

Public Enemies: A Wizards And Wiseguys Adventure

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Background For Wizards And Wiseguys Setting

Magic Returns

On June 30, 1908, near Tunguska, Siberia a mysterious explosion flattened hundreds of square miles of forest. Eyewitnesses alternately described a ball of fire falling from the sky or the sky opening up and pouring out fire. An orange glow in the sky was visible for days as far away as Western Europe. Although the cause is still unknown, the consequence is clear. Magic was reawakened. Traditional native cultures and occultists were the first to notice, but it soon became common knowledge. Most governments and universities developed magical research projects and many corporations and private citizens around the world being to engage in the practice of magic.

Portals

After the Tunguska event, long dormant gates to Faerie appear. There are hundreds of gates, usually in rural areas. Most portals work for only one week of the month - under the light of the full moon. There are 6 known permanent gates, one in Siberia at ground zero of the event, one deep in the central Arizona desert, one in Bavaria, another in India, one near the ruins of Karnack, Egypt and one in China.

The denizens of Faerie have missed contact with our plane - some are fond of humans and are eager to get reacquainted, others have missed sowing mischief and chaos among man. Still others see an opportunity for trade and profit, and if men do not always understand what the price is when they bargain with the Fey, so much the better. Travel to Faerie is hazardous for men; it's rumored that a day spent there can be 10 years in our world. Some of those who have returned from traveling there have lost their senses. So the travel across the portal is largely one way, with Fey coming across visiting our world.

Fey construct bazaars and markets on "our" side of the gates and makeshift towns grow up nearby. Trade flourishes and people stream in to see the wares the Fey have for sale and what they can teach, for the Fey are experts of the magical arts. These makeshift settlements grow into small towns and then into small cities as the trade across the gates flourish. If some children born in settlements near the gate have unexplained golden tinted eyes or pointy ears or if village girls disappear forever after running off with mysterious strangers, no one complains too loudly. The rise of magic brings prosperity and riches to the lands around the gates - and most are reluctant to ask if there may be hidden costs.

GM Notes: Faerie, also known as the Shadow, is essentially an analog of a traditional fantasy setting, albeit one that is very comfortable with inter-planar trading. With the inherent magic of the Shadow world (and the elves, dwarves and other assorted races), de-

scribing it as the Realm of Faerie just seemed natural to modern man. After the Tunguska event, the veil that kept modern humans from perceiving Shadowkind and magic accurately has been lifted. However, travel across the portal into the Faerie/Shadow World is perilous, and "normal" humans will often experience time dilation, loss of mental faculties or other undesirable side effects. Shadowkind characters could be allowed in this setting at the GM's discretion.

Early Days of Magic

Non-western cultures are more accepting of the reawakening and in some cases simply have better geographic access to permanent gates, which accelerates their magical development. Sorcery-fueled revolutions spring up in India, China, Mexico and the American Southwest as magic evens the playing field against modern weapons and armaments.

- The Second Boxer Rebellion succeeds in China and Boxers declare the formation of a "Taoist People's Republic". China collapses into anarchy as warlords and Boxers fight for control.
- British colonial forces are almost overwhelmed in India - before being reinforced by friendly Gurkha shamans.
- Rebellious Native Americans in the Southwest quickly rout US forces and found the Native Confederation, which comprises most of Arizona.
- Australia erupts into full-blown civil war as Aboriginals rise up and reclaim the interior of the nation.
- The city of New Orleans erupts in full revolt. When the smoke clears, it declares itself the Free City-State of New Orleans.

The Mexican Invasion

German mystics have foreseen American intervention in the war. To preempt this, agents of the Central Powers enchanted Mexican officials into launching an invasion of the US in 1912. The Native Confederation and New Orleans both declare neutrality. With no magical combat force to speak of, the Americans are routed badly by the Mexicans who have been trained and reinforced by German mystics. The early years of the war go badly, with the US losing New Mexico, California and Nevada. It is late 1919 when the US Army Sorcery Brigade, with training from Icelandic mystics (and secret training from the voodoo priests of New Orleans), is able to repel the invaders.



Faerie Spirits

During the Mexican Invasion, supplies of morphine ran low (because most of the nations that grow poppies were Asian colonies that revolted with the awakening of magic. Anti-western sentiment is strong in those nations and they aren't inclined to trade with Western nations at that time.) The warring nations deal with this by procuring battlefield painkillers from Faerie, specifically distilled spirits - Faerie spirits. This has similar medicinal effects as opium/morphine, so it's effective for battlefield first-aid.

The problem is that it has debilitating side effects and is highly addictive. So, like the aftermath of the Civil War, after the Mexican Invasion there are thousands of injured veterans who are reduced to panhandling, crime and trading on the black market to get their fix. Faerie spirits also have some disturbing supernatural side effects: hardcore addicts stop casting shadows and will appear translucent in mirrors.

In the later stages of addiction, the addicts are able to perceive the mundane world and Faerie simultaneously, this leads to confusion and madness. The public outcry over the epidemic of Faerie spirit addiction among veterans draws the Temperance movement and the anti-magic movement together in 1919, forming the power bloc that will successfully lobby congress for a dual prohibition of both sorcery and alcohol.



Gangsters and Grimoires

"Maybe I'll learn someday, Dad, that you can't win in this game."

~Letter from John Dillinger to his father.

In 1909, a bank is robbed in Rochester, New York by use of sleep spells. By the time the tellers, customers and guards wake up, the safe was cleared out and the criminals were long gone. In 1910, the idea of "magic crime" is cemented in the imagination of the public when one bandit, Henry Starr, achieves folk legend status for a spectacular bank-robbing spree across the southern United States.

Starr is a larger than life figure and newspapers sell millions of copies aggrandizing his escapades. In one famous story, he escaped from a jail in Evansville, Indiana by threatening guards with a chair leg he'd carved some runes on and called a "staff of wizardry". In another, he eluded capture by a posse in northern Missouri while helping farmers deal with a rampaging troll that had burst out of the local portal. The fact that he targeted banks and always treated common people kindly helped the papers cast him as a modern blend of Robin Hood and Merlin. Starr was killed in January 1911 by a Federal Marshall's fireball in Harrison, Arkansas. Rumors endure that he faked his own death and sightings are reported for decades.

Once the know-how hits the criminal underworld, a wave of similar crimes is reported across the US. The markets at Faerie Portals that provide easy access to magical items aggravate the problem. Soon, it seems as though no bank, armored car or business is safe from criminally minded wizards or even hare-brained kids waving a rod of lightning. Public outcry demands that local governments adapt and soon many towns and cities have "Anti-Magic Squads" on their police force for this purpose.

The crime wave adds to the distrust that has been growing in America ever since the Revolt of New Orleans. Many religious conservatives regard arcane magic as dangerous and heretical. Worried about the potential for sorcery to replace union workers, organized labor joins forces with the religious anti-sorcery groups and the American Anti-Magic League (AAML) is born.

This faction is especially powerful in the American South. Many counties and a few Southern states pass laws making the practice of arcane magic a felony. The AAML organizes vigilante mobs wielding shotguns and the hangman's noose to patrol all known gates during the week of the full moon. Criminal "moon-shiners" make a fortune smuggling magic items or faerie spirits out of remote Faerie portals, outrunning the AAML mobs (which often included local law enforcement) and selling their goods to an eager public.

The Setup

- The PCs are the Trundle Gang, a group of bank robbers and ne'er-do-wells led by the charismatic highwayman Jacob "Jake" Trundle.
- It's 1930 and the Great Depression is hitting the country hard. Times are tough and more people are losing their homes and farms to foreclosure every day.
- Prohibition outlawed alcohol in 1920. Anyone found practicing selling liquor is subject to severe criminal penalties. The law is widely ignored and speakeasies do a booming business across the country.

- In 1920, in response to popular outcry, a Prohibition against Sorcery was passed by Congress. The law deported all denizens of Faerie out of the country and prohibited the practice of magic for any reason other than law enforcement or national defense. Spell books and magic items were burned in the streets and all known portals to Faerie were sealed.
- J. Edgar Hoover, director of the FBI and a wizard in his own right, wrangled a bill through Congress that made the FBI the only law enforcement agency allowed to use magic. Unfortunately, his agency is sorely undermanned to take on this burden. Unchecked, a wave of magic crime hits the nation.
- By 1930, the public has grown angry with the FBI's inability to effectively enforce the prohibition on either booze or magic. Political pressure increases on the Bureau. Frustrated, Hoover resorts to desperate methods to try and get the situation under control. He orders his agents to resort to necromancy to clamp down on bootlegging and illegal magic operations. The FBI's use of hordes of undead in their raids on bootleggers and underground wizards yields mixed results. There is a notable increase in arrests, but it spawns an outraged response from a shocked American public.
- The Trundle Gang has been on a multi-state bank-robbing spree (in their antiquated Model A Ford) through the American South. A couple of the gang members are spell-casters (having done time in the Army's Sorcery Corps during the Mexican Invasion (or possibly in a European Army during the Great War.) So, with a combination of firepower and spellpower, the Trundles have been blazing a path of crime across the landscape.
- They have a reputation for treating common people kindly and the newspapers have depicted them as modern-day Robin Hood characters. Given the popular resentment of banks due to the Depression and the rash of foreclosures, the Trundle Gang are enjoying full-blown folk hero status these days.
- The Trundle Gang has read in the papers that they've moved into the FBI's top ten list of most wanted criminals. They aren't too concerned with this, as they're too busy robbing banks and partying away the money in speakeasies, honky-tonks and bordellos. As the adventure begins, they have stopped in Hagerstown, Kentucky to hit the Hagerstown Bank and Trust.

Note: The idea behind this mini-adventure is that you can play it with a minimum of preparation and that the game begins as soon as your players sit down. So, to accommodate this "no fuss" approach, this adventure is much more linear than a more general adventure would be. Certain assumptions are made at the beginning of the adventure to avoid the waffling over direction that can bog down PCs in the early minutes of a gaming session.

Having said that, this adventure can easily be modified by a savvy GM to be more open-ended.

The Adventure Begins...

Scene 1 – Bank Robbery

Hagerstown, Kentucky is a medium-sized town in the hills of rural Kentucky. Most residents are either coal miners or farmers. The Depression has hit this area especially hard, although life's never been easy here. Many farmers have had their farms foreclosed on and many miners are out of work and losing their homes.

The Hagerstown Bank and Trust is a small one-story structure on the town square, directly in front of the white marble memorial to the town's Civil War veterans. It's the end of the month, so the payroll from the local coalmines is in the bank vault right now (the character's estimate that it should be around \$55,000). There is one bank guard (an elderly man with a nightstick and a revolver), 6 bank employees (including the manager) and about a dozen bank customers. The vault is open and unlocked during business hours.

The bank has probably seen better days – a large ragged hole in the roof lets in the elements. If the PCs ask how the hole got there, one of the NPCs in the bank replies: "Hill giants came through here about a week back – smashed the place up." The folks in the bank have no further information about the hill giants other than they rampaged through the town, stole some livestock and were last seen heading west.

It's early evening when the PCs enter the bank with their guns drawn. The folks in the bank are either awestruck or excited about being robbed by the Trundle Gang. They offer no resistance unless they're mistreated.

Enemies Present – Bank guard, bank manager. (use Small Town Yokel stats in Appendix II. Note that only the guard is armed and he's carrying only a Police Positive (.38S Revolver – stats for this gun are in *Appendix III*)

Onlookers Present – Bank tellers, customers, sleeping bloodhound in front of the bank

Tactics – The guard, bank manager and employees will be cowed and awestruck by the reputation of the PCs and will put up no fight unless they feel their lives are in danger. (The Trundle Gang has a reputation of treating people well, so it's not unreasonable for the bank employees and customers to react this way.)



The Hagerstown sheriff and his deputies will arrive as the PCs are leaving the bank.

Plot Points

- PCs are viewed as Robin Hood type heroes by the average citizen. This won't be a revelation to the characters, but it might be to the players.
- Small town cops arrive and give chase as PCs leave town.

Roleplaying Opportunities

- The bank manager and bank guard are star struck by the PCs, since they're famous highwaymen. They stutter and stammer a lot. "Your...you...you're...really the Trundle Gang? Oh my. Oh my stars. Oh my."
- The pretty brown-haired bank teller in a calico dress gives one of the PCs a discreet wink and squeezes his hand as she's handing over the bags of money.
- A redheaded young boy in denim overalls tugs at the hem of one of the PC's jacket. "Mister! Mister! Are you in Jake Trundle's gang? Can I see some magic? How about your autograph? My daddy says you're a hero!"
- A grizzled old farmer with corn-cob pipe tips his hat to the PCs and asks them a favor in a whisper. "Fellas, I'd be most obliged if you'd torch those yonder cabinets in back. That's where they keep the mortgage papers. Here - I just so happen to have a matchbook right here."

Development - As the PCs are leaving the bank and loading up their Model A Ford with their ill-gotten loot, the old sleeping bloodhound on the front porch wakes up, looks down the street and starts barking frantically.

Suddenly, two Model Ts carrying the Hagerstown sheriff and his deputies turn the corner and barrel down the street towards the PC, guns blazing.

It's clear someone in the bank has called the police just as the PCs walked up. The bank clerk in the calico dress is screaming at the bank manager, calling him a coward and a heel.

The bank manager looks sheepishly out the window at the PCs, phone still in his hand, as the bullets and buckshot whiz overhead.

(It's possible the PCs have taken action that would preempt this, such as tying up the bank manager. In that case, have the dog start barking, the cops round the corner and the bank

teller screams at the PCs: "Y'all need to make a getaway while you still can!" (At GM's discretion, she may even run out and try to jump in the car with them.)

Scene 2 - Cheese it, pal! It's the Law!

Two carloads of cops screech to a halt down the street from the bank. The sheriff and deputies step out and open fire on the Trundle Gang. They're amateurs, giddy with fear and adrenalin, so they're shooting wildly and inaccurately.

On the other hand, they do outnumber the PCs 2 to 1. And several of them are packing 12 gauge shotguns, which don't really require much accuracy.

Someone yells out from a window, telling the sheriff that the boys from the firehouse have grabbed rifles and are coming down to help. (The firefighters will arrive in 5 rounds. There will be 1 of them for every PC and they will be armed with either the Browning M-1918 (.30-06 assault rifle) or the Winchester M-1892 (.25-20 Carbine).

The PCs have a free hand to resolve this anyway they like, but it should be clear that the smart move is to run.

Enemies Present Hagerstown sheriff and deputies (2 per PC) in two Model Ts. (Use stats for Small Town Sheriff and Small Town Yokel in Appendix II. Stats for Model T are found in Appendix III.)



Tactics - The Hagerstown sheriff and his deputies will try to pin the PCs down and wait for their backup to arrive (i.e. the firefighters). Once their full posse is in place, they'll charge the PCs, trying to overpower them.

If the PCs try to escape in their getaway car, the sheriff and his men give chase.

Possible Complication - The flirtatious bank teller could try to join them, creating some additional chaos. Her name is Lindsey McManama. She's engaged to a very solid and boring coal miner and she sees the Trundle Gang at her chance for a more exciting and dangerous life, à la Bonnie Parker. She might just run out and jump in the PCs car.

For a more dramatic option, she might kick the bank guard in the shin, grab his gun, run out of the bank while firing wildly at the police and then jump in the car, shouting, "Let's get going before their backup gets here!" This could be a handy prod if the PCs are getting bogged down in the gunfight - or just to spice things up a bit.

Allies Present – Lindsey McManama is intended as an NPC, but she could be a PC if your group is large or one of the players takes a shine to her. If you decide to have her as a PC, the players need to be aware and accommodate her joining the party at the bank robbery. Lindsey has been religiously reading the stories about the various gangsters the newspapers regularly report on in rather breathless and romantic manner: Dillinger, Bonnie and Clyde and the Trundle Gang. The papers paint these outlaws as heroes and gentleman bandits in the Robin Hood mode. Trapped in a small town like Hagerstown, Lindsey sees a boring and predictable future of marriage to a miner and half a dozen children in the first 6 years of marriage. She wants more. She wants romance, excitement – danger! And the Trundle Gang looks like her ticket to that.

Lindsey MaManama (Seasoned Wildcard)

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d8, Spirit d6, Strength d6, Vigor d6

Skills: Driving d6, Fighting d6, Investigation d6, Notice d6, Shooting d8, Stealth d6, Persuasion d6, Taunt d6

Pace: 6 **Parry:** 5 **Toughness:** 5

Hindrances: Curious, Habit (Smoking), Loyal

Edges: Combat Reflexes, Counterattack, Marksman, Steady Hands

Gear: Quarter Roll (stolen from bank where she worked) 1d4 damage, Colt Police Positive .38 revolver (stolen from bank guard) 2d6-1 damage, paperback copy of Emily Bronte's Wuthering Heights, small white leather purse containing 2 dollars, cigarettes, hip flask filled with Canadian scotch, various personal possessions.

Onlookers Present Bank customers, bank guard, bank manager, citizens peering out their windows, agitated bloodhound on the front porch of the bank.



Scene 3 – Chase!

The PCs light out for the countryside; the sheriff and his deputies are hot on their heels. Consult the Situational Rules for chases in the Savage Worlds rulebook.

The coppers aren't giving up without a fight, though. They hang out of the windows of their jalopy, hurling hot lead after the Trundle Gang. Bullets whiz by the car. A lucky shot cracks the back window.

Chase Length: Standard

Maneuvering Trait: Driving

Notes:

- The driver for the PCs gets +2 to their Driving roll because the PCs car is a Model A Ford. It's a newer and much faster model than the Model Ts the police are driving.
- Remember that all attacks from a moving vehicle are at -2 unless the character has the Steady Hands edge.
- The Model A provides Heavy Cover (-4), the Model T provides Medium Cover (-2). Both cars are moving at highway speed (over 15") down the dusty gravel road.

Development

After 5 rounds of trading shots back and forth, lightning flashes, the evening skies open up and it begins to pour. The country road turns to mud (slowing movement to ½ speed) The sheriff and his posse will fall far enough behind that they soon fall out of sight.

With the posse gone and the road turning to mud, it looks prudent to find a place to spend the night.

If Lindsey McManama is with the party, she can direct them to Pastor Brown's barn/speakeasy.

If she's not, the barn appears –visible from the road –with warm inviting light and the sounds of frivolity spilling out. It looks like the best bet to get out of the cold and wet.

Scene 4 – Pastor Brown's Barn

Scene at a Glance

Plot Points

- Pastor Brown has a regular barn dance/speakeasy operating out of his barn on Friday nights – the PCs are wel-





come there thanks to their folk hero reputation.

- (Optional) Lindsey's fiancé might be there – he might also have a date with him.
- Doctor Melvin Henby leaves the speakeasy/barn dance to drive into town to alert the police to the PCs whereabouts.
- The FBI has a task force in the area hunting for the Trundle Gang. They've hooked up with the local sheriff and his deputies.
- Both the FBI and the local cops arrive at Brown's farm to try and arrest the Trundle Gang.
- (Optional) An NPC steals the cops' transportation and uses it to help the PCs escape.

Action Scenes

- (Optional) There might be a bar brawl with Lindsey McManama's fiancé.
- The FBI and the local sheriff will arrive to try and arrest the Trundle Gang.

Non-combat Encounters

- Craps Game
- Meeting Pastor Brown
- Captain William Scholfield
- Meeting Doctor Henby
- (Optional) Meeting Lindsey's fiancé

Baptist pastor Thaddeus Brown hosts a Friday night speakeasy in his barn out in the country, several miles outside of Hagerstown. There are a couple of kegs of beer, lots of local moonshine and dozens of townsfolk dancing and enjoying themselves.

The pastor will recognize the PCs from the newspaper stories about them and gives a warm welcome. He sees the PCs as heroes, since banks are very unpopular in this area during the Great Depression due to the high numbers of farmers being driven off their land by foreclosures. He fancies himself a Southern Gentleman and he takes pride in showing hospitality, especially to such renowned guests.

He offers the PCs a free first round introduces them around to the various customers, taking care to point out available single ladies and gentlemen.

If Lindsey is an NPC and has accompanied the PCs, she grabs whichever PC she's taken a fancy too and pulls him to the dance floor area of the barn. Obviously if Lindsey is a PC, she does whatever the player would prefer.

If Pastor Brown is asked about the incongruity of a man of the cloth being a bootlegger, he'll smile and say, "There's a mighty thick wall between Friday night and Sunday morning."

A Place to Rest: The end of this scene provides a chance for characters who are injured or have used spells to rest, unless there is one of the following action scenes...

Other encounters in the speakeasy:

- There's a one-armed veteran of the Mexican War, Captain William Scholfield, who used to lead an infantry battalion, as he'll tell anyone who listens for a more than a minute. He's already very drunk – but he'll ask the PCs for money for another drink. His poison of choice is Faerie Spirits – he got hooked on them during the war Scholfield never really came home from the war – and it's all he talks about as he drinks himself into a stupor. He's in the later stages of Faerie Spirit addiction – he casts no shadow from the dozen or so lanterns that illuminate the barn and sometimes it seems though he's reacting to things that no one else can see, jumping from shadows or shaking hands with invisible people.
- There's a craps game over in the corner where several coal miners are gambling. If the PCs wish to partake, handle it with the Gambling Skill rules as a contest between the PC and the farmers and miners at the party. The stakes are generally \$2. Use the Small Town Yokel stats in Appendix II to represent the gamblers in the game.
- If Lindsey McManama is with the party, her fiancé, Sean McCoy, is at the speakeasy. He is alarmed at her being there in the company of a group of known gangsters. Lindsey might be surprised by his presence (perhaps she thought he was a teetotaler). Alternately (at the GM's discretion) she may have brought the PCs there to provoke some sort of reaction from him. Use the Small Town Yokel stats in Appendix II for her fiancé. He's liquored up and will confront Lindsey loudly before swinging at whichever PC he thinks she's there with. This is a non-lethal bar brawl and all damage will be Nonlethal Damage.
- Doctor Melvin Henby is the doctor for Hagerstown. He's a kindly, white-haired codger who likes his whiskey and who's delivered most of the people now in the barn. He's also a banjo player. Henby, along with a couple of friends who play standup bass and harmonica, provide the music for Brown's establishment. Brown introduces the PCs to Doc Henby after his first set. He greets the PCs, patches up any of them who may be injured from the earlier combat. After he gets them all patched up and buys them a round of drinks, Doc Brown – he checks his watch and says he needs to go visit a sick parishioner. At 10pm. On a Friday night. Pastor Brown rubs his chin. "That's very odd," he says.

Long Arm of the Law

The revels have continued at Pastor Brown's barn after Doc Henby leaves. Unfortunately for everyone involved, Henby drove straight into town to tell the sheriff about the PCs being at Brown's place. The sheriff was actually being interviewed by the FBI task force in the area hunting for the Trundle Gang. A combined force of sheriff, deputies and FBI agents hurry to Brown's farm to arrest the PCs.