

**BP's Next Production: "By Way Of Murder"**

Written - and to be directed by - Mark Waghorn (aka 'Seth').

Hi All,

I know you may fancy a bit of a rest after giving your all in CCF, but I very much hope you will be interested in auditioning for this next BP offering. There will be a readthrough evening and an audition evening coming up very soon. The dates are to be confirmed in an email to all members next week, but I am hoping they will be:

Readthrough – on either Weds 7<sup>th</sup> or Thurs 8<sup>th</sup> Dec  
Auditions – on either Weds 14<sup>th</sup> or Thurs 15<sup>th</sup> Dec

(It all depends what Robert can book).

Performances dates are **Thurs 22<sup>nd</sup>, Fri 23<sup>rd</sup> and Sat 24<sup>th</sup> March 2012**, with a dress rehearsal on the evening of Weds 21<sup>st</sup>.

Rehearsals will be the usual Weds and Thurs evenings starting (I think) on Weds 11<sup>th</sup> Jan and running for 10 weeks up to the performance week. There may need to be the odd Sunday rehearsal as we get nearer to the show, but this is to be confirmed.

It's a 'thriller' called 'By Way Of Murder' or '*Sex, Murder, Kidnap, Suicide, Blackmail and Despicable Deceit*'.

It's in 2 acts, approx 2 hours playing time, 5 female / 4 male parts, one standard 'living room' set. The period is 1974.

It is a typical 'old-fashioned' type thriller...not quite Agatha Christie, but in a similar vein. It's aim is to keep the audience guessing and provide shocks and twists along the way.  
The synopsis is:

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Lady Sarah's stately home of Baxford Hall is the setting for this tale of murder, kidnap and deceit. Film producer Jack Summers, and his actress wife Janie, have taken refuge at the Hall to escape death threats that Jack has been receiving. A visit by Detective Superintendent Beveridge puts Jack's shady dealings under scrutiny, and when Jack's bodyguard and one of Lady Sarah's employees are murdered, and Janie is kidnapped and held to ransom, no one is sure who they can trust. It's up to Beveridge to solve the crimes. Meanwhile, what is Miss Franklin – the Hall's mysterious housekeeper – up to?  
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The parts:

Lady Sarah Dashwood-Bantwig - age range: late 30s to early 50s

Miss Rhona Franklin - Scottish, age-range: 60s

Jack Summers - age-range: 40s to late 50s

Janie Summers - age-range: 40s to early 50s

Lynne Cramer - age-range: late 20s to early 30s

Detective Superintendent Beveridge – female (or male\*) - age-range: 40s to 60s

Detective Inspector Frank Curtis - age-range: 40s to early 50s

Bob Metcalfe - age-range: 30s to 40s

A Man - age-range: 30s to 50s

(Other parts played by members of the cast: i.e. the off-stage voices of Shaw and the Police.)

\*This role could be played by a male actor with minor adjustments to the text to reflect the change of gender.

Please read on for more detailed information about these characters:

Lady Sarah Dashwood-Bantwig

Age range: can be anywhere between late 30s to early 50s.

She is elegant in manner and appearance. She is a central character and it is around Sarah that most of the action happens. This needs a good strong actress who is able to play a range of emotion from happiness to terror to despair.

Miss Rhona Franklin

Scottish, playing age required is 60s (so it can be played by someone younger as long as she can age up. Miss Franklin has worked at the hall for 40 years, hence why she needs to be at least 60.)

She is Baxford Hall's dour Scottish housekeeper; a serious woman with a dominating presence, but who also likes a wee drop of the strong stuff. She is always eavesdropping and the dislike between her and Sarah is mutual. She is at the centre of a sub-plot within the play.

Jack Summers

Age-range: 40s to late 50s

Jack is a film producer. He is a strong-looking 'ladies' man who takes pride in his appearance. The impression of him is one of coolness and charm, but as we discover during the course of the play he has a nasty and ruthless side.

Janie Summers

Age-range: 40s to early 50s

Janie is Jack's wife and an actress. She is glamorous in appearance and wears a fashionable wig.

Lynne Cramer

Age-range: late 20s to early 30s

She is an attractive young businesswoman – or is she....? Flirts with Jack.

Detective Superintendent Beveridge

The script has this character as female, but there is no reason that it couldn't be made a male role with some simple changes to the text to reflect the gender. It is more important to capture Beveridge's pompous and somewhat patronising nature. This is the classic detective part in that Beveridge asks all the questions, solves the crimes and provides everyone with an explanation of the events. As she (or he) sums up towards the end of the play: "What a sordid tale of sex, murder, kidnap, suicide, blackmail and despicable deceit".

Age-range: 40s to 60s

Detective Inspector Frank Curtis

Age-range: 40s to early 50s

Think Jack Regan from "The Sweeney".

He is a rugged, but somewhat attractive man. He is dressed in the stereotypical plain clothes of a detective and his accent and turn of phrase reveal inner-city roots.

Bob Metcalfe

Age-range: 30s to 50s

Bob is a bodyguard...not a very good one...from Wigan (so an ability to do a northern accent would be good). He is smartly-dressed and has a strong physique.

This is a small, but significant role. Bob appears in one scene in Act One – in which he gets murdered.

A Man

Age-range: 30s to 50s

This is a very tiny part. No lines. This character provides a twist at the end of Act 2 Sc1 by appearing from the shadows at the very end of the scene to Lady Sarah who screams in surprise.

It might perhaps suit a stage-crew member who wouldn't mind appearing on stage very briefly (for about 20 seconds?)

Meanwhile, if you would like to get an early view of the script you can download a pdf reader copy free of charge direct from the NTP website by doing the following:

<http://www.plays4theatre.com>

Click on 'Catalogue'

Search on Title: 'By Way Of Murder'

Click on the play.link

Select [ORDER READER COPY \(PDF DOWNLOAD - WORLDWIDE\) - contact us for Murder Games](#)

...and then follow the instructions to get a free reader copy emailed to you.

And finally...I would love to hear from anyone who would like to help out with any 'backstage' roles, e.g. producer, assistant director, props, costumes, etc, etc...

If you have any questions or would like to discuss any of the above further, please contact me.

Thanks,

Mark

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