

THE ELVIS PRESLEY CONVENTION

*Murder
Mystery*



A Murder Mystery Pack
by
Archie Wilson

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Customer Taster

THE ELVIS PRESLEY CONVENTION

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It is time for the annual Elvis Presley Convention to find out which of the King's pretenders can claim his crown for this year. But with a killer in their midst, the party is about to be All Shook Up! Enter the redoubtable DCI Sherbert Holmes, super sleuth, to track down the murderer with the help of the guests, and have the guilty party doing the Jailhouse Rock!

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About this murder mystery pack

The full pack should provide all the information you need to stage your own Murder Mystery. It is intended for use at a three course sit down meal where the principle characters will act out a set of events to the assembled guests.

Please remember from the outset that this pack is intended for an improvised performance although there are set lines for some characters.

Your cast must use the information provided to develop their characters, their “back stories” and improvise the action when and where the situation arises.

They must stay in character from the moment the guests arrive until the plot is complete and the murderer is unmasked.

This means that your performers are less constrained and restricted, can react and interact with each other and the guests at will and have a lot more fun!

This Customer Taster contains extract from the pack.

This document includes:

A **plot overview** *[truncated from the original]*

General staging notes

Sample **Character overviews** including **motive** and **opportunity** to murder the victim

A **Narrative Arc** to show how the event should flow.

An extract from the **Questions** to be asked by DCI Holmes by character

An extract from the **Denouement** by DCI Holmes by character

The full pack includes:

The full versions of the above (obviously!) and

Table cards listing characters as information for your guests

“Whodunnit” sheets for guests to complete

Customer Taster

Plot Overview

An Elvis Presley Convention is being held, and at its centre is a competition for Elvis impersonators. Guests from all over the county have been invited to listen to each of the five finalists and judge by ballot which impersonator has represented their hero in the best manner. Each Elvis brings along his Priscilla, whose job it is to drum up support for their man. One by one the five finalists take to the floor and sings the song of his choice, following which the ballot takes place.

Attending the convention are:

Wally Mulligan: Founder and chairman of BEPAS – the British Elvis Presley Appreciation Society. Managing Director of Mulligan’s Marvels, “sweet manufacturers to the stars”.

Winifred Horncastle: Long term member of BEPAS and Finance Director of Mulligan’s Marvels.

Gladys Raynor: A Member of BEPAS. Former sales girl for Mulligan’s Marvels.

Richard Winslade: A relatively new member. Managing Director of Winslade’s Pharmaceuticals and a qualified pharmacist.

Angela Mitchell: A long term member. Closet lesbian. Deputy manager at Winslade’s Pharmaceuticals.

Darren Destry: Long term member. A labourer at both Mulligan’s Marvels and Winslade’s Pharmaceuticals.

Sophie Hastings: One of the founders of the Elvis Presley Convention. Part time sweet taster at Mulligan’s Marvels.

Byron Bradley: Joined BEPAS shortly after it was formed. Works at Porton Down as a toxicologist.

Georgina Gravison: Not a member; in fact, she hates Elvis Presley’s music. Receptionist at Winslade’s Pharmaceuticals.

Roland Rickman: A Professional Elvis Impersonator. He registered with the convention just two weeks ago in order to enter the competition, but failed to tell them he is a professional.

And, later, **DCI Sherbert Holmes...**

The five singers line up to hear the result but, just as the winner’s name is about to be revealed, one of them collapses to the floor and is found to be dead. Detective Chief Inspector Sherbert Holmes is called to the scene and he vows to solve the murder there and then.

General Staging Notes

Casting / rehearsal

Your chosen performers should be issued with a copy of this entire pack.

You should hold as many rehearsals as required depending on experience of performers.

The first rehearsal should concentrate on reading through this pack, getting a feel for how the event is structured and the role that each character has to play in the plot.

Before the second rehearsal the performers should further prepare their back stories using the basic character analysis sheets as a base. At the second rehearsal these should be read out by each performer in character.

As it is impossible to rehearse the whole event without that all-important audience to react to, you should concentrate on cementing motives and relationships within the group. These can be rehearsed by the performers, more to prove they can improvise and keep up a convincing performance than word for word content!

DCI Holmes can use a notepad from which to read the set questions and denouements.

Facilities required for the performers

The performers need a separate private room for their use. They will use this prior to the event to get changed and prepared and will use the room during the event where they can exchange notes and discuss any change of tactics. The murder victim will also use this room once deceased!

The performers will be given the same food as the guests.

It would be sensible to check the facilities before the event to make sure sufficient space is available to stage the “Interrogation” by DCI Holmes.

Recommended event format

The evening works best if structured round a sit down meal. If the event is being staged in a hotel this may be a formal, served, multi-course meal, but if the event is staged in a hall or private venue you could lay-on a simpler meal or even a table buffet. Ideally there should be a table free area in which cast and guests can mix (for pre-dinner drinks) before sitting down to the meal in an area set aside for that purpose. If this is not possible guests can be shown to their tables immediately. A table for the cast of should be placed separately at the top of the room, raised if possible. If appropriate for the venue, a stage should be set for the singing competition finalists to perform.

Suggested timetable

7.00 pm	Guests arrive and are greeted by wedding party at the door.
7.15 pm	Pre dinner drinks.
7.45 pm	Singing competition takes place.
8.15 pm	First course served. The cast circulate round tables.
8.25 pm	The verdict of the competition is announced, and the victim dies.
8.30 pm	Main course served... arrival of DCI Sherbert Holmes
8.50 pm	Interrogation by Holmes.
9.30 pm	Questions asked by guests.
9.40 pm	Cast leave, guests complete “Whodunnit” forms... dessert served.
10.00 pm	Cast return... denouement

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Character Overview, Motive and Opportunity

Wally Mulligan

Now in his fifties, Wally was the founder member of B.E.P.A.S. in 1978, the year after Elvis died. He is the Chairman of the Society and has been since its inception. Much to the disgust of his wife Emily, who can't stand Elvis Presley, his house is festooned with Elvis memorabilia, his CD/DVD rack crammed with Elvis tracks and his bookcases awash with books on the life and times of the King. An avid Elvis impersonator, Wally has won the coveted award eight times since it was first given in 1985.

He has a very high opinion of himself and believes he is God's gift to Elvis impersonators, still unable to believe he hasn't made it to the big time.

In truth, he was never particularly good, his voice being too rough for the softer ballads (such as Love me Tender.) He tends to go for the big rock numbers in order to disguise this fact.

His eight wins in previous competitions have come more on the back of his bully tactics (threatening to terminate membership of people not voting for him) than singing prowess.

He is the Managing Director of Mulligan's Marvels, who boast of being "Sweet Manufacturers to the Stars".

As his wife refuses to accompany him on any of these conventions, Wally has chosen Winifred Horncastle to be his Priscilla. He is also conducting an affair with her which has been going on for some five years. He is now tired of her and is looking to 'trade her in'.

Wally is not a nice person. He is a bully, a tyrant at work, obsessed with his own grandeur and believes himself invulnerable to life's slings and arrows. He is paranoid about theft from his factory and has even instituted a rule whereby everybody is searched before they leave the site for hidden sweets. If any are found the guilty party is immediately sacked as an example to others.

His Grandfather, Tobias, almost ruined Jeremiah Winslade (Richard Winslade's Grandfather) when he called in a loan (a gentleman's agreement between Masons) early.

Wally suffers from severe asthma and always carries an inhaler which he uses frequently.

Winifred Horncastle

Now in her forties, Winifred joined the Elvis Presley Convention society in 1990 after being invited to the 1989 convention.

Formerly married to Johnson Horncastle, one of the directors of Mulligan's Sweets. Johnson died in 1987 from a stress induced heart attack.

Winifred is a quiet, mousey creature. Neat and tidy to the point of obsession, she will clear up behind anybody. She is the sort of person who will pick up litter in the street and put it in the waste bin.

When she was younger, and a junior accountant at Mulligans, she had met Georgina Gravison's mother who also worked there. She heard all about the affair between Wally and Lily Gravison and offered as much support to the woman as she could.

Winifred has been left with lots of money but still prefers to work... mainly for the company of other people, and for the fact that Wally Mulligan has promised her the Managing Directorship on his retirement or death.

She works as director of finance for Wally at Mulligan's Sweets.

Since first becoming involved with the convention she has thrown herself... and much of her money... into supporting the society and in particular Wally Mulligan - with whom she is besotted. She has been to five previous conventions with Mulligan as his Priscilla, all around the country, and has shared his hotel room on each occasion. She would like nothing better than seeing Wally divorce his wife so that he could marry her. Unfortunately, this seems a far way off.

Winifred is starting to get desperate and considering letting Emily Mulligan know, in a roundabout way, that her husband is being unfaithful. She suspects that Wally is having an affair with somebody else; for the last few months he has been cold towards her and never seems to be in when she calls.

However, she does not know who his new mistress is.

Motive

Winifred has been having an affair with Wally for five years. She constantly asked him to leave his wife and marry her. Recently, she began to suspect that he is also having another affair. She stands to benefit from his death, having been promised managing directorship when Wally retires or dies.

Opportunity

She has access to sweets as PA to Wally at Mulligan's Marvels, and has access to drugs through Georgina Gravison.

Narrative Arc

(Please note that non-guilty parties *must* tell the truth although they do not have to volunteer information if not asked for it.)

Guests (the audience!) are regarded as members and friends of the British Elvis Presley Appreciation Society.

A splendid box of chocolates must be prominently displayed, perhaps in the centre of the room (but kept out of reach of the audience!) These contain Wally Mulligan's "special" menthol sweets to aid the voice.

Pre-dinner drinks (Approx 20-30 mins.)

The cast spend 20-30 minutes socialising with the guests, dropping clues and red herrings.

After approximately 20 minutes:

- Darren Destry must be seen opening the box of chocolates and sampling some of them.
- At this point, Sophie Hastings must make a big show of "spotting" him doing so, declaring - to all and sundry - that it isn't fair for Darren to have more than one voice-enhancing sweet, as it might give him an advantage
- ...

The Singing Competition (Approx 30 mins)

MC: Ladies and Gentlemen, the moment you have been waiting for has arrived! Each contestant in turn will sing one of the King's songs and I humbly ask you to complete the voting slip you have been given indicating your "King for the Year". Once the songs are complete your voting slips will be collected, counted and I will announce the result. Elvis contestants, please come to the front. May I introduce you to the esteemed President of the Elvis Presley Society, Mr Wally Mulligan!

(Wally Mulligan takes the stage.)

Mulligan: Good evening, Ladies and Gentlemen. As those of you who have attended previous conventions will know, it is the President's job to introduce each singer before his song. I shall sing last of course, the best singer always sings last! And I shall select the order in which each contestant sings... if that's what you can call it! Before we begin, however, and in the time honoured tradition of this convention, each contestant is given the chance to enhance his singing voice by sampling the delights of Mulligan's Special Sweets, made by my company to a top secret recipe. I shall take the first sweet and the others may then help themselves.

(He picks up the box, taking and eating a sweet, and hands them round to the other singers who each take and consume one.)

Mulligan: Let the contest begin! The first to sing - earplugs in for this one, and in fact for all of them - will be Byron Bradley. The second, Roland Rickman; the third, Darren Destry; the fourth, Richard Winslade; and finally, the best of all... myself!

(The contest takes place and, at the end, the MC gathers up the voting slips and then pretends to count them as the group rejoin the guests to answer further questions. At this point the table and chairs are placed in position for the meal (assisted by the cast if necessary) and the guests are invited to partake of the first course.)

The Verdict and the Death (Approx 5 mins)

(As soon as all guests are finished with their meal the MC makes the following announcement.)

MC: Ladies and gentlemen, I have here in my hand the Elvis Presley voted, by you, to be the King for this year. After the announcement he will entertain us for the rest of the evening. If the Elvises and Priscillas will kindly come to the front, and the Elvises line up please.

(The cast arrange themselves accordingly.)

MC: Ladies and gentlemen, the winner is...

(At this point ... gasps for breath and collapses to the floor. The rest of the cast gather round, concerned.)

MC: (Uncertainly) Ladies and gentlemen, we do seem to have a problem, Mr ... is clearly seriously ill and will be removed from the hall.

(Mr ... is dragged unceremoniously to the back room by ... and The MC also goes. After a very short while he returns.)

MC: I am sorry to have to tell you that ... has breathed his last. Our Pres... is dead. The police must be informed.

(He takes mobile phone from his pocket and begins to dial. He leaves the room and the group rejoin the guests for the duration of the main course, moving around the tables dropping further hints and clues. The guests eat the main course. When the main course is finished and cleared away, a police siren is heard followed by the sound of a car skidding on gravel. DCI Holmes instantly appears.)

Holmes: Ladies and Gentlemen, please remain seated. Nobody must leave the room without explicit permission from myself. Our forensic team in the back room have conducted a miraculously quick preliminary examination on the body of the deceased and I regret to have to tell you that there is clear evidence of foul play. Mr ... has been cruelly murdered! As some of you may know, he suffered quite severely from a ... condition for which he took a very strong medication recommended by his Harley Street physician. This drug was ... and is ingested with the use of an inhaler. But a blood sample has revealed a very high dose of the drug ... in the deceased body. I am given to understand that this drug is used to control severe asthma attacks but must not be used in combination with any other asthma medication! It is inconceivable that Mr. ..., an asthma sufferer all his life, was aware of the fact and took the drug willingly. This combination of drugs acts on the metabolism within ten to twenty minutes of administration and is fatal in ninety-nine percent of cases. The only conclusion I can draw is that ... was administered to him some time during this very evening. And that somebody here tonight deliberately and callously did away with Mr. ... Sergeant! Get all the Elvises and Priscillas up here now. I shall interrogate them myself. First, Winifred Horncastle.

Interrogation (40 mins)

(Winifred Horncastle stands.)

Holmes: Where do you work?

(Response.)

Holmes: What position do you hold there?

(Response.)

Holmes: I understand your husband was a previous Director of finance at Mulligans?

(Response.)

Holmes: How did he die?

(Response.)

Holmes: I have heard rumours that you were conducting an intimate affair with Mr...

(Response.)

Holmes: I'm told that Mr. Mulligan had promised you the Managing Directorship of Mulligans Sweets when he retired... Or died. Is this true?

(Affirmative response.)

Holmes: You know Miss Gravison quite well I understand.

(Response.)

Holmes: How did you come to know the family?

(Response.)

Holmes: Did you know that Mr. ... suffers badly from asthma?

(Response.)

Holmes: I'm told by some of the other suspects that you think Mr. ... was conducting another affair with someone else... Apart from yourself... Is this true?

(Affirmative response.)

Holmes: Do you have access to prescription drugs?

(Affirmative response.)

Holmes: Thank you, Miss Horncastle. Please be seated. Next, Darren Destry. Stand, please.

(Winifred Horncastle sits.)

(Darren Destry stands.)

Holmes: Did you have anything to do with the death of ... ?

(Response.)

[etc.]

Denouement (Approx 20 mins.)

[Holmes reviews the opportunity and motive of each suspect...]

(Roland Rickman stands.)

Holmes: Mr. Rickman is new to BEPAS. He joined only two weeks ago, having spent many years abroad in Canada and the USA where he made a very successful career impersonating Elvis Presley. He knew nobody at this convention until his phone call to Gladys Raynor... **[Etc.]**

[Continues until Holmes identifies the guilty...]

(Holmes handcuffs and leads away the guilty party (to vociferous protestations!), they are followed by the rest of the cast.)

MC: Ladies and Gentlemen, I can now reveal the winning table.

(He reads out the name of the winning party. Applause and distribution of prizes as appropriate. The cast reappear to take their applause and a bow.)

(Curtain.)