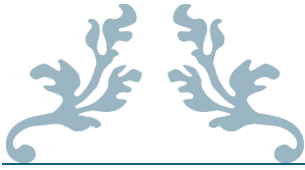


Dead in the Water

A Book-Play-Game Murder Mystery



Frank A. Lancione



DEAD IN THE WATER

A Sunset Years Book-Play-Game Murder Mystery



FRANK A. LANCIONE



Robin (Fish) Logan as an Adult
FOREWARD

The *Big Beautiful Babes Water Aerobics and Social Club* ladies swooned when young, handsome Robin Logan began 'servicing their pools.' Someone's killed him. Inspector Lance has to find out who.

Is This a Book? A Play? A Game Or All Three?

What if your favorite murder mystery book was also a play you could stage at home to entertain your friends? What if you could take that idea further and turn it into a game where participants competed to discover who the murderer was and how the crime was committed? Now you can!

"Dead in the Water" is a murder mystery play approach that we have used to entertain hundreds of residents in the real-life senior retirement community that our fictional Sunset Years retirement community is modeled after.

A surprising amount of hanky-panky, rivalries, personality quirks, and interpersonal conflicts make role-playing these characters challenging and fun, whether you're 16, 60, or beyond.

If you'd like to experience this story conventionally as a book, turn to the Introduction. Start there and read to the end.

If you'd like to experience this story as a play or game, read Appendix 1. This guide will explain how to use the tools in this package to advance the story and engage your actors and audience in a compelling four-act play format, and compete to discover the killer.

So, what are you waiting for? Robin Logan has been murdered. One of these characters is the killer. It's up to you—or maybe you and your friends—to find out who!

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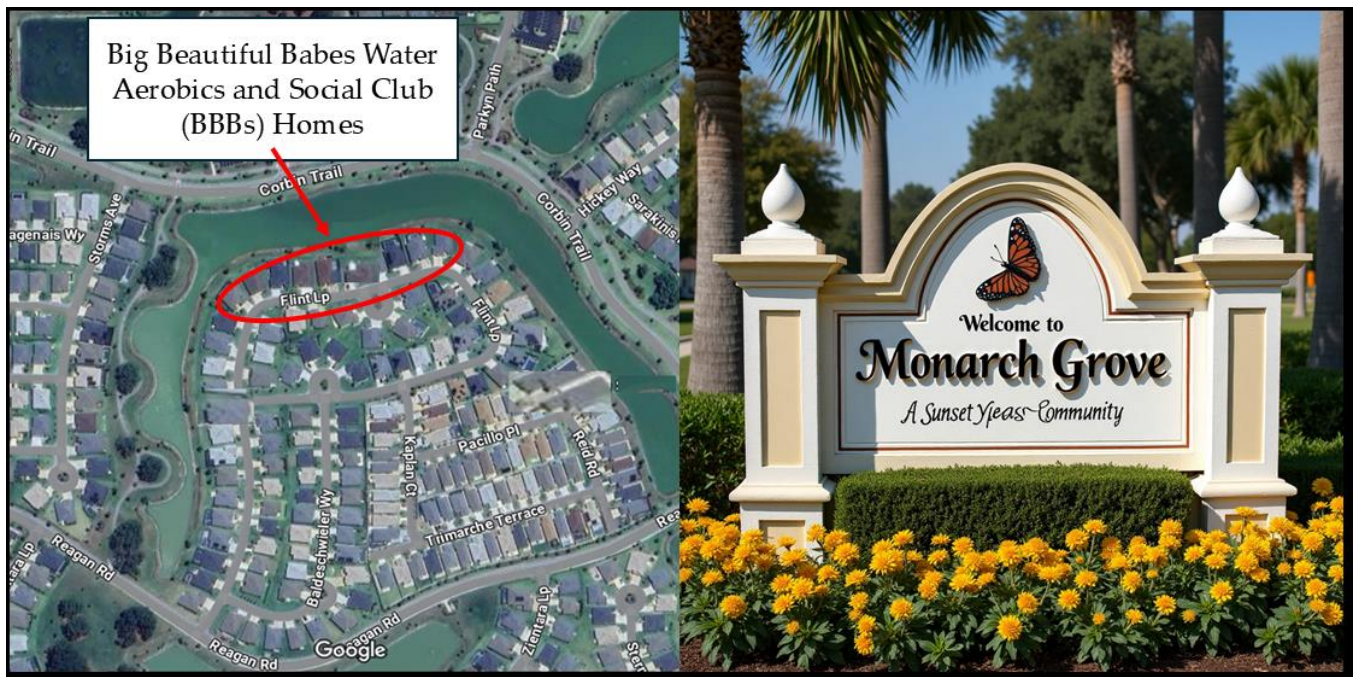
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ACT 1 A FISH OUT OF WATER

Scene 1 - A Rough Way to Start the Morning

Setting - Flint Loop in the Monarch Grove Neighborhood





**Robin (Fish) Logan Unconscious in His Truck
6:00 am on Flint Loop in the Monarch Grove neighborhood
Sunset Years Retirement Community, Florida**

1.1 A Neighbor Finds Robin Logan Unresponsive in His Truck

"Hello? Is this 911? My name is Allie Beck. I'm on Flint Loop in the Sunset Hills Monarch Grove neighborhood. There is a truck parked here on the circle on the pond side of Flint Loop.

The driver is slumped over the wheel, unconscious. I touched his shoulder and tried to see if he was just asleep. No response. Then I opened the door and jostled him. Still no response. He doesn't appear to be breathing.

We know him. His name is Robin Logan. He's a pool guy/handyman who does work for a group of us in the neighborhood. Please send an ambulance. I'm afraid something is very wrong." (.6 Minute - 110 Words)



Senior Inspector Lance
Wildwood Police Homicide Detective
Assigned to Respond to The Call

1.2 Inspector Lance Answers the Call

"Damn, 7:00 am on my way to work and Dispatch is already calling me in my car. This better be good.

Senior Inspector Lance here. Go ahead. A death, you say. Where? Monarch Grove neighborhood. What is the exact location? The small circle on the pond side of Flint Loop. Yeah. I know it. Unfortunately, I've been there before.

Is the Crime Scene Investigation team there yet? They are? Who is it? Gordy? That's even better. You say the witness who called it in is also still on the scene.

Look, instead of coming into the office, I'm going straight to the site so I can talk with the witness. What's the name? Allie Beck? Ok, I'll look for her when I arrive.

Alert my partner, Inspector DiSalvo, that I will be at the site and will meet her at police headquarters once I've interviewed this witness. Also, when they arrive, tell the coroner's team not to remove the body. I want to look at it when I get there." (.9 minute - 169 words)



Allie Beck – 78 years old

Founder and President of the *Big Beautiful Babes Water Aerobics and Social Club (BBB's)*. Resident of Flint Loop in the Monarch Grove Neighborhood

1.3 Allie Beck Describes Logan's Activities in the Neighborhood

"Pleased to meet you, Inspector Lance. My name is Allie Beck. I live across the street. I was starting out for my morning walk when I saw Robin's truck parked here.

We all know him. He's a pool cleaner/handyman who does work for many of us who live in this neighborhood. He goes by the nickname of "Fish" because of all those fish tattoos he has.

I wasn't surprised to see Fish's truck here. He frequently waits here on the circle in his truck until it gets light enough for him to begin working in people's backyards.

He says mucking around in people's backyards in the dark gets people all upset. So, he just waits until it's light enough for them to see that it's him and not a robber.

Fish is well known and well-liked in the neighborhood. There's eight of us ladies with homes that back up to the pond section of Flint Loop. We are all friends and all have pools.

We call ourselves the *Big Beautiful Babes Water Aerobics and Social Club*—the BBBs for short. We socialize together and take turns hosting water aerobics sessions in each other's pools on a rotating basis.

Fish is kind of an honorary BBB member. He maintains our pools and does handyman work for all of us. We hire him to tend bar and cook the food for our club holiday parties and special events. He even drives us when we rent a van and go on day trips together.

We jokingly say he's one of the girls. I guess I should say, was one of the girls. What else can I tell you?" (1.5 Minutes - 279 Words)



Senior Inspector Lance
Wildwood Police Homicide Detective
Lead Investigator on the Case

1.4 Lance Probes for Additional Information on Logan

"I appreciate anything you can tell me about Mr. Logan's routines, his friends, and especially anyone who might have had a dispute with him or a reason to do him harm.

Also, who else should we be talking with to better understand what might have happened to Mr. Logan?" (.3 Minute- 49 Words)



Robin (Fish) Logan

Found Unresponsive in His Truck and Declared Dead
on the Scene by the Emergency Medical Technicians
That Responded

1.5 Allie Beck Provides Additional Background on Robin Logan

"Certainly you will want to talk to all of the BBBs. I'm the President and founder of the club. I can give you their names and contact information. You may want to speak with some other neighbors, too. I can help your there as well.

Up until a year ago, Fish worked for *Sumter Pool Services*. They were a good company. But we all felt that if he went out on his own he could charge us less and still take home a lot more money for himself. It was a win for everyone--except *Sumter*.

I used to own and run several small businesses. So, I took the lead in helping Fish get started. I set up a Florida Limited Liability Corporation (LLC) and hired Fish to do the customer work.

I keep a small portion of the gross receipts for keeping the books and running the administrative side of the business. Everything else goes directly to Fish.

Fish's former employer, Jordan Greer, was furious when Fish went into competition with him. Greer couldn't sue Fish because the new contracts were with the LLC I'd set up, not directly with Fish. Greer definitely had it out for Fish.

Fish was very close to all of us BBBs. Most of us are in are our sixties and seventies and have no living relatives. Fish was in his thirties. He was Samoan and grew up in Hawaii.

Like most of us in the club, he had no blood relations in the area. We were his family. He called us his "Aunties." We treated him like a nephew—heck, almost like a son. I will do anything you need to help you find who did this."

(1.6 minutes, 289 words)



**Conference Room – Wildwood, Florida
Police Headquarters**

Scene 2 – Lance Questions the BBBs

Setting - Wildwood, Florida, Police Headquarters

1.6 Inspector Lance Meets With Logan's BBB Customers

Thank you for joining us here in Police Headquarters today. Please take your seats everyone. We are going to start.

I'm Senior Inspector Lance of the Wildwood Police Homicide Division. The lady on my right is my partner, Inspector Alexa DiSalvo.

As you are all aware, three days ago Mr. Robin Logan was found unconscious in his truck on Flint Loop in the Monarch Grove neighborhood. The Coroner has uncovered evidence that leads us to believe that he was murdered.

Please share with us any information you have on anyone who might have had a reason to harm Mr. Logan and anything that might help us better understand the circumstances of his death.

I know that it is awkward to implicate other individuals in investigations like this. However, someone has purposely ended Mr. Logan's life. That individual may still be in your community.

For your own safety, as well as the safety of others, it's imperative that you identify anyone you are aware of who may have a connection to this murder.

I am going to call upon each of you in turn. Please give us your name, age, residence, and association with Mr. Logan. Ma'am, would you like to go first?
(1.1 minutes - Words 205)



Chrissy Pines – 79 years old.

Former Member of the *Big Beautiful Babes Water
Aerobics and Social Club (BBB's)*. Resident of Flint
Loop in the Monarch Grove Neighborhood

1.7 Chrissy Pines Responds

"Inspector, I'm Chrissy Pines. I'm 79 years old and I live on the section of Flint Loop that backs to the pond.

Honestly, I have no idea why I'm here. I used to employ Logan for pool and yard service. However, I fired him over a year and a half ago. I know my neighbors think he is so wonderful. I found him to be unreliable and, frankly, a scam artist.

I went on a 75-day cruise. He was supposed to take care of my pool and property while I was away. A former sorority sister of mine lives in the area. She checked on my property while I was gone.

She said it was obvious that Logan was simply letting things go while I was out of town. She called him and complained. He said he'd been doing the work and planned to keep billing me.

I was supposed to be enjoying myself on my trip. Instead, I was emailing and texting to try to resolve this matter. It was really irritating.

I terminated Logan while I was still on my trip. My dropping him created a lot of personal friction with my neighbors—including some of the ladies here at this meeting. Things got so bad that I quit our neighborhood BBB club altogether.

I don't know anything about Logan's death. If you want my opinion, though, I think he got what he deserved." (1.3 minutes - Words 237)



Emery Landon – 73 years old.
Member of the *Big Beautiful Babes Water Aerobics and Social Club (BBB's)*. Resident of Flint Loop in the Monarch Grove Neighborhood. Younger Sister of Drew Landon.

1.8 Emery Landon Responds

"Inspector, I'm Emery Landon. I'm 73 years old. Like the other BBBs, my home backs to the pond on Flint Loop.

We all knew Fish. He was in our neighborhood pretty much every day. He worked for various people in Monarch Grove and Linden. We, BBB club members, were his main customers.

We eight ladies in the BBB group are more or less family to each other. We celebrate holidays together, take turns hosting water aerobics and parties for each other at our homes, and even do day trips together. Fish was a part of all of those activities.

When Allie Beck convinced Fish to go out on his own, our BBB group stood by him. We all signed up to have him exclusively do our pool cleaning, yard work, and handyman work. He even started coaching our water aerobics sessions and driving us to doctors and shopping.

Like all of us, Fish had no family in the area. He really appreciated being a part of our BBB celebrations, particularly on holidays. He called us his "Aunties." He was as emotionally attached to us as we were to him.

Unfortunately, sometimes I felt Fish acted a little too familiar. We BBBs had fallen into the habit of bantering back and forth with him in a flirtatious way. He would flirt back. My sister, Drew, especially liked him and spent a lot of time with him.

Frankly, I thought Fish's interactions with Drew crossed the line. Their exchanges often became downright embarrassing. I talked to Drew about it. She said that it was all in good fun and she didn't mind." (1.6 Minutes - Words 294)



Drew Landon – 77 years old.

Member of the *Big Beautiful Babes Water Aerobics and Social Club (BBB's)*. Resident of Flint Loop in the Monarch Grove Neighborhood. Older Sister of Emery Landon

1.9 Drew Landon Responds

"Inspector, let me go next. I'm Drew Landon. I'm 77. I am Emery's older and more reasonable sister. I, too, live on the pond on Flint Loop, three houses down from Emery.

I love you, Emery, but sometimes you are just a stick in the mud. Inspector Fish was like a younger family member to all of us. He came here from Hawaii and had no one and nothing when he arrived. Pool cleaning is not very glamorous, but he was conscientious and had a fun, infectious personality.

All of us in the BBBs liked him and were rooting for him to do well. Allie helped him start out on his own, and the other BBBs all pitched in. We absolutely were flirtatious with Fish—all of us. Even you, Emery.

My goodness, how many chances do women in their sixties and seventies have to kid around and flirt with a good-looking man in his thirties? He was husky, but on someone of Samoan heritage, bulky is sexy. He was good-looking, dressed mainly in bathing suits, and was around us every day.

While we all kidded around with Fish, I don't think there was any actual hanky-panky going on between him and any of our members. I was very close to him. I think I would have known if he was servicing more than just the pools of one of our members." (1.3 minutes words 233)



Nicky Lane – 62 years old.
Member of the *Big Beautiful Babes Water Aerobics and Social Club (BBB's)*. Resident of Flint Loop in the Monarch Grove Neighborhood

1.10 Nicky Lane Responds

"Inspector, I'm Nicky Lane. I'm 62 and I also live on the pond on Flint Loop.

Fish was more or less an unofficial member of our BBBs. The eight of us in the BBB group do almost everything together. Between water aerobic workouts four times a week, parties, day trips, and just hanging out together in the evenings, it's like living in a sorority house, except the members are in their sixties and seventies instead of their teens and twenties.

Fish was paid support staff, an employee, but we treated him like one of the "girls." I was the closest to Fish in age of anyone in our group. Based on that factor alone, if Fish were going to fool around with a BBB, it would have most likely been me. However, nothing was going on between Fish and me, or as far as I could tell, between Fish and any of the other BBBs.

In fact, I am on record stating that I suspected Fish was gay. He was very attractive and at an age to still be sexually active. Yet, he never talked about relationships with any females except us.

I don't know who or why someone would want to hurt him. His passing is certainly going to change things for our BBB group." (1.2 minutes - Words 216)



Allie Beck – 78 years old
Founder and President of the
Big Beautiful Babes (BBB) Water Aerobics & Social Club.
Resident of Flint Loop in the Monarch Grove
Neighborhood

1.11 Allie Beck Responds

"Inspector, as you know I'm Allie Beck. I'm 78 and I live on the pond on Flint Loop.

I described my relationship with Fish to you the other day. I'm not going to repeat that. However, I have been thinking about other people you need to talk to.

First, three of our BBB members are snowbirds away for the summer. I'll give Inspector DiSalvo contact data for all three of these people. I'm sure their families can confirm they weren't in town when Fish was killed.

You should also talk with two other people. The first is Jordan Greer, the owner of Sumter Pools Services. Fish worked for him before he started his own business, and Greer was furious when Fish left.

Unfortunately, the second person is my nephew, Adrian Beck. Adrian's dad and I received a large inheritance from our father when he passed away.

Under the terms of our dad's will, Adrian's father's share reverted to me when he died a few years ago. It will only be passed on to Adrian upon my death.

Adrian worried that my relationship with Fish might somehow jeopardize his future windfall. He was very negative toward Fish. You should talk to him, too."
(1.1 minutes - Words 210)



Jules Parker – 63 years old

Member of the *Big Beautiful Babes (BBB) Water Aerobics & Social Club*. Lives on Flint Loop in the Monarch Grove neighborhood

1.12 Jules Parker Responds

"Inspector, I'm Jules Parker. I'm 63 and I live on the pond side of Flint Loop along with the other BBBs.

Fish's death was a real blow to me, Inspector. Allie helped Fish start his business, but I was really the one who spent the most time with him and was closest to him personally. He didn't just clean my pool and cut my bushes. He became a personal trainer and health coach to me.

Two years ago, I was forty pounds heavier, in dreadful shape, and felt like hell. Fish was very athletic. I paid him to coach me individually in the pool and in my home gym. He convinced me to switch to a plant-based diet and to take up yoga and meditation.

Today, I am stronger, leaner, more flexible, and more in touch with my body than at any other time in my life. Fish was an inspiration and a soul mate to me. I just hope I can maintain all that he helped me achieve now that he's gone.

I really don't know anything about Fish's death. I do know someone you should talk to, though: Melvin Riley. He lives on the pond side of Flint Loop, too. Before Fish started working in our neighborhood several years ago, Melvin and Allie were a thing.

Allie broke things off with Riley shortly after Fish started working with us. Riley blamed Fish for the breakup and constantly badmouthed Fish to anyone who would listen.

Allie, please don't be upset with me for mentioning Riley. You aren't responsible for what he does. I just thought that the Inspector should know that if anyone had a motive, Riley clearly did." (1.6 minutes -Words 283)



Senior Inspector Lance
Wildwood Police Homicide Detective
Lead Investigator on the Case

1.13 Inspector Lance Closes the Meeting

"I appreciate everyone coming here today. We are just at the beginning of our investigation. It's likely we will need to speak with you again.

Please inform Inspector DiSalvo if you need to leave town for any reason or if you think of anything else that might assist our inquiries. That's all for today."
(.3 Minute – 54 Words)

Appendix 1- How to Experience this Story as a Book, Play, or Game

To Experience this Story as a Book

Start by reading the Introduction. It is formatted like and reads like a book. The Introduction describes the Sunset Years retirement community where the murder takes place and provides insights on Robin Logan, the deceased. After the Introduction, read the material in Acts 1-4 all the way to the arrest of the murderer in Act 4 Witness Statement 4.18.

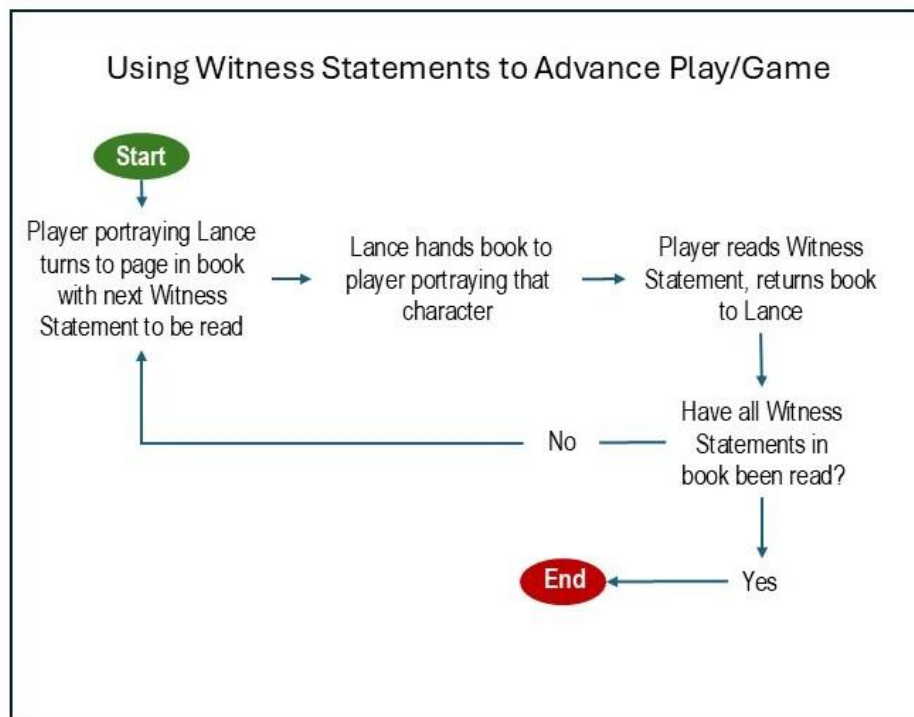
To Experience this Story as a Play or Game

Skip the Introduction. Beginning with Act 1, the story is formatted as a four-act play. The story advances in this section by having the individuals assigned to each character role read their “Witness Statements” out loud to the audience. The person playing Senior Inspector Lance controls this book which contains the Witness Statements and coordinates the process.

1. The play/game experience starts by having the person who plays Senior Inspector Lance read statement **1.0 Welcome to the Play/Game Experience** to the group
2. The Lance actor then manages the flow of the play/game by calling upon the other participants to read the Witness Statements for their characters in the order shown in the Navigation Checklist handouts
 - a. Lance hands the book to the individual playing the role of the next character whose turn it is to speak in the order shown in the Navigation Checklists. That person reads their Witness Statement and then returns the book to Lance
 - b. Lance then opens the book to the page of the next Witness Statement to be read and hands it to the individual playing that role.

- c. That person reads their Witness Statement and returns the book to Lance
 - d. When all Witness Statements have been completed and Lance has read his Act 4 Conclusion, the play is ended
- 3. If you are experiencing the story as a game:
 - a. The Witness Statements for Inspector Lance prompt the person playing Lance to ask the group to vote and discuss their suspicions at the end of acts 1, 2, and 3.
 - b. The player or players who identify the killer correctly the most times in the voting across acts 1, 2, and 3 win the game

Figure 1 below depicts the process:



Play/Game Experience Tips

It is important that the witness statements be read in the specific order in which they are numbered (e.g., 1.1, 1.2, 1.3, etc.). DO NOT allow participants to view any Witness Statements before they are to be read to the entire group.

Creating Handouts for Play/Game Participants

Appendix 2 has templates you can photocopy to create handouts for participants. These include 1) character profiles of all of the roles, 2) a voting sheet, and 3) Navigation Checklists to help participants keep track of whose turn it is to read Witness Statements within an act.

You can also visit the *Sunset Years Murder Mystery Series* homepage and download digital copies of the entire handout package to print out at home. The web address is [Murder Mystery Events \(frankalancione.com\)](http://frankalancione.com).

Adjusting If You Lack the Right Number or Mix of Players

We recommend that you read through the entire play in book form before you undertake hosting a play or game interactive event. Going through the entire script, you will get a feel for which roles the people you intend to invite would be best suited to play and would have the most fun portraying.

If you don't have the right number or mix of participants, you can:

- ***Assign people to play more than a single role.*** All this requires is for people to read the witness statement of more than one character.
- ***Drop roles.*** If you don't want to have people cover more than one character, you can choose to drop characters altogether. There is only one murderer. That means that when you do your pre-read of the mystery as a book you will learn which players can be eliminated without disrupting the central storyline.
- ***Ignore gender.*** The character names in the storyline were purposely crafted to be gender neutral (e.g., Jules, Mel, Jordan). You can execute

the story as a play or game without regard to whether any specific character is male or female.

Appendix 2 – Participant Handouts

Appendix 2 contains templates you can photocopy to create participant handouts.

The **Character Profiles** handout briefly describes each role. It helps participants keep track of the various characters in the play.

The **Vote Tally** handout provides participants with a place to record their votes. It also provides helpful hints for voting and suggests open-ended questions to stimulate participant discussion.

The **Navigation Checklists** assist players to keep track of the action. These checklists show by act the sequence in which Witness Statements are to be read, the reference number of the statement (1.1, 1.2, etc.), and the page in the book where the statement is found.

You can photocopy these handouts directly from this book. You can also visit the *Sunset Years Murder Mystery Series* homepage and download digital copies of the handout package to print out at home. The web address is [Murder Mystery Events \(frankalancione.com\)](http://MurderMysteryEvents(frankalancione.com)).

Character Profiles

Character Profiles - Dead in the Water	
Adrian Beck	Male 40 – Nephew of Allie Beck
Allie Beck	Female 78 – Founder and President of Big Beautiful Babes Water Aerobics and Social Club (BBBs). Formed company to help Logan launch his own business
Jordan Greer	Male 57 – Owner of Sumter Pool Services. Hired Logan to provide pool services in the Monarch Grove and Linden neighborhoods
Drew Landon	Female 77 – Member of BBBs. Older sister of Emery Landon
Emery Landon	Female 73 - Member of BBBs. Younger sister of Emery Landon
Nicky Lane	Female 62 – Youngest member of the BBBs
Robin Logan	Male 35 – The deceased. Provided pool & handyman services to the BBBs. An associate in the company Allie Beck formed to help him launch his own business
Jules Parker	Female 63 –BBB member. Logan was her athletic trainer and plant-based living coach in addition to providing her pool/handyman services
Chrissy Pines	Female 79 – Former member of the BBBs. Older sister of Rory Skyler
Melvin Riley	Male 80 – Neighbor of Allie Beck and Chrissy Pines. His relationship with Allie Beck changed after Logan started working for the BBBs
Rory Skyler	Female 72 – Lives in Podunk, GA. In Sunset Years visiting her older sister Chrissy Pines
Sr. Inspector Lance	Male 60 – Wildwood Florida Police Department Homicide Division Senior Inspector in charge of this case
Inspector DiSalvo	Female 24 - Lance's partner

Vote Tally Sheet

Vote Tally Sheet- Dead in the Water Who Killed Robin (Fish) Logan?						
Place an X by your first and second choice suspects after Acts 1,2,3. Only one X per column						
Suspects	ACT 1		ACT 2		ACT 3	
	<i>1st</i> <i>Choice</i>	<i>2nd</i> <i>Choice</i>	<i>1st</i> <i>Choice</i>	<i>2nd</i> <i>Choice</i>	<i>1st</i> <i>Choice</i>	<i>2nd</i> <i>Choice</i>
Adrian Beck						
Allie Beck						
Jordan Greer						
Drew Landon						
Emery Landon						
Nicky Lane						
Jules Parker						
Chrissy Pines						
Melvin Riley						
Rory Skyler						
Sr. Inspector Lance						
Inspector DiSalvo						
Vote quickly, then discuss your vote with those around you. Who do you think did it? Why? If you changed your mind from earlier votes, why?						

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Act 1 Navigation Checklist – Dead in the Water

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Act 2 Navigation Checklist – Dead in the Water

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Act 4 Navigation Checklist

Act 4 Navigation Checklist – Dead in the Water

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ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Frank A. Lancione's books chronicle how today's senior citizens are reinventing aging for the 21st century.

Frank's *Sunset Years Poems and Essays Series* is a celebration of what life looks like when you never stop striving, dreaming, and achieving even in your 60's, 70's, 80's and beyond.

Sunset Years: Poems for Seniors Who Still Love Life and Each Other explores how today's seniors are redefining relationships, family, physical fitness, and cultural identity in the last phase of their lives.

Sunset Years: You're Still the One is a book of love poems that shows romance and passion can still thrive in your last phase of life

Sunset Years: Looking for America puts you up in the cab riding with Frank and his wife Diane on a 10,000-mile three-month recreational vehicle (RV) circumnavigation of the U.S. It changes their whole view of America and themselves. It might change yours, too.

Sunset Years: Living Your Best Life for the Rest of Your Life continues the focus on love, vitality, and achievement in your senior years.

Frank's *Sunset Years Book-Play-Game Murder Mysteries* transform traditional murder mystery novels into exciting interactive play/game events. This series includes:

- *Death of a Socialite*
- *Death by Cat*
- *Dead in The Water*
- *Deserved to Die*
- *Double Down on Death*

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