

A Film Noir Murder Mystery

Drama, Comedy, and Smooth Jazz

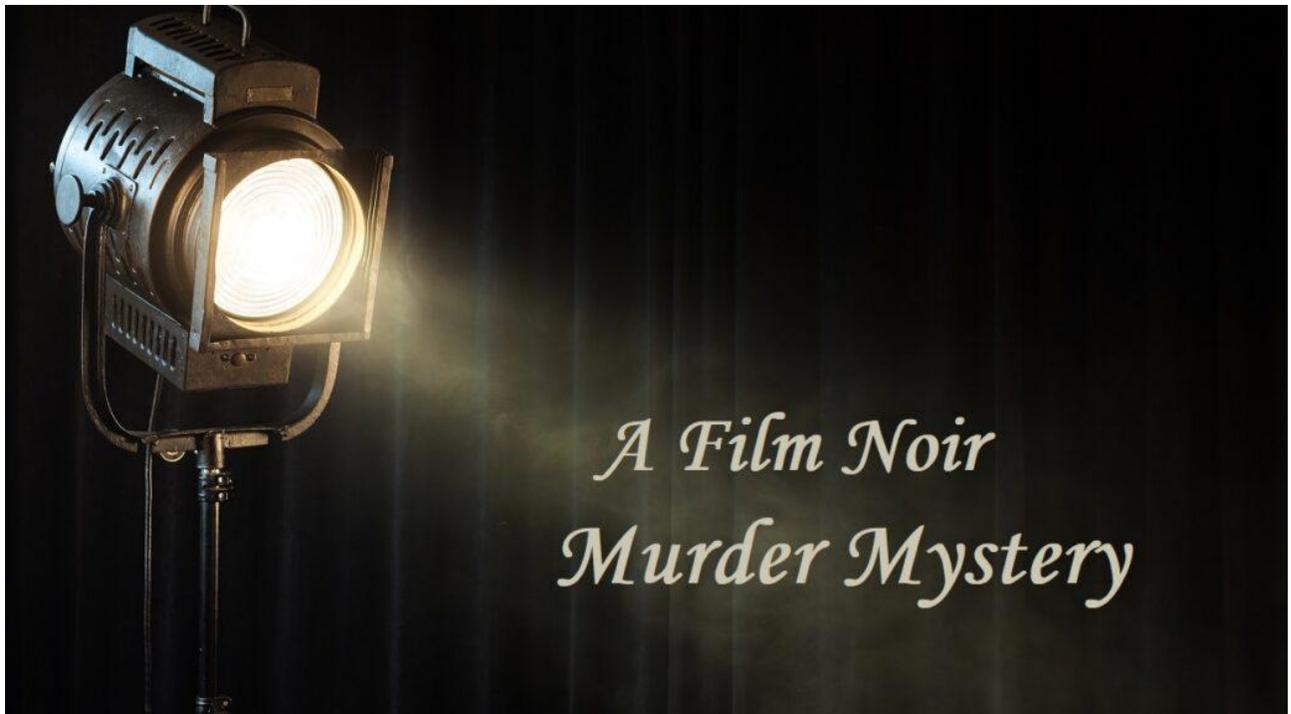
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Genre: Blackbox Larp

Length: 3,5-4 hours

Players: 6-10

First run: Blackbox Cph 2022



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Sales Pitch

Variation 1

The rain was pouring hard on the thin roof and the Detective wasn't expecting a single visit. Not just owing to the weather, but everything had been going to hell lately, including his career. Suddenly, a knock. A most terrible crime has been committed, says the dame in the red dress. She needs help. Help only he can provide.

A Film Noir Murder Mystery presents a series of Hollywood clichés and movie moments. Take part in creating and directing the story, play film noir archetypes, and explore the fabled murder mystery genre through drama, comedy, and jazz.

Variation 2

This larp is a classic film noir story featuring a drunken detective, a lady in red, a corrupt politician, and more. A murder has been committed and a dame is in distress. But who is really behind the crime in this grim story where it seems almost everyone has a motif of their own?

...In this city that never sleeps, where something bad is always brewing, you gotta take the joys you're offered cause you never know if you're gonna live to see tomorrow.

Larp Schedule

Workshop: 60-70 minutes

Break: 20 minutes

Larp: 2-2,5 hours

Larp Structure

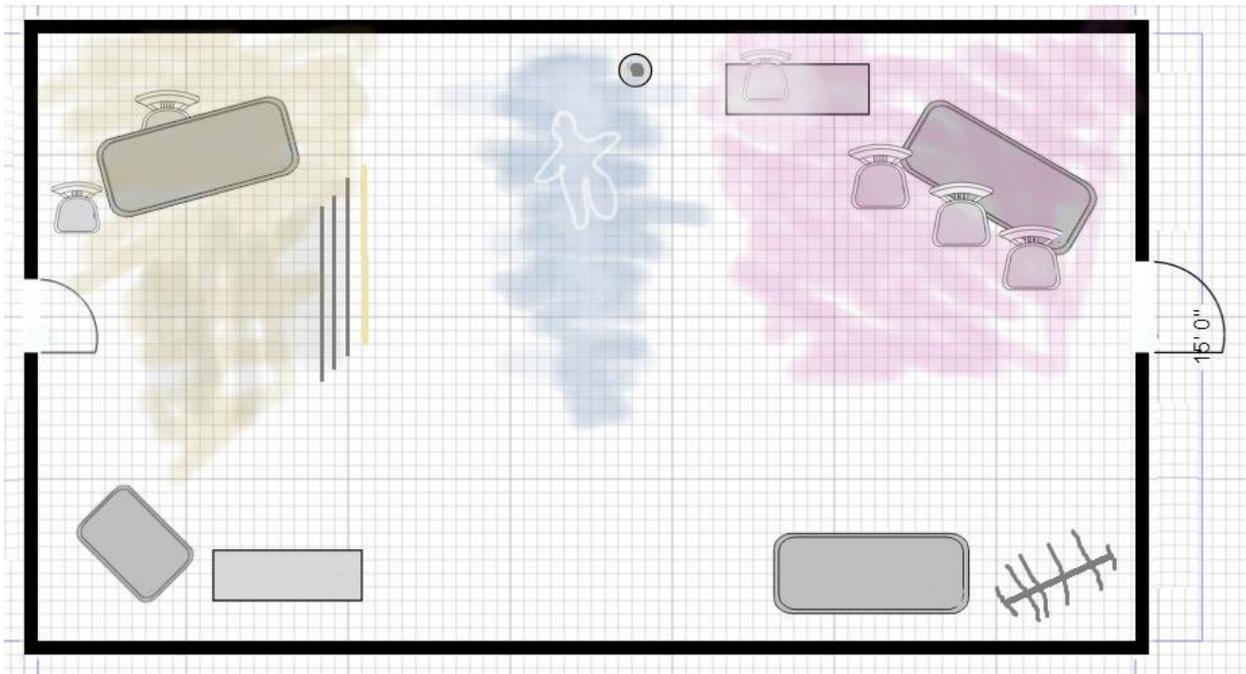
A Film Noir Murder Mystery is played as a series of classical film noir scenes coming to life in an old Hollywood film studio. Players play studio-characters who take on changing film noir roles. The film noir scenes together form a murder mystery investigation, with the Detective getting closer and closer to solving the case. In the end, there is no one murderer, but rather a collection of motives and different endings. The goal of the larp is lighthearted fun, intense scenes, and an opportunity for many, many dramatic one-liners.

What You Need

Preparing the Space:

The space needs to be big enough to contain 3-4 playing areas + a GM/technician space + a costume rack and table. You'll need a sound system that can fill the space and theatre light for 3-4 different areas.

Blackbox CPH setup:



Top Left: Office

Desk w. papers

2 chairs

Blinds

Sepia light

Top Middle: Dark Alley

Trash can

Blue and white light

Top Right: Prohibition Bar

Bar (3 stage modules)

Stage (1 stage module)

4-5 bar chairs

Glasses + 2 bottles of water

+ 1 bottle of whiskey/rum

Red/violet light; spot for stage

Bottom Left: Tech & GM

Tech table

Space for GM to sit

Darkness

OR: High-End Living Space

Potted plant

Golden light

Bottom Right: Prop Station

Costume rack

Prop table

Trash can/plant when not in use

Minimal light to see with

Office

INSPO



BLACKBOX CPH



Dark Alley

INSPO



BLACKBOX CPH



High-end Living Space

INSPO



BLACKBOX CPH



Note: Props for the living room were skipped to make the change from alley fast but the space needed some. A potted plant has been suggested here but a rug, a framed painting, or a lamp could also be great.

This pic is from the final scene, so everyone was in it, which is why the bar-spot was lit to create a bigger space.

Prohibition Bar

INSPO



BLACKBOX CPH



Props:

The purpose of the props and costumes is to be able to grab something quickly to signify that you're playing a film noir role now and to make it recognizable. You can use whichever old-Hollywood type things you can get your hands on, but I brought:

- A flowy pink "sugar-daddy" robe in soft tulle
- A trenchcoat
- A suit jacket
- A grey fedora
- 2 normal guns and one small golden gun attached to a string of pearls
- A veiled pillbox hat
- A stylish black umbrella
- A slinky floor-length dress covered all over with sequins
- A short lady's jacket in red silk velvet (from the 20s)
- A black capelet with pearl embroidery (from the 1890s)
- A pair of vintage shoes (40s)
- A leather tie
- A small lady's purse
- A silk kimono (20s)
- 2 champagne bowl glasses (the high ones are a modern style)
- 1 grimy glass for the office
- 1 leather wallet with a police identity card and a badge
- A mink coat
- 2 red lipsticks
- A maid's apron
- A bottle of rum with the label removed (remember to inform the players if you bring real alcohol)
- A silk scarf
- Pen and paper for the detective, the journalist and the cops
- 1 clapper board (you should get or make this too if nothing else)

I wanted but didn't get a typewriter so unclear whether that would've been useful or not.

Further get (see preparing the space):

- chairs and tables,
- water jugs/bottles + extra glasses
- Potted plant
- Trash can
- Blinds
- A piece of white chalk

When selecting your props, make sure to have something for every type of character. If you're just gonna go for a few things, you should prioritize the fedora, a gun, and the clapper board.

Encourage players to bring extra props.



Light:

The light is always on in the bar, as this is where the player-characters hang out when they are not playing a scene. Otherwise it will be on in a given area when the players are “filming a scene” there.

The light is a soft sepia yellow in the office.

It’s a red-tinged golden in the upper-class home.

A cold blue with a white center in the alley.

And a red or purple in the seedy prohibition bar. The white spot light comes on when the singer goes on stage.

Music:

The GM runs the soundtrack while the larp is played. Sometimes the Director might make special requests, so it’s good to be prepared for a bit of everything.

Here are some suggestions:

Rain and sometimes thunder, for the alley: <https://asoftmurmur.com>

Dark and sinister jazz: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CudYgvGGcgY>

A different dark and sinister jazzy:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ECyfxIOR_nk&list=PL0gR5bMMKdVb4CDKFivkVOzHPNyrsZpzx

Neutral/uplifting film noir type background music:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TrGC138bjyY&t=2967s>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=icMYxQJ0sI8>

Evil piano music, for visits to the high-end home (some of the pieces work for it, some don’t):

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uMCSdgkdOJc>

Fireplace sounds, high-end home: <https://asoftmurmur.com>

When the singer goes on in the bar: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UHE4UTFDL0>

Sexy jazz (for the sax mechanic): <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UJRORx2PxWk>

Generally avoid lyrics not to distract the players, and feel free to layer several types of sound and music on each other by playing multiple videos at once. Fade out the music whenever you want to end a song, unless it’s the end of a scene. When the Director yells “Cut”, it’s a nice effect if the film music, rain, etc. also stops though you might want to keep a bit of ambience melody on the low.

GM & Runtime Materials: A Ton of Envelopes



Workshop notes and location instructions (see Workshop).



Character concepts for Studio characters:

There are 11, so one extra. Feel free to change it up.

Each player picks one during the workshop.

PRINT & CUT/COPY:

The Leading Man

You're the male movie star every man wants to be and every woman wants to be with. You're slick, charming, and probably secretly gay.

--

The Difficult Diva

You've been the nation's darling for decades. Deep down, you're terrified your time is coming to an end but they'll have to pry your fame and glory from your dead cold hands.

The New Leading Lady

You've only recently been discovered and you just can't quite believe it: you're going to be a star!

You'll do anything, say anything, believe ...anything to get there.

--

The Overlooked True Talent

You could be one of the greatest if you'd only get the recognition you deserve. Unfortunately, you don't quite fit the Hollywood mold - be it due to skin tone, sexuality, or lack of willingness to sleep with the director.

You still take pride in your art but you're not without bitterness.

(No-print comment: This character is inspired by Anna May Wong, bring up racial injustice at your discretion - the character is not meant to be played as a racial caricature but as someone driven by professional pride and frustration).

--

The Sexually Adventurous Camera Man

You've always got your eyes on the prize whether you're going for the perfect shot or for a late-night rendezvous with one of the stars.

--

The Runner

You're new to the set and eager to prove yourself useful. If anyone needs anything, you're there - bringing coffee, running errands, fanning the diva, or agreeing with the producer that they're as important as they think they are.

One day soon you hope to be doing something of real importance in the studio.

--

The Stunt Double

An adrenaline junkie, you love your job with a passion and are always looking for ways to make your stunts more realistic and impressive.

You get along well with everyone.

--

Hair & Makeup

You're an essential part of the crew, and frankly, the studio couldn't run without you. Still, you're chronically undervalued, underappreciated and overworked.

You're always around and you overhear a lot of gossip, so you know what's what.

--

The Producer

None of these self-righteous geniuses, divas, or thrill-seekers would have any income if it weren't for you. They need you. Not just for your wallet, but for your great ideas.

As the producer, you fund the film and you are stock-full of opinions on it, most of which are ill-informed. Still, even you have to respect the Director while the camera rolls.

--

The Agent

You're looking for just the right buttons to push, so you can make your client into a star and turn their stardom into money.

Your fuel is ambition, fear of failure and copious amounts of "pep pills."

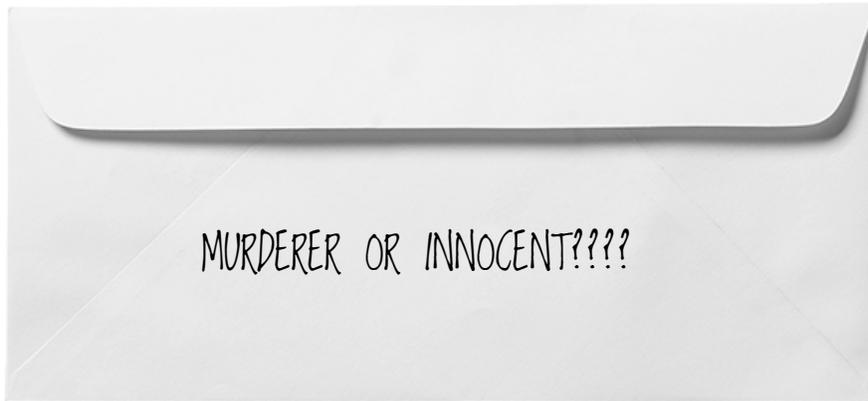
You probably have a young spouse at home with expensive habits.

Info: Pep pills were amphetamines, used by studio employees in Hollywood to be able to work long hours and stay "fashionably" skinny.

The Screenwriter

You created the script and you've got the vision. Now it's up to the director how it's translated to film - though you may be asked for advice or ideas, or find it impossible, at times, not to interfere.

You're usually quiet and reserved, but seeing your creation come to life makes you come out of your shell.



6-8 notes with the text: YOU ARE INNOCENT

1 note with the text: RED HERRING - YOU ARE GUILTY BUT NOT OF THIS

1 note with the text: YOU ARE THE MURDERER!

The GM makes sure that each player participating in a scene picks one before the camera “starts rolling”, reads it, and gives it back. There should (at least almost) always be a murderer in the mix, so you'll have to manually limit the amount of notes to fit with the amount of role-taking player characters from scene to scene.

The note-system isn't very elegant as of now and requires chasing the players around the set, so feel free to switch it for something smoother. A jar of coloured beads with one red bead placed by the bar perhaps.

Every role has to draw a murderer-note/bead, including the inner monologue and the stunt double, but the director does not.

The point of the system is to make suspicion and suspicious behaviour move around between the players.

The Scene Envelopes

The larp is run as a series of film noir scenes, ordered in envelopes. Each envelope has the title of the scene + location on the front and the participating roles on the back. Inside is a scene description as well as a note for each participating role, sometimes with a short description or instruction on the back. Make the note with the scene description bigger or print it on coloured paper to set it apart.

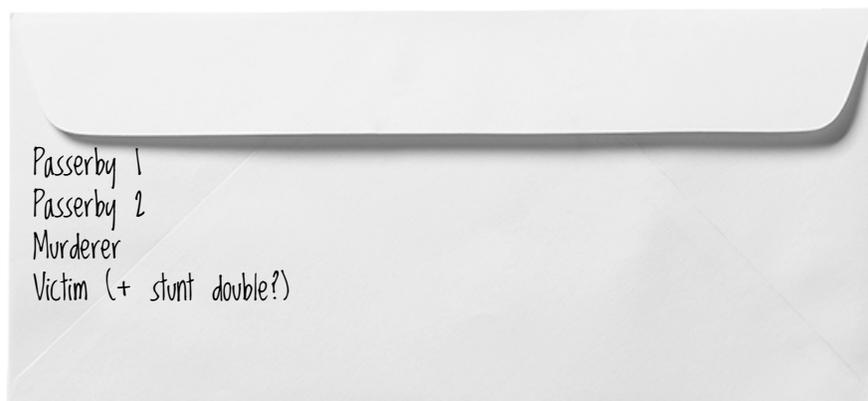
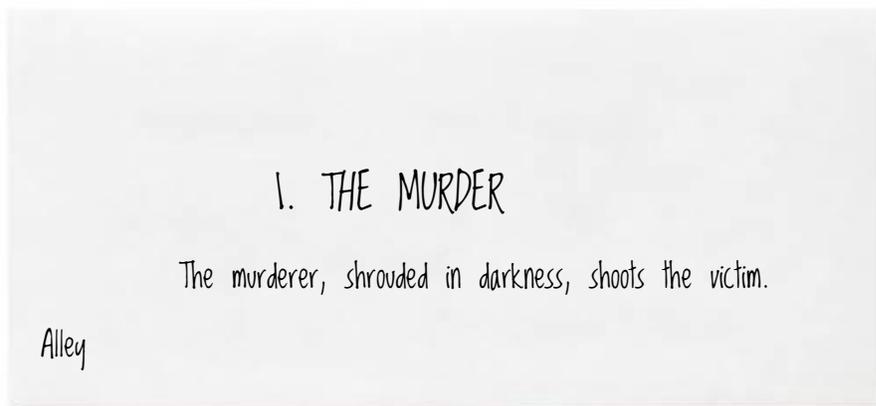
The first two scenes and the last are in set order, but the scenes in between can be played in any order and you can replace, remove and add scenes as you like, even during the larp. The director is also free to make up scenes on the spot or retake existing ones. Be aware that the last scene may take about 20-25 minutes.

Each scene has a director who is in charge of instructing the crew and setting the scene. The GM picks the first director, and from then on every director passes on the role to another when they've finished their scene. The next director then picks a new scene to shoot and afterwards the next director again. And so on.

The director hands out the roles to his cast. Despite the studio-personas, every player can be cast in a role. The roles should not be given to the same people every time.

Place the scene envelopes near the costume station, so they're easy to get to.

The First envelope:



The GM acts as supporting director in the first scene - which is also played out as the last part of the workshop and functions as a kind of prologue. At the end of the scene, draw the outline of the body on the floor with chalk, creating a crime scene.

Remind the players to:

Yell “BANG” when they shoot

Use “Action” and “Cut” (with the clapper-board if you have one) to frame the scenes.

PRINT & CUT/COPY:

Scene

The murderer, shrouded in darkness and impossible to recognise, shoots the victim.

A couple of citizens pass by - it’s unclear whether they see what happens.

--

Passerby 1

Maybe you saw something, maybe you didn’t.

--

Passerby 2

Maybe you saw something, maybe you didn’t.

--

Murderer

You could be anyone. No costume.

--

Victim

Successful middle-aged local politician. You are being murdered by someone you know and used to trust.

2. THE LADY IN RED SEEKS HELP FROM THE PRIVATE INVESTIGATOR

Location: Office, evening.

Roles: Lady in Red, Detective, Inner monologue

Scene

The Lady in Red arrives at the office of the private detective. She needs help. Her husband - a local politician - has been killed! She says the police have reason to suspect her - but she swears she didn't do it. The Detective is her only hope.

--

Lady in Red

You're in trouble. Your husband has been murdered and the police have reason to think you did it! You can't go down for this.

You've got only one place to turn: the Detective.

You know your husband was involved with the mafia. Let the Detective know you suspect them.

--

Detective

You promised yourself you wouldn't take any more cases. This business is too grim and you're too broken to work it.

But when a dame steps through the door, your fate is sealed. You've never been able to resist a dame.

--

Inner Monologue

The Detective drinks too much and has sworn not to take any more cases .. but he's never been able to resist a dame.

The Dame is worried she's gonna go down for the crime. She can't go to prison!

--

X. INVESTIGATING THE CRIME SCENE

Location: Alley

Roles: Rookie Cop, Corrupt Cop, Bar manager, Journalist, Detective

Scene

The Detective arrives at the crime scene. The police are already there. A potential witness, the manager from the nearby bar, is lingering at the edge of the scene. A curious journalist shows up asking questions.

--

Rookie Cop

New in the job. Want to be a hero. Try to impress the Corrupt Cop.

--

Corrupt Cop

You've been in the crime solving business too long. You know it's never the right people who go down for what's been done and your tired of fighting.

The Rookie Cop is new in the job. Once you were like him.

Now, you just want to get home and forget about this mess.

You do not think highly of the Detective.

--

Bar manager

This happened in the alley behind your bar. Did you see something?

--

Journalist

Why isn't anyone doing anything about the levels of crime in this city? It's time to get some answers!

--

Detective

Dammit! The police are already at the scene. They don't think too highly of you. You'll have to find a way to get the intel out of them anyway.

Look for suspects.

--

X. DROWNING YOUR SORROWS

Location: Bar

Roles: Detective, Bar Manager, Singer, Gangster 1, Gangster 2

Scene

The Detective goes to the bar to drown his sorrows. He needs to get his thoughts straight.

A beautiful melancholy singer is performing tonight, watched closely by some gangsters. The bartender sees trouble brewing.

Does it end with a fight or a quiet escape?

--

Detective

You can't think straight if you don't get your poison. You aren't trying to find any clues at this bar, but you can't help turning the case over in your mind.

A dame in trouble distracts you. Looks like the melancholy singer performing tonight has something she wants to tell you.

--

Bar Manager

You know the Singer is the kept girl of the Mobster Boss. You know the gangsters are watching her because he's jealous and possessive. You know the detective is an alcoholic - and now he looks like he's taking an interest in the dame.

--

Singer

You're the girlfriend of the Mobster Boss. He's possessive and dangerous and you're afraid of him. You heard about the murder and you think he did it - you want to find a way to tell the Detective without the gangsters stopping you.

--

Gangster 1

The Singer is your boss's girlfriend.

Your boss is very possessive, so you watch her to make sure she doesn't stray.

You're pretty stupid and easily distracted.

--

Gangster 2

The Singer is your boss's girlfriend.

Your boss is very possessive, so you watch her to make sure she doesn't stray.

You're clever and prone to violence.

--

X. VISITING THE HOME OF THE VICTIM

Location: Private home

Roles: Detective, Maid, Lady in Red, Mobster Boss, Inner Monologue

Scene

The Mobster Boss and the Lady in Red are talking about old times in the sitting room. The Lady in Red thinks the Mobster Boss is flirting with her.

Suddenly, there is a knock on the door and the maid opens. It is the Detective! The Mobster Boss scrambles to hide and the Detective questions the Lady in Red about her husband's connections.

--

Detective

You still feel like the Lady in Red is hiding something from you.
You question her about her husband's connections to the mafia.

--

Maid

You are pretty new in this job.
You are very nervous.

--

Lady in Red

You think the Mobster Boss is flirting with you. He's always had a soft spot for you. Did he kill your husband to get to you?
You don't want the Detective to know the Mobster Boss is here. It wouldn't look right.

--

Mobster Boss

You were in business with the victim drafting some shady laws.
His wife doesn't know what you were up to. You don't want her to know.
You left something behind when you were last here and came back to find it.
You hide when the visitor arrives.

--

Inner Monologue

The Maid is new at her job and very nervous.
The Mobster Boss left something incriminating behind here and doesn't want anyone to find out.
The Lady in Red doesn't want the Detective to know the Mobster Boss is in her home.

--

X. MEETING THE SINGER SOMEWHERE DISCREET

Location: Office/Alley/Private home

Roles: The Singer, Detective, Inner Monologue

Scene

The Detective arranges to meet the singer somewhere discreet - to help her, press her for information, or just for a moment's bliss.

--

Detective

You sense the Singer knows something (more) she hasn't said.

You need her alone to get to her, you can tell.

You also want to help her if she's in trouble.

You've got a soft spot for dames in trouble.

--

Singer

You know it's dangerous to meet the Detective alone. But you want to find a way to get away from your boyfriend, the Mobster Boss.

Maybe the Detective is the way?

--

Inner Monologue

The Detective is trapped between his desire to solve the case and his desire to get closer to the Singer.

The Singer needs his help against the Mobster Boss and wonders what she should do to get it.

Is it even right to take advantage of a dame in need?

--

X. GOING TO THE POLICE

Location: Office (now police station)

Roles: Detective, Inner Monologue, Rookie Cop, Corrupt Cop, Journalist

Scene

The Detective goes to the police to figure out what they know and to secure their support in case things go haywire. They are old enemies, the Detective and the cops, so things are tense.

Suddenly: The inquisitive journalist shows up to ask if there is any progress in the case and why there isn't??

--

Detective

You might be getting in over your head and need the support of the police.

You still can't tell where the evidence points and want to know if they're hiding anything from you.

--

Inner Monologue

The Corrupt Cop and the Detective have a past. They're both too hardboiled and broken to talk about it out loud.

--

Rookie Cop

You're clueless and don't understand why the Corrupt Cop and the Detective should have any trouble cooperating.

--

Corrupt Cop

You don't want to trust the Detective but you're getting a rising feeling that maybe this case is something you'll have to deal with seriously after all.

--

Journalist

“Why IS no one doing anything to solve the crime issue in this city?”

“What have you got so far?”

--

X. GETTING INTO BED WITH THE MAFIA

Location: Bar

Roles: Detective, Singer, Bar Manager, Mobster Boss, Gangster 1, Gangster 2

Scene

The Detective seeks out the mafia to get more information on their connection to the victim. He finds the Mobster Boss and his crew in the bar.

The Singer casts long meaningful glances his way but keeps to herself. The Bar manager meaningfully polishes the glasses.

--

Detective

It feels too easy concluding that the Mobster Boss is the murderer. But you've got no doubt he knows more than he lets on. You've come to figure out what it is.

You let the Mafia know you're not against them - you just want to find who did it.

--

Singer

You sadly sing a haunting melody from your seat in the spotlight sun. You cannot speak freely here.

--

Bar Manager

You watch and listen. If anyone asks you anything, you didn't see nothing and you didn't hear nothing.

--

Mobster Boss

You're not too blind to see an opportunity when it presents itself. Many people think you committed the murder. Now the Detective is here asking questions. Point him in some other direction.

--

Gangster 1

You are loyal to your boss.

You are an idiot.

--

Gangster 2

You are loyal to your boss.

You are mean and clever.

--

X. THE ROOKIE COP TRIES TO SOLVE IT BY HIMSELF

Location: Bar

Roles: Mobster Boss, Gangster 1, Gangster 2, Rookie Cop, Detective, Corrupt Cop

Scene

The Rookie Cop is convinced he knows who did it. Obviously it was the Mobster Boss - and he's going to take him down!

Rookie Cop goes to the bar and gets himself shot. The Corrupt Cop is already there but can't stop it.

The Detective arrives in the last moment and help the Corrupt Cop drag the Rookie Cop away for some medical attention.

--

Mobster Boss

You can't let the Rookie Cop push you around. Let him say his piece but take him down when he gets too much.

--

Gangster 1

You're ready to defend your Boss.

You're still an idiot.

--

Gangster 2

You're eager to pull the trigger and shoot this Rookie Cop.

--

Rookie Cop

All you ever wanted was to be a hero.

Now you're going to bring in the Mobster Boss for murder.

--

Detective

You got a tip the Rookie Cop might try to solve things by himself.

You arrive at the very last moment to save his life.

--

Corrupt Cop

You've got no idea why the Rookie Cop would be so stupid as to take things into his own hands.

But it also awakens something in you. Maybe justice still has a spark of life?

X. VISITING AN UNMARKED GRAVE

Location: "Alley" now a graveyard

Roles: Corrupt Cop, Rookie Cop, Detective

Scene

The Corrupt Cop remembers years ago when a very similar murder happened. This was the case that broke his career. Now he wonders again if there was anything he missed.

After a while, the Rookie Cop arrives and they talk about the ongoing investigation.

The Detective watches unseen from the bushes.

--

Corrupt Cop

--

Rookie Cop

--

Detective

--

X. ONE LAST CHANCE FOR A DAME

Location: Alley

Roles: Dame (Lady in Red/Singer), Detective, Gangster 2

Scene

A dame stands on a street corner. She's looking to leave the city. Is the detective gonna ask her to stay or will he try to help her leave?

Gangster 2 arrives mid-scene to stop the dame from leaving regardless of their decision.

--

Dame

Maybe it's time to leave, leave this terrible place of broken dreams.

--

Detective

The dame is leaving. Will you let her or will you hold her back?

--

Gangster 2

The dame cannot be allowed to leave. No one leaves without your Boss's permission.

--

LAST: APPREHENDING THE MURDERER

Location: Home of the Victim

Do not draw a murderer this time.

GM is the Director again.

Roles: The Detective, The Lady in Red, The Mobster Boss, The Singer, The Corrupt Cop, The Rookie Cop, The Maid, The Journalist, The Bar Manager, The Inner Monologue

Scene

The Detective has gathered all the suspects at the home of the victim and the Lady in Red. Now he tells them how he knows the identity of the murderer!

The Detective Hat goes on tour.

The first detective declares the identity of the murderer and how he knows they did it. Then he passes on the fedora to the next detective, who steps forward and declares the identity of the murderer and how he knows they did it. And so on, until everyone has been the detective.

When everyone has been the detective, the crime is solved and you can yell "Cut. It's a wrap!"

If the mood is for it, you might want to give the players a few extra moments after to play out the end of the shoot in their studio-characters. A drink in the bar, a cheers to the film, and then off-game and onwards.

Remember: you can do other scenes, and if you've brought extra envelopes and paper, you can write more during the larp if the players come up with something fun you want them to be able to run with. You do not need to write instructions for the roles past the first 30 minutes of play.

The Sax Mechanic

- But what's the "sax mechanic?"
- It's a sex mechanic but with saxophone!

If the players want to play a sex scene, having appropriately seduced each other's characters verbally and/or non-verbally, they:

1. Go behind the blinds
2. Close the blinds with much drama, slowly but erotically - perhaps following some suggestive shadow play
3. GM plays loud sexy saxophone solo
4. The light fades out.

Murder Mechanic

Explain during the practice scene 1. Murder

If the player-character wishes to commit murder, they must:

1. Verbalise that murder is what is happening, for instance: "I am going to kill you, you worthless bastard!"
2. Commit the crime with slow and controlled movements.
3. If they use a gun, they must yell BANG.

Intro & Workshop

Intro

1. Hello, Welcome, Please sit down in a circle, Who am I?
2. What are we doing: Old Hollywood film noir murder mystery
3. What is film noir?

Hollywood crime drama, known usually as “melodramas”, not really a genre
20s-50s

Themes: pessimistic, ambivalent, brutal, romantic, full of innuendo, secrets, crime, impossible situations, moral ambiguity

Character tropes: femme fatales, hardboiled men, soft women

Context: post-2nd WW, prohibition era, the great depression, the cold war.

Truth in film noir reality: The world is inherently corrupt.

-> Reactions:

Cultural paranoia - the others are onto you/up to something.

Wallowing

Life of crime

Looking for one good thing to hold on to.

Sense of humour.

4. What are some film noir themes you're looking forward to playing with?
Practical: Everyone says some theme they're looking forward to exploring.

Exercise: Suspicion

“Get up and walk around among each other. Notice how there seems to be something off with everyone else. Notice how they're looking at you. Like they know. Grow the feeling of paranoia. Look each other over - but try not to be noticed as you do it.”

Exercise: Forming Allies

“Continue walking around but now, look for that one person you feel you can maybe dare to trust. See if you can find some eyes and create a connection - non-verbally or in

whispers. Notice who your shared enemies are. Being against someone together brings you closer.”

Exercise: Conflict

Start forming bigger groups of allies - making sure you have shared enemies. Show your support and animosity silently, with your body language. Decide who are the two shared enemies everyone else is against.

Exercise: Flirtation

“Now! For flirtation. The film noir world is full of erotically loaded moments. You will again walk around among each other but this time, let the eyes linger flirtatiously. Like you are starving for something sweet and they are the pie on your path. You can look away, look back. Look them up and down. Touch your hair, bite your lips, fan yourself.

You can also flirt verbally. Keep it suggestive, keep it slow. “What’s a dame like you doing in a city like this?” “What’s a man gotta do to get a dance with a bird like you?”

You can even touch each other lightly. Here we use the escalation mechanic.

Once you’ve established a mutual flirting connection, test the waters by touching the other person’s hand or arm. Maybe they touch you back in the same way; maybe they let their hand lightly slide up your arm. Maybe you then put your arm around them. You never skip a step by, say, going straight for the knee, and if the other person doesn’t respond by escalating, you always step back.”

Exercise: Sax Mechanic

“The Sax Mechanic is the sex mechanic for this larp. It works like [this: see Sax Mechanic]. Can I have a volunteer or two?” *Demonstrate sax mechanic.*

Film Noir vs. Studio Reality

“You’re not just playing film noir characters, you’re playing old Hollywood studio employees playing film noir characters.

Film noir is: gender stereotypical, sexually conforming, morally ambiguous

Studio people are: creative, non-conforming, queer, competitive, personal, real

That means that your film noir roles are gendered but they can be played by anyone and the studio characters do not have the same opinions or values as the film noir roles they portray.

When you're not performing a film noir role, you can sit back in the bar - which also acts as the studio-hang out space, and watch, judge, and chat quietly with each other.

The studio and film noir realities are not completely separate, however. You sometimes become your role when you film, and your studio persona can seem like a fine glaze covering the real, dark and mysterious you. Sometimes your studio character might shine through; driving you to try to get more spotlight for yourself, for instance; other times your film noir role will completely take over.

Please pick a studio character." *Let them pick studio characters.*

"Feel free to sit back down, and let's do a round where everyone presents their studio character." *Character round.*

"Now I'll present the stages to you, then we're going to do two practice scenes, and then we will have the break."

Present the scene locations with the lights, one by one.

"Now we'll do a practice scene. First we'll play a moment from a normal day at the studio, prepping for a shoot. Let's say, we're filming a menage a trois situation between a Dame and two men. The Director is set to arrive on set in 5 minutes and everything must be ready by then, from costuming to poses."

Exercise: Practice Scene: Studio: 5 minutes

Everyone acts in their studio characters, prepping the scene.

Exercise: Practice Scene: 1. Murder

Use the first envelope. Pick a Director. Help them set the scene. Have them redirect the scene. Outline the body with chalk.

Follow up with the Break.

Last Bit Before Game Start

Last minute directions. Explain the Murderer notes. Let them know they can treat you as a sort of executive producer. Explain how the larp will end (You will remove all remaining envelopes and put out the Last Scene when it's time). Questions. Go.