

Simply to Die For

Roving Rogue Productions

2021

By CJ Corl

CAST

Narrator	Announcer and narrator who sets the stage for the project
Sonia “Sonny” Day	Granddaughter of May Day and heir to the Day Gang
May Day	Matriarch and leader of the Day Gang, having taken over when her husband died
Tom Collins	Brewer and smuggler for the Day Gang
Millie Graham	Maid for May Day
Lew Scannon	Leader of the West Side Gang
Rick O’Shae	Enforcer and “muscle” along with Lew’s second in command
Robin Hyde	Bookkeeper for the West Side Gang
Vera Piercing	Lew’s on/off girlfriend and silent film star with an obnoxious voice
Belle Tone	Local Jazz singer who’s been hired to sing at the party
Skip Dover	Belle’s pianist and manager, along with the owner of the club she sings at
Eddie Bull	Local Politician who’s trying to campaign all the time
Theresa “Terry” Bull	Eddie’s wife who’s increasingly unhappy with her marriage
Noah Goodman	Owner of the local telephone company along with his sister, Anita
Mary Goodman	Wife of Noah Goodman, from old-money who doesn’t have money anymore
Anita Goodman	Sister to Noah and technically co-owner of the phone company
Dr. Jameson	Doctor who’s struggling and invited in hopes of getting more into smuggling

EPISODE SEVEN:

Scene One:

NARRATOR

So... we’ve got four dead and three attacked. Our lovely Millie just discovered the very dead body of Tom Collins downstairs in the wine cellar. We can’t say that he didn’t go out with his favorite thing. His head and shoulders are down in a keg of beer, and the liquid is spilled all around him as if there’d been a struggle at some point. His hands are limp at his sides, and if he hadn’t been stuffed in the keg, he’d probably have fallen out by now.

RICK

Aye, definitely dead.

LEW

Hell of a way to go.

RICK

Coulda been worse.

LEW

Coulda been better.

-both snicker-

MAY

Will you two stop? A man is dead.

LEW

Four people are dead, by my count. Come on, Rick, let's pull him out. Maybe we'll get an idea of what happened. Besides the obvious.

NARRATOR

The two men heave the body up and out of the keg, putting him down against the wall. Rick steps back before Lew kneels closer to the body, looking him over. There's a little foam at Collin's mouth, eyes swollen shut, and some faint bruising where his neck and shoulders meet, as if being held with considerable force.

RICK

Definitely looks like he was sampling his goods a little too much.

LEW

And couldn't get himself back out.

MAY

You're both so callus.

LEW

Apologies, Mrs. Day. Would you rather I say that it looks like he was killed by being forced into his own beer? And stand around trying to figure out what we can do for him?

MAY

There's nothing we can do for him now. I suppose we just leave him here.

NARRATOR

Harsh...

EDDIE

Seems like the best choice, old girl. Let's go raise a glass to your man. He was a good brewer.

MAY

That he was.

LEW

One of the few things we can agree on, Day.

NARRATOR

The four start back up again, Rick pausing to grab some more bottles of gin and whiskey to take up with them.
Lew spies him and the two share a grin as they continue upstairs.

EDDIE

It has to be a man. No woman could have held a man down of that size to drown him.

LEW

You obviously don't know women.

EDDIE

I've had more than you have.

LEW

I'm sure you have. The difference is, I have a few good ones who keep coming back. I'm sure you don't know what that's like, to have women clamoring to come back to your bed.

EDDIE

-growls-

Listen here you-

MAY

Stop. I won't have everyone bickering over something as foolish as who is best in bed.

LEW

Cause we all know he'd lose.

EDDIE

Bah!

MAY

Mr. Mayor, come, let's fetch a drink.

(MAY AND EDDIE LEAVE)

RICK

I could hear that down the hall.

LEW

I'm not wrong.

RICK

That man couldn't provide pleasure to the easiest girl in town.

-Rick and Lew snicker as they walk back into the parlor-

(JOIN THE MAIN GROUP AGAIN)

ROBIN

Is it true? He's dead?

RICK

Afraid so, love.

VERA

Oh, Lew-ie! What are we going to do?

SONNY

Yeah, Lew-ie. What are we going to do?

LEW

I suspect what we've been doing. Unless someone wants to admit that they're the killer.

MAY

I think we all know who the killer is.

LEW

Oh? Then, please, enlighten us, Day.

MAY

You're the only one here who has any motivation to kill.

LEW

Gonna try and pick a fight with me now, Day? You know you won't win.

MAY

Sounds like you're forgetting your place, boy. Why don't you just admit it? You're the one killing people. You've been out to ruin me since you started.

LEW

I'll gladly admit that I want to see you gone. But I'm not the one killing people.

MAY

Then why are you here?

LEW

Because you invited us. And I wanted to see what was such a big deal about these shindigs you throw every year. Trust me, if I was trying to take you out, you'd know it. I wouldn't be playing games with your underlings.

MAY

Of course, you would. You'd love to see my entire system go up in flames. You and your goon there are the only ones here who'd be able to get away with this.

LEW

I'm awfully honored that you think O'Shae and I are capable of causing all this trouble, but I can't take credit for this. And you know it. Sure you're not using this as a way to clean house and get rid of your competition? All the while making yourself look like the poor victim?

MAY

Why you-

RICK

I really wouldn't take another step forward if I were you, Mrs. Day.

NARRATOR

Rick has a hand resting at his hip.

You think he's got a reason why he does that? Like, all the time? Does he have something in his pocket?

MAY

What? Am I next on your list?

RICK

You're always first on my list.

SONNY

Wait! Stop!

NARRATOR

Sonny moves between her grandmother and the West Siders.

SONNY

What is this really going to solve?

MAY

It means we can just hand him over to the police when they can get here. I could lock him up downstairs.

SONNY

I can get the handcuffs.

LEW

Wait, what?

NARRATOR

Oh-ho-ho...

VERA

-yell of indignation-

Don't you dare touch my Lew-ie-kins!

EDDIE

But we know who the killer is!

NOAH

No. We don't.

NARRATOR

Noah speaks up from where he is in the corner of the room. He stands up slowly, shoulders still slumped forward as he moves closer.

NOAH

We don't know who's doing this. Yes, it might make sense for Lew to kill two of your men, Mrs. Day. But Lew has no motive to kill my sister. Or Mrs. Bull. Am I right, Mayor?

EDDIE

Uhh... well... yes. I suppose you're right.

NOAH

Besides, Lew was with Skip and me when we were attacked, all three of us. Why would he attack himself? Maybe I'm wrong, but we don't have enough information to accuse anyone definitively.

Why don't we all spread out and give everyone some space?

SONNY

That sounds like an excellent idea.

RICK

Right, we'll be over here. Out of your way.

Scene Two:

NARRATOR

The guests all separate, leaving in their little cliques and settling around the first floor of the house. The door leading to the music room where Anita was killed is now closed. Everyone's a bit too nervous to touch her.

Cause, ya know, she might still be electrified or something.

May and Sonny are sitting close together, the younger Day trying to calm the elder.

SONNY

Grandmother, everything will be fine. But we can't go around accusing people of murder.

MAY

What? You think he didn't do it?

SONNY

I think we don't have enough information yet.

MAY

He's our biggest rival! What more do you need?

SONNY

Grandmother-

MAY

Girl! What are you still doing up here?

MILLIE

I'm sorry, ma'am. I was just...

NARRATOR

Poor Millie is just trying to find a quiet spot in the corner to get over her shock at finding her co-worker dead. Is that too much to ask for?

MAY

Just what? Lazing about? Like you don't have things to do.

MILLIE

I-

MAY

I want food and drink up here, for everyone.

MILLIE

But-

MAY

But what?

MILLIE

Ummm... I'm afraid we don't have any more appetizers, ma'am.

MAY

No more? Why not?

MILLIE

Some were ruined, burned in the ruckus. And Cook didn't leave anything else.

MAY

My god, do I have to do everything myself? Go down and make something.

MILLIE

But-

MAY

Go!

MILLIE

Yes, ma'am.

NARRATOR

Millie rushes downstairs again, avoiding her employer as she goes. Probably scared of what she'd do.

I'd be scared of Mrs. Day if it was me. Especially when people keep ending up dead.

MAY

Good. I'm going to go check with some of our other guests.

SONNY

Do you need any help?

MAY

Yes, I'll start at the front of the house. You start at the back.

SONNY

Yes, Grandmother.

NARRATOR

May hurries back upstairs to her guests. Her granddaughter goes to follow her but is stopped.

EDDIE

Miss Day, may I have a word before you go back to your guests?

SONNY

Of course, Mr. Mayor. What can I do for you?

EDDIE

I wanted to speak with you about Mrs. Goodman-

SONNY

Mr. Mayor, is this about Mr. Goodman? I think the discussion has finished.

EDDIE

Yes, yes, I know. I am not saying anything-

SONNY

But you are.

EDDIE

I'm not saying anything publicly. Just, hear me out?

SONNY

... Go on.

EDDIE

I don't think it's fair for Mrs. Goodman. This whole thing. Her husband is cheating on her.

SONNY

You cheated on your wife.

EDDIE

With women!

SONNY

What's the difference? It's still an affair.

EDDIE

Maybe so. But Terry and I both knew we had a bad marriage. Mary has the right to know her husband is wandering away from her.

SONNY

Would you say the same thing if he was stepping out with a woman instead? With Belle?

EDDIE

Will you stop asking such questions, girl? I just think Mary deserves to know.

SONNY

And you made a deal with Miss Tone to not say anything.

EDDIE

I said I wouldn't say something, you're right. But Miss Day, can you honestly say that you wouldn't want to know if the roles were reversed? What if it was your sweetheart-

SONNY

I don't have a sweetheart.

EDDIE

But if you did. Wouldn't you want to know?

SONNY

I would. But that's not the question.

EDDIE

But it is. Why wouldn't you want Mary to know?

SONNY

It's not my place to say anything. It would be different if Mary and I were friends. But I don't know her that well. And I'm assuming you don't either.

EDDIE

Oh, bully, what does that matter?

SONNY

It matters a great deal more than you think it does. Now, I'm going to suggest you come with me back to the gathering and leave Mrs. Goodman alone.

EDDIE

But-

SONNY

No 'buts,' Mr. Mayor. Or do you forget who my grandmother is?

EDDIE

What? You need to call her to help you?

SONNY

No, but think about her and remember that she's the one who raised me. I can be just as ruthless, if not more so. Now, why don't you be a good sport and come with me to join the others?

EDDIE

-sighs-

SONNY

Please, I'd be happy to have your company.

EDDIE

Yes, yes. Fine.

Scene Three:

NARRATOR

Ooo, girl! I wouldn't want to go up against her.

In the parlor, the West Siders all sit together. Robin and Rick are close, with Robin perching on the arm of Rick's chair. Vera is sprawled out on one of the sofa's, practically in Lew's lap. She squishes his cheeks together between her hands.

VERA

I just don't understand why anyone would think my Lew-ie-kins could be a killer!

ROBIN

Ignoring the fact that he's the leader of a ruthless gang.

VERA

I mean, he's just so sweet!

LEW

Alright, Vera, stop. I can't feel my cheeks.

Look, it's not a problem. I would be suspicious if Day didn't suspect me.

VERA

But she should be kinder!

RICK

Why would she be kinder to us? Don't be daft.

VERA

I am not daft! Lew-ie! Are you going to let him speak to me like that?

LEW

I'd much rather you both shut your mouths so I can think.

ROBIN

... You think you know who it is?

LEW

I'm not sure. It still feels like I saw something out at the tree. Like it somehow fell on purpose. To trap us all here. Either way, I know it's not any of us.

VERA

Well, no one here has a vendetta against me.

RICK

That doesn't mean the rest of us are safe while we're here.

LEW

If anyone hears anything, tell me. I want to know what we're up against.

VERA

Oh, Lew-ie-kins! Don't put yourself in danger!

RICK

We're already in danger, ya daft gowl.

VERA

Lew-ie!

ROBIN

Oh shut it, ya dumb dora. I'm going out to get some fresh air.

RICK

I think I'll join you, lass. I can only handle that voice for so long.

VERA

Lew-ie!

LEW

Just let them go. Be careful you two.

ROBIN

We'll be outside.

NARRATOR

Wait... wait... wait! Take me with you!

VERA

Good, now it's just the two of us.

LEW

Oh, joy.

VERA

I'm so glad you're okay. I don't understand why anyone would think you could be the killer. You're such a sweet man. I mean, who could say no to this face.

LEW

Vera, please. Not here.

VERA

I just like to make sure everyone knows that I'm your girl.

LEW

I know-

VERA

Besides, I've gotta make sure those other girls don't think that they ever have a chance with you.

LEW

I'm sure-

VERA

I mean, have you seen that Belle? I bet she thinks she's so wonderful because she's a canary.

LEW

Vera-

VERA

I mean, anyone can sing. It's not like it's that hard. I'm a fabulous singer, but you don't see me parading around like I own the place just because I sing at a nightclub.

LEW

I-

VERA

I've been in films. I've done much more than she has. But you don't see me trying to take all the attention and put it on me.

LEW

Belle don't seem like she's doing that.

VERA

I could if I really wanted to. Really, without all these murders, I'd be the one everyone would be paying attention to, not all these other things.

LEW

Vera, please...

VERA

Oh! Of course! You're so tired and tense. Why don't I rub your shoulders? Oh! Or I could sing for you?

LEW

Oh, I don't-

VERA

That would show that Belle Tone.

LEW

You don't have to-

VERA

-badly sings a few bars of a 1920s song-

LEW

Vera, babe, stop.

-covers Vera's mouth-

I appreciate the thought, but I don't think I can handle all this right now.

VERA

What do you want me to do?

LEW

Why don't you just sit here with me?

VERA

But-

LEW

We could get a few drinks and relax a bit.

VERA

I-

LEW

And you can tell me everything we're going to do when we get back to your place.

VERA

Oh

-giggles-

Scene Four:

NARRATOR

Nope. Not sticking around for that.

Uhhh... let's see. Is there anyone else we can go listen to so I don't have to listen to Vera's dirty talk.

(TWO GUNSHOTS)

That sounds promising.

MARY

-screams-

NARRATOR

And sounds like it's upstairs.

NOAH

Mary!?

(GROUP RUSHES UPSTAIRS)

MARY

It's... It's...

NARRATOR

On the landing at the top of the stairs, not far from the room Mary had been staying in, is Mayor Bull, a hole in his chest. And another to his head.

Yeah, he's most definitely dead.

MARY

Oh, Noah! It's so awful!

SONNY

What's going on- Oh my god.

MAY

The Mayor...

LEW

-whistles-

Yeah, that's uh... yeah.

MAY

The Mayor died in my house.

RICK

Sickner fer ya.

NARRATOR

What does that even mean, Rick?

NOAH

We can't... what happened? Mary?

MARY

I don't know. The gunshot woke me and I came out and he... he was like this.

VERA

Well, Lew-ie didn't do this! He was with me!

MAY

Well someone has to have done this. Mayors don't just shoot themselves.

NARRATOR

Especially not in the chest and then the head. That seems like too much to do for a dying person.

MAY

Sonia!

SONNY

Grandmother?

MAY

Mayor Bull wanted to speak with you about something when I was leaving. What was it?

SONNY

Oh... uh... nothing really. He just had a few questions.

MAY

About?

SONNY

Oh, about where we'd placed Terry. He wanted to make sure he knew where she was when the police came.

MAY

Oh, I see. That's, unusually kind of him.

SONNY

He wanted to make sure nothing looked bad to the public.

BELLE

That sounds more like him.

NOAH

So what do we do with him?

MARY

I don't know if I can continue looking at him.

SONNY

Let's go downstairs and decide.

MARY

Wait, what if the killer is still here?

SONNY

We'll get everyone in the same place. Then we'll know they can't do anything.

MARY

So you want us all in the same room with someone who's killed five people?

SONNY

It's better than everyone on their own and easier to pick off one by one.

NOAH

Don't worry, Mary. You're with me. I'll keep you safe, I promise.

NARRATOR

After a little bit of coaxing, everyone is now downstairs in the parlor.

MAY

We'll have to do something with the body. We can't just leave him there.

SONNY

Let's put him with his wife and Dr. Jameson. Once everyone is calmed down.

MAY

... You're getting better at this.

SONNY

This?

MAY

Being in charge. You're making decisions and decisive ones. You're stepping up.

SONNY

Thank you, grandmother, that... that means a lot.

MAY

Now, let's take care of our guests.

NOAH

There has to be a solution. It has to make sense somewhere. Something politically motivated?

ROBIN

Killing the Mayor wouldn't change anything politically. Killing his wife might, but not him.

SKIP

Who was the last one to see the Mayor?

RICK

Day said it was her granddaughter who saw him last.

NARRATOR

Uh oh...

Everyone immediately looks over at Sonny, who stops short.

SONNY

He was with Grandmother and me. But we came back with everyone and then parted. I don't know where he went.

BELLE

And where did you go?

SONNY

To the powder room, if you must know.

BELLE

So no one was with you. And no one can prove that's where you were.

SONNY

I walked up the stairs with all of you. If I'd killed him, I would have already been upstairs.

SKIP

She has a point, Belle.

BELLE

Mmm-hmmm...

SONNY

I seem to remember you threatening him.

MAY

What? Threatening my guests?

BELLE

It's not a threat if he couldn't keep his hands off me or my girls. It was a warning of what I could do if he tried to mess with anyone I care about.

MAY

So you killed him?

BELLE

Heavens no. Why would I do that? We'd come to an... agreement.

MAY

A likely story.

MARY

Wait, the Mayor was shot. So, obviously, whoever has a gun killed him.

LEW

Hate to break it to you, Mrs. But you're at a party with a bunch of gangsters. Pretty sure we all have guns.

SONNY

That's awfully presumptuous of you.

LEW

I'll show you mine if you show me yours, Sunshine.

SONNY

Ugh...

NARRATOR

Sonny pulls out a small pistol as Lew reveals a handgun, both showing them to each other, and that the chambers are completely full.

LEW

Alright, everyone out.

MARY

You can't mean.

NARRATOR

Slowly, each guest offers up a gun. May reveals an elegant and meticulously clean handgun. Robin and Rick have matching handguns. Rick wears his at his waist under his coat... so that explains why his hand is always there! Skip has a dark revolver tucked into a pocket of his jacket. Vera pops open her clutch, showing a tiny, rather opulent pistol. Belle hitches back her skirt, revealing a delicate pistol strapped to her thigh. Even Noah sighs, pulling out a simple revolver from under his coat.

So... that helps narrow it down.