



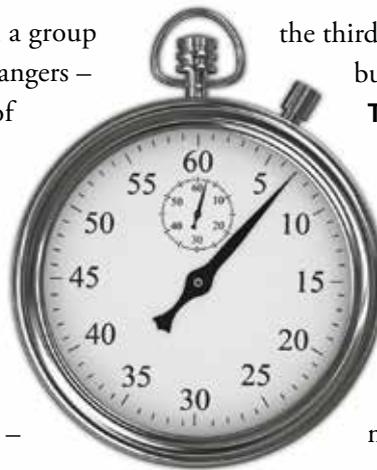
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Owner/operators of Exit Strategy  
 Escape Room, Shelley Miller and  
 Tom Acton.

## *We've Gotta Get Out of this Place!*

The clock is ticking. You're in a room with a group of people who may be friends, family or strangers – or some combination thereof. Regardless of whether or not you know anyone, you all share the same mission: to escape within one hour. The room itself is like a 3-D puzzle to be solved, carefully designed with an engaging “plot” or theme. Working together, players use their bodies and minds to uncover clues, solve puzzles and locate hidden objects to find a way out – hopefully, in time.

This is the escape room experience, and it's become a worldwide phenomenon that has arrived in Downtown Cumberland. Operated by Tom Acton and Shelley Miller, Exit Strategy Escape Room opened in December 2018 on



the third floor in room 306 of the Allegany Museum building. Two rooms are currently available:

**The Untouchables** room, where Eliot Ness has hired you to help him nab Al Capone by searching for his ledger inside one of his private speakeasy clubs; and **Through the Looking Glass** room, where you've followed the white rabbit into a fantasy world, only to learn that he has vanished and you can only escape by finding his magic tokens and pocket watch.

Exit Strategy Escape Room also currently offers two portable rooms, designed for groups of six to fifty people. **Missing Talismans** challenges players to find the treasure chest that contains the most valuable spoils obtained by the four greatest pirate captains, and protected with the



**The Untouchables room where Eliot Ness has hired you to find Al Capone's ledger.**

power of four magic talismans. In **Tohua Island**, tiki statues of the children of Tāwhirimātea, the god of weather, have gone missing. Players must find a way out before it's too late.

The idea of the business arose from the simple question, "What are we going to do this weekend?" Eventually, the couple learned about the escape room craze sweeping the country. Designed as a social play experience, the escape room concept originated in Japan around 2007 and caught on in Asia and Eastern Europe before arriving in San Francisco around 2012. Tom says, "Shelley and I would travel to escape rooms in other areas. On our first outing, we didn't get out of the first room, but it was still a lot of fun."

Since its 2018 opening, the Exit Strategy experience has been catching on in Cumberland. "It's been good. We've been pleasantly surprised. We've seen hundreds of participants

since opening, with guests coming from Morgantown to Hagerstown and everywhere in between," Tom says.

Tom and Shelley believe the escape room experience is perfectly suited for team-building, and have used it with their other business they've operated since 2003, Get Out & Play Outfitters. "We've offered team-building escape room experiences to several area businesses, including Potomac State College, Cintas, and Hamilton Relay," Tom says. "The portable units are popular for corporate events and parties."

Rooms are priced at two levels, depending on the number of participants: at a per person rate for a minimum of four, or at a private room fee for up to eight. Minors under 18 must be accompanied by an adult age 21 or older; for the



**Through the Looking Glass room where you must find the white rabbit's magic tokens and pocket watch.**

Untouchables Room, the minimum age is 12.

The couple operates the business from an office located on the second floor of the Western Maryland Railway Station, where they also maintain a small retail shop selling GAP (Great Allegheny Passage) bike trail and C&O Canal memorabilia such as t-shirts, hats and souvenirs. "These serve as an advertisement for the community of Cumberland," Tom says. "Many cyclists end their rides here. The merchandise reminds people, 'Here's where we finished our ride.'"

Tom and Shelley continue to come up with ideas. One about to launch in spring of 2019 is the Goosechase Scavenger Hunt, designed as a community-wide experience

throughout the Cumberland area. Players will be able to download a designated phone app to keep track of score – both those of their own team and those of other teams. The app also allows them to take photos to post, obtain and provide live information, do GPS check-ins at various sites, plus ask questions and provide answers to other participants.

To find updates on the Goosechase Scavenger Hunt or to obtain information and make reservations, go online to **exitstrategyescaperoom.com** or call **301-777-0747**. You can also use a contact form on the web site to schedule a visit.

**Exit Strategy Escape Room**  
3 Pershing Street, Room 306, Cumberland, MD 21502