

Exposed Deck

By Anne Ratchat

Guy Alpha is attempting to acquire his first international property and to celebrate the occasion, he invited his close friends on a weekend yacht trip to Cuba. Half way to their destination, the yacht breaks down, leaving the company with no signal, too many booze, and opportunity to achieve their personal goals. In this lap of luxury, surely nothing could go wrong.

Players: 6-12 (more is better)

Run Time: 2-3 hours

Running the Game - Guy Alpha and Sutter May are the only mandatory character. The rest are added to flavor the story and add unique interactions. Find excuses why other characters are not in play. The space needs to be large enough for people to mingle and have private conversations but not large enough that people can simply get away. I recommend having an area that is a deck, a galley, a bedroom, and the engine room. Playing online? It transitions really easily using discord. Just set up the rooms as you would tables in a convention space and jump between.

Consent Mechanics - The core of consent mechanics is that everyone is building the story together. Each character has one character they want to protect (Positive) and one character they want to undermine (Negative) and they will be attempting to do so over the course of the game. When players interact with you, they are giving you invitations for play. You get to decide how to react or how things effect you. For example, if someone insults you, you do not have to be insulted. You might be naive and think it is a compliment. "Thank you." This happens with violence as well. If someone tries to punch you, you get to decide if you dodge, get hurt, or get killed (and yes, it is fun to die and watch everyone else deal with what that means). Feel free to test out the waters and see what feels fun. Also, you can step out of character and negotiate for specific scenes or interactions.

Also, if you see something fun going on and want to get involved, find a reason to get involved. The time until the coast guard arrives is limited so take advantage of the time you have on this yacht.

Plot Cards - These are random plot devices you can use at any time you decide, or not. These do not count as physical things being carried until they are passed on to someone else. You must use them at some point to trigger plot for someone else. When you pass on the card, this plot device is triggered with that person, either being effected by or finding said item, and they take control of the plot device.

Place the following on index cards. Shuffle them and pass them out, one per player.

1. Heart Attack
2. Sea creature sighting
3. Toolbox
4. Crowbar
5. Satellite Walkie Talkie
6. Sun burn

7. Truth Serum Syringe
8. Kitchen Knife
9. Designer Drugs
10. Insider Information
11. Work files
12. Inflatable Life vest
13. Scuba set

Safety Mechanics - These are mechanics in play in order to make sure everyone is able to take care of themselves so that everyone can get the most out of the game.

The Door is Always Open - If you need to leave the game for any reason, feel free to do so. This can be to take care of your needs (bio, water, etc.), to check on an important call, or maybe you just aren't having fun. If you are not going to return, please tell the facilitator just so they know.

Out of Character - You can put your fist against your head to signal that you are speaking out of character. This can be for a clarification or for a negotiation. Other players will not respond in character to the information you shared this way. You particularly want to use this signal if things are going in a direction that doesn't feel comfortable to redirect.

Look Down - You can put a salute to shade your eyes and look down to travel out of character in the game space. Be this because you are being sneaky in character or because you just want an excuse to leave a scene, you can do this with no questions asked.

Largo - This game can get loud and dramatic and in your face. If you are feeling overwhelmed, you can say "largo" to tone down the scene. The scene will continue as it was but with less emotion, less screaming (if they were), and hopefully make all players most engaged in play.

Guy Alpha - The Owner - You were always an entrepreneur from your first childhood lemonade stand. You knew nothing in the world would stop you from becoming wealthy but little did you know that one day you would define wealth. You never self-identified as smart but you knew how to do well enough in school and figured that STEM had potential. You went into engineering, believing that power technology was the way of the future. You struggled with the program but, as before, you did well enough, even if it meant you were always down to the wire on all of your assignments. When rushing to finish a semester long project, you literally ran into someone who would become your girlfriend. She was impressed by your equations and made you feel like you actually had potential in this field. That project was the foundation of a breakthrough and started your famous and infamous company.

Your girlfriend is mousey and shy and incredibly smart and hot. She does everything you need her to do to support you behind the scenes and help your image in public. Controversy helps stocks after all, so who cares if society only knows parts of who the two of you are if they keep talking and making you money. She is your muse.

You are in the process of taking over your first overseas property, which is where Mickey Young comes into play. You are hoping to really show him the luxury you can provide so that he will help you negotiate the best deal with his company for your first international property.

Positive: Harrow Vargas - She is your rock. Everything you are, she makes better. You need her to be in the limelight for the media but you know she would rather be a homebody. For this weekend to be successful, with the non-stop socializing, you need to make sure she has the ability to recharge because she isn't always the best at advocating for her own needs.

Negative: Gene Riley - They are one of your biggest friendemies; friendly in public to each other's face, you know the two of you are always socially backstabbing the other at any opportunity. A person has the easiest time acting the opposite of their true personality in front of the camera. They acted particularly happy to see you today so you have to watch your back.

Harrow Vargas - The Trophy Girlfriend - You were always incredibly smart. 4 years old when you got into Mensa, the spotlight was now on you and you panic and went doe eyed. The IQ test you took was just games. Everyone, especially your parents, put so much pressure on you to perform and you just clammed up and were lost to obscurity. People insulted you but you didn't defend yourself because 1. What evidence did you have and 2. That would require talking back and you'd rather just be left alone. And so you were.

You became an accountant because you don't have to talk to do numbers. You continued your passion into physics and engineering as a hobby. One day, while leaving a coffee shop, you bumped into a young engineering student, about your age, and your papers were scrambled together. He was dorky and speechless when he saw some of your equations. Also unable to talk, you started passing equations back and forth and over time, love bloomed. Unafraid of the limelight, he took center stage while you were very happy to be the silent armcandy. You never needed anyone to think highly of you so you don't mind the hate comments you get online. Today, it is important to be seen for business relationships but you would be much happier squirreling away to read a book or figuring out the next step of the current equation that is bothering you.

Positive: Guy Alpha - He is the light of your life and you are smart enough to protect him from the many threats he misses. You don't do it for thanks because you know it would hinder his ability to shine if he was afraid of the possible messes you clean up before they become problems. There is little you will not do for him. You just want his love.

Negative: Nelson Hunt - you think they are trying to sabotage your business but you don't have evidence. You know that Guy Alpha and Nelson have a lot of meetings on board so maybe you can find something here and get them ousted,

Carter Baldwin - The Captain - You own Crystal Waves, a company that will run yacht trips for the super wealthy. Having been in this industry for nearly 20 years, you know that this ultra-elite can ask for almost anything and will expect you to provide. The market space for these luxury experiences is very competitive and so staying in favor with the clientele is very important.

You have hand selected your crew to be the best of the best. With that said, you are a temperamental boss because you treat the crew based on how well they are liked by the clients. You will readily give out bonuses in front of your guests when they are in a good mood. You will publicly berate the crew if they have displeased the celebrities in some way. You never follow through if you say you are going to fire one of the crew, so they should be thankful. They need to realize that they are always on stage in front of the elites because the workers exist for their entertainment.

You have found additional ways of making up the gaps between the wealth inequality of you and your clients. You have created a "small" side business selling sensitive objects that once belonged to these super elite including, but not limited, to underwear, hair brushes with hair, sometimes used condoms. People will buy the most bizarre things online and you make so much money from this side hustle.

Positive: Gene Riley - You adore this personality. They are just as delightful in person as they seem to be on the television. You find yourself going out of your way to help them with everything they ask and you also find that you do not mind at all - it makes you feel validated and important. Perhaps if you play this right, they will have you on their show?

Negative: Nelson Hunt - You know a yes man when you see it and you know that two yes men competing makes each much less significant. You need to find a way of getting this CFO out of the way so that Guy Alpha and the Mickey Young the amount of work you have done for them to make this contract work. If you play this right, you might be able to expand your business.

Lonnie Lee - The First Mate - You like Carter Baldwin but hate the job because the clientele are caricatures of themselves. You would quit but you can't find a job that pays as well to do equal or less work. The secret you have is to always look busy but in reality, you often don't have much to do because the captain likes schmoozing, the yachts are hightech and require little oversight, and the mechanic keeps the boat running. You know that Carter can be temperamental so you do your best to stay out of the way "keeping busy". You find a lot of time for hobbies, especially auditory ones you can do while "cleaning" the yacht. Sometimes when trying to tidy up, you can find some good drugs that no one will care if they go missing. That's a fun afternoon, then.

You have attempted creating a video account but could never get it off the ground. Really, you would accept any get rich quick scheme but you want to become famous so that you can show the world how a real person acts. The world, in general, should have a light reflected on itself to show all the debris and decay that it has created. You think this is why the account failed - people are not ready to confront the truth that you were showing them.

Positive: Kandi Duncan - You are having a secret tryst with Kandi. It is very hard to hide it but you have for now. You think you are in love. You are looking for a way out of this shit job and to build a better life together.

Negative: Guy Alpha - He is the worst of the worst. He is stuck up, ethically horrible, and you hear he didn't even make his success without his parents' money. Just the cycle of the entitled becoming more entitled. You think the world would be better without him.

Sutter May - The Mechanic - Your family is from the Northeast so you grew up around boats. While the rest of the family liked sailboats, resulting in you knowing your way around sailboats well, you were drawn to the luxury market, even if you could never afford it from your family background. Your loving older brother was a networker and people person. With footwork, and knowing you had a life so much bigger than what he would ever achieve, he arranged for you to go overseas for college on scholarship and you took a running leap into that international life. When you met influential people, you made the most of the skills your brother had taught you and made yourself very useful for these people. You continue to make yourself useful to this day. The yacht didn't just break down for no reason, you sabotaged the engine. Feigning as the crew's new yacht mechanic, your true job is as an international corporate espionage spy. You know there are documents you need to find and squirrel away to get to your employers. You've been trying to lay low for the voyage but it is time to be seen in the right places so people don't expect you to be in the wrong ones.

Positive: Kandi Duncan - Your job is typically really lonely but you see Kandi actively trying to create a sense of community and comradery with the staff. You don't remember the last time you've had such a pleasant work experience, especially - ugh - the amazing food you've been eating. You could never tell her how much you appreciate her because your cover story is completely falsified but you do want to find a way to thank her.

Negative: Guy Alpha - They are your target and your aim is to bring them down in anyway in order to assist your employer. Yes, you need to find the documents, but also it would be useful if he just disappeared at sea.

Kandi Duncan - The Chef - You got this job with the Captain, Carter Baldwin, straight out of culinary school and it's worked really well for you. Yes, the clientele are pretentious but you don't deal with them too often and when you do, it tends to be in the galley so you get to see a bit more into people's true sides. The Captain is volatile but you think that is mostly because he cannot control his blood sugar. Usually, you get him something to eat or drink and it's all better. In this crew, that you consider to be a tight knit family, you get to travel the world. Not too shabby for a poor kid with no prospects.

This job also has brought you a low level of fame as a reel video star. Your short couple minute-long videos of prepping meals and testing out multipurpose gadgets in your small brig allow you the ability to connect into the lives of so many lay people. You are right at the point of the tipping point of your career. It'll be a risk but you might be able to start your own company and be self-employed. You expect this will be a big change because currently, your overhead is so low that staying where you are is safe.

You have been secretly having a fling with Lonnie Lee because it is lonely out here. You think he is way more into you than him and you don't want to hurt his feelings but the reality is that you two are at different points in your life. It's nice while you are together but career-wise, you know he is looking for a way out and you are trying to get deeper.

Positive: Isley Vargas - You aren't one for drug use but you've built quite the relationship with the stoner during their time on the ship. You expect it's because of the munchies but they spend a lot of time in your brig, keeping you company while you cook. They haven't been one to offer much advice, trying to keep most conversation surface level, but you know that the advice you can drag out of them is solid.

Negative: Sutton May - You have nothing against introverts but Sutton doesn't really hang with the rest of the crew in the way the old Mechanic had. When you can't hang out with the guests in any quality time way because you are working for them, missing one of your small team really hurts. You want to find a way to get him fired and replaced.

Gene Riley - TV Personality - You are a household face of luxury. You are currently most famous for your architecture show, which started with luxury houses and transitioned to a spin-off of international luxury hotels. For work, you frequent endless Michelin star restaurants, get high-end spa experiences, and have a stylist to dress you in luxury brands.

You spend so much time traveling and entertain yourself by reading and listening to a lot of true crime media. You have become quite the good detective and figured out a bunch of investigation techniques from your hobby. It is grotesque but also you find that a lot of people do find it just as interesting as you. Nothing brings you joy as much as solving a mystery.

Today is such a big day. Your friend, Guy Alpha, is buying his own first international property so you want to help as much as possible with what you've learned from your show. You are so excited for him. It is also the perfect setting to get some publicity photos.

Positive: Kandi Duncan - You are a big fan of her day in the life social media content but don't want to come off as too much of a fan because you personally hate it when people do that to you. However, you find every opportunity to spend more time with her to live the quaint life her portray online.

Negative: Carter Baldwin - Something about Carter Baldwin makes you feel very uncomfortable. He laughs a little too hard at your jokes. He seems to echo your emotions to a T, as if he doesn't have any himself and is just following your lead. He's just always there, right next to you. You know you need to be polite but you want him to stop and leave you alone. Is he some sort of superfan?

Isley Vargas - Trophy girlfriend's stoner sibling - You were an above average kid but when your genius sister burnt out super early due to your parent's pressure, they turned their pressure on to you. Saying you did better wasn't saying much. You started growing weed in high school to cut through the pressure. You started developing your own strains in college as an experiment. You graduated med school at the top of your class and started work in ER because it was so fast paced that you couldn't think about the depression slowly eating away at you. So in your free time, you do whatever you want and are always down for a new strain even if you would probably lose your job if the hospital found out about your hobby.

This current strain you've been smoking has been giving you the worst munchies so you've been spending most of your time near food. Luckily, you have a teenager's metabolism, otherwise you would have a hard time getting into your work slacks on Monday. The chef seems far too innocent to be working with the people she does but her skills in the kitchen make you understand how she got the job in the first place.

Positive: Harrow Vargas - You know her public persona is a coping defense and, honestly, of the ones you've seen her try out, this is the best one. She thinks she's in love and is happy to privately pursue her intellectual interests. If only one of you can be happy, you want her to be.

Negative: Prisca Nolan - They are so snooty and judgemental of everything. You just want things to be chill and it seems like they always want things to be as dramatic as possible. They are also very dismissive of your sister when taking care of your sister is supposed to be part of their job. If you could find some way to replace Prisca, or maybe find someone better, you think you could convince your sister to convince her boyfriend to hire someone new.

Nelson Hunt - The Best Friend - You are Guy Alpha's best friend and CFO of the company. The foil to Guy Alpha, you graduated with a degree in business and met Guy Alpha during the graduation party for your college. Shortly after, you two started the business together and have been together through thick and thin. You have learned that Guy Alpha is a strong leader type that you have the most of control if you just tell Guy Alpha yes. He doesn't follow up with anything you do in the company too closely so you have a lot of freedom in the actual implementation of the "ideas". His ideas and work also make it super easy to pitch to the shareholders so your job is usually pretty stress-free.

You are in debt due to a horse racing addiction. You are siphoning money from the company in order to help pay for it. You know you are in trouble but there is no one you can ask for help. You believe that Guy Alpha cares enough about you that he would forgive you but you are scared to test this theory. Currently, you are particularly starting to stress out about this because with the lack of signal, you have no way to keep up with the current races. You are starting to feel signs of withdrawal.

Positive: Guy Alpha - You have been pining for Guy Alpha since you met him and started the company together. His cocky grin and blue eyes make you start to smile even when you are in the foulest of moods.

Negative: Harrow Vargas - This girl is useless and does nothing for Guy Alpha. If he just wants arm candy, you can be arm candy for him. You want her gone and you don't particularly care what is necessary to make this happen. You also know that she acts differently around you so you think she is on to your financial schemes within the company.

Prisca Nolan - Assistant - You are a top-rated career executive assistant. You are very good at your job and are proud knowing that all your actions reflect on the company. This is the most prestigious job you have had, let alone that anyone could have. You are never not working and you love it. You are constantly on camera behind Guy Alpha and, accordingly, you dress in luxury brands to appear the most polished. This has led to you having your own cult following for your fashion taste. Who said professional dress is boring?

You are also quite the gossip and you know how to unload dirty romance secrets at exactly the right time. You know Nelson Hunt is in love with Guy Alpha. You know Kandi Duncan and Lonnie Lee are hooking up. You don't have evidence yet but you think the Mickey Young is making eyes at Sutton May. You would never let yourself get pulled into something so scandalous so it is very easy for you to be judgemental of these masochistic fools.

Positive: Nelson Hunt - He is as cutthroat as you and he is going places. You need to find a way to get on his good side so that he knows you are betting on his pony. The two of you could do well making waves together.

Negative: Henry Mills - They are no better than any of the crew. Low class will always be low class. The Lottery Winner just got lucky and are as crass as any other automechanic, no matter what fancy car they might brag about driving. They do not deserve to be here and you want to find a way to put them back in their place.

Henry Mills - Recent Lottery Winner - You were a mechanic who, on a really bad day (your girlfriend dumped you; your house was going to be foreclosed), bought a lottery ticket. Later that week, you were an extreme multi-millionaire. You could not count all the zeroes. You bought the autoshop. You got your mortgage taken care of. Debts paid. And the money was not even dented. So you bought luxury vintage vehicles. You bought a fancy penthouse in the city. You started schmoozing with the greats of society and business. You met Guy Alpha and both of you loved being seen by the camera having a good time so your relationship started. It is definitely superficial but who needs more in life when money can buy you anything you want - except the perfect trophy girlfriend that Alpha has. You'd love someone like her in your life. You've always been attracted to beautiful things, like your vintage cars. You want the life that everyone can drool over and without that significant other, who stays out of your flings, you will never be able to convince the general American audience that you have it all.

Positive: Harrow Vargas - She barely talks and looks cute. You need her in your life. You need to find a way to make her believe that you can provide her a better life than what Guy Alpha can.

Negative: Carter Baldwin - You know a scummy business owner when you see one. You know from his watch that someone how he is making additional money somewhere and you cannot figure out where he is getting it - yet. Even with all the money you now have, you wouldn't suffer if you had more.

Mickey Young - Business Negotiator - You came to the states for college not only as an international student but as an underaged student, as well. You had a hard time making friends, no one wanting to associate with a dorky, overachieving, weirdly accented 16 year-old, until you met the person who would later become your college-long roommate. This roommate guided you, taught you how to socialize and mingle, and was the reason your college experience was so positive. When you graduated and moved home, everyone was so excited to see how sophisticated and suave you had become. When you were searching for your new job, your experience in the States impressed the right people and they gave you quite the leg up in the hierarchy ladder.

You now do state-side negotiations for your company, assisting with money-transfers and acquisitions internationally. Currently negotiating for your company with Guy Alpha to sell the him his first overseas property. Your company culture dictates that you cannot do business until after you have spent time socializing and getting to know each other and, for the Guy Alpha, socializing means partying. You are not complaining. You thoroughly plan to take advantage of the luxuries available here for as long as possible and delay the business deal, as you will have to go back immediately after.

Positive: Sutter May - The mechanic is the younger sibling of your college roommate and so are protective of them. Like you, you know that he went to college away from home, overseas. You hope you can find time to reconnect with this kid sibling that you've only heard great things about in college.

Negative: Lonnie Lee - You know his two-faced behavior well as it is the same behavior you see from your childhood "friends" jealous of your success due to going to college abroad. But unlike your childhood friends who have connected parents, this "First Mate" doesn't have anyone to protect him. You have the opportunity to let your frustration out and you doubt anyone would care.