

# Murder by the Dark of the Moon

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A Mini Module for GangBusters™, the 1920s Role Playing Adventure Game by Rick Krebs

## Introduction

Scene: The dockyard of Sullivan City, May 7th 1921, 1:25 AM.

The docks and streets of Sullivan City are shrouded in a thick pea-souper, but that doesn't prevent those seeking a good time from finding their way to the city's blind pigs. The only difference is that this night of illicit revelry will end in tragedy. At 25 minutes after 1 AM a dockyard beat cop finds a posh De-La-Rochelle touring car has run into a lamp post on Hudson Street and been left with the driver's door ajar, its motor is still running, and its headlights glow warmly in the fog. The beams of its lights however illuminate a lifeless dark form laying in a pool of blood, the driver? A chill runs down the spine of the beat cop as he quickly kneels beside the body but there are no signs of life. He stands and peers into the darkness but there is not another soul on the street and eerie quiet. There is nothing more to do but call it in. He runs to the call box on Delacroix, the next street over, but on returning to the scene of the crime he finds the car is gone and someone has turned out the victim's pockets.

## The game begins 3AM at the scene of the murder for the following characters:

### Who are the Characters?

You are a **Sullivan City Detective** assigned to solve this murder. There aren't normally many murders in Sullivan City, so this is something new. Everyone knows who this murder victim is, this guy was rich and a hero in the Great War. The District Attorney Phillip Mansfield himself is all over this. You normally solve burglaries and thefts. You are aware there is corruption in the police department but you aren't taking any money as it goes against your personal values. There's going to be a lot of pressure to solve this fast.

You are a **Beat Cop** assigned to assist the Detectives to solve the murder. You normally walk the dockyard beat alone in the dark so you are tough and able to handle yourself. Your brand of law is fair, and considering the turf, reasonable. Most of the people in this ward run to you for help rather than away from you when there is trouble. You know who the local criminals are and they don't step over the line, they follow an unwritten code of their own. Still things could have gotten out of hand. This murder is very out of character for the locals but you never know, bad things happen.

You are a **Reporter from the Sullivan Beacon** assigned to follow up the story, when you got the call you rushed to the crime scene; your sidekick is a photographer. Murder's make for good press, they sell a lot of papers, and the front page of the morning's paper will soon scream the news in block letters that the son of one of the cities wealthiest families, a Great War hero, and heir to a fortune has come to a tragic end. Who did it? Everyone will want to know. You will have to file a story and pictures every day and scoop the rival paper's crime reporter for the Star Examiner starting as soon as possible.

You are a **Gangster**, although no strangers to violence the boss considers murders to be bad for business. As long as no one sees graphic crimes taking place publicly everyone makes money from prohibition. This murder will bring unwanted attention, so the boss plans to take care of this. Somebody broke the code. The boss says you are to find the murderer before the cops do while suppressing knowledge of the gangs corruption of government and police. The boss hasn't decided yet whether to or not to tip off the cops when the murderer is found. Find the murderer.

You are an **FBI Special Agent** assigned to the State of Roanoke and your office is in Sullivan City, you wake to the telephone jangling, its the Governor of Roanoke State calling on you to investigate the murder, so you rush to the crime scene. The family of the deceased are politically influential in the State of Roanoke. The FBI is above reproach but the Governor has the dim view that the same can't quite be said of Sullivan City's corrupt municipal government and police. The Sullivan City police won't like the FBI interfering in their case. You are not officially allowed to investigate a murder but you can informally assist. You are not officially allowed to carry a firearm but you do carry one of your own as a private citizen.

### **The game begins at 8 AM for the following characters:**

You are a **Private Detective** that will be hired the following day to solve the murder by the family of the deceased, they will have no confidence that the local police can solve this murder. The family is very influential in the city and wealthy. You have worked for their businesses before in an investigative capacity. So, you were recommended as being effective and discreet by one of their managing directors. The family wants to avoid any negative publicity and scandals. Something is off with this case, but you have to pay the bills.

You are a **Prohibition Agent**, your job is to shut down the blind pigs; this is exactly the sort of crime you believe is a direct result of the illegal liquor trade which has sprung up in Sullivan City. This murder if connected may expose the ugly belly of the underworld for all to see.

### **Game Master Info**

Several sailors on the street are rounded up by a flying squad hastily assembled for the occasion to find someone to pin the murder on and they have been bundled off to the nearest station house for questioning. One of them is insensible and no one will be able to question him until he sobers up.

- Sailor John Marsden, an old sailor of 60 yrs old, a stoker, and somewhat worse for wear and likely incapable of having committed the murder in his state. If asked about the waterfront murder he will deny knowing anything about it. He will stammer something about a Jennie Greenteeth come ashore to take a life. Its a sailor's superstition about an underwater witch who lives at the bottom of the lake and takes the lives of men. According to the tales she has sharp teeth like a shark, eyes that glow, and long arms. She sings a siren song before attacking. Sound a lot of superstitious rubbish. The police took a knife off of him and his bottle of Polar Whiskey, which he wants back.
- Oleg Kiril Yanofsky, a Russian and fluent in several languages Russian, Polish, French, but his English is broken at best, he is a deckhand and currently unemployed. He fell asleep on the street with his arms wrapped around a bottle of Parlour Gin. Someone has robbed him, turned out his pockets, and stolen his pocket watch, and he can't understand why he is in jail when crooks are running free. The police took a knife and awl from him.
- Michael Finn, an Irish sailor obviously and immigrant, but this is not his real name. Alone among those rounded up he is sober. He is a revolutionary in exile, and the police took a pistol from him, a revolver in a European calibre. If it is examined it will be quickly determined that it has not been fired, all cylinders are loaded. Finn has lost none of his revolutionary zeal, despite being an exile. He will never reveal his true identity. Finn knows Morse code and how to use a telegraph. If the authorities discover he is a "terrorist" the FBI will want to question him. Finn will simply deny any knowledge of any crime. He has committed no crime in the USA. He is a capable sailor and knows how to tie knots etc. Oddly however his last job was as a cook.
- William Chapman, is unconscious, almost poisoned by a bottle of Green Fairy Absinthe. When he awakes at 10 AM the following day he will swear that he saw a car flying past in the direction of the dock. "It darn near ran me down! There was a pair of men in it." When questioned he will say it was a posh touring car. Could he identify the occupants? No. Where did it go? How the heck should he know.

## **The Stolen Car**

The victim's car will be found at 9 AM the next day when a dockyard worker (Abner Gilson) notices the slick and the smell of gas rising from the water.

A ship was docked the night before, the pleasure steamer the Empress of Erie. Having boarded passengers the evening before, and loaded cargo, it left at approximately 3:30 AM with its next port of call as Port Wycliffe and following that Bison City. The Empress of Erie makes regular trips up and down the coast with tourists and cargo.

A crane used to load ships will have to be used to pull the touring car out of the harbour. Once it is on the dock the police will call Bannerman's Garage to tow it to the alley behind the station. If examined, once set down on the pier, investigators will find that someone used a stick of wood to push the gas

pedal to the floor and set the car's throttle wide open. The word "Beans" is partially painted on the stick. No one was in it when it was driven off the dock. There is a half empty bottle of the same Green Fairy Absinthe in the back on the floor.

*The car was stolen from the crime scene by a local criminal as a crime of opportunity. Once it was realized the car was a hot potato it was quickly disposed of. The stick of wood was broken off of a crate of Boston Baked Beans in in the alley behind the Half Bend Diner, the broken end will match the crate if compared. The diner is frequented by a couple of disreputable characters responsible for the theft. One of them will have the contents of the victim's turned out pockets, containing a clue, but they aren't good for the murder.*

## **Waterfront Map Details**

### **Hudson Street**

#### **The Sailor's Mission**

One of the nearest buildings to the crime scene may be found on Hudson Street, a Sailor's Mission. A chaplain and several sailors may be found there and questioned, but they heard nothing and no one came into the mission at this late hour. These men are Christians of various denominations. The Mission offers cheap good accommodations, light refreshments, and a chapel.

Rev. Roger Stone, a man in his mid 40's, a religious man who runs the Sailor's Mission. He lives in near poverty and serves the spiritual needs of sailors.

Alton Alward, deckhand, in his late 20's, he has been promised work on the Empress of Erie when she returns. Alton always stays at the mission between ships. He has a tidy sum in savings at the Eastman Bank and is planning one day to buy a cottage and settle down.

Beverly Thomas Dickenson, of English nationality and middle aged this sailor is between jobs and hoping to get work on one of the ships that plies the great lakes. He goes by Tom as his first name is a bit unusual by American and Canadian standards. He has done every manual job on ships and come up from the hawsepipe. He has come to Sullivan City because the steamers stop here. There's always a chance he might be taken on. Devout and sober, he is a reliable worker, sure to get work.

Gus Welland, an older man Gus and carpenter is fond of Crown and Anchor and has his own dice. The Reverend is a bit suspicious of him as gambling in any form is unwelcome at the Mission. Gus only plays for pennies so not a great gambler by any means. Despite his appearance Gus is adept at mathematical calculations due to his carpentry. Gus was a sailor on a battleship in the Great War. He takes the odd carpentry job and does high quality work.

#### **Isenor's General Store**

This legitimate business has goods of all kinds from clothing to hardware. Abe Isenor runs the place and has a sharp pencil when it comes to accounting. On the side he is the bookkeeper for Andy Hook

and in his pay. Although outwardly convivial and friendly Abe is not a good man, he is greedy and selfish. He will deny all knowledge there is a blind pig above his store; he says he will complain to the landlord and would have called the police had he known. The only person he'll really call is Andy Hook to warn him of trouble and trouble makers.

This building is secretly owned by Andy Hook and has two floors, the floor above used to be let out to rent but now it is the current location of the Hook Gang's blind pig. This is meant to be a secret. Prohibition Agents have forced Hook to move his blind pig several times. The entrance is via the back, a stair. The password is Charlie. The blind pig serves the worst sort of bathtub gin and some good stuff stolen from the shipments of the other bootleggers, the Caine Gang.

### ***Staff of The Bind Pig***

Art Shuckle, barman, Art is in charge of the blind pig, ostensibly, but he is really second to Hank Hammerstein one of Andy Hook's thugs.

Ned Post, bouncer and enforcer, Ned is accustomed to letting his fists do the talking, not a thinker.

Hank Hammerstein, bouncer, Hank and Ned are always together, Hank does the thinking for Ned. Always thinking ahead he is smart enough to know Andy Hook won't always be the gang's leader. Maybe one day that leader will be Hank. Hank would prefer not to fight with the Caine Gang and reach some kind of an accommodation. Hank carries a semiautomatic pistol.

### ***Capital Street***

#### **The Capital Theatre**

This theatre shows silent films. The owner, Arnold Astin has made an accommodation with the Caine Gang bootleggers to supplement the theatre's income and a blind pig operates out of the back of the theatre in what was once a storage area. A secret door provides access between the two and provides an escape route for the blind pig's customers in the event of a raid, they enter and seat themselves in the darkened theatre. The theatre's staff are well paid to look the other way.

#### **The Half Bend Diner**

##### ***8 AM Customers:***

Bobby Chump, nursing a cup of coffee Bobby is well known to the local Beat cops as a petty thief. He's already been to jail several times but hasn't graduated to the big leagues. He'd like to get in the prohibition game but the local bootleggers won't have him. He's unreliable, and a liar. When questioned he denies even the most simple obvious truths when he should admit them. Bobby isn't armed.

Rod, Roddy, Roderick Graft, Roddy is always on the lookout for the next deal. He picked the victim's pockets, Oleg's pockets, and had the nerve to steal the murder victim's car. That makes him a problem and someone the gangs will want to find. They tried to sell the car to the Hook Gang but word had

spread of the murder pretty quick and the car was too hot. It had to be disposed of. Of course he's realized that he and Bobby are in way over their heads. He's got evidence in his pockets and his first instinct will be to run. Roddy isn't armed but he's saving to buy a pistol. He and Bobby just want to get out of town and lay low at his Uncle's farm which is located on the outskirts of Sullivan City. They just need to hitch a ride. Bobby and Roddy will try thumbing a ride from a delivery truck on Lambert Street about 1 PM. Roddy is eating a sandwich plate and drinking coffee paid for with his ill gotten gains. He has \$43.20, the victim's cigarette case and monogrammed lighter, and Oleg's pocket watch which has his wife's picture in it. He thought he could sell them but hasn't realized he'd be better off throwing them away.

The victim's cigarette case has some expensive smokes in it and an address card to the Phaeton Club on Lambert Street. On the back of the card is hand written "Shawcross". For a prohibition agent this is gold, a blind pig, and the password!

"Snitch" Wilhelm, Willie, Wessel, Snitch is fluent in German and English. He doesn't work if he doesn't have to. Snitch is a petty criminal and someone the police tap when they want to find out what is going on. They pay him for reliable information but he prefers not to be identified publicly. Snitch feeds them whatever the Boss of the gang tells him to, typically information on rivals. Why fight when the police can do the work? He likes being in the pay of the gang and the police. Snitch will be curious as to why Bobby and Roddy are acting so oddly, and why Roddy has money, he never has money.

### ***Staff of the Half Bend***

Loretta Lane, she is a tough old bird and has seen more than her fair share of adversity. This diner is all she has. She is extremely strong as she used to work in a circus. Meals at the Half Bend are priced affordably and Loretta makes a good living. She waits on customers and runs the cash. Her husband Earl was a circus clown, and is oddly grumpy, he is the cook.

Earl Lane, formerly a circus clown, and a good cook. He has arthritis now which makes him grumpy. He loves Loretta and they are happily married. They are saving to move to Arizona where the weather is less damp and the climate is better for Earl's health. Earl buys the odd bottle from bootleggers for himself and the diners clientele of sailors. Earl won't sell to anyone else, and he can tell real sailors from the fake one's prohibition agents send around. Earl chucks trash out into the alley and feeds a couple of stray alley cats. These animals keep the rats down.

### **Pike's Fish Market**

Fresh fish sold daily by local fishermen.

### **Ambrose Ice House**

Ice is collected from the lake in winter and stored here for use throughout the year. The Ice house has two trucks it uses to deliver ice throughout Sullivan City.

### **Newcombe News and Tobacco**

This shop sells newspapers both local and foreign, out back in the alley are piles of unwanted old papers tied in bundles with string for pickup by employees of the Fish Market.

### **Heartfield's Barbershop**

Jasper Heartfield is the barber and this unassuming little man is in a position to hear and learn much. His patrons are mainly dock workers and sailors. He is known to sell liquor but never keeps any in the shop. Instead he makes a telephone call to the bootlegger and has it delivered to the customer on the street corner by cab. He will call the exchange and ask for Lake Front 301. This is the telephone number of the Hornet Cab Co. on Shawcross Street owned by the Caine Gang. Deliveries take place within 15 minutes. Customers can order whiskey, beer, and absinthe.

He also knows the passwords to the blind pigs and routes customers by their social class. One is the Phaeton Club on Lambert Street, a high class place, but they don't let sailors in, and the other is the Bowfin in the alley off Capital Street. Jasper provides the passwords, Shawcross and Anchor respectively, but not before being sure who he is talking to. As a joke, if he thinks he is dealing with someone he is suspicious of he sometimes gives the street address of the Police Station House 3 on Union Street. Rarely will he send people Andy Hook's way, to the blind pig above Isenor's General Store on Hudson Street, the password is Charlie. When pressed by the authorities he gives information on Andy Hook's blind pig rather than betray Caine.

### **Olmstead Office Building**

Local offices from which Oswald Caine runs his import export business, Caine Import Co. Telephone Lake Front 101. Oswald Caine is simply practical and wants to make as much money as possible. If you can't beat them you may as well join them... His view of prohibition is that it won't work. Prohibition is unpopular. Caine's approach is purely that of running a business, albeit an illegal one. Although Sullivan City is supposed to be dry it isn't. Oswald pays the police, and officials a salary, for protection. He has a near monopoly but others are learning fast.

There is a darker undertone however in Sullivan City, a rival gang of hardened criminals, the Hook Gang, competes for a spot in the bootlegging business, branching out from their other vices, things may get ugly. The Andy Hook Gang was a problem before prohibition and that won't change. The Hook Gang have robbed a few shipments at gunpoint, something has to be done. If the Hook Gang are responsible for the murder it might be a great way to rid the city of them.

### ***Caine Bootlegging "Staff"***

Oswald Caine, he used to be a lieutenant on Sullivan City's police force but decided to quit and become a bootlegger. His approach is purely business and no one that works for him is allowed to carry a gun. He knows the murder victim was at the Phaeton Club sometime that evening so its important to find out what happened.

John Bull, accountant

Emily Anderson, secretary

### ***Capital Street Alley***

#### **Bowfin Blind Pig**

There is a nondescript door in the alley, a very heavy door, with a peephole. The password is Anchor. Unknown to the police the head usher of the Theatre and other staff are on the payroll of the Caine Gang bootleggers and can easily tip off the blind pig to the approach of police and evacuate the customers into the theatre. Customers are not allowed to enter the blind pig from the theatre. Refreshments are regularly delivered to the theatre so it is a good cover.

#### ***Staff of the Blind Pig***

Dick Droll, the bartender knows how to make practically every drink. He'd be working at the Phaeton if it weren't for an indiscretion.

Ed Andrews, waiter, he serves the customers which are typically sailors. He has arms like a stevedore and a right hook to match. Ed used to be a sailor himself so he can relate to the clientele. In a pinch he helps Nate with unruly customers.

Nate Ginch, Bouncer, Nate is the doorman, and no one gets in without the password.

### ***Chandlery Row***

#### **Deitz Chandlery**

The Deitz Chandlery smells of kerosene and other preservatives for this extensive shop has the accoutrements and equipment used by sailors, including slicks, boots, rope and hardware. It is a third generation family business.

#### **Wharton Warehouse**

The Warehouse stores shipments from the steamers.

#### **Ingersoll Trucking**

Conveniently located next to the Wharton Warehouse this trucking company distributes shipments all over the city and nearby countryside.

Chet Rawlins, a truck driver, Chet will be making a delivery to the countryside about 1 PM and may pick up Bobby and Roddy as they are thumbing a ride on Lambert Street. Chet isn't supposed to pick anyone up but occasionally does so to supplement his income.



## ***Delacroix Street***

### **The Eastman Bank**

The bank... TBD

## ***Lambert Street***

### **The Phaeton Club**

The Phaeton Club is hardly a secret. This blind pig is not supposed to exist, much to the fury of those against prohibition, and yet it is pretty much hands off. Raiding the place would be very unwise in this city due to its clientele, the rich, the influential, and even government officials. The boss of the bootleggers used to be a cop, Lt. Oswald Caine, and runs the gang with a code of his own, he does not allow guns. The members of his gang are not allowed to engage in other criminal activity. This makes the activity of breaking the prohibition law a little more palatable to the clientele of the Phaeton Club.

### ***Staff of the Blind Pig***

Head Waiter

Waiters and Waitresses

Barmen

Bouncers

## ***Lambert Road***

### **The Graft Farm Still**

Uncle Sam Graft operates a dairy farm and has a still out back in the woods. It is carefully concealed. Income from the still supplements that of the farm. Milk is collected daily from the farm so comings and goings pass with little comment. Sam Graft makes a trip to town once in a while, or sells to his country neighbours. Andy Hook has approached him about buying all his production but he isn't sure if he wants to be involved with the notorious Hook. He has a dim view of his neer-do-well nephew Roddy.

## ***Shawcross Street***

### **The Shawcross**

This club for "gentlemen" has filled its cellars from floor to ceiling with liquor legally procured before prohibition. It has enough on hand to supply the needs of its members for years. It is members only, so anyone who is not a member is turned away at the door.

### **Hornet Cab Co.**

The Hornet Cab Co. Has been purchased by the Caine Gang bootleggers and has diversified into light trucking as well in order to move alcohol. The foreman, Joe Destry handles all the orders but sometimes telephones Lake Front 101 which is Oswald Caine's office. Joe used to be a wrestler and has a wicked body slam. There are three cab drivers for each of the two shifts.

### **Fisherman's Rest**

Reasonably priced fish and chips are sold in newspapers. Andy Hook is the proprietor and cook. This fish and chip shop is the front for the "Hook Gang" whose specialties, prior to prohibition, were the usual criminal vices. Prohibition, the gang leader, Andy Hook, recognizes, is an incredible opportunity to make money. However, he has a problem. The other bootleggers, the Caine Gang, are led by a well connected former cop who despises Andy Hook and his gang. Still, no problem is unsolvable, with lead. The murder though would be an ideal way of getting back at Caine if it could be pinned on him.

### ***Hook Gang Members***

Andy Hook

TBD

### **Whittle Hotel**

TBD

### ***Union Street***

#### **Police Station House 3**

Downstairs the station has a Sergeant's desk and a booking room, and cells. Upstairs the police station has a bull pit for the staff and a glassed office for the Captain. There is an interrogation room and a locker room in the basement. The station has a single car at its disposal which is dispatched daily from the garage at City Hall.

#### ***Staff***

Captain Willard, Oswald Caine used to be one of his officers but now he's gone over to the other side of the law and Willard has no truck with that. The problem for Willard is that he suspects his superiors at City Hall, and most of the men under his command, are on Caine's payroll. He's powerless to do anything about it and its frustrating the heck out of him. City Hall has not been keen to pick up the bill for enforcing prohibition and the law is unpopular in the city.

2 Detective Sergeants

2 Sergeants (2 shifts)

10 Beat Cops per shift