny it was them.*
- *Any remaining evidence comes out and is put on the clue table.*

**Coco:** "This murder is spoiling my fun of finding the New Faces of Romance! I demand that the killer be caught right now. It was Chip! He's bitter about losing the family business and he wants Cherish Chocolates to go under. If Chip can't have it he doesn't want anyone to have it. *(Points at Chip)* You did it! You killed Roy!"

**Chip:** "I did not! I come from an honorable family. It was Doc Hoover. He killed Roy because he was jealous of all the attention Coco was giving him and he knew that no one, ever, smuggles diamonds in carob. *(Points at Doc Hoover)* You did it! You killed Roy!"

**Doc Hoover:** "I did not! I'm a doctor for goodness sakes. Doctors save lives. Besides, Coco would never get involved with carob. It was Gunther. He killed Roy because Roy was destroying the family business. *(Points to Gunther)* You did it! You killed Roy!"

**Gunther:** "I did not! I would never use a diamond as a murder weapon. It would be too hard to get back from the police after. But I know who did it. It was Crème. She was afraid that Roy was going to discover the secret

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ingredient and set Crème up to take the fall. (*Points at Crème*) It was you!  
You killed Roy!"

**Crème:** "I did not! Roy was no threat to me. Carob will never catch on and Roy wasn't smart enough to discover our secret ingredient! It was Roxanne! She killed Roy because he dumped her for a life of carob. (*Points at Roxanne*) You did it! You killed Roy."

**Roxanne:** I did not! I freely choose chocolate over the Carob Cowboy. He's the one that denied his true calling to chocolate. It was Coco. People these days are on a real health kick and she was afraid that Roy would take too much of the market share. She killed him because she couldn't stand the competition. (*Points at Coco*) You did it! You killed Roy!"

**Coco:** Don't be ridiculous. I did not. (*To the audience*) You decide. Who do you think killed Roy? Examine the evidence on the clue table, talk to the suspects, and fill out your solution sheets."

*Make sure all the clues are on the clue table. Cast mingle, answer questions (no lying but evasion and vagueness ok) and collect solution sheets.*

### Act III Scene II: DEDUCTION: Interrogation, Evidence Examination, Solutions Collected

#### Actor Notes:

- *Cast mingling and answering questions. Evading questions and being vague is ok but no outright lying*
- *Ask people who they think the killer is and why.*
- *Encourage people to examine the evidence and question other characters*
- *Collect solution sheets and give them to the person, usually the director, judging them.*

### Act III Scene III: DENOUEMENT: Grand Finale Shootout & Wrap Up

*Director - see Performance Notes*

*After all the 'solutions' are in but before a winner is announced, if there is a winner:*



## **GRAND FINALE - Shoot Out between characters.**

*(Use exact dialogue. Happens fast.)*

**Roxanne:** *(Pulls out a gun, shoots it up in the air to get everyone's attention and then confesses.)* "I confess. I did it. I killed Roy. He told me it was either him or chocolate and I picked chocolate. I knew he would be after Coco for her secret ingredient. He just didn't know that it was diamonds! I knew he wouldn't be able to resist Cherish Chocolates and that he would choke to death on the contraband!"

**Doc Hoover:** *(Pulls his gun and points it at Roxanne.)* "You spoiled our diamond smuggling operation for revenge!"

**Chip:** *(Pulls out his gun and aims it at Doc.)* "Don't shoot my sister!"

**Coco:** *(Pulls out her gun and aims it at Chip.)* "Don't shoot my lover!"

**Crème:** *(Pulls out her gun and aims it at Coco.)* "Don't shoot my lover!"

**Gunther:** *(Pulls out his gun and aims it at Crème.)* "Give me back my diamonds or I shoot!"

*Everybody shoots each other and drops dead.*

*Cast rise from the dead as they are introduced by the MC*

## **OPTIONAL:**

**'New Face of Romance' contest if people have come in costumes / Dance contest**

*(Cast can Romance Dance contest while entries on solution sheets are read for the correct solution or the funniest solution or whatever kind of solution you want to give prizes for.)*

## **Prizes Awarded for Best Solution and Contest**

*"Thank you for coming. We hope you had as much fun as we have. Thank you."*

*[Recommended time to insert a wrap-up song. Get the audience to sing along. Create a cue line that includes the song title. Ex: "Thank you for playing along and remember to walk down the bright side of the street. Start music - start singing. If no song is desired thank people for coming and bow out.]*

**Suggested SONG: BRIGHT SIDE OF THE STREET**

[illegible]

# PRODUCER / DIRECTOR Notes



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## MYSTERY FACTORY IMPROV SCRIPTS are designed to:

- ⇒ be ready to perform with minimum rehearsal time
- ⇒ be very forgiving; it's really, really hard to make a noticeable mistake during the performance
- ⇒ make maximum use of the actors' strengths
- ⇒ take advantage of the 'mood' of individual audiences
- ⇒ be extremely flexible and adaptable to any requirements - both those known ahead of time and unexpected situations that come up during the performance.
- ⇒ Mystery Factory scripts can be improvised or memorized. Each scene has a stated purpose. The actors can memorize the suggested dialogue or use it as a springboard into improvisation.

### **ACTORS: What they need to know and what they don't need to know**

#### ***ACTORS can make a CHARACTER CHEAT SHEET:***

- Write a list of abbreviated bullet points on a card or in a small notebook to refer to just before each scene.
- Don't get caught looking to it and don't let anyone get their hands on it.
- Base your bullet points pieces of information, clues, and actions that your character need to do in each scene they are in.

#### **What each actor NEEDS to KNOW:**

##### ***Who their character is in the big picture.***

- ◆ It works best if actors integrate who they actually are into their character. It's more fun that way and less work.
- ◆ It is very important to stay in character whenever the actors are mingling with the audience. Once the pertinent information is covered - what the character thinks of the other suspects and whatever 'clues' have recently been disclosed - making conversation between the 'scripted' scenes can be tedious. So,
- ◆ If the actor enjoys rock climbing or soap operas or building log cabins out of popsicle sticks, then their character can have the same interests. This enables the performer to mingle and easily chat-up the audience while continuing to backstab, slander and speculate scandal about the other suspects. Actors frequently engaging the guests between the scenes creates an enjoyable experience for everyone.

##### ***What their secret is.***

- ◆ Every character has something to hide. This gives them a reason to act suspicious and is subconsciously picked up by the audience, who wonder if the character is hiding the fact that they are the murderer.
- ◆ There are certain places in the script where each character's secret is revealed. Until that time, suspects can allude to the fact that others are hiding something without being

specific; when their own 'secret' is brought up they can act flustered and change the subject, answer a question with a question or begin to slander someone else.

### ***What their relationship is with the other characters.***

- ◆ Each actor only needs to know their own relationship to the other characters. Once they know this they can respond to each other from the basis of that relationship. If two characters are lovers but are hiding the fact, there can be lots of furtive signals and longing glances on one hand while ignoring each other on the other hand. If two characters are competitors they can openly – but light heartedly – have animosity towards each other.

### ***When to perform their scene and what information needs to be revealed in that scene.***

- ◆ Each needs to know their own scenes and what information the scene is set up to reveal. They also need to know the cue that signals the end of the scene before theirs, and what cue to give to signal for the next scene to start. This can be easily executed if the actors make 'cheat sheets' on recipe card size pieces of paper that they carry in a purse or pocket to remind them of the order and information of the action. The director cues the mingling actors two or three minutes before the 'scripted' action resumes so they can check their notes and be ready to go.

### ***Move around the room and interact at least once with everyone.***

- ◆ Don't be shy, especially as the event progresses. Feel free to stand up at your table during the meal and shout something at one of the other characters across the room. (but avoid food fights – the site managers don't like it). (Sometimes you can get away with throwing a bun but never toss your cookies!)
- ◆ Moving the action around helps the audience feel integrated into an interactive event and included in the antics, rather than passively watching a stage play.

### ***Who they follow in the Grand Finale Shoot-Out.***

### Each character DOES NOT need to know:

- ◆ What the other characters' relationship to each other is. This is more information than they need to remember and unnecessary. If they want to know this, they can ask each other in the course of the event. "Is it true that you know Joe from jail?"
- ◆ What and when scenes not including them will be performed. They only need to know their own scenes, what 'cue' to listen for and what 'cue' to give.
- ◆ Exact dialogue. Unless otherwise indicated, dialogue is a sample of how conversations *could* go. In some cases, exact wording is necessary for a clue, and will be indicated as such.

*When an actor knows their character it is easy to go with the flow and respond to any situation as their character would. Feel free to add mannerisms or otherwise spice up a suspect.*

### REHEARSALS:

- \* Depending on your group, there should be three or four rehearsals. Actors should receive and look over their script and have some idea of who they are a week or more before meeting.
- \* The Villain/Victim needs to be a real rotter to give the actors someone to work up their energy against and so that no one in the audience will be very sorry to see them dead.
- \* The 'Grand Finale Shoot-Out' needs to happen rapidly. As soon as one actor has finished their line the next one goes. Everyone fires their guns at the same time after the last person has said their line. After they have dropped dead, the Director introduces the cast.
- \* Director or host thanks crowd for coming and hopes they've enjoyed the performance.

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### **First rehearsal:**

Go over relevant Director's Notes with cast. Have actors introduce themselves as their character and interact with each other on the basis of their relationship together. Go over songs if music is included. Do a 'read through' of script. Emphasize that murder mystery performances are team work and at any time any character can contribute to a scene if the action (or lack of) seems to require it.

### **Second rehearsal:**

Practise improv-ing each of the scenes as you would perform them the night of the event. If you choose to run certain scenes together practise the smooth integration of them. Having the characters walk away from each other and begin to mingle with the guests again is usually sufficient to end a scene. Starting up the background music again works, too. Just make it clear that the characters are finished with each other for the time being. Rehearse songs. Third rehearsal, go through the script using only the cheat sheets.

### **Third rehearsal:**

Dress rehearsal. Needs to be five days or less before the performance day. Run through the action from beginning to end. Work out any travel logistics, etc. Make sure everyone has all the information they need for a smooth performance.

## **MYSTERY LOGISTICS:**

- Each troupe will need a director and between four and six actors.
- One of the actors will play a double role: that of the victim and the victim's brother who shows up shortly after the murder happens.
- The director will keep track of the props, making sure that each character has the evidence that they need on hand, that the guns are loaded, and that all the relevant information is getting out.

- Probably the most useful skill for the director to have is a sense of timing. The mystery script is divided into three acts with a number of scenes in each act. Whether to run one scene at a time or some or all of them consecutively for optimal entertainment depends on a variety of factors that can only be determined in the course of the event. The Director always needs to keep an eye on the clock to be sure that the scenes don't drag out or that the action isn't over too quickly. An easy way to adjust the timing of the event is to adjust the time between the scenes.

Is the dinner plated or buffet?

- This can make a difference in the timing of the action. A longer break will be needed if it is buffet as people are only interested in getting their food. A half hour without anything happening is usually good but it can be shorter or longer depending on the number of people in the audience. If the meal is serviced you want to wait around twenty minutes before trying to get peoples' attention because they only have eyes for what is on their plates.

Is the meal ready to be served or is it delayed?

- The director will need to liaison with the banquet manager or whoever is in charge of the food service. Because the mystery format is infinitely flexible it is easy to be easy to work with. The director will call the shots (no pun intended) for when to start and when to stop the action.

Has someone from the audience tried to threaten or seduce one of the performers?

- Sometimes, when the audience doesn't realize that there is a 'mystery performance' taking place they can take exception to a character's behaviour – another reason not to act seriously – and want to challenge them. Sometimes an audience member will take a shine to one of the characters and want to take 'getting to know them' to the next step. Either case can be a sign to move the action along so that people understand that a theatrical event is happening.



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Are people leaving the hotel ballroom to check on the hockey score in the sports bar?

- Some things you just have to deal with as you go. Designate someone from the audience to get the score and announce it to everyone. Work them or the situation that's arising into the plot.

Is one of the actors going to pass out from malaria?

- You're on your own with this one.

Has the venue locked all of your props in the green room and lost the key?

- This has been known to happen. In a pinch all evidence can be verbal and the characters can point their fingers and say 'BANG!'

Does the client group have awards to present, speeches to give or other business that needs to be taken care of at the same gathering as for the mystery?

- Find out ahead of time from your contact person if there is other business that needs to be conducted in the same time slot as the mystery. Long spaces between scenes can interrupt the 'wah' of the event, causing loss of continuity in the performance and loss of interest in the audience. Because your coordinator and your mystery troupe both want the event to be a success, arrange ahead of time, as much as possible, to have other business conducted either before the mystery begins or after it is over.

Who is providing prizes for the winners and how many prizes are there?

- Prizes can be for the best, worst, and funniest solution or just the best. If you are having a contest of some kind at the end of the performance while the solution sheets are being gone through, you want prizes for that as well.

For an evening event where the guests are eating, the coordinator can ask for either the cast to eat at the tables with the guests (not all at the same table) or to have sandwiches and/or a veggie plate in the green room. If the event goes over more than one day, meals should be taken with the guests

The excitement and challenge of live entertainment is that you never know what will happen.-  
in true mystery tradition – Expect the Unexpected!

### **LIAISON WITH VENUE/SITE MANAGER:**

- ✓ If at all possible do a site inspection. It's a good idea for the Director to see the venue ahead of time so that he can let the actors know the room or spaces they will be working in and if there are any special circumstances (like two foot wide pillars every three feet blocking sight lines) that need to be considered so that the audience will be able to understand what is going on as it happens.
- ✓ Arrange for the site to provide pens or pencils for the participants to fill out their solution sheets. Most sites have lots of these with their logo on hand, and are only too happy to supply them.
- ✓ Get the logistics about meal service and timing that works for the client and the site.
- ✓ Find out how early you can get into the venue to set up. You want at least two hours to set up and do sound checks.
- ✓ Arrange for a green room. (This can look like anything from a guest suite to a closet that you share with 100 stacking metal chairs.) Have water, no ice, a mirror and good lighting available in the room.
- ✓ Find out if the site has a sound system you can use or tap into – handheld wireless mics are the best!

### **SOUND:**

- 🕒 All the 'scripted' scenes must be on microphone. Nothing spoils the evening more than the audience not being able to hear what is going on. Two or three handheld mics are optimal. This gives the actors freedom to move around, which is key to making everyone feel part of the action.
- 🕒 New batteries in hand held mics and spare ones quickly available.
- 🕒 Sound requirements are generally minimal. Do all sound checks and if using music, run through songs before performance.

- ☹ If music / songs are used during the performance make sure that they are UPBEAT, toe tapping numbers. NO torch songs! NO sappy songs. You want the music to energize the room and get things swinging. The last thing you want is people feeling mellow. Choose an upbeat song that can be loosely tied into a disco theme. Songs should only be sung up until the musical interlude or the first reasonable break. Do not sing the whole song. It slows the mystery down too much. Create a cue line that includes the song title.
- ☹ If music is used, the songs can be sung by individual actors, the entire cast or the entire audience. Lyrics can be made available or choose songs that most people at least know the chorus of. Hand clapping with the beat should be encouraged.

### PRE-PERFORMANCE:

1. Set up Clue Table – need approximately 2' x 4' table.
  - ◆ Get table cloth from venue or provide own funky cloth.
  - ◆ Set up Clue Table sign and basket of pencils that can be passed around later.
  - ◆ Make sure all necessary dates and locations are filled in on evidence hardcopies.
  - ◆ As evidence is revealed place it on the clue table for perusal by the audience.
  - ◆ Display prizes on Clue Table if appropriate.
  - ◆ Place Solution Sheets out after the murder for people to take. Near the end of Act Three make sure everyone has one.
2. Do a Sound Check
3. Load Cap Guns
  - ◆ Make sure guns are ready to go and if any have been fired earlier in the performance that they have been reloaded.
  - ◆ When the cast has dropped dead, with their gun in their hand, make sure to tell them to hold onto it tightly. You don't want the gun 'prried from their cold, dead hands' because sometimes audience members don't understand that a cap gun can cause hearing damage if fired too close to another person's ear.
4. Have all props present and accounted for and distributed as needed.

## PERFORMANCE DIRECTOR NOTES: Act I, Act II, Act III

### ACT ONE: Pleased to Meet You!

- Act I Scene I takes place at the beginning of the event, during the cocktail or reception hour. Most people have arrived, but maybe not all of them.
- By the time you start Scene II everyone should be there.
- All of the scenes, beginning with Scene II, need to be on mic - preferably wireless handheld.

Each scene has a stated purpose, evidence (either as hardcopy or as physical evidence) to reveal and the information to get out. The scene can be done as an improv scene (know what information needs to get out and ad lib it) or as a regular script (memorizing dialogue with some ad lib). Involve the audience and increase participation by asking them questions. The core of each scene may be elaborated on and embellished depending on time available.

### Act I Scene I: GETTING TO KNOW YOU: Welcome, Mingling, Gossip & Backstabbing

*ACTOR NOTES: in Script*

### Act I Scene II: MOTIVES REVEALED: Altercations with Victim-To-Be

- Everyone should have arrived.
- Scene II may contain a clue for solving the murder but it will not be recognized as such at this point (by the audience) so don't change anything that might affect the clue.
- Make sure actors have any props or papers they need for the scene.
- Actors can play it as an improv scene or as a regular script. The dialogue can be memorized or used as a springboard for improv acting and audience participation.
- The core of the rest of the scenes in the script may be elaborated on and embellished depending on time available.
- Each character has an argument with the victim revealing their motive for murder.
- The argument implies wrong doing but does NOT include details

- **All scripted scenes on microphones** - preferably hand held wireless - then you only need two and they can be passed among the actors and held to the audience members when they have something to say. This scene & all of the following scenes should use a microphone - preferably wireless handheld. If the scenes are not on microphone, not everyone will hear what the actors are saying. For an excellent performance, everyone should be able to hear the actors during scripted scenes.
- Check that microphones are ready to go and that the actors have practised passing them to the next person.
- If a song is part of any of the scenes, make sure that the sound person or musician is cued up and ready to play the backing track. (Check this for every song in the show.)

### Act I Scene III: MURDER!!! Characters Reveal Their Dark Sides

- Check that the 'victim' has anything he needs in his pockets.
- At the end of the altercations the victim dies a long, drawn-out, melodramatic, painful death.
- Victim should die need an exit or doorway to make it easy to remove them.
- Once the murder has happened, don't let the audience members approach the body.
- Optional: have a sheet ready to cover the 'body' once the victim has died. Can be held up to hide them crawling away if necessary.
- Have a small table set up off to the side somewhere to place CLUES on along with a sign that says *Cluetable*, solution sheets and pens for the audience and to display the prizes - if you wish.

**BREAK:** No performing for approximately 20 – 30 minutes to allow people time to begin enjoying dinner. Item that belonged to the victim or where found in his/her pockets, etc, which may or may not be clues are put on the clue table.

## **ACT TWO: Shut Your Mouth!**

- Begin Act Two when everyone has been served or had time to go through the buffet line at least once.
- The scenes usually run one right after the other however every event is unique. If the action needs to be interrupted you can do it between scenes or just before Act Three.
- Make sure actors have the props and evidence required for their scenes

## **ACT THREE: Whodunnit?**

### **Act III Scene I: FINAL FINGERS POINTED:** Accusations, Denials, Call for Solutions

- Make sure actors have the props and evidence required for their scenes
- Guests have solution sheets to fill out: available at clue table or handed out.
- Call for solutions. - You have ten minutes to fill out your solution sheets.
- Between Scene One and Scene Two is the time for the audience to fill out their solution sheets. Ten minutes (approximately) is the usual time given.

### **Act III Scene II: DEDUCTION:** Interrogation, Evidence Examination, Solutions Collected

- Make sure all the clues are on the Clue Table for people to examine
- Double check that everyone, who wants one, got a solution sheet

### **Act III Scene III: DENOUEMENT – Grand Finale Shootout & Wrap Up**

- Guns loaded and ready for each actor go grab for the Grand Finale.
- Cast Introductions – know how to pronounce their names
- Optional Contest material
- Prizes ready to be awarded
- Wrap up song cued and ready to go.

## BASIC RULES

- ☺ HAVE FUN! Mysteries should be over the top, light-hearted and melodramatic in an exaggerated, hamming-it-up kind of way. NEVER be serious – it will bring the mood of the mystery down.
- ☺ STAY IN CHARACTER! If it turns out that someone in the audience knows you or wants to talk about mysteries or other interests, let your character arrange a time to meet up with them after the performance is completely finished.

# HAVE FUN!



(If the actors have fun the audience will have fun.)



## **EVIDENCE INCLUDED & PROPS REQUIRED**

### **HARDCOPY EVIDENCE:**

#### **Act 1:**

- Ode to Chocolate - Roxanne
- Chocoholics Anonymous Membership Cards for Roy - found in Roy's pocket
- Letter from Dr. Hoover re Mrs. LeGume - found in Roy's pocket

#### **Act 2:**

- The Crime Scene Scoop: Newspaper article on robbery - Gunther
- Lab Report - Gunther
- Autopsy Report - Chip
- Bill of Sale & Deed for Cherish Chocolates - Coco
- Chocoholics Anonymous Membership Cards for Roxanne Rapper - Gunther
- Extra Chocoholics Anonymous Membership Cards to plant on unsuspecting members of the audience

#### **Act 3:**

- Solution Sheets

### • **PROPS:**

#### **Act 1:**

- Tray for chocolates - Roxanne
- Bulk Chocolates / Samples of Cherish Chocolates to be passed out to the participants and for Roy to wolf down and choke on - Roxanne
- Mask & bag & loaded cap gun – Roy
- Miscellaneous items to be found in Roy's pocket: few coins, keys, half eaten carob bar, yo-yo, etc. They don't mean anything but the audience doesn't know that.

#### **Act 2:**

- Dark T-shirt with chocolate smear - Gunther
- 'The Hopeless Diamond' that Roy choked on for Clue Table with autopsy report – optional

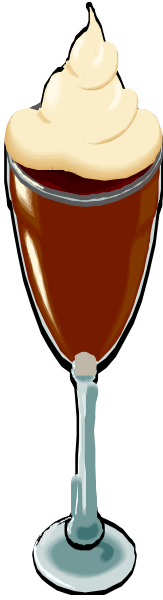
#### **Act 3:**

- 6 Cap guns plus caps - one for each actor
- Prizes for winners



# Roxanne's Ode to Chocolate

© 2002 Vanessa Violini



Oh -ho, I love chocolate so  
Even though I know  
Where it's going (slap thighs and butt) to go

I don't really care though  
How big my butt is gonna grow  
Cause Chocolate is better than  
Loving from any man

Chocolate, Chocolate, Oh chocolate

Oh yeah I love chocolate  
be it cold or hot  
when it's on my lips  
I just can't stop

gonna feel it slide  
in my mouth  
warmin' my body from north to south

The smell of chocolate  
makes me feel so high  
moves a tear to my eye

Better not get between my chocolate and I  
Or you'll be kissing my booty good bye!!

Chocolate, chocolate!!





*From the Desk of:*

Dr. Damien Hoover  
Specialist  
Switzerland

Swiss Bank Acct # 88832058409

*Dear Mr. Roy LeGume,*

*I am writing to confirm the appointment for your mother, Beatrice LeGume, two weeks this Wednesday at 2:00. After the operation I will be available to conduct 'business' with you as requested.*

*Sincerely,  
Doc*

# THE CRIME SCENE SCOOP



## **RE: Robbery at *The Family Jewels***

### **INCIDENT:**

At approximately 2:30 am this morning an unknown person entered *The Family Jewels* after disarming the alarm. The perpetrator proceeded to empty the safe of over \$1,000,000,000 worth of jewels, including the infamous Hopeless Diamond. The Hopeless Diamond is reputed to place a curse upon whoever has it and the curse holds true in this case. No sooner had the thief turned to leave when they stepped on the tail of the sleeping guard dachshund who began to bark viciously. The barking awoke the proprietor, Gunther Legume, who was asleep in the back of his shop.

Mr. Legume raced to the front of the store and grabbed the burglar's shirt as the thief was leaving. The burglar slipped free from the top and escaped with the jewels. This incident is the latest in a series of jewel heists that began just over a year ago. With the acquisition of the shirt, the special investigations operations feel that they are clothing in on the culprit.



# CRIME LAB REPORT

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Date:

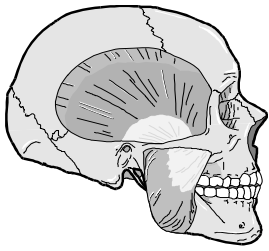
Requested by: *Mr. Gunther LeGume*  
*"The Family Jewels" Gem Shop*

Report on: *Stains found on T-shirt from alleged  
robber during alleged robbery.*

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*Analysis of T-shirt removed from  
suspect during alleged robbery of 'The  
Family Jewels' Gem Shop revealed a chocolate  
stain. The chocolate was found to have a  
number of characteristics in common with  
the chocolate manufactured by Cherish  
Chocolates. No other notable traits were  
discovered.*



# AUTOPSY REPORT

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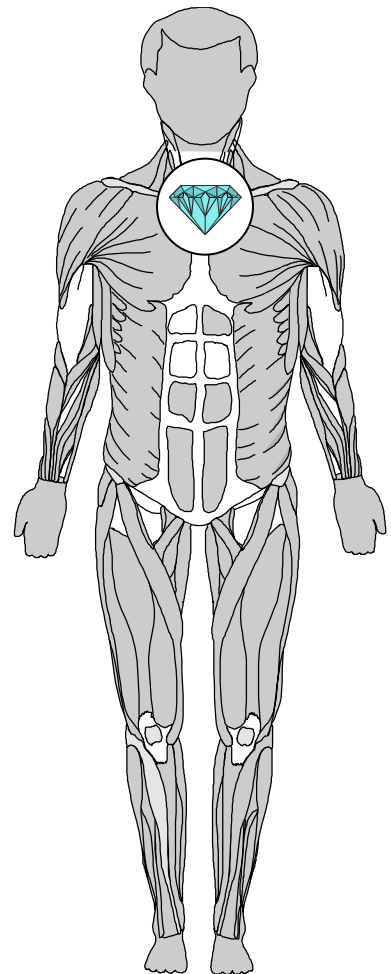
## Subject: Roy Bean

Upon investigation of the involuntary death of Roy Bean, of 'Carob Confection', it has been revealed that the said dead male had an extraordinary amount of chocolate in his system. There appears to be only a slight allergic reaction to the chocolate.

No trace of poison was found. There were no signs of drowning, bondage, or male menopause.

The only item out of the ordinary was a large diamond caught in the throat of the cadaver. Therefore we at the morgue pronounce death by choking.

Roy Bean died when he choked on a diamond.



# BILL OF SALE

ITEM: *Cherish Chocolates*

BUYER: *Coco Carmel*

SELLER: *Chip Ripple Senior*

AMOUNT: *I O U – Poker Game*







# DEED

## CHERISH CHOCOLATES

Family Owned & Operated

**Owners:**

~~Chip Ripple Senior~~

~~Cherish Ripple (Deceased)~~

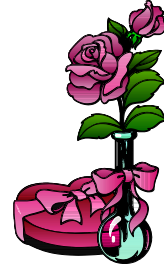
~~Chip Ripple Junior~~

~~Roxanne Ripple Rapper~~

*Coco Carmel*

# *Dying For Chocolate*

## *Solution Sheet*



*Who Died:*

*Who Did It:*

*How:*

*Motive:*

*Comments:*

*Your Name:*



### **ADVICE FROM THE EXPERTS**

If a man lies about an apparently inconsequential thing, then that thing is not inconsequential.

- Frank Herbert

It is an old maxim of mine that when you have excluded the impossible, whatever remains, however improbable, must be the truth.

- Sherlock Holmes/ Arthur Conan Doyle