A ZOOM MURDER MYSTERY

# SUSPICIOUS Minds

*a murder at*

## EL CAMINO ROYALE

LAS VEGAS · NEVADA

## PLAYER HANDBOOK

For every guest: the rules, the night ahead, the guest list and your detective's notebook.

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WELCOME

# Howdy, high rollers!

Welcome to **El Camino Royale**, Las Vegas' #1 high-stakes casino and Elvis tribute experience. Join us for a night of scandal, murder and a distinct lack of Elvis Presley music.

Tonight the casino's star attraction, **Rex Royale**, Las Vegas' third-best Elvis impersonator, takes the stage. Everyone who's anyone is here: high rollers, has-beens, a reporter sniffing for a scoop, and at least one person with murder on their mind.

Your job is to work out **who** the murderer is, **how** they did it and **why**. Read these rules carefully, and message your hosts if you have any questions.

### What you'll need

- **Zoom** on a laptop if you can (it's easier to move between breakout rooms), with camera and mic on.
- **Your character pack**, which your hosts will send before the night. Read it carefully, and don't show anyone.
- **A costume** if you're feeling dedicated, and definitely a **character-inspired Zoom background**.
- **Pen and paper**, or the detective's notebook at the back of this handbook.
- **Dinner and drinks.** The game runs over dinner. Your hosts may have arranged a Secret Santa food delivery.

## The night in five parts

| | PART | WHAT HAPPENS |
|---|---|---|
| 1 | **Introductions**<br>Casino Theatre · ~30 min | The hosts set the scene. When you're called, read the **"Read aloud" box** from your pack. Don't read anything else: no secrets, no clues, no missions. |
| 2 | **Pre-Show Drinks**<br>Breakout rooms · ~30 min | Mingle with your fellow show-goers and complete **Mission 1**. You might hear something suspicious... |
| 3 | **Showtime**<br>Casino Theatre · ~5 min | Time for the Elvis tribute show. Unfortunately, something goes terribly wrong... |
| 4 | **The Investigation**<br>Breakout rooms · ~35 min | Complete **Mission 2** and dig for answers. Police bulletins will arrive along the way. **Reveal all your clues by the end of this part.** |
| 5 | **Accusations**<br>Casino Theatre · ~30 min | Everyone comes back to the theatre. Submit your guess: **who** did it, **how** and **why**. Then we argue it out and the truth is revealed. |

# House rules

1. **Embrace the stupidity.** This game is only fun if everyone is all in. Play your character in the first person: say "Yes, I went to Mexico last year," not "my character went to Mexico." Improvise, add to your backstory and **own it**. Your pack has suggestions; build on them.
2. **You can't lie about your truths.** Your truths are everything in your character pack: your story, your quick facts, your clues and any secrets. You can be evasive (answer with a question, change the subject), but if someone challenges you, you have to tell the truth. When someone asks about a secret, answer only what they asked and nothing more. You can also use what you know to spread rumours and take the heat off yourself.
3. **Lie about everything else.** Anything not in your pack is fair game. If someone asks about your trip to Mexico, you can't say you never went, but you can rave about a trip to Iceland to throw them off. This is handy for alibis and filling out your backstory.
4. **Anyone can lie about "Did you do it?"** Your pack tells you whether you're the murderer. You can deny it or pretend you did it. Plenty of innocent guests have a reason to look guilty.
5. **Reveal all your clues by the end of Part 4.** You don't have to reveal them straight away, but every clue has to be out by the end of the second round of breakout rooms. The hosts will warn you before time's up.
6. **Collude, share and suspect.** You can team up and share information. But there are red herrings... Trust no one.
7. **Stay in the room to talk.** Breakout rooms are locations around the casino. You can only question people who are in the same room as you. To move, send the hosts a private Zoom chat message (for example, "Back Alley please") and they'll move you. Tip: keep moving. You'll overhear other conversations, but watch who's in the room before you share anything juicy.

## Getting around the casino

Each Zoom breakout room is a location. Change your Zoom name to your character's name when you arrive. To move, send a **private chat message to the hosts** with the room you want. The hosts may also move you at random to spice things up.

| ROOM | WHAT IT IS |
|---|---|
| **Casino Theatre** | The main Zoom room. Everyone starts and finishes here, and it's where the show happens. |
| **The Bar** | Cocktails, gossip and loose lips. |
| **Gambling Floor** | Poker, roulette and people with something to lose. |
| **Casino Lobby** | Where new arrivals are sized up. |
| **Back Alley** | Starts empty. Come here for private conversations. |
| **Security Room** | Where the hosts sit when they're not wandering. Message them or drop in for help. |

WHO'S WHO

# The guest list

This is what everyone knows about everyone. Some guests may not be here tonight, depending on how many people are playing.

### Sgt Bev Glazer (ret.)

THE RETIRED COP

They may love donuts, but they hate Elvis. A passionate campaigner against "the devil's music", they're at the casino to protest. Could "Jailhouse Rock" send them over the edge?

Old friends with Maestro Vincent Vibrato and their spouse

### Chase Ambler, Esq.

THE LAWYER

Slick, smart and slimy, but what good lawyer isn't? They say Chase will do anything for a client. But would they really do *anything*...

Flew to Las Vegas with Lou-Ann Hashbrown

### Chemtrail Charlie

THE CONSPIRACY NUT

They think 5G spreads covid and they're definitely going to tell you about it. Everyone knows their head isn't screwed on quite right, but could they go off the rails enough to kill someone...

Sells ivermectin to Dakota Calibre, their BFF

### Dr Constance Losewell

THE PROFESSOR

This professor rejects expected utility theory and is always seen gambling (and losing) big at the casino. Could one big loss push them over the edge?

Friends with Tiny · Has gambled with Rex

### Dakota Calibre

THE REPUBLICAN GUN NUT

Voted Trump in 2020, and that tells you everything you need to know about them.

Has seen Rex perform many times · Buys ivermectin from Chemtrail Charlie, their BFF

### Johnny Roundhouse

THE RECENTLY FIRED KUNG-FU ACTOR

Down on their luck, this kung-fu actor's drug problem might have finally caught up with them. Could they turn their kung-fu prowess to evil?

Used to work with Rex, Starla Highkick and Tiny at the casino · Has met Marina Flint before

### Lou-Ann Hashbrown

THE DINER OWNER

A small-business owner who needs to drum up trade at their diner or they'll be out on the street. What lengths will they go to?

Flew to Las Vegas with Chase Ambler · Has met Rex before

### Marina Flint

THE SCUBA DIVER (AND ASSASSIN)

Just a regular scuba-diving instructor. Nothing more to see here. Promise.

Has met Johnny Roundhouse before

### Paige Turner

THE REPORTER

They're the who, what, when and where of this town. Everyone knows they'll do whatever it takes to get the scoop, but they wouldn't kill someone. Right?

Has reported on Rex before

### Penny Slotz

THE DRAG QUEEN (SUPPORT ACT)

Dramatic, sassy and iconic, but everyone knows about their pill-popping habit. Could this bad habit drive them to murder!?

Tonight's support act on Rex's bill

### Peter Parker

YOUR FRIENDLY NEIGHBOURHOOD SPIDER-MAN

Your friendly neighbourhood Spider-Man. But saving the city doesn't pay the bills... Would they risk it all for some cash?

No strong ties, but around town a lot

### Sebastian Gloom

THE AVANT-GARDE ANGSTY SHOW DIRECTOR

"No one understands my art" is their catchphrase. Married to the dancer, they'll take any opportunity to be recognised.

Married to Starla Highkick · Directs the casino's shows, including Rex's

### *Starla Highkick*

THE DANCER

They've got their sights set on Broadway, and no one's gonna stop them. No one.

Married to Sebastian Gloom · Works with Rex and Tiny at the casino · Used to work with Johnny Roundhouse

### *"Tiny" Brickhouse*

THE BOUNCER

They don't say much, but they don't need to. They'll do anything for the boss. But would they kill???

Works with Rex and Starla Highkick · Used to work with Johnny Roundhouse · Friends with Dr Constance Losewell

### *Velvet LaRue*

THE HIGH-CLASS ESCORT

Only ever seen on the arm of the richest people in town. They'd never stoop so low as to kill for money... or would they?

No strong ties, but moves in many circles

### *Maestro Vincent Vibrato*

THE SINGING COACH

They never made it big themselves, but now they coach the big names. Could jealousy drive them over the edge?

Coaches Rex · Knows Starla Highkick · Old friends with Sgt Bev Glazer

## And your hosts tonight

### *Rex Royale*

THE ELVIS IMPERSONATOR · YOUR HOST

El Camino Royale's resident Elvis tribute act, and the reason you're all here tonight. Thank you. Thank you very much.

Performs at the casino for the owner · Works with Tiny and Starla Highkick · Used to work with Johnny Roundhouse · Coached by Maestro Vincent Vibrato · Has met Lou-Ann Hashbrown before · Has gambled with Dr Constance Losewell

### *Dame Delilah Diamante*

THE CASINO OWNER · YOUR HOST

They run this joint, and don't you forget it.

Employs Tiny, Starla Highkick, Sebastian Gloom and Rex · Used to employ Johnny Roundhouse

TAKE NOTES

# Detective's notebook

| GUEST | CONNECTIONS | ALIBI / WHEREABOUTS | MOTIVE? | NOTES & CLUES |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Sgt Bev Glazer (ret.) | | | | |
| Chase Ambler, Esq. | | | | |
| Chemtrail Charlie | | | | |
| Dr Constance Losewell | | | | |
| Dakota Calibre | | | | |
| Johnny Roundhouse | | | | |
| Lou-Ann Hashbrown | | | | |
| Marina Flint | | | | |
| Paige Turner | | | | |
| Penny Slotz | | | | |
| Peter Parker | | | | |
| Sebastian Gloom | | | | |
| Starla Highkick | | | | |
| "Tiny" Brickhouse | | | | |
| Velvet LaRue | | | | |
| Maestro Vincent Vibrato | | | | |

**Your final accusation.** Who: _____ How: _____ Why: _____

CREDITS

# About this game

**Suspicious Minds: A Murder at El Camino Royale** was written by **Lehan Zhang** and **Andrew Howes**. They first ran it on Zoom for friends during Australia's 2021 COVID-19 lockdowns, over dinner, with a Secret Santa food delivery on the side.

It's adapted from Nick Breen's *Free Murder Mystery Party Plan* (nickbreen.ca, 2011). The original casino-and-Elvis setting, and many of the character types, come from Nick's plan. The Zoom format, rules, character missions, alibis, gender-neutral solution, clue drops and new characters were written for this version. Thank you, Nick.

Free to download, print and host for your own non-commercial games. Please keep this credits page with the files.

Peter Parker / Spider-Man, Shang-Chi and Doctor Strange are Marvel characters. Not affiliated with Elvis Presley Enterprises. All other characters and places are fictional, and any resemblance to real people is coincidental (and probably hilarious).