

## TRUNCATED SAMPLE SCRIPT

This is a series of excerpted scenes from the full script, which runs to 25 pages--about 22 minutes in performance. Also included in this truncated script is a sampling of the 10-page appendix featuring casting monologues, a sound effects cookbook, background on the "Golden Age" detective genre as well as detailed technical information.

If you wish to secure the performance rights to the script, and pre-recorded music tracks, contact [Info@RuyaSonic.com](mailto:Info@RuyaSonic.com)

## INSPECTOR BUFFLETHORPE

"The Twitshyre Murder Case"

A radio drama by

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SAMPLE SCRIPT  
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Inspector Rufflethorpe

"The Twitshyre Murder Case"

Prod. #1938

CAST

INSPECTOR RUFFLETHORPE	British detective-inspector
EVERETT FRIMLY	Detective-sergeant
LADY MARGARET BENSINGTON	Upper class British widow
CONSTABLE DIXON	Sharp-witted police constable
CEDRIC CRUMPTON, ESQ.	Stuffy solicitor to the Bensingtons
GRETCHEN LAYTHERLY	West End actress (ingénue)
COLONEL FROTHINGHAM	Retired military man
RALPH STELLSMORE	Rakish young scion
CHALMERS	Butler
MADAM HILLSWICK	Society matron
ELSIE	Maid
COUNTESS VALESKA	White-Russian mystic
ANNOUNCER	The announcer
REGINALD SKELMSDALE	Lady Margaret's male secretary

NOTE:

The above list is for a cast of 14. A smaller cast of 11 can be used if the following roles are combined for one actor each:

ANNOUNCER/RALPH STELLSMORE  
REGINALD SKELMSDALE/CHALMERS  
CONSTABLE DIXON/COUNTESS VALESKA

Four sound effects artists are also required.  
Walla walla can be done by both the cast and SFX crew.

Pre-recorded music tracks using an authentic 1930s organ underscoring the drama are available as downloadable MP3 files. Contact [Sales@RuyaSonic.com](mailto:Sales@RuyaSonic.com).

SCRIPT NOTE: Asterisks besides a cue number (for example: 3\*) indicate that the performer of that cue wait for music or a sound effect to establish itself and in some cases, await a signal from the director to begin. It is recommended that the master script be marked with a hand-lettered "Q" to the left of these special cues, so they stand out better.

Visit Tony Palermo's Radio Drama Resources website: [www.RuyaSonic.com](http://www.RuyaSonic.com)

**Pronunciation Guide and Glossary for "The Twitshyre Murder Case"**

<b>INSPECTOR RUFFLETHORPE</b>	<b>[RUFF-el-THORP]</b>	<b>British detective-inspector</b>
<b>EVERETT FRIMLY</b>	<b>[FRIM-lee]</b>	<b>Detective-Sergeant</b>
<b>LADY MARGARET BENSINGTON</b>	<b>[BEN-sing-ton]</b>	<b>Upper class widow</b>
<b>CONSTABLE DIXON</b>	<b>[CON-stah-bul DIX-on]</b>	<b>Local police officer</b>
<b>CEDRIC CRUMPTON, ESQ.</b>	<b>[SED-rick CRUMP-ton ]</b>	<b>Stuffy family lawyer</b>
<b>GRETCHEN LAYTHERLY</b>	<b>[GRET-chin LAY-thur-lee]</b>	<b>West End actress</b>
<b>COLONEL FROTHINGHAM</b>	<b>[FRAW-thing-ham]</b>	<b>Retired military man</b>
<b>RALPH STELLSMORE</b>	<b>[STELLS-more]</b>	<b>Rakish young scion</b>
<b>CHALMERS</b>	<b>[CHALL-mers]</b>	<b>Butler</b>
<b>MADAM HILLSWICK</b>	<b>[HILS-zwick]</b>	<b>Society matron</b>
<b>ELSIE</b>	<b>[EL-see]</b>	<b>Maid</b>
<b>COUNTESS VALESKA</b>	<b>[val-ES-kah]</b>	<b>White-Russian mystic</b>
<b>REGINALD SKELMSDALE</b>	<b>[REG-in-ald SKELMS-dale ]</b>	<b>Lady B's personal secretary</b>
<b>LORD ARCHIBALD- FARQUHAR-BENSINGTON</b>	<b>[ARCH-e-bald] [FAH-kwah-BEN-sing-ton]</b>	<b>The victim</b>

<b>alibi .....</b>	<b>[AL-a-buy ]</b>	<b>- proof that they were somewhere else than the murder scene.</b>
<b>beau .....</b>	<b>[BOW]</b>	<b>- boyfriend</b>
<b>constable .....</b>	<b>[CON-stah-bul]</b>	<b>- A British police officer</b>
<b>colonel .....</b>	<b>[KERN-all]</b>	<b>- A military officer</b>
<b>egyptian .....</b>	<b>[e-JIP-shun]</b>	<b>- from Egypt</b>
<b>firearm .....</b>		<b>a gun, pistol</b>
<b>harum-scarum .....</b>		<b>wild and reckless.</b>
<b>luncheon .....</b>	<b>[LUNCH-on]</b>	<b>- Lunch.</b>
<b>Margate .....</b>		<b>The setting of the story in the County of Kent, near London</b>
<b>marksman .....</b>		<b>a good shot with a pistol.</b>
<b>mysterious .....</b>	<b>[miss-STEER-i-us]</b>	<b>- full of mystery, puzzling</b>
<b>poppycock .....</b>		<b>a ridiculous idea.</b>
<b>potassium cyanide ....</b>	<b>[po-TASS-ee-UM SI-ah-nide]</b>	<b>- an insect poison often used in murder stories</b>
<b>preposterous .....</b>	<b>[pre-POSS-ter-us]</b>	<b>- unbelievable, absurd, crazy</b>
<b>sergeant .....</b>	<b>[SAR-gent]</b>	<b>- a police detective rank</b>
<b>solicitor .....</b>	<b>[so-LISS-i-ter]</b>	<b>- Lawyer</b>
<b>suffocation .....</b>	<b>[suff-o-KAY-shun]</b>	<b>- inability to breathe</b>
<b>super-natural .....</b>		<b>fantastic happenings with ghosts and mummies, etc.</b>
<b>Twitshyre .....</b>	<b>[TWIT-shy-er]</b>	<b>The name of the estate of Lord Farquhar-Bensington.</b>

The Twitshyre Murder Case

## INTRODUCTION

(ANNOUNCER, FRIMLY)

1\* MUSIC: [A-1] RUFFLETHORPE THEME--UP. ESTABLISH. CONTINUE

UNDER, BUT DUCK AS NEEDED.

2\* ANNOUNCER: [CUE] The \_\_\_\_\_ radio network proudly presents another "mystery at the microphone" with Inspector Rufflethorpe--Scotland Yard's finest detective. We'll follow the brilliant detective-inspector and his able assistant, Everett Frimly--as they untangle another case of murder, mystery and mayhem. And now, Detective-Sergeant Frimly...

3. MUSIC: [A-2] TWITSHYRE INTRO--UP FULL. DUCK.

4\* SGT. FRIMLY: [CUE] Hullo. I'm Everett Frimly, Inspector Rufflethorpe's right-hand man. I ask you, how can a murderer vanish into thin air? The victim is in a locked room. A murder, most foul, is committed, and yet, when the room is opened, the murderer is gone! Well, the Inspector and I were certainly baffled by just such a mystery in what I call, "The Twitshyre Murder Case."

5. MUSIC: TWITSHYRE INTRO--UP FULL. LET IT FADE.

1\* SGT. FRIMLY: Scotland Yard assigned Inspector Rufflethorpe and myself to investigate the mysterious death of Lord Archibald Farquhar-Bensington, at Twitshyre Estate. We motored up to Margate and met local police Constable Dixon. The Inspector began, of course, with... the butler...

SCENE ONE: INT. LORD BENSINGTON'S STUDY - DAY  
(RUFFLETHORPE, CHALMERS, DIXON, FRIMLY, LAYTHERLY)

2. SOUND: CLOCK TICKING IN B.G.--CONTINUE.

3\* RUFFLETHORPE: [CUE] Describe for me, Chalmers, Lord Bensington's death in this room last night.

4. CHALMERS: Well, Inspector. His Lordship came into this study at precisely 9:40--he's quite a stickler for time. He locked himself in to... er "avoid" the guests at Lady Bensington's cocktail party. (PAUSE) Ten minutes later, I heard a scream... then a crash, and several gunshots. We rushed over and could hear him shouting, "I'll get you!" and "You can't get away!" Then, another gun shot and... silence. So...

5. CONSTABLE DIXON: So... they broke down the door to find Lord Bensington dead--with a gun in his hand--but a bullet hole in his... foot!

1. RUFFLETHORPE: Yes, Constable, but how did his Lordship die? Was it from the gunshot to his foot?
2. CONSTABLE DIXON: Impossible, Inspector! The coroner's report states he died of suffocation. The gunshot was a flesh wound. It can't be suicide.
3. SGT. FRIMLY: So it must be murder! But where did the murderer go? No one came out the door!
4. RUFFLETHORPE: Yes, Frimly. The windows were locked from the inside. Are these walls solid? No secret doors?
5. SOUND: TAPPING ON WOODEN PANELS.
6. CONSTABLE DIXON: None, Inspector! We checked every inch of this room. The desk had been overturned, with his shoes and pocket-watch lying on the floor.
7. SGT. FRIMLY: It seems the murderer suddenly appeared in the room, killed him, and then... (GASPS) vanished?
8. CONSTABLE DIXON: Frankly, Inspector, I'm baffled. It's as if Lord Bensington were murdered by a ghost!
9. CHALMERS: Excuse me, Inspector. Elsie--the maid, thinks a... a curse caused Lord Bensington's death.
10. RUFFLETHORPE: What's that you say, Chalmers? A curse?

1. CHALMERS: His Lordship was on the board of the British Museum. Elsie thinks perhaps one of their Egyptian mummies might be involved, sir.
2. SGT. FRIMLY: So, our murderer is an Egyptian mummy who can walk through walls, suffocate armed men...
3. RUFFLETHORPE: ... and then disappear without a trace? Heavens no, Frimly! Constable, who was in the house at the time of the murder, last night?
4. CONSTABLE DIXON: I've detained them all for the investigation, Inspector; The widow--Lady Margaret Bensington; Her male secretary--Reginald Skelmsdale; Colonel Frothingham--a retired military man; Gretchen Laytherly--an actress; Her beau--Ralph Stellsmore; the Countess Valeska--a White-Russian mystic...
5. SGT. FRIMLY: A mystic?
6. CONSTABLE DIXON: A fortune teller and "psychic" medium; Then... Madam Hillswick--a society matron; and the family solicitor--Mr. Cedric Crumpton, esquire.
7. RUFFLETHORPE: Yes. Well, let's interview them all beginning at Noon, that's 10 minutes from now and...

# SCRIPT HAS BEEN TRUNCATED AT THIS POINT (several pages later...)

5. MISS LAYTHERLY: (DISTANT) Help! (SCREAMS) Ahhh! Ahhhh!
6. CHALMERS: It's coming from Lady Bensington's chambers!
7. SGT. FRIMLY: Hurry! Constable! Inspector!
8. SOUND: FOOTSTEPS RUNNING.
9. MUSIC: [A-3] COBRA ATTACK--STING.

SCENE TWO: INT. LADY MARGARET'S ROOM - SECONDS LATER  
(LAYTHERLY, CRUMPTON, FROTHINGHAM, LADY BENSINGTON, REGINALD,  
RUFFLETHORPE, ELSIE, DIXON, FRIMLY)

- 10\* SOUND: RATTLESNAKE--CONTINUE. FOOTSTEPS ARRIVE.
- 11\* MISS LAYTHERLY: [CUE] Help! Save me! Help! Th-the snake!
12. MR. CRUMPTON: Great Scot! It's a...a...cobra! Coiled in a  
dresser drawer! Ready to strike Gretchen!



1. FROTHINGHAM: Careful, Miss Laytherly. Don't move. Don't move! These cobras are extremely deadly.
2. LADY BENSINGTON: Reginald! Do something! Do something!
3. REGINALD: Here. Step aside. I'll shoot the serpent!
4. FROTHINGHAM: Steady....steady....
5. SOUND: GUNSHOT. LID SHUTS. RATTLE INSIDE BOX.
- 6\* MR. CRUMPTON: Did you see that, Colonel? Reginald shot the lid and trapped the snake in the drawer!
7. LADY BENSINGTON: Are you okay, my dear?
8. MISS LAYTHERLY: Oh, thank you, Lady Bensington. I-I'm sorry. I-I only came into your room to... Ohhh! (FAINTS)
9. SOUND: BODY DROPS TO GROUND.
- 10\* MR. CRUMPTON: Oh, she's fainted! The poor, lovely, thing.
11. FROTHINGHAM: Good shooting there, Reginald.
12. REGINALD: Yes, wasn't it? I'm quite a marksman.
13. RUFFLETHORPE: Luckily you had your pistol, Mr. Skelmsdale.
14. LADY BENSINGTON: Inspector Rufflethorpe! My secretary, Reginald, is carrying this gun for my protection.

1. REGINALD: Yes. After Lord Bensington's death, I thought a firearm would be a good precaution. And it was. Lady Bensington might have been killed!

## SCRIPT HAS BEEN TRUNCATED AT THIS POINT (several pages later...)

SCENE THREE: INT. - FORMAL DINING ROOM - NIGHT  
(VALESKA, LADY BENSINGTON, HILLSWICK, CRUMPTON, FROTHINGHAM,  
RUFFLETHORPE, LAYTHERLY, STELLSMORE, ELSIE)

7\* SOUND: DINNER DISHES --CONTINUE. WALLA--DINNER.

- 8\* COUNTESS VALESKA: ...you see, ghosts are not always frightening. Friendly spirits can help you, Lady Bensington.
1. LADY BENSINGTON: That's very kind, Countess. Something must explain my poor husband's horrible death.
2. MADAM HILLSWICK: Well, I can only be thankful that my husband has never even been to the British Museum.
3. MR. CRUMPTON: Poppycock, Madam Hillswick! My guess is that his Lordship was bitten by that Egyptian cobra, eh, Colonel?
4. FROTHINGHAM: No, no, no, Crumpton, old bean. It would take an hour to die from a cobra's bite. Archie died within ten minutes! Right, Inspector?
5. RUFFLETHORPE: Quite right, Colonel. If only I could question his Lordship himself about his attacker.

## SCRIPT HAS BEEN TRUNCATED AT THIS POINT (several pages later...)

1. MUSIC: [A-5] THE SEANCE--UP AND UNDER.
  
- 2\* COUNTESS VALESKA: I call upon the mystic spirits to speak to me.  
(PAUSE) I seek the soul of Lady Bensington's  
departed companion. (PAUSE) I... wait!
  
3. MISS LAYTHERLY: What?
  
4. COUNTESS VALESKA: I'm beginning to see... Oh, spirit. Please  
reveal yourself and... Wait! I--I--I see a  
round... tree. A round tree. But it is dead. A  
round tree--cut down, in the prime of life? I  
see a face, the face of a woman.... I...
  
5. LADY BENSINGTON: (SCREAMS) Ahhhhhhhh!
  
6. ELSIE: (SCREAMS IN REACTION) Ahhhhh!
  
7. SOUND: TEA TRAY CRASHES. BODY DROPS. WALLA--COMMOTION.
  
- 8\* MR. CRUMPTON: Lady Bensington! She's...
  
9. RUFFLETHORPE: Somebody get the lights!
  
10. MISS LAYTHERLY: Oh, no! How horrible!
  
11. ELSIE: Is she.... Is she... dead?

## SCRIPT HAS BEEN TRUNCATED AT THIS POINT (several pages later...)

2. MUSIC: [a-7] THE PASSAGEWAY--LET IT FADE ITSELF.

PRODUCTION NOTE:

Put the sound effects and dialogue through REVERBS.  
Frimly's narration remains dry, but his dialogue is wet.

SCENE FOUR: INT. UNDERGROUND PASSAGEWAY - MINUTES LATER  
(FRIMLY, RUFFLETHORPE)

3\* SOUND: [REVERB] FOOTSTEPS--UNDER.

4\* SGT. FRIMLY: [CUE] (NARRATING) The Inspector and I ventured down a stone staircase to a long, dark corridor. At the end, we found a door leading outside. However, there was no sign of the Countess Valeska.

5. RUFFLETHORPE: [REVERB] Well, Frimly. She could be anywhere on the grounds by now. If she's our murderer, the timing of her escape was somewhat odd. Shine your light down here, Frimly. Look. It's a small box. A mailing box. It's opened...

6. SGT. FRIMLY: Hmm, it's addressed to Reginald Skelmsdale-- postmarked last month. The return address is Red Back Acres, Yox-pock-petal, New South Wales, Australia. There's something inside...

1. SOUND: SHAKE ROACH BOX. BOX OPENING.
- 2\* SGT. FRIMLY: Goodness! Half a dozen dead cockroaches?
3. RUFFLETHORPE: It appears some are dried out--half...eaten.
4. SGT. FRIMLY: Half-eaten cockroaches from Australia? A rather unappetizing snack, I might say.
5. RUFFLETHORPE: (ELATED) By Jove, but they are, Frimly! Very tasty indeed! And Reginald Skelmsdale is the key to solving Lord Bensington's murder! We must find him at once! Hurry!
6. MUSIC: [A-8] THE GUN ROOM--(BRIDGE)--LET IT FADE.

SCENE FIVE: INT. THE GUN ROOM - MINUTES LATER  
(FRIMLY, STELLSMORE, RUFFLETHORPE, CRUMPTON)

- 7\* SGT. FRIMLY: [DRY] (NARRATING) We searched the entire house and eventually found Skelmsdale--in the gun room. But he wasn't available for questioning... or anything else, for that matter...
8. MR. STELLSMORE: Poisoned you say? Poisoned in the gun room?
9. RUFFLETHORPE: Yes, Mr. Stellsmore. I believe his fingerprints are on this glass of Scotch.
10. SOUND: RATTLING ICE IN A GLASS--UNDER.

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6. MUSIC: [A-10] THE SOLUTION-- (BRIDGE)

SCENE SIX: INT. THE STUDY - 30 MINUTES LATER  
(FRIMLY, LADY BENSINGTON, RUFFLETHORPE, FROTHINGHAM, DIXON  
CRUMPTON, CHALMERS, LAYTHERLY, HILLSWICK, STELLSMORE, ELSIE)

7\* SGT. FRIMLY: [CUE] (NARRATING) Constable Dixon returned just  
as we assembled everyone in the study. Lady  
Bensington seemed anxious to hear the  
Inspector's conclusions regarding the murders  
of Lord Bensington and Reginald Skelmsdale...

8. SOUND: WALLA--MUFFLED TALK-HUSHED. CLOCK TICKS IN B.G.

- 1\* LADY BENSINGTON: Friends, I am heart-sick over the loss of my husband and personal secretary. My only comfort is knowing that the good Inspector has brought this dreadful episode to a speedy conclusion.
2. RUFFLETHORPE: Thank you, Lady Bensington. With my investigation completed, I'll simply announce that the murderer is...
3. FROTHINGHAM: Wait, Inspector! We know all about Reginald Skelmsdale and Countess Valeska. Can you explain how Lord Bensington was murdered in this very room when it was locked and no one entered or left?
4. RUFFLETHORPE: Oh, that. Very well... (PAUSE) Last night, at the cocktail party...
5. SOUND: [REVERB] WALLA--COCKTAIL PARTY. GLASSES CLINK.
- 6\* RUFFLETHORPE: [CUE] It was about 9:40 when Lady Bensington bid farewell to his Lordship. He retired to his study and bolted the door securely--from the inside...
7. SOUND: [REVERB] DOOR CLOSES AND LOCKS. WALLA AND GLASS CLINKS--STOP.

- 1\* RUFFLETHORPE: He took off his shoes to relax. Ten minutes later, at 9:50, this grandfather clock, here, began to chime the hour...
2. SOUND: [REVERB] CLOCK CHIME (10X)--CONTINUE UNDER.
- 3\* SGT. FRIMLY: Ten minutes early!
4. RUFFLETHORPE: Yes! The murderer had set the clock ahead-- knowing his Lordship would naturally check the time against his own pocket-watch. He reached into his vest pocket and...
5. SOUND: MAN SCREAMS "YOW!"

## SCRIPT HAS BEEN TRUNCATED AT THIS POINT (several pages later...)

3. INSP. RUFFLETHORPE: The same jasmine perfume I smelled in the gun room--along with the scent of cyanide. You had to kill Skelmsdale--who staged the cobra attack and too-handy rescue--because he was your accomplice... in the murder of Lord Bensington!
4. MUSIC: [A-14] DEAD LORD BENSINGTON RIP CHORD.

- 5\* ALL: (GASP) (AD LIB) Lord Bensington! No! Egad!

## SCRIPT HAS BEEN TRUNCATED AT THIS POINT (several pages later...)

5. MUSIC: [A-16] RUFFLETHORPE CLOSING THEME--UP. CONTINUE UNDER.



6. ANNOUNCER: [CUE] We'll return again next week with another mysterious tale from the case-book of "Inspector Rufflethorpe." (PAUSE) Today's program was written and scored by Tony Palermo. ("paw-LAIR-mo").

7. MUSIC: CLOSING THEME--FADES.

[CREDIT SEQUENCE FOLLOWS ON NEXT PAGE]

1\* ANNOUNCER:

[CUE]Our program featured...

as Inspector Rufflethorpe, \_\_\_\_\_

as Sergeant Frimly, \_\_\_\_\_

as Lady Bensington, \_\_\_\_\_

as Constable Dixon, \_\_\_\_\_

as Countess Valeska, \_\_\_\_\_

as Cedric Crumpton, \_\_\_\_\_

as Gretchen Laytherly, \_\_\_\_\_

as Colonel Frothingham, \_\_\_\_\_

as Ralph Stellsmore, \_\_\_\_\_

as Chalmers, \_\_\_\_\_

as Reginald Skelmsdale, \_\_\_\_\_

as Madam Hillswick, \_\_\_\_\_

AND as Elsie, \_\_\_\_\_

Our sound effects artists were:

\_\_\_\_\_ ' \_\_\_\_\_ '

\_\_\_\_\_ ' \_\_\_\_\_ '

\_\_\_\_\_ ' \_\_\_\_\_ '

\_\_\_\_\_ ' \_\_\_\_\_ '

Our director was \_\_\_\_\_.

Engineering by \_\_\_\_\_. I'm \_\_\_\_\_,

(PAUSE) "Inspector Rufflethorpe" is a production of the

\_\_\_\_\_ Radio Network.

==THE END==

## Radio Skills School

### Microphone Technique:

- 1) Sensitive and dead areas. Don't touch!
- 2) Proximity effect. (Boomy if too close.)
- 3) Proper distance for radio acting.
- 4) Dynamics and distance. (Back off to yell.)
- 5) Off mic use for distant sounds. Asides.
- 6) Popping "P"s and S-S-S-Sibilance.
- 7) Mic safety. (hitting, blowing, dropping)
- 8) Assume every mic is always ON.
- 9) Quiet script page turning.

### Radio Acting:

- 1) Quiet in the studio.
- 2) Don't cough, laugh, or talk during production.
- 3) Watch the director. Wait for your cue. (Q)
- 4) Speed equals excitement. Don't bore audience.
- 5) Jump in if there's dead air.
- 6) Wait for director's signal at end of show.

### Radio Direction "Sign Language"

- 1) "Wait." Open hand.
- 2) "5-4-3---" Finger count down.
- 3) "You're on." Pointing finger.
- 4) "Wrap it up." Finger draws circles.
- 5) "Stretch it out." Pulling taffy.
- 6) "Louder." Pull ear.
- 7) "Quieter." Finger to lip (Shhhh-style)
- 8) "Cut." Finger slits throat.
- 9) "Come in" or "Back off" microphone.

## Writer/Director's notes for "The Twitshyre Murder Case"

# Inspector Rufflethorpe

## The Twitshyre Murder Case

A radio drama written & scored by [Tony Palermo](#)

*Inspector Rufflethorpe* is a 1938-style mystery drama similar to *The Adventures of Sherlock Holmes*. This program is a classic British detective story, the type set in an English manor--with a fresh corpse and long list of eccentric suspects. In this episode, "The Twitshyre Murder Case," Inspector Rufflethorpe of Scotland Yard, and his assistant, Sgt. Frimly are called to a country manor in Margate to investigate the mysterious death of Lord Archibald Farquhar-Bensington. There's a ghostly séance, a series of baffling murders, and a monument to deductive logic when the culprit is finally unmasked.

This style of "whodunit" mystery was very popular from 1910 to 1940, when the American "hardboiled" detective story supplanted it in print, film, and on radio. While Agatha Christie's novels continue to be popular today, these drawing room murder-mysteries have largely disappeared. *Inspector Rufflethorpe* affectionately revels in the clichés of the genre—without resorting to parody. My scripts never make fun of the programs of the past and *Inspector Rufflethorpe* is no exception, however preposterous its plot twists may be.

A sub-genre of the "Golden Age" detective story was the puzzling "locked-room murder"—where the victim is in a locked room. A murder--most foul--is committed, and yet, when the room is opened, the murderer is gone! Novelist and radio dramatist, John Dickson Carr specialized in this style and I've created a doozy of a plot for "The Twitshyre Murder Case." In classic radio fashion, we first learn of the crime and later re-enact it--with appropriate sound effects--as the amazing solution is revealed.

At Twitshyre Manor, Detective-Inspector Rufflethorpe encounters a variety of colorful suspects. The names of the characters give a special flavor to this style of mystery; Lady Margaret Farquhar-Bensington, Colonel Cuthbert T. Frothingham, the mysterious Countess Valeska, Gretchen Laytherly--a West End ingénue, her beau, Ralph Stellsmore; the rakish personal secretary, Reginald Skelmsdale, and the family solicitor, Cedric Crumpton, Esq. In radio drama, you must sketch characters quickly, and name and manner of speech are the only tools available. With a properly descriptive name, listeners can easily imagine the characters--costume and all.

I was inspired to create *Inspector Rufflethorpe* after reading hardboiled author, Raymond Chandler's famous 1948 essay, "The Simple Art of Murder," where he gleefully gores the carcass of English drawing room murder mysteries. Chandler wrote snidely of British crime novels with titles like, "The Triple Petunia Murder Case" and "Death Wears Yellow Garters."

I decided to add a Golden Age genre piece into Part One of my own hardboiled [Rick Lowell – Private Eye](#) series, "The Stuff That Dreams are Made Of." For *Rick Lowell*, I created a scene on a Hollywood movie set for an "Inspector Rufflethorpe" Golden Age-style film and then used it to dovetail Los Angeles' WW II anti-Japanese paranoia into a ridiculous "least likely suspect" trick where the script has been re-written to make the *Japanese gardener* (on an *English Estate*??!) the murderer.

This element was both funny and a meta-detective genre slap, because later in the *Rick Lowell* series, the cynical, 1940s tough guy detective winds up resorting to such Golden Age clichés as using clues involving ashes and a banded Egyptian cobra to solve his own hardboiled mystery. The brief *Inspector Rufflethorpe*

scene was so much fun, I expanded it into a full length program of its own—but with the parody elements removed. This show is entirely an homage to Golden Age British mysteries.

Please note that in this show, I deliberately violated one of the rules of clarity for radio drama; I used more than 4-5 characters in a single scene--the explanation of the murder. In fact, I have 11 characters in that scene.

Normally, you can't have more than 5 characters in a radio scene because it becomes difficult for the audience to keep the identities straight. "Who's talking?"

Even "tagging" the dialogue a la, "Don't you think so, Colonel Frothingham?" won't help once you have more than seven characters on mic at one time.

However, in this play, I felt the thread of the murder plot was so compelling that I could "hand off" the dialogue between the eleven characters as they all proposed possible solutions to the mystery. It didn't matter who was speaking, because the listener would be busy following the trail of the crime.

My goal here was to spread the dialogue--and especially this genre's often lengthy solution of the mystery--around to as many characters as possible. I sought to give many actors a chance to shine.

In most whodunit novels, the detective will go on for pages and pages as the final explanation of the crime is laid out. I wanted to avoid the monotony of a single character speaking for 4 minutes straight. I also wanted to use sound effects to accompany the multiple-narrators as they reconstructed the crime.

The convoluted logic of these impossible crimes presents quite a challenge to the radio dramatist. Rendering such tricky goings-on with clarity is much easier in film than purely through sound. However, when presented with clarity, the abstractions of the crime can be very rewarding to the listener who commits to following along.

Tony Palermo

**CASTING EVALUATION:**

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

"The Twitshyre Murder Case" [14 or 11, plus 4 SFX]

_____	<b>INSPECTOR RUFFLETHORPE</b>	British detective
_____	<b>EVERETT FRIMLY</b>	Detective-sergeant
_____	<b>LADY MARGARET BENSINGTON</b>	Upper class British widow
_____	<b>CONSTABLE DIXON</b>	Police officer
_____	<b>-also- COUNTESS VALESKA</b>	White-Russian mystic
_____	<b>CEDRIC CRUMPTON, ESQ.</b>	Stuffy lawyer
_____	<b>GRETCHEN LAYTHERLY</b>	West End actress (ingénue)
_____	<b>COLONEL FROTHINGHAM</b>	Retired military man
_____	<b>RALPH STELLSMORE</b>	Rakish young scion
_____	<b>-also- ANNOUNCER</b>	The announcer
_____	<b>CHALMERS</b>	Butler
_____	<b>-also- REGINALD</b>	Personal secretary
_____	<b>MADAM HILLSWICK</b>	Society matron
_____	<b>ELSIE</b>	Maid

=====

Audition ratings: A through F

Actor Name	Bold	Emotion	Accents	Who	X	

**CASTING MONOLOGUES: "The Twitshyre Murder Case"**

Everyone participating in our radio workshop is asked to read some lines aloud in front of a microphone. The casting director will cast the roles in our production based upon these "lukewarm readings." Please take a moment to read the lines below several times, both silently and aloud. These monologues provide a bit of a "back story" giving an idea of who the characters are. Since radio actors often play several parts, we encourage the use of different voices or accents for the different roles.

**ANNOUNCER:** I'm the announcer. I introduce our 1938-style radio program about Scotland Yard's finest detective, "Inspector Rufflethorpe." We follow the brilliant detective-inspector as he untangles another case of murder, mystery and mayhem. Today's exciting drama is called, "The Twitshyre Murder Case."

**SGT. FRIMLY:** Hullo. I'm Detective-Sergeant Everett Frimly, Inspector Rufflethorpe's right-hand man. Scotland Yard assigned us to look into the mysterious death of Lord Archibald Farquhar-Bensington, at Twitshyre Estate.

**INSP. RUFFLETHORPE:** Inspector Ambrose Rufflethorpe, here. In this case, the victim was in a locked room. A murder was committed, and yet, when the room was opened, the murderer was gone! I was certainly baffled for a time--before my superior deductive reasoning triumphed in the end.

**LADY BENSINGTON:** How do you do. I am Lady Margaret Bensington. I am heart-sick over the death of my dear husband. My only comfort is knowing that the good Inspector will bring this dreadful episode to a swift and just conclusion.

**COUNTESS VALESKA:** I am Countess Irina Valeska—a White-Russian noble, experienced in the mystic arts of fortune telling and seances. I will attempt to contact the souls of the dead to help solve this puzzling murder mystery.

**COL. FROTHINGHAM:** What, ho! I'm Colonel C.T. Frothingham--retired military man and long-time friend of Lord Bensington. I was stationed in Egypt during the 1920s and my experiences may prove useful to the Inspector's investigation. You see, I know all about mummies, curses, cobras and such.



**SOUND EFFECT ROLES: "The Twitshyre Murder Case"**

NOTE: For info on how to obtain/create sound effects, see:  
[http://ruyasonic.com/rdr\\_sfx.htm](http://ruyasonic.com/rdr_sfx.htm)

**SOUND EFFECT ARTIST #1:**

CLOCK TICKING IN BACKGROUND  
DRESSER LID SHUTS  
DINNER BELL  
WIND  
SLIDING STONES  
SHAKE A ROACH BOX  
BOX OPENING

**SOUND EFFECT ARTIST #2:**

TAPPING ON WOODEN PANELS  
RATTLESNAKE (IN/OUT OF BOX)  
LIGHT SWITCH CLICK  
THUNDER-CRASH  
TEA TRAY CRASHES  
CREAKING DOOR, DOOR CLOSES, DOOR LOCKS  
ICE RATTLING IN A GLASS

**SOUND EFFECT ARTIST #3:**

CLOCK CHIMES (12X) (10X)  
GUNSHOTS  
DINNER DISHES  
GLASSES CLINK  
RUMBLE (THUNDER)  
CRACKLING FIRE

**SOUND EFFECT ARTIST #4:**

FOOTSTEPS -- RUNNING, ARRIVING, LEAVING  
BODY DROPS TO FLOOR  
POKER TAPS BRICK, POKER TAPS HOLLOW AREA  
MAN SCREAMS "YOW!"

**WALLA WALLA ARTISTS:**

"LUNCHEON?" "I'M FAMISHED" "AFTER YOU."  
DINNER  
COMMOTION  
GASPS  
MUFFLED TALK-HUSHED  
COCKTAIL PARTY

**SOUND EFFECT HOW TO: "The Twitshyre Murder Case"**

NOTE: For info on how to obtain/create sound effects, see:  
[http://ruyasonic.com/rdr\\_sfx.htm](http://ruyasonic.com/rdr_sfx.htm)

**CLOCK TICKING IN BACKGROUND:**

Ticking timer SFX device.

**DRESSER LID SHUTS:**

Slam wood on table.

**DINNER BELL:**

Tinkle a tiny bell. "Ding a ling"

**WIND:**

Crank wind machine SFX device. (Slowly)

**SLIDING STONES:**

Scrap two sharpening stones together slowly.

**SHAKE A ROACH BOX:**

Shake a rattle

**BOX OPENING:**

Ruffle a plastic bag.

**TAPPING ON WOODEN PANELS:**

Tap a stick on a wooden box.

**RATTLESNAKE (IN/OUT OF BOX):**

Shake egg shakers quickly.

**LIGHT SWITCH CLICK:**

Click electric switch loudly.

**THUNDER-CRASH:**

Shake crash box SFX device. "Ba-BOOM."

**TEA TRAY CRASHES:**

Drop some silverware on a metal tray.

**CREAKING DOOR, DOOR CLOSES, DOOR LOCKS:**

Slowly open door SFX device and rattle the handle.

**ICE RATTLING IN A GLASS:**

Rattle AA batteries in tumbler.

**CLOCK CHIMES (12X) (10X):**

Rink clock chime SFX device.

**GUNSHOTS:**

Snap clipboard or rap a leather cushion with a drum stick.

**DINNER DISHES:**

Rattle some dishes and silverware together--occasionally.

**GLASSES CLINK:**

Clink some glasses together--occasionally.

**RUMBLE (THUNDER):**

Shake plexiglas sheet like thunder--occasionally.

**CRACKLING FIRE:**

Crinkle plastic bag

**FOOTSTEPS -- RUNNING, ARRIVING, LEAVING:**

Run and walk on wooden walkboard.

**BODY DROPS TO FLOOR:**

Drop two plastic clubs onto wooden walkboard. "Ba-DUMP"

**POKER TAPS BRICK, POKER TAPS HOLLOW AREA:**

Tap a stick on walkboard / tap a stick on wooden box.

**MAN SCREAMS "YOW!":**

Scream--as in "Yow! An ugly spider!"

**WALLA WALLA:**

"LUNCHEON?" "I'M FAMISHED" "AFTER YOU."

DINNER: "Delicious." "I say..." "Pass the carrots, please."

COMMOTION: "She's out cold." "Oh, my!" "Was it a ghost?"

GASPS: "Oh my!" "My word!" "What?"

MUFFLED TALK-HUSHED: "I knew it." "She seemed so charming..."

COCKTAIL PARTY: "And then I said..." "Lord Archibald."

**ENGINEER'S NOTES: "The Twitshyre Murder Case"****EQUIPMENT REQUIREMENT:**

This show requires the use of two reverbs to simulate an underground passageway. One reverb will be used for dialogue, the other for sound effects. Be prepared to vary the amount of reverb (Wet/Dry) as the director signals for it.

**MUSIC CUES:**

This program uses beds, bridges and rip-chords. Several rip-chord come quickly on the heels of one another--having two CD players would be good, but one will do--let the chord finish and then quickly advance to the next cue quickly and trigger the cue. If you have two CD players, just alternate between with odd-numbered tracks on CD player #1 and even-numbered tracks on CD player #2.

- 1) Inspector Rufflethorpe Theme [BED] (0:27)
- 2) Twitshyre Intro [BED] (0:32)
- 3) Cobra Attack [BED] (0:33)
- 4) Interviews [BRIDGE] (0:08)
- 5) The Séance [BED] (0:05)
- 6) The Escape [RIP-CHORD] (0:06)
- 7) The Passageway [BRIDGE] (0:08)
- 8) The Gun Room [BRIDGE] (0:09)
- 9) Murdered [RIP-CHORD] (0:05)
- 10) The Solution [BRIDGE] (0:12)
- 11) Dead Countess [RIP-CHORD] (0:05)
- 12) Dead Mrs. Rowntree [RIP-CHORD] (0:05)
- 13) Dead Skelmsdale [RIP-CHORD] (0:05)
- 14) Dead Lord Bensington [RIP-CHORD] (0:05)
- 15) Wrap Up [BRIDGE] (0:10)
- 16) Rufflethorpe Closer [BED] (0:27)

Original score composed by Anthony E. Palermo

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