

An Old-Timey Murder Mystery for 3-5!

A One-Shot RPG with the New Day System

by Peter William Hurford

Requirements

- Game Master who is familiar with New Day and this sheet
- 3-5 people who have never played this one-shot before
- Standard Polyhedral Dice
- Combat Game Mat and Figurines (or appropriate stand-ins)
- Character sheets for this specific RPG (see below)

Setting

- The time is 1925 in North Hampton, Vermont. It's the height of the Prohibition, Bootlegging, Speakeasies, Gangsters, and all that jazz.

Initial Story Unfolds

- The Doctor (player character) is working at the hospital when he/she gets a call from the First United Vermont Catholic Church, the biggest church in all of Vermont. While it's not well-known out of state, this Church is a pretty big deal. The call is frantic and will first make no sense but reference a possible death ("We think he's dead!"). With a bit of prompting, the caller will ask the Doctor to come to the house near the Church right away. No further details are given, even with additional prompting.
- First, it is only the Doctor (player character) who gets to play – all other characters watch while waiting for their turn. The Doctor arrives at the home and knocks/rings doorbell/whatever. Father Rutledge greets the Doctor, and ushers her/him to the upstairs bedroom where Fathers Radley and Lynd are waiting. These people are described, as is the house generally.
- More specifically, they reach a door. Father Rutledge describes what is going on, detailing *Father Rutledge's Testimony* (see below). Rutledge insists that no one has touched the body, and nothing in the room had been moved, removed, or added. Currently, the cause of death is unknown. The Doctor may investigate a bit (see *Potential Investigation Points* below), but only a little bit of play is allowed before further characters are added. The Doctor will be strongly railroaded to find the cause of death pretty quick.

- Once the death is found to be murder, the Fathers decide it best to call the County Detective (player character) to investigate the scene of the crime and pursue clues to find the killer.
- Father Lynd is the only one who argues that involving the police may not be a good idea, and insist they also hire the Church's Lawyer (player character) to supervise the investigation. Rutledge and Radley agree.
- The Detective gets the call at his/her office first. It is much more civil, explains Father Rutledge's Testimony (usually here the GM just says "He tells you what he told the Doctor about the murder", since the player has been listening and it speeds things up, but the testimony can be repeated if necessary), and that she/he needs to investigate some foul play.
- If there are more than three people playing, the Detective is also instructed to bring "one of your best officers" or "two of your best officers" as back up, depending on the amount of Police Officers (player characters) in the game. They will all decide to go check out the house at once, as a group. They also all know each other already.
- The Lawyer (player character) gets a call at his/her office, detailing *Father Rutledge's Testimony* (again in reference), plus the facts that the cops have been called. The fact that this alcohol investigation is really embarrassing for the Church is stressed, and they want the Lawyer there to assist in making things go smoothly. The Lawyer is instructed to assist in the investigation any way she/he can. The Lawyer knows the Fathers a bit, but not well.
- The Lawyer, Detective, and any Police Officers (if applicable), arrive at the house simultaneously. They are all ushered up the stairs by Rutledge to the Doctor, and meeting and greeting can occur. The investigation then proceeds until the murder is solved (see *Investigation Points* below).

Father Rutledge's Testimony

- Fathers Berkshire, Radley, Rutledge, and Lynd are all Catholic priests of the most prominent church in Vermont.
- Father Berkshire was locked in his room for the night by Father Rutledge, to keep him away from the "Devil's Drink" (which constantly tempts Berkshire), so he wouldn't be hungover at the eulogy he had to give tomorrow for Francis Hughes.
- Francis Hughes was a candidate for governor of Vermont before withdrew from the campaign and committed suicide three days later.

- During the day before the eulogy, to ensure Berkshire did not drink alcohol, Father Rutledge was with Berkshire at all times. Obviously many steps were taken to ensure Berkshire would be free from this strong temptation, given that it would be very embarrassing for the Church if this secret of alcoholism in the Church got out. Not only should the Church be holy, but with the Prohibition, alcohol is very illegal!
- Before being locked in his room for the night, Berkshire was thoroughly searched first by Father Radley and then by Rutledge. Radley also thoroughly searched Berkshire's entire room. During the search of Berkshire and the room, Rutledge was still with Berkshire at all times. Rutledge then personally escorted Berkshire into his room and locked the door himself.
- Berkshire still has the only key, and is quite sure the door couldn't have been unlocked while Rutledge was in there -- . Berkshire even looked back through the keyhole to ensure Rutledge was in his bed!
- Somehow, despite the room being locked, having no windows, and no known entrances other than the locked door itself, the next morning Rutledge was found dead from toxin. No containers were found anywhere in the room. The door showed no signs of entry.
- To make matters even stranger, not only was the door locked, but Father Lynd was outside guarding the door all night and saw no signs of foul play.

Solution

- Berkshire had wanted to drink alcohol through the keyhole via a straw, but his alcohol was instead laced with poison! Instant murder! A few days ago, he had arranged for a speakeasy to get him the alcohol the day before the eulogy in exchange for a hefty bribe. Turns out the speakeasy was run by the Mafia, who also killed Francis Hughes. They wanted to kill Berkshire before he was able to find out.

Points of Investigation / Clues

- Hidden in the room is a note that says "Eleven Sixteen Richmond Street, Ask for Velma" – This is the password to get into a speakeasy.
- The poison was fast-acting, and attacks the throat by closing it up; it would have killed the person pretty much in minutes without giving them any opportunity to call for help.
- The poison was very clearly mixed with alcohol, probably a beer of some sort.

- Berkshire's prints can be found all over the inside of the door, but not on the handle.
- There is a bendy straw not too far from the door, swept away.
- Father Lynd says the poison was a curse from God!
- Lynd actually fell asleep on the job for a couple of hours with a cup of water in his hands.
- Lynd's cup of water actually had a sleep powder.
- The sleep powder was made in the same place as the toxin that killed Berkshire.
- The wine in the poison came from the speakeasy
- Berkshire was in a lot of debt to the mob, and just a few days ago decided he wouldn't pay it and was going to seek church protection and expose the mob.
- It's not obvious that the speakeasy is run by the Mafia.

Character Class: The Doctor

Not a time-traveler, just someone who knows how to heal and do medical investigations. Knows the stuff.

Character Name: _____

Basic Stats:

Strength: 2, Vitality: 3, Agility: 2, Intelligence: 4, Wisdom: 2, Charisma: 1

Hitpoints: _____ / 19

Defense: *Fortitude: 15, Evasion: 16, Will: 13*

Combat: *Initiative: 2, Speed: 6*

Skills:

Athletics ... 2, Endurance ... 3, Dexterity ... 2, Sneak ... 2, Knowledge ... 7, Deduction ... 4, Empathy ... 2, Perception ... 2, Persuasion ... 1, Bluff ... 1, Brawl ... 2, Guns ... 2*

Bonus: Additional +2 to knowledge of medicine

Attacks:

Brawl (*Brawl* vs. *Fortitude*), melee, **d6+2** damage

Stealth Poison (*Dexterity* vs. *Evasion*), melee, **0** damage, -5 penalty if you don't have advantage, **on hit** they are poisoned and take d4 damage for 4 turns.

Gun (*Guns* vs. *Evasion*), range 3, **d8+2** damage, -2 penalty if opponent is in cover, **on hit** they have disadvantage

Special Equipment:

3x Heal Kit (*Use to make a knowledge check. Heal the target by an amount of health equal to your result, divided by two. Then Heal Kit is consumed.*)

6x Testing Kit (*Used to make a knowledge checks about testing powders, etc. Results are situation specific. The Testing Kit is consumed.*)

10x Gun Ammo (*After each shot, the gun ammo is consumed.*)

Character Class: The Lawyer

The handsome one on the case, making sure everyone stays out of trouble... or gets into trouble if that's how you want it.

Character Name: _____

Basic Stats:

Strength: 1, Vitality: 2, Agility: 3, Intelligence: 2, Wisdom: 2, Charisma: 4

Hitpoints: _____ / 18

Defense: *Fortitude: 13, Evasion: 15, Will: 16*

Combat: *Initiative: 2, Speed: 7*

Skills:

Athletics ... 1, Endurance ... 2, Dexterity ... 3, Sneak ... 3, Knowledge ... 2, Deduction ... 2, Empathy ... 2, Perception ... 2, Persuasion ... 7, Bluff* ... 7, Brawl ... 1, Guns ... 1*

Attacks:

Brawl (*Brawl* vs. *Fortitude*), melee, **d6+1** damage

Gun (*Guns* vs. *Evasion*), range 3, **d8+2** damage, -2 penalty if opponent is in cover, **on hit** they have disadvantage

Special Equipment:

10x Gun Ammo (*After each shot, the gun ammo is consumed.*)

Character Class: The Enforcer

The beat cop for this local “hood”, the Enforcer is a police officer charged with the training and equipment needed to ensure the local ordinances stay... enforced.

Character Name: _____

Basic Stats:

Strength: 4, Vitality: 3, Agility: 2, Intelligence: 2, Wisdom: 1, Charisma: 2

Hitpoints: _____ / 19

Defense: *Fortitude: 17, Evasion 14, Will 13*

Combat: *Initiative: 1, Speed: 6*

Skills:

Athletics ... 4, Endurance ... 3, Dexterity ... 2, Sneak ... 2, Knowledge ... 2, Deduction ... 2, Empathy ... 1, Perception ... 1, Persuasion ... 2, Bluff ... 2, Brawl ... 5, Guns* ... 5*

Attacks:

Brawl (*Brawl* vs. *Fortitude*), melee, **d6+2** damage

Nightstick (*Brawl* vs. *Fortitude*), melee, **2d6** damage, -5 penalty if you don't have advantage, **on hit** they have disadvantage

Gun (*Guns* vs. *Evasion*), range 3, **d8+3** damage, -2 penalty if opponent is in cover, **on hit** they have disadvantage

Special Equipment:

12x Gun Ammo (*After each shot, the gun ammo is consumed.*)

Character Class: The Detective

Perhaps you're not a Sherlock Holmes, but you can act like him if you so choose. People may just hate you. But either way, you get the crimes solved. ...Usually.

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Basic Stats:

Strength: 1, Vitality: 2, Agility: 2, Intelligence: 3, Wisdom: 4, Charisma: 2

Hitpoints: _____ / 18

Defense: *Fortitude: 13, Evasion: 15, Will: 16*

Combat: *Initiative: 2, Speed: 6*

Skills:

Athletics ... 1, Endurance ... 2, Dexterity ... 2, Sneak ... 2, Knowledge ... 3, Deduction ... 6, Empathy ... 4, Perception* ... 7, Persuasion ... 2, Bluff ... 2, Brawl ... 1, Guns ... 1*

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Special Equipment:

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Hitpoints: _____ / 18

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