

HOW TO MAKE A KILLING ONLINE

The Lighter Side of Serial Murder

Written by

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Three podcasters at a Jack the Ripper convention risk losing their listeners as well as their lives when a prominent Ripperologist is slain by an elusive killer who seeks to ensure that the Whitechapel Murders remain unsolved.

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INT. BASEMENT STUDIO - NIGHT

With a greenscreen hung behind them, three young people in headsets sit at a folding table in front of a video camera. The logo on their t-shirts reads SWF, with the bottom of the letter 'F' taking the shape of a bloody knife blade.

JULIET MUNOZ scribbles notes on a legal pad and HUSANI PRADESH highlights passages in a medical textbook while AMANDA CHOI reads her scripted narration from a laptop.

AMANDA

So, even though the authorities investigated hundreds of leads, none of them panned out. The case remains open and no suspects have ever been arrested for the crimes.

JULIET

Some experts believe the killer may still roam San Francisco's streets, patiently stalking his next victim.

HUSANI

(scoffs)

Yeah right, maybe in a wheelchair.

AMANDA

To this day, it remains one of the most baffling cases in true crime.

HUSANI

What a pathetic coward. Only seven confirmed victims and two of them survived. Those are rookie numbers.

JULIET

But in letters to the newspaper, he claims to have killed 37 people.

HUSANI

There's absolutely no evidence of that. This guy was a pathological liar. An attention whore like BTK.

AMANDA

I think it's important to remind our audience that these unfortunate victims were real people with hopes and dreams. They had friends and families who loved them very much.

HUSANI

Hey Zodiac, if you're listening:  
You're not scary. You're not smart.  
You're a punk. Yesterday's news.

JULIET

What about the symbol and all the  
cyphers? That stuff is terrifying.

HUSANI

Lame gimmicks, plain and simple. I  
mean, look at that corny mask. And  
the glasses? Give me a break, this  
chump was just another uber-nerdy  
murder-dork like Israel Keyes.

AMANDA

We'll be covering THAT twisted tale  
in a future episode, so be sure to  
like and subscribe for more videos.

JULIET

Now before we go, we want to share  
some exciting news. We're finally  
taking the show on the road!

AMANDA

That's right. Next week, we'll be  
livestreaming from the floor of  
Ripperpalooza '22 in Connecticut.

HUSANI

New London here we come! Spot o  
tea, pip pip, cheerio and all that!

AMANDA

Swedish journalist Kemper Edmundson  
is reportedly going to announce he  
has evidence that may solve the  
World's Most Infamous cold case.

HUSANI

My confidential source tells me  
it's largely circumstantial, but if  
the story checks out, this could be  
Earth-shattering news.

JULIET

And we'll be there when it happens.  
So that's it. Thanks so much for  
tuning in. As always, don't forget  
to keep yourself alive and be on  
the lookout for - SCARY WHITE FOLK.

TITLE CARD: HOW TO MAKE A KILLING ONLINE

EXT. RUNDOWN HOTEL - AFTERNOON

SUPER: New London, Connecticut

The podcasters exit their cab in front of the White Chapel Hotel & Suites, a former chain motel that has seen better days. Sliding sign letters proclaim: WELCOME RIPPEROLOGISTS.

HUSANI

This place is a dump. Zero stars.

Amanda motions to the colonial-era church across the street.

AMANDA

There's the famous white chapel.

JULIET

No vacancies at the Bates Motel?

AMANDA

We need to be where the action is.  
C'mon party people, let's check in.

INT. SHABBY HOTEL ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

The cramped room holds two beds and some dated furniture.

AMANDA

See? I told you. This isn't so bad.

JULIET

I am not sleeping on those sheets.

HUSANI

You and me both. I will absolutely NOT let the bedbugs bite, thank you very much. It's Sofa City for me.

AMANDA

Oh cut it out, there aren't any--

Amanda pulls down the covers and a tiny speck skitters away.

JULIET

I call dibs on the bathtub.

Juliet enters the tiny bathroom to use the sink. The water pipes burble dubiously before the faucet coughs to life.

JULIET (CONT'D)

They need to call Jack the Plumber.

HUSANI

Other than the running water, this hotel is remarkably similar to a real 19th century lodging house.

AMANDA

We're not here for the ambience. There's a meet-and-greet down in the bar. Let's go check it out.

INT. HOTEL LOBBY - MOMENTS LATER

The elevator doors part, leaving the three podcasters in the bustling lobby. The Ten Bells Pub sells warm pints and fish n chips as the chairs in the Conference Room begin to fill. Front Desk clerk DENNIS deftly handles the convention chaos.

DENNIS

(on phone)

The naked sushi place cancelled at the last minute. I'm sorry, she didn't say why. No, I can't make her come back. Because its illegal. Yes, everywhere. Well, last year was just a big misunderstanding and the police dropped the charges.

(pause)

I know you purchased the VIP food and drink package. Let me make it up to you with some complimentary dessert. The severed bread pudding is tasty but if you're a chocoholic like me, the headless torso lava cake is simply to die for--

They walk through the Victorian façade of the hotel bar.

INT. TEN BELLS PUB - CONTINUOUS

Faux gaslights give the English pub an air of authenticity. Gloomy shadows dance on vintage wallpaper in the dim light. Wearing historically accurate attire, bartender PAUL pours pints of dark beer while serving wench KARLA delivers them to the teeming masses. The lively crowd is abuzz with debate and conjecture. Colorful characters in capes and deerstalker caps engage in heated discussions with stodgy intellectuals.

AMANDA

There's Sir Rodney O'Callahan.

JULIET

Who?

AMANDA

Former Chief Inspector at Scotland Yard. He wrote Gutters of Blood.

HUSANI

No, that was Gareth Ridgley. Sir Rodney wrote Blood in the Gutters.

AMANDA

I stand corrected.

JULIET

Where's Kemper Edmundson? That's who I want to interview.

AMANDA

Think he's just hyping up the big reveal to keep us in suspense?

HUSANI

Hard to say. The Ripper community is pretty divided over this. He's actually received death threats.

JULIET

Death threats? For what?

AMANDA

For solving the case they never could. Bruised ego, wounded pride. Reputations are at stake here.

HUSANI

More than that. There's an entire cottage industry built around the identity of the Ripper. If this guy's right and Jack is somebody that every single one of them overlooked--

JULIET

A lot of very smart people are gonna end up looking very dumb.

AMANDA

That tends to make them very angry.

JULIET

And folks REALLY don't like it when someone threatens their livelihood.

HUSANI

Do you want death threats? Cause THAT's how you get death threats.