

The
MOUSE BURGER
Murder

A Murder Mystery
Written By Brian Ormrod



Artwork by
Mark Crupton



Published by Lazy Bee Scripts

Customer Taster

The Mouse Burger Murder

Copyright 2024 by Brian Ormrod

COPYRIGHT REGULATIONS

This murder mystery is protected under the Copyright laws of the British Commonwealth of Nations and all countries of the Universal Copyright Conventions.

All rights, including Stage, Motion Picture, Video, Radio, Television, Public Reading, and Translations into Foreign Languages, are strictly reserved.

No part of this publication may lawfully be transmitted, stored in a retrieval system, or reproduced in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, manuscript, typescript, recording, including video, or otherwise, without prior consent of Lazy Bee Scripts.

A licence, obtainable only from Lazy Bee Scripts, must be acquired for every public or private performance of a script published by Lazy Bee Scripts and the appropriate royalty paid. If extra performances are arranged after a licence has already been issued, it is essential that Lazy Bee Scripts are informed immediately and the appropriate royalty paid, whereupon an amended licence will be issued.

The availability of this script does not imply that it is automatically available for private or public performance, and Lazy Bee Scripts reserve the right to refuse to issue a licence to perform, for whatever reason. Therefore a licence should always be obtained before any rehearsals start.

Localisation and updating of this script is permitted, particularly where indicated in the script. Major revisions to the text may not be made without the permission of Lazy Bee Scripts.

The name of the author must be displayed on all forms of advertising and promotional material, including posters, programmes and hand bills.

Photocopying of this murder mystery constitutes an infringement of copyright unless consent has been obtained from Lazy Bee Scripts and an appropriate fee has been paid.

***FAILURE TO ABIDE BY ALL THE ABOVE REGULATIONS, CONSTITUTES AN
INFRINGEMENT OF THE COPYRIGHT LAWS OF GREAT BRITAIN.***

Published by Lazy Bee Scripts

The Mouse Burger Murder

About the Pack

The Mouse Burger Murder is a murder mystery evening set in a burger bar in a motorway service station with an unpopular new manager.

There are approximately 50 minutes of scripted scenes, plus opportunity for the audience to question the suspects and submit an accusation.

It requires a cast of 8 characters (2M, 2F, 4 either), plus an optional cameo with one speech and a Master of Ceremonies (though the MC could double with the Inspector).

Structure

The full murder mystery pack contains:

- The Organiser's Overview [*Extract Here*];
- The Script; [*Extract Here*]
- Audience Pack, with:
 - An accusation sheet to be filled in,
 - Clues Sheet for making notes,
 - Who's Who sheet (with spaces to insert photos);
- Flyer template, to which you can add your company's name;
- Welcome speech for the MC.

The Organiser's Overview contains:

- Author's introduction;
- Plot synopsis;
- Character descriptions, with costume notes;
- Approximate timings;
- Guidance on audience questioning;
- Set description and guidance;
- Props list;
- Sound effects list.

Plot Synopsis

Lymm Carnforth, a mean vindictive restaurateur with a murky past, has sent a series of vicious e-mails to the services management at Junction 17A on the M6 about a mouse infestation at Keeley's burger bar, and has replaced Keeley as manager. Ken Dal, short-sighted barista, and Ford Knuts, a disturbed kleptomaniac young trainee chef on a government scheme, now have to deal with her as their new boss.

Two inept 'Mice Guys' employees, Corley Stafford and Lake Killington, arrive to lay poison bait and are harassed by the new manager. Ken, a father figure to Ford, is struggling to cope having mislaid his glasses. Charnock Richard, retired teacher and writer of an exposé of his times in the schools, turns up after a short while with flowers to propose to Keeley over his regular morning coffee, only to find her dismissed and no coffee being served. Sandy Bach, a young cleaner employed by the services and engaged to Ken, is paying close attention, as is Hilton Park, a Detective inspector, who is on a stakeout for a jewel thief. (The fugitive jewel thief is an optional cameo who may be planted in the audience with a brief exit speech at the end.)

[Continued in the full pack.]

Character Descriptions

The names are derived from locations of M6 service stations. Feel free to invent others appropriate to your area.

Lymm Carnforth

40-60, female.

The new manager of a motorway service station's burger bar. Lymm is a scheming, ruthless catering manager with twenty years in the business. She speaks her mind and takes no prisoners. She has a murky backstory, and it's unclear how she came to have this new post.

Costume: Think Bet Lynch – leopard print coat, fur collar, bouffant hair, lipstick, eyeliner, etc.

Ken Dal

30s, male.

Short-sighted barista. Ken is very loyal and will do anything for anyone. He has worked at this burger bar for at least five years under Keeley, the previous owner, whom he admired enormously. He is very protective of his assistant, Ford, to whom he is a father figure, and he is in love with Sandy Bach, a cleaner.

Costume: Typical burger bar apron, baseball cap, and matching bow tie, with black trousers and white shirt. He removes the cap and apron for Scene 3 onwards.

Inspector Hilton Park

40-60, male or female. If female, rename to Tebay Truckstop.

Detective Inspector. Hilton operates undercover and is at the burger bar on a stakeout for a felon. He ends up investigating the murder because he is at the scene and has seen everything. He is a straight, no-nonsense character who will pursue all lines of enquiry to get his man.

Costume: If male, in the style of Columbo; if female, in the style of Vera.

Corley Stafford

20-45, female or male. If male, rename to Burton Stafford.

Pest exterminator. A practical joker whose foolhardiness in the past has led to serious consequences. Although the two pest exterminators are suspects and have a serious backstory, they are a comedy double act and tend to lead the comic and slapstick elements of the play.

Costume: Overalls and baseball cap.

Lake Killington

20-45, female or male. If male, rename to Tod Hills.

Pest exterminator and Corley's best mate. Has a murky past that includes a spell in prison.

Costume: Overalls and baseball cap.

Sandy Bach

20-35, female.

The service station's site cleaner. Questioned everything at school and got into trouble for it, and resultantly failed her exams. Liable to skive on the job, not because she is lazy but because she is too

clever for mundane work. Likes to be in on the gossip. In love with Ken and nothing will stand in the way of her planned marriage.

Costume: Cleaner's overalls, young person's style clothing beneath.

Ford Knuts

16-20, female or male.

Trainee chef. She is on the autistic spectrum, which has prevented her getting a job commensurate with her high intelligence and is working in the bar on a government scheme. A kleptomaniac, instinctive and sensitive, and liable to act on impulse.

Costume: Burger bar apron and baseball cap, white shirt to match Ken's, black trousers or skirt. Removes the cap and apron for Scene 3 onwards.

Charnock Richard

50-70, male.

Retired chemistry teacher, now writing his memoir. In love with Keeley, the burger bar's previous owner. Highly intelligent but holds grudges against many former pupils, in particular Ford, and is using his memoir to exact revenge.

Costume: Dressed to propose – tweed jacket with leather elbow patches, bow tie, smart trousers and shoes.

Fugitive

Any age, male or female.

A jewel thief sought, but never caught, by the inspector. Planted among the audience for a cameo role at the end.

This character is optional; if you prefer, you can end the scene before their appearance.

Approximate Timings

(This assumes the event is set around a three-course meal; other arrangements are equally possible, but bear in mind that time is needed after the audience questioning so that accusation sheets can be completed by the audience, collected by the Inspector/MC and adjudicated by the cast so that a winner can be announced.)

Welcome speech – 2 minutes

First course served – 20 minutes

Scene 1 – 25 minutes

Scene 2 – 5 minutes

Break, main course served – 25 minutes

Scene 3 – 12 minutes

Break – 5 minutes

Audience questioning – 15 minutes

Break, accusation forms filled in and collected, then dessert served – 25 minutes

Scene 4 – 8 minutes

Winners announced, and prizes given – 5 minutes

Total ≈ 150 minutes

Audience Questioning

After Scene 3, there should be a short break for the audience teams to decide on a question to ask one of the suspects. When each table has decided on a question to ask (which can be ascertained by the MC), all cast return to the stage.

The Inspector goes from table to table, and a representative from each table asks a question to a suspect. If any question is asked too quietly for all in the room to hear, the Inspector can repeat it.

The suspects must speak the truth, or the truth as they believe it, except for the murderer, who is allowed to lie.

The Mouse Burger Murder

Script Extract

Characters

Lymm Carnforth – new manager of a service station burger bar, 40-60.

Ken Dal – short-sighted barista, 30s.

Hilton Park – Detective Inspector, 40-60.

Corley Stafford – pest exterminator, 20-45.

Lake Killington – pest exterminator, 20-45.

Sandy Bach – young site cleaner, 20-35.

Ford Knuts – young trainee chef, 16-20.

Charnock Richard – retired teacher, now writing his memoir, 50-70.

Fugitive – optional cameo role, any age.

Master of Ceremonies – any age.

Scene 1

(Ken enters. Struggling without his glasses, he begins frantically polishing surfaces and looking around for Ford. Ford dashes in, getting into her burger bar uniform.)

Ken: (To Ford.) Thought you'd only be gone five minutes. The new boss is due any time now!

Ford: (Joining in the table wiping.) Sorry, Ken. Had to use the northbound loos. They're cleaning those on this side.

(The Inspector enters, eyes members of the audience with suspicion, and takes up a position for his 'stakeout'. Ken and Ford stop work momentarily and watch him warily. Corley and Lake enter briskly, carrying toolbags and newspapers, and prepare to lay traps. Lymm follows immediately behind, keen to find fault. Sandy drifts in, pretending to sweep in the background but keeping a nosey eye on what is going on.)

Lake: We've parked our van at the back entrance, Mrs. There's a lot of gear to bring through.

Lymm: Miss! I should think so too. I don't want a Mice Guys van parked in the service station car park for all the world to see.

Corley: We can work round all these milk crates and cans of cooking oil, but we'll need the rest shifting, soon as.

Lymm: Of course. Health and safety! **(To Ken.)** What's your name again? Kevin? Ken?

Ken: Ken. Ken Dal.

Lymm: Can you sort it, Ken? **(To Ford.)** Young lady?

Ford: Me?

Lymm: Yes, YOU. What's your name?

Ford: Ford. Ford Knuts.

Lymm: Really?

Ford: Don't laugh. I had enough of that at school.

Ken: Her father was a car fanatic.

Lymm: Really?

Ken: **(Winks at Ford.)** Ford came off lightly. She's got a brother called Land Rover Discovery.

Sandy: And an older sister called Toyota Diesel Good Runner, Knuts.

(Lymm gives Sandy an icy stare.)

Sandy: Joke...

Lymm: Mmmm! Well, Ford, since you're standing around doing nothing, start folding these new menus.

(Ken finds a table and shows Ford what to do.)

Ken: I've been working here five years and I'm still waiting for more storage space.

Lymm: I'll get it sorted. There's hardly room to swing a cat in this burger bar. We had two floors in my last place, *and* a cellar for storage.

Corley: Compared to some of the burger bars we've been called out to, Mrs, this place is a palace.

Lymm: MISS!

Corley: Sorry, *Miss*. Shine your torch behind the gas range, Lake.

Sandy: (**Nosying.**) Want me to sweep behind the counter, Mrs? Looks like someone's being having a party.

Lymm: Miss! Carnforth! The name is Carnforth, Lymm Carnforth. But woe betide anyone who calls me Lymm! (**Goes to check.**) I can't believe it. No wonder this place is infested. The floor's full of coffee beans.

(While Lymm is occupied with the pest exterminators, Sandy takes the opportunity to 'bump into' Ken.)

Ken: (**Not recognising her.**) Sorry!

Sandy: (**Coily.**) It's me. Sandy. Don't you recognise the future Mrs Dal?

Ken: Er... sorry, Sandy. I've lost my glasses.

Sandy: (**Straightening Ken's collar.**) Tut tut. And you meeting your new boss for the first time.

Ken: If she's as kind as Keeley, I'll be happy.

Lymm: (**Looking up.**) Ken! Leave that girl to do her job and get over here.

Ken: (**Joining her.**) Yes?

Lymm: 'Health and safety'! What's this all over the floor?

Ken: (**Inspects closely.**) Smells like coffee beans.

Lymm: Of course they're coffee beans! Twenty years in the catering business, I think I know what a coffee bean looks like. I'm asking what they are doing on the floor.

Ken: Sorry. There must be a hole in one of the bean sacks.

Sandy: That'll be them mice.

Ford: I thought mice only ate cheese.

Lake: Mice will chew through anything, mate.

Lymm: (**To Ken, indicating Ford.**) Does she actually get paid to work here?

Ken: Ford? Of course she does. She's on a government scheme. College Mondays and Tuesdays; Wednesday through Saturday she serves burgers. She's a good hard worker.

Lymm: Not the sharpest tool in the shed, is she?

Ken: (**Defensively.**) Keeley never had any complaints.

Sandy: Went to the same school and ended up back there as a cleaner years later. Got to speak to Ford in her after-school detentions. The things she told me. (**Calls across.**) You didn't get on with the teachers at our school, did you, Ford?

Ford: I don't want to talk about it.

Sandy: School-phobic, they said she was.

Lymm: (**Aside.**) Work-phobic, more like.

Ken: (**Overhearing.**) She was never a problem for Keeley.

Lymm: Well, I'm not Keeley, I'm the new boss, so you'll both have to get used to it.

(Ken goes to help Ford while Sandy sweeps.)

Lymm: (**To Sandy.**) No wonder this Keeley couldn't handle things with Mr Magoo and a muppet on the staff.

Sandy: No one's got a bad word to say about Ken! First day Ford arrived, Ken saw she needed help. He's been like a father to her ever since.

Lymm: You seem to be well informed, Miss...?

Sandy: Bach. Sandy Bach. I'm employed by the service station management, but I drop by here most days for a chat. See what's new.

Lymm: (**Opens handbag, refreshes lipstick.**) Well, I'm new, and I won't have slackers. If Ford can't get used to it, she'll have to go.

Ken: (**Openly hostile.**) Ford? Let her go? If she goes, I go!

Lymm: Really? Let's hope that won't be necessary. **(Returns lipstick to bag, closes catch.)**
I ran a very tight ship at my last place, and I intend to do the same here.

Sandy: Where was that then?

Lymm: Kingsley. You wouldn't know it.

Sandy: Kingsley? Frodsham way? That's where you grew up isn't it, Ken?

Lymm: Oh, did I say Kingsley? Slip of the tongue. I meant Kingston.

Inspector: **(Focusing on one member of audience, gives a yelp of recognition.)** AHA!

(Everyone except Ford gathers to look into the audience. Ford takes the opportunity to take Lymm's handbag and hide it.)

Inspector: Oh no, my mistake. Sorry!

(The Inspector turns and sees them all.)

Inspector: As you were. **(Flashes a warrant card.)** Stakeout. Can't say more. Pretend you haven't seen me.

(All exchange looks, then resume their tasks.)

Lymm: Right. All right, Ken, I want these beans sweeping up, and when you've done that, you can help Ford with the menus. I'm going to check the lease. **(Exits.)**

Sandy: Don't worry, Ken, I'll do it for you. I don't mind. I've nothing else to do. This service station is like a morgue first thing in the morning.

Ken: Thanks, love.

(Sandy sweeps while Ford and Ken fold menus.)

Corley: } **(Together)**

Lake: } Fag break!

(Corley and Lake exit. Charnock enters, carrying a laptop and a bunch of flowers with a card attached. He makes himself presentable and calls to the bar.)

Charnock: Keeley, my little cheese puff? Keeley? It's me, Charnock. Your writer in residence has arrived. Just in time for our morning coffee. **(Pause.)** Keeley? Keeley, darling!

Sandy: Morning, Charnock. You haven't heard?

Charnock: What?

Sandy: It's not Keeley anymore.

Charnock: Not Keeley?

Sandy: She left yesterday, suddenly, out of the blue. **(With a note of sarcasm.)** I'm really sorry. I can't believe she didn't let YOU know.

Charnock: Why?

Sandy: She was under a lot of stress, all those complaints the site office has been receiving. Think it all got too much for her.

Charnock: Those vicious emails? I was going to help her with those. Didn't she leave a card?

Sandy: Perhaps it's in the post.

Charnock: I don't think she knows my address. I can't believe it. Today of all days. **(Goes to the bin, drops in the flowers.)** I always looked forward to sharing my morning coffee with Keeley. It set me up for the day.

Sandy: It's Miss Carnforth now. Lymm. Maybe she knows what happened.

...

[Continued in the full murder mystery pack.]