Boddy's Message

"Greetings and felicitations, honored guests.

My name is Mr. Boddy. I am pleased you could attend this dinner. I regret to inform you that I will not be able to join you tonight. You see, I will have been murdered recently - - and by someone in this very room.

I'm sure you will agree that my stated profession of financial advisor and investment broker is somewhat misleading. You know me better as a blackmailer *par excellence* who has enjoyed a substantial income for a number of years thanks to the exploitation of certain information I gained about each of you. Deep and compromising secrets you couldn't allow to be made public.

Although I have been careful to conceal my true identity from you, such a dangerous pastime involving desperate people has a certain inherent risk to it. Your presence here means I became careless or one of you became clever or perhaps a little of both. In any case, I have made arrangements for just such an occasion.

I am leaving sealed instructions for my agents to follow upon my death or disappearance. You will all be gathered to this place and the bait will be the evidence I have collected against you, in parcels hidden about the mansion. Such a lure you can not possibly resist. It is my payment to you for executing justice upon my murderer.

To ensure the innocent among you do not reach the consensus that I have gotten what I deserved and my killer should escape unharmed, there is a cunning twist to this evening. I have learned a great many things over the years that have led me to discover a dark and terrible power - - born of shadow and nightmare and unspeakable horror. With this power, I made a pact to avenge my death from beyond the grave.

You have until midnight to ferret out and kill the murderer from within your midst. If my killer still remains alive after the clock strikes twelve, all in this house will be visited by death so gruesome it defies description. Naturally, my killer could seek honorable redemption by confessing his or her guilt and committing suicide, thus sparing the others from needless suffering. And, of course, any one of the innocents could dispense justice across the board in order to secure his or her own survival.

To my killer, it must seem rather unsporting of me to pit you against such tremendous odds without any hope of escape. In the interest of fair play and with grudging respect for your besting me, I offer you freedom if you are the *sole* survivor at midnight. Merely repeat your murderous performance, or trick others into doing your dirty work, and your blood debt to me will be paid in full.

Now I would not suggest that you wreck havoc upon one another like heathen dogs. I will provide a bit of dignity to what is no doubt proving to be a most unpleasant affair. I have arranged for a number of suitable weapons to be hidden around the mansion. All you have to do is find the weapons and summon the will to use them.

Good night and good luck."