

TALK OF MURDER
The Great Gatsby Gala 2013

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“TALK OF MURDER “
THE GREAT GATSBY GALA, 2013

SYNOPSIS: *The year is 1927 when silent movies were the “bees knees”. The fictitious venue has been named The Grand Gatsby Speakeasy to fit client requirements related to the real movie “The Great Gatsby”. The premise of this interactive murder mystery is that Marco Vincente, Executive Producer, American Adventures and Action films (AAA) is hosting a party at the speakeasy (which is owns) to announce his next film. Everyone who is anyone in Hollywood has been invited and while the theme of the party has been under wraps, Marco plans to surprise his competitors at MGM by revealing that he will produce the first talking movie based loosely on the book The Great Gatsby. **Script notes in black, tech notes in blue as affects script only.***

Cast – Murder Ink Productions

Felicity Fox – Ellen Terri; Roxanne Redlight – Karen Burns; Al Fresco – Jeff Stimson; Marco Vincente – Greg Lutz; Biff Wellington – Joe Chandler; Ima Starr – Dyana Carroll; Detective Knight – Marney Austin. Two extra dancers.

Cast – Guest Actors AAA

Babette Delight – Amy; Rich N. Famous – Don; Paige Turner – Mary Beth; Max Mickelson - John

Director – Marney Austin; Stage Manager – Mary Robinson

2:00 – 5:00 - Rehearsals with AAA managers, executives run opening speech and all meet Murder Ink actors. **To be followed by a tech rehearsal/ sound levels for mics.**

5:00 –5:45 Break in Green Room, costumes/makeup, sandwiches, soft drinks, etc.

5:45 – 6:30 – Guest check in and reception. Actors mingle. Felicity sings **(6 songs pre-recorded and played on small system with hand held mic near the antique tow truck).**

6:30 – Actors including AAA guest actors will be cued to leave reception and take places on main stage for cocktail scene. **(Music of the 20’s, video fireworks, confetti, chair for dancers placed upstage center. Champagne glasses for actors on stage. VIDEO starts and is shown on two back screens.**

6:45 – Doors open, guests are seated **(Music of the 20’s continues.)**

7:00 – Extra actors are cued to leave stage (when most guests are seated); Marco, Felicity and Ima have a short scene and exit stage. **(As soon as they exit- The Charleston Music (rendition #3) starts and 3 dancers dance the Charleston.**

7:10 – 7:30 – Welcome speeches Brad and Linda

7:30 – Marco's Welcoming Speech and introductions of AAA actors - Rich N. Famous (Don), Max Mickelson (John), Paige Turner (Mary Beth) and Babette Delight (Amy) *(Marco holds a hand held mic for the four guests.)*

Marco: Good evening everyone and welcome! As I'm sure you all know, I'm Marco Vincente, Executive Producer for American Adventures and Action films (AAA). What an evening we have planned for you – giggle water for everyone - bathtub gin and Squirrel Whiskey, dancing, singing and of course the announcement you have all been waiting for. And where else could we have such a great celebration but here at my ritzy new club - The Grand Gatsby Speakeasy - the only place in Hollywood to celebrate such a monumental undertaking (and get a drink – even the local coppers are excited to be here). Also, a big thanks to Rich N. Famous handling the details of this event! He is the best director and party host in the business. Rich, please come on up here. I want you to know there are no hard feelings about you and Felicity, my ex. I'm just happy she's got her claws into you and not me.

Rich: Well, she's a little too pushy for me too Marco. I think I will dump her for someone who requires a little less maintenance if you understand me.

Marco: Oh, believe me, I do. See you later Rich.

Rich: Yea...maybe.

Marco: Now to business – show business that is. I want you all to be the first to know that I have secured the rights to the book Gatsby and will produce the first ever-talking movie. The script based on the book is almost finished and we start production in two days. I'm sure that's a blow to my old friend Max Mickelson, the big cheese at MGM - where are you Max? Come on up here. Now, Max, I hope there are no hard feelings. It's just show biz! I'm sure you were surprised that I beat you to the first talkie.

Max: Not really. Just wait til you see the surprise I have for you later **(evil smile, sits)**

Marco: Speaking of show biz, no one knows more about the biz than Hollywood's gossip girl with the great gams – come on up here Paige Turner.

Paige: Hello Marco.

Marco: I hope you'll write about this ritzy party in tomorrow's edition of the Town Tattler.

Paige: Maybe. Unless I'm busy working on a movie script for MGM.

Marco: MGM? I thought you were going to write a script for AAA.

Paige: So did I but when I called, you were always too busy for me.

Marco: Sorry Paige. Maybe we can take a stab at it tomorrow.

Paige: Or tonight. See you later Marco.

Marco: Now, where was I? Oh yea, movies. And what would movies be without movie stars? Babette Delight, get a wiggle on and come up here.

Babette: Hi Marco. Wow! You sure do look spiffy tonight.

Marco: And you are the cat's meow Babette baby. Didn't I see you at the studio the other day with Biff Wellington?

Babette: Yea, he was showing my around. Said he was kinda "stuck on me".

Marco: Take it easy Babette. Biff is only stuck on...Biff. See ya later if you're not spifflicated already.

7:40 – Marco's final words and introduction of short scene from *Great Gatsby*

Marco: Fortunately, movies are more than movie stars. They provide entertainment whenever we need a place to go and get away from it all. A place to go and laugh or cry. And now not only will audiences be able to see our stars in action but hear them. So, sit back and enjoy a scene from **Talk of Murder** starring Biff Wellington and Ima Starr and remember, **NOTHING IS AS GREAT AS HOLLYWOOD!** **(Marco exits stage left to change into knife.)**

7:40-7:45 – Scene from *Great Gatsby* referring to shirts thrown from balcony.

G Do you remember?

D- I do.

G-When an hour alone with you was an impossibility.

D-Now you have it, Jay.

G-Sentimental.

D-You were never sentimental, Jay.

D-I'd like to get one of those pink clouds and put you in it and push you around.

G- I've got a man in London who buys all my clothes.

He sends over a selection of things each season.

Spring and fall

D-Oh...

D-I've never seen such beautiful shirts before!

D-Why do you stand or sit as far away from me as possible?

G-I find it... difficult...

D-To be close to me?

G-It's been a very long time since I've been able to look at you.

D - Oh.

D - I wish you had your uniform still.

I would wear the same gown I wore when you were my favourite beau!

We'd dance right here in the great hall of this preposterous house of yours.

D-My sweet young Lieutenant Jay Gatsby!

G-I do still have my uniform.

D-Then you are a sentimental man.

(They will continue until Marco re-enters – fast change to knife.)

7:45 – Marco enters stage left and falls just off center stage with knife in back. Ima screams and **body is removed by techs – working lights only.**

7:50 – **As soon as Marco's body is removed along with any props such as the shirts, spotlight up on satellite stage left, fog machine, and**

lamppost. (music intro Mike Hammer.)

Detective: *It's a dark night in a city that knows how to keep its secrets, Hollywood. It's not easy for a dame to be a gumshoe or try to find the answer to life's questions but it pays the bills. I was going through my beat up file cabinet full of clientele – the paranoid, the frightened, the rejected and of course, the wannabe movie stars when I decided to get out of my office and head over to the Grand Gatsby Speakeasy for a shot of bathtub gin. As soon as I rounded the corner, Felicity Fox, the dame who has a great big dollar sign where most women have a heart, appeared under the streetlamp. She begged me to find out who killed her husband during his party tonight. It seems the infamous Marco Vincente was stabbed in the back. Well, she's a paying customer so I said I'd take the case and I'd see her back at the joint. Besides the dough, I just don't like people who stab other people in the back. I'm Gal Knight and there are some things you just can't walk away from. (Exits satellite stage and goes to center, main stage. **At end of introduction speech, detective will move to center main stage – lights up. Two barstool height director's chairs have been pre-placed – one downstage center and one center satellite stage right along with two mics on stands – one in front of each chair (Rich N. Famous has to be second one to be interrogated so not enough time to move one chair/mic to satellite stage and back to main stage).***

Detective (continued from Main Stage Center): *Good evening ladies and gents, I'm Detective Knight and I'm here to find out who stabbed Marco Vincente in the back tonight. I have information on some of you and would appreciate it if you would come up on stage when I call your name: Babette Delight, Felicity Fox, Paige Turner, Biff Wellington, Ima Starr, Max G. Mickelson, Al Fresco, Roxanne Relight, Cherry Bee and FiFi Flapper, Rich N. **Famous (Main characters will stand upstage and each have a short interrogation in a director's type chair – bar stool height – which will be set center stage (The exception will be Rich N. Famous who will automatically take the duplicate chair preplaced on Satellite stage right).** Interrogation is as follows:*

Detective: ***Miss Babette Delight, would you please answer a few questions? I understand that you were Tony the Torch's moll?***

Babette: *So?*

Detective: ***So...who knows about this? That could be the end of your career and motive for murder.***

Babette: *Rich N. Famous. He ratted me out so I told him to scram.*

Detective: ***So, level with me. Do you know of any reason Mr. Famous would want Mr. Vincente dead?***

Babette: *Abs-o-lute-ly!...I mean NO. (Pause) Not unless you figure that with that sap Vincente out of the way, MGM would produce the first talkie and Rich would direct it (smiles and bats her eyelashes as in "gottcha Rich"). No, no reason at all (smiles).*

Detective: *I see. Miss Delight, where were you when Mr. Vincente was stabbed in the back?*

Babette: *I was at my table having a ciggy. My sugar daddy can vouch for me (points to her table and gets everyone to agree with her).*

Detective: *One last question Miss Delight. Is it true you were seen earlier this evening with Mr. Biff Wellington in his Packard?*

Babette: *Applesauce! Biff is a swell guy but I've hardly talked to him since I arrived at this juice joint.*

Detective: *Thank you Miss Delight. That will be all for now. Please do not leave the premises.*

Detective: *Mr. Rich N. Famous, will you please answer a few questions? According to Babette Delight your crush on her is over. Why is that?*

Rich: *Babette is just a dumb dora with a great set of gams. That tomato wanted to get out of her contract with AAA and come over to MGM and then she double-crossed me. When I told her to scram, she got real screwy and gave me the heebie jeebies.*

Detective: *What? I mean okay, you are not friends - you just had a fling with her?*

Rich: *Listen Lady Dick...*

Detective: *That's Detective Knight to you Mr. Famous. I understand that you were planning to direct the first talking musical "Devil-May-Care" to be produced by your friend Max G. Mickelson over at MGM.*

Rich: *Yea, ain't that the bee's knees!*

Detective: *And you planned on having Felicity Fox, Mr. Vincente's ex wife star in the movie. Is that correct?*

Rich: *Yea but she wanted to handcuff me. I think I'll cast that dame with the great chassis, Ima Starr. With Marco gone, that dame is out of a job.*

Detective: *Speaking of wives, is it true you still have one in Missouri?*

Rich: *Horsefeathers! Okay, on the level, yes. I suppose Paige Turner that blue nosed gossip queen told you.*

Detective: *Maybe. Speaking of women, is it true that Felicity was still under contract with AAA when she agreed to star in “Devil May Care”?*

Rich: *Yea, but she said she could take care of that.*

Detective: *Do you know what she meant by that?*

Rich: *She planned to double cross Marco and blackmail him until he let her out of her contract. I never dreamed she would stab him in the back – literally.*

Detective: *Blackmail him? For what?*

Rich: *Why don't you ask her?*

Detective: *Thank you. I will.*

Detective: *Is it true that Mr. Vincente dumped you to marry Ima Starr? That could make a jealous gal like you angry enough to kill.*

Felicity: *Have you been drinking giggle water or what? Ima Starr is a cheap floozy who can't act her way out of a box. And no, I didn't kill Marco.*

Detective: *I have a friend whose a cop and he told me that Marco had been involved in the Mafia, turned State's witness and was put into the Witness Protection Program. Did you know about this?*

Felicity: *Your friend has a big mouth.*

Detective: *Apparently when Marco left New York he took a violin case full of the Mob boss's money. Maybe they caught up with him or maybe you told them where to find him. With Marco out of the way you would be free of your contract with AAA and could move over to MGM and marry Mr. Famous. That's motive Miss Fox.*

Felicity: *Look detective, Marco's been stabbing people in the back for years, including yours truly...seems to me he got what he deserved. As to Mr. Famous, we have a professional relationship - that's all.*

Detective: *Not according to him. He said you wanted to get married.*

Felicity: *Well, that doesn't make any sense, does it? After all, he just admitted that he already has a wife.*

Detective: *Miss Fox, where were you when your ex husband was stabbed in the back?*

Felicity: *I was just there (points to where she was standing during the Gatsby scene) so there are plenty of witnesses.*

Detective: ***Please do not leave the room.***

Detective: ***Miss Paige Turner, I understand you are the gossip columnist for The Town Tattler. Is that correct?***

Paige: *Yes.*

Detective: ***My sources say that you are planning on a new career?***

Paige: *Yes I am going to be one of the scriptwriters for MGM.*

Detective: ***I thought I heard you were going to work for AAA?***

Paige: *I would never work for that slime ball Marco (sorry – I know you shouldn't talk bad about the dead).*

Detective: ***So, you didn't like Marco?***

Paige: *No, that high hat was a liar and a cheat. He promised me a job and then wouldn't even meet with me. I hated him... but I didn't bump him off.*

Detective: ***Where were you when he was “bumped off” so to speak?***

Paige: *I was taking photos of the guests when I saw that chef Al Fresco arguing with Max Mickelson.*

Detective: ***Did you hear what the argument was about?***

Paige: *Something to do with a special knife.*

Detective: ***Thank you Miss Turner. Please do not leave.***

Detective: ***Mr. Biff Wellington, I have a couple of questions for you.***

Biff: *Anything that might wrap this scene. I have a date with a doll and champagne in the cooler.*

Detective: ***Sorry Mr. Vincente's murder has spoiled your plans. Do you mind if I ask you who the “doll” is?***

Biff: *The hooper with the great chassis – FiFi Flapper*

Detective: *I see. According to the Town Tattler and their resident gossip columnist, Paige Turner, you were seeing Ima Starr.*

Biff: *That's all for the press. She has a crush on me but she doesn't give me the respect I deserve as the greatest actor in Hollywood.*

Detective: *That must be difficult for someone like you. Did Mr. Vincente appreciate your talents?*

Biff: *You bet! He knew I did him a favor when I agreed to star in his upcoming movie ...wasn't I great in that scene tonight? (looks in mirror)*

Detective: *I know you were on stage when Mr. Vincente was stabbed so you have the perfect alibi but... you might know someone who wanted him dead. Do you Mr. Wellington?*

Biff: *I don't think anyone had a beef with Marco except his ex wife, that gold digger, Felicity Fox.*

Detective: *Hum...please don't leave the premises Mr. Wellington.*

Detective: *Miss Ima Starr, I have a few questions for you. I believe you're Marco Vincente's wife – sorry...I mean widow.*

Ima: *(crocodile tears) Yes...I can't believe it. Everyone loved Marco!*

Detective: *Hum...I see. You were heard arguing with your husband and his ex, Felicity Fox, earlier this evening. What was that argument about?*

Ima: *Marco and I were discussing a scene I would play out tonight from **TALK OF MURDER** when that gold-digger of an ex wife of his started yelling and screaming and threatening both of us. She had too much giggle water and I guess she just went crazy. You see, detective, she's been angry ever since Marco dumped...oops...married me. I really feel so sorry for her.*

Detective: *I really feel that you are giving me a line. Do you know of anyone who would want your husband dead?*

Ima: *Well, besides Felicity, Marco told me earlier today that Babette Delight was all balled up when he told her he wouldn't give her a contract at AAA. Everyone at the studio knew she carried a torch for him and wanted to leave MGM. Maybe she got screwy and stabbed him ...(more crocodile tears).*

Detective: *Thank you Miss Starr. That was a lovely performance.*

Detective: Mr. Max G. Mickelson, would you step forward please. Mr. Mickelson, I understand you were as aspiring golfer?

Max: Yes, but that was a long time ago. Now I'm the big cheese at MGM.

Detective: Of course. Someone told me earlier that your hobbies include cooking and that you had an unusual set of Japanese butcher knives. Can you describe them?

Max: They are very sharp, cost a lot of dough and have red lacquered handles.

Detective: Red? How unusual. I don't suppose you have one to show me.

Max: I brought one with me tonight to show my friend, Al Fresco, but someone had sticky fingers and it disappeared while I was in the John...I mean Gent's.

Detective: Where were you when Mr. Vincente was stabbed?

Max: In a bull session with a few friends.

Detective: Hum...please don't leave the premises Mr. Michelson.

Detective: Chef Al Fresco, I have a couple of questions for you. Is it true that you poisoned several politicians at a dinner when it turned out the food was laced with arsenic?

Al: Cosa? (pause) Si, it was an incidente many years ago.

Detective: If Mr. Vincente knew about this accident, perhaps he was blackmailing you?

Al: No. No. He was mio amico, my friend, my good friend. He even gave me a job.

Detective: It seems he was also very good friends with Miss Roxy Redlight.

Al: Marco – he flirted with all the girls – but Roxy is amore mio and Marco, he promised to stay away from her.

Detective: I see. I heard from Paige Turner that you had an argument with Max Mickelson earlier this evening.

Al: He accused me of stealing one of his knives. I was insulted, that's all.

Detective: It is true you were backstage when Marco was stabbed?

Al: *(obviously lying)* Yes...in the cucina.

Detective: *That's odd because the other employees in the kitchen didn't see you until after Mr. Vincente had been stabbed.*

Al: *They are lying because they are jealous of me and my talent.*

Detective: *Did you see Mr. Vincente's secretary, Betty, when you were backstage?*

Al: *I don't a remember.*

Detective: *That's all for now Chef, but please do not leave the stage.*

Al: *Grazie Detective.*

Detective: *Miss Roxy Redlight. Please step forward. Chef Al Fresco told me that you are his "amore" - girlfriend. Is that true?*

Roxy: *That's none of your beeswax.*

Detective: *Anything I think might lead me to Mr. Vincente's murderer is my business Miss Redlight. Please answer the question.*

Roxy: *I guess you could say he's stuck on me.*

Detective: *Do you also know Mr. Max Mickelson?*

Roxy: *Not personally. He has a crush on one of the other dancers, Cherry.*

Detective: *I know. I had a conversation with Cherry earlier and she told me a very interesting story - that you had her steal one of Mr. Mickelson's red handled knives. The same kind of knife, which was used to stab Mr. Vincente.*

Roxy: *Baloney! She must have had too much giggle water.*

Detective: *No, she was sober when she told me she was afraid she would take the wrap when we found out from Mickelson that she stole one of his knives. I think you took the knife from Cherry, gave it to Al and he stabbed Marco after you lured him backstage. You wanted to star on Broadway and Al was your ticket. Speaking of which, I checked your purse and found these two train tickets to New York.*

Roxy: All right. Cherry did steal the knife so we could sell it to pay for the tickets to New York. Al found out and took it off me. Then when Marco cornered me backstage and Al saw us together, he went nuts and stabbed him. I tried to stop him but he was too strong. I loved Marco!

(AL DENIES EVERYTHING AND STARTS YELLING AT ROXY)

Detective: Pipe down Mr. Fresco. You're lying Roxy. You see, Betty, Marco's secretary overheard you and Al talking about catching the train to New York now that "he was out of the way". You thought you were alone and that Marco was dead but as he made his way to the stage, he told Betty the two of you were in on it. Roxy Redlight and Al Fresco, the police are waiting for you in the lobby. Let's go.

8:30 – Murderers try to escape and run around the room and to the door being chased by a Keystone Cop (Marco in disguise). *Keystone Cop music. Meanwhile actors leave the stage taking the 4 guest actors with them and the two remaining dancers dance the Charleston again (Charleston Music as in opening).*

CREDITS ROLL – OLD FASHIONED BLACK AND WHITE. Pictures to be taken earlier that day.