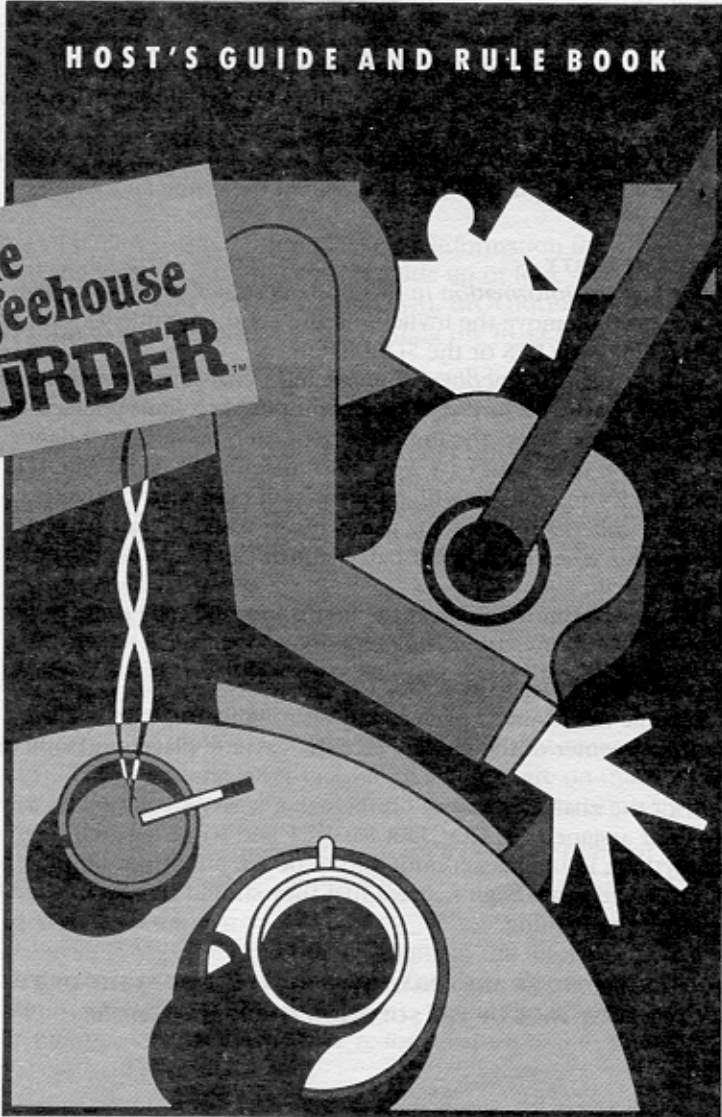


LIFE OF THE PARTY™

GAMES

HOST'S GUIDE AND RULE BOOK

The
Coffeehouse
MURDER™

A stylized, high-contrast illustration in shades of gray and black. It depicts a coffeehouse scene. In the foreground, a hand holds a knife over a coffee cup. To the left, a sign reads "The Coffeehouse MURDER". Below the sign, a cigarette is in another coffee cup. The background features a large, stylized figure of a person, possibly a murderer, with a white hand reaching out. The overall style is graphic and minimalist.

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8 Invitations, 8 Character Packets, Name Tags, Solution, Cassette Tape



You're about to plan an evening of intrigue and excitement. Your living room will become a theater, where you and seven of your friends will solve a murder.

Each of you will play a character--a suspect in some way involved with the crime. One of you will have committed the crime and will try to hide that fact.

BEFORE THE PARTY

Read all the information in this booklet (*Rules of Play and Plot Scenario, too*). Remove the invitations and set them aside. Do not read the CHARACTER PACKETS or the SOLUTION.

Your first task is to contact friends and make sure they are available the night of the party. Be sure you have eight people (count yourself as one) to play all the parts. Stress the importance of each player's attendance.

Once you have your cast, you must assign roles. Read ABOUT THE CHARACTERS and decide which person will play what character. Remember this is a role-playing game, but you should not be concerned about gender when casting the party--a man can play a woman or a woman can play a man.

Fill out the information on the invitations and mail them to your guests. One extra invitation is included.

THE EVENING OF THE PARTY

Arrange the room so players may sit roughly in a circle. Place a small table in the center of the circle. Place the cassette player and tape on the table.

Print the character names on the name tags. As your guests arrive, give them their assigned CHARACTER PACKET and name tag. Tell them not to read anything in the packet until told to do so, but to put on their name tags. Once the game begins, stress that they should remain in character for the rest of the evening.

IMPORTANT: IF THERE ARE ONLY SEVEN PLAYERS THE NIGHT OF THE PARTY, OPEN THE FIRST PAGE OF THE SOLUTION FOR INSTRUCTIONS.



(To Be Read Aloud By The Host The Night Of The Party)

This is a game about murder and those who play are all suspects. The object of the game is to deduce who in the group is playing the role of the murderer. The murderer must try to hide the fact that he or she committed the crime.

The CHARACTER PACKETS contain all the information the group needs to find the murderer. Each packet is made up of four sections. The top section contains your character's PERSONAL BIOGRAPHY. You will read this section to yourself after I finish reading the RULES OF PLAY.

The three remaining sections are clues that will help the group to solve the murder. You will read and reveal them during the game, as directed.

With the help of the clues, the truth will unfold through normal conversation (by questions and answers) with each player acting the part of their character. The basic rule of play is that all questions must be answered truthfully, *only the killer may lie*.

READING AND REVEALING CLUES

When told to do so, read your first clue. Then, in conversation with each other, reveal the contents of your clue and place it on the table. You're then free to read your second clue, but don't reveal it until all first clues are placed on the table.

When all first clues are on the table, I'll announce that second clues may be revealed. This routine is repeated until all clues are on the table. Any clue placed on the table may be reviewed at any time by any player.

Be sure to divulge all the information in each clue. Every bit of information, however obscure, may be important.

EXPANDING YOUR CHARACTER

It may not be in your best interest to volunteer the information in your personal biography (unless your biography tells you to do so). Of course, if asked, you must reveal the information (unless you're the killer, then you may lie). Remember, all characters are here for one purpose--to accuse correctly and avoid being accused.

If a player asks you a question that has no relevance to the information supplied, you may improvise and develop your character beyond the background provided. This is encouraged. This information, however, should not contradict what has been accepted by the group as fact. *Remember you must stay in character throughout the game.*



THE CASSETTE TAPE

The cassette will be played before the conversation begins. Players should not be concerned with the accents used by the actors on the tape. Simply allow the recording to lead you into the flow of the game.

ENDING THE GAME

Once all clues are on the table, each player can accuse his or her prime suspect. Tell how and why the crime was committed and give evidence to support your claim. Once all the accusations are made, I will read the SOLUTION.

HOW TO BEGIN PLAY-A QUICK REVIEW

Follow these steps in order:

- The host reads the RULES OF PLAY aloud to everyone
- All players secretly read the top section of their CHARACTER PACKETS (this is your personal biography)
- The host reads the PLOT SCENARIO aloud, twice
- All players secretly read their own CLUE 1
- The host plays the cassette
- Then, the conversation begins!

This is a game of fiction. Names, characters, places, and incidents are either the product of the author's imagination or are used fictitiously, and any resemblance to actual persons, living or dead, events, or locales is entirely coincidental.

Jeremy Swain, rambler, gambler, boot-heels-worn-down, collar-turned-up bustin' 'cross the scene folksinger, was found dead with a single bullet hole in the head. Swain was a rising star who had a "crossover" hit entitled *Sun-down in Memphis*. His body was discovered in the third floor walk-up apartment he was occupying while playing at the Gate of Fate coffeehouse. The apartment was located two floors above the club and was offered to featured acts while they appeared there. Swain had missed an early morning interview and did not respond to knocks on the door by coffeehouse manager, Fran Fern. The door was secured from the inside by a wooden latch. The latch was the only lock on the door because the regular lock had been broken the night before, as Swain claimed, by an over-zealous fan. The latched door was kicked down by the police Fern summoned. A .22 caliber pistol was found laying next to the body.


Although suicide seemed likely because there was no other means of access to the apartment, the police thought it odd that a musician who was about to embark on his first national tour would kill himself. Also, no money was found in the apartment. The case remains open and is being investigated.


Swain was playing the Gate of Fate as a favor to club owner, Barney Fawn. Fawn had hired Swain often when Swain was struggling. Now Jeremy felt he owed it to Fawn to fill some tables for him with his newfound fame. Swain played to full houses for each of his sets and was leaving the next day to embark on the tour arranged by his manager, Del Finney.


There was a closing night party attended by most of those gathered here tonight. The party ended around 4:00 am. The police have determined that Swain died between 5:00 and 7:00 that morning.


That last evening, though, was a truly memorable time. The joint was jumping! Opening act and emcee Art Fez re-entered the scene after a four year hiatus. The two turned the night magical from the postage stamp stage. Things were getting so loose, Swain even invited Natalie Corvus to the stage to belt out one of her Gregorian chants. The show ended after Barney Fawn, never one to discourage that one last round, chased everyone out for fear of being busted for a curfew violation.


The death of Swain was a somber contrast to that evening. Perhaps the group gathered tonight can shed some light on the events which led up to Swain's death and discover what really happened.


 **Patty Farb:** Department store heiress with too much money and too much time on her hands. She often gave money to struggling artists she felt showed promise. Patty had affairs with most of the performers at the club and once fell especially hard for Swain. She gave money to many causes and was once, for a short time, a member of the American Communist Party. She attended the party that evening and claimed she was with one of her artist friends at the time of death.


 **Art Fez:** The bongo-playing comedian who opened the show for Swain and doubled as the emcee. Fez was active in the labor movement in the late 1940's and at the time, was a good friend of Swain. Fez was called before the House Un-American Activities Committee (HUAC). While he was cleared of any communistic "wrong doing", he was blacklisted from the clubs and was playing his first gig in four years. He did attend the party but left early. He stated that he was searching the streets for a restaurant that served purple gelatin at the time of death.


 **Barney Fawn:** Forty-year-old night club owner and amateur UFO watcher. Fawn claimed to have had encounters with alien beings and believes some of the acts he hires are the next closest things. He would loan struggling singers moderate sums of money and then have them pay him back by playing his club for peanuts. He did not attend the party, choosing to remain downstairs counting the night's receipts instead.

 **Teresa Wilcox:** Was Swain's live-in but was not sharing the apartment during Jeremy's current engagement. They had been having "marital" problems of late. Wilcox also served as Swain's back-up singer but did not perform at the Gate of Fate. She did attend the party but was unclear about her whereabouts at the time of death.

 **Rocky Tuttle:** Young and aggressive loan officer of a small bank. Tuttle was making the scene often in the past few months. Although he was as square as they come, Tuttle and Swain struck up a close relationship. He did not attend the party and was vague about his movements around the time of death.

 **Del Finney:** Swain's business manager and owner of a dry cleaning store. He was a big force behind Swain's success and was as hard-working as any manager of a folk act could be. Finney was not at the party. He left right after the show to make final preparations for Swain's next date.

 **Natalie Corvus:** She was a chronic club hanger-on who fancied herself a talented singer. She would invariably come on stage every amateur night and belt Gregorian chants at the top of her lungs. Natalie was often seen outside the club in Swain's company and it was a well-known fact that Teresa found that unbearable. Natalie was at the party but left after a boisterous argument with Wilcox about the former's singing or lack of singing talents. She claims she was stargazing at the time of death.

 **Fran Fern:** Fran was the manager/bartender of the Gate of Fate. She was briefly married to Swain during the lean years. Active in many causes, she once lobbied to have the raisin declared the national fruit. She stayed in the club to clean up and did not attend the party.

Compiled with permission from a longer, more extensive work by Del Close—a cat with a loose wig.

- To dig** To understand
- Do up** To consume or destroy
- Face** A person
- Fall by**..... To visit
- Get in the wind** To leave
- Pad**..... An apartment
- Riff**..... A musical or conversational solo
- Salty**..... To be angry
- Short**..... An automobile
- Short line**..... Low pay
- Scene** Where things "happen"
- Tapped**..... To be arrested
- Tossed**..... To be searched by the police
- Wig** A mind (A loose wig would mean one is a creative thinker)

Note: Mr. Close suggests that one may be able to pass as a hipster by interspersing: "like", "dig", and "man" into any declarative sentence. The advanced student may wish to add "I'm hip" to this list. Try saying "I'm going to the store" using this method.

