

*Chicago* is a Kander and Ebb musical set in Prohibition-era Chicago. The story is a satire on corruption in the administration of criminal justice, and the concept of the "celebrity criminal".

The show opens with Velma Kelly welcoming the audience to the evening's show as she performs "All That Jazz". Velma is a vaudevillian who murdered both her husband and her sister when she found them in bed together. Meanwhile, we are introduced to Roxie Hart, a chorus girl who murders her lover Fred Casely.

Roxie convinces her husband Amos that the victim was a burglar, and Amos cheerfully takes the blame. As Roxie expresses her appreciation of her husband's thick skull to the audience, the police inform Amos of the dead man's name. Amos puts two and two together, the truth comes out, and Roxie is arrested. She is sent to the women's block in Cook County Jail, inhabited by Velma and other murderesses. The block is presided over by the corrupt Matron "Mama" Morton, whose system of "mutual aid" perfectly suits her clientèle. She has helped Velma become the media's top murder-of-the-week and is acting as a booking agent for Velma's big return to vaudeville.

Velma is not happy to see Roxie, who is stealing not only her limelight but her lawyer, Billy Flynn. Billy re-arranges Roxie's story for consumption by sympathetic tabloid columnist Mary Sunshine. Roxie's press conference turns into a ventriloquist act with Billy dictating a new version of the truth while Roxie mouths the words. Roxie becomes the new toast of Chicago as Velma's fame is left in the dust. Desperately Velma tries to talk Roxie into recreating the vaudeville act she had with her sister, but Roxie turns her down, only to find her own headlines replaced by the latest sordid crime of passion. Separately, Roxie and Velma realize there's no one they can count on but themselves and the ever-resourceful Roxie decides that being pregnant in prison would put her back on the front page.

Velma muses over Roxie's continual run of luck despite her obvious tricks and lies. A little shy on the arithmetic, Amos proudly claims paternity, and still nobody pays any attention to him.

Roxie has a heated argument with Billy, and fires him. She is brought back down to earth however when she learns that a fellow inmate has been executed. The trial date arrives, and Billy calms her, telling her if she makes a show of it, she'll be fine. As promised, Billy gets Roxie her acquittal but, just as the verdict is given, some even more sensational crime pulls the pack of press bloodhounds away, and Roxie's fleeting celebrity life is over. Billy leaves, done with the case. Amos stays with her, glad for his wife. But when she confesses that there isn't really a baby, Amos leaves her.

In the end, Roxie and Velma team up and create a new act for their big finale.