

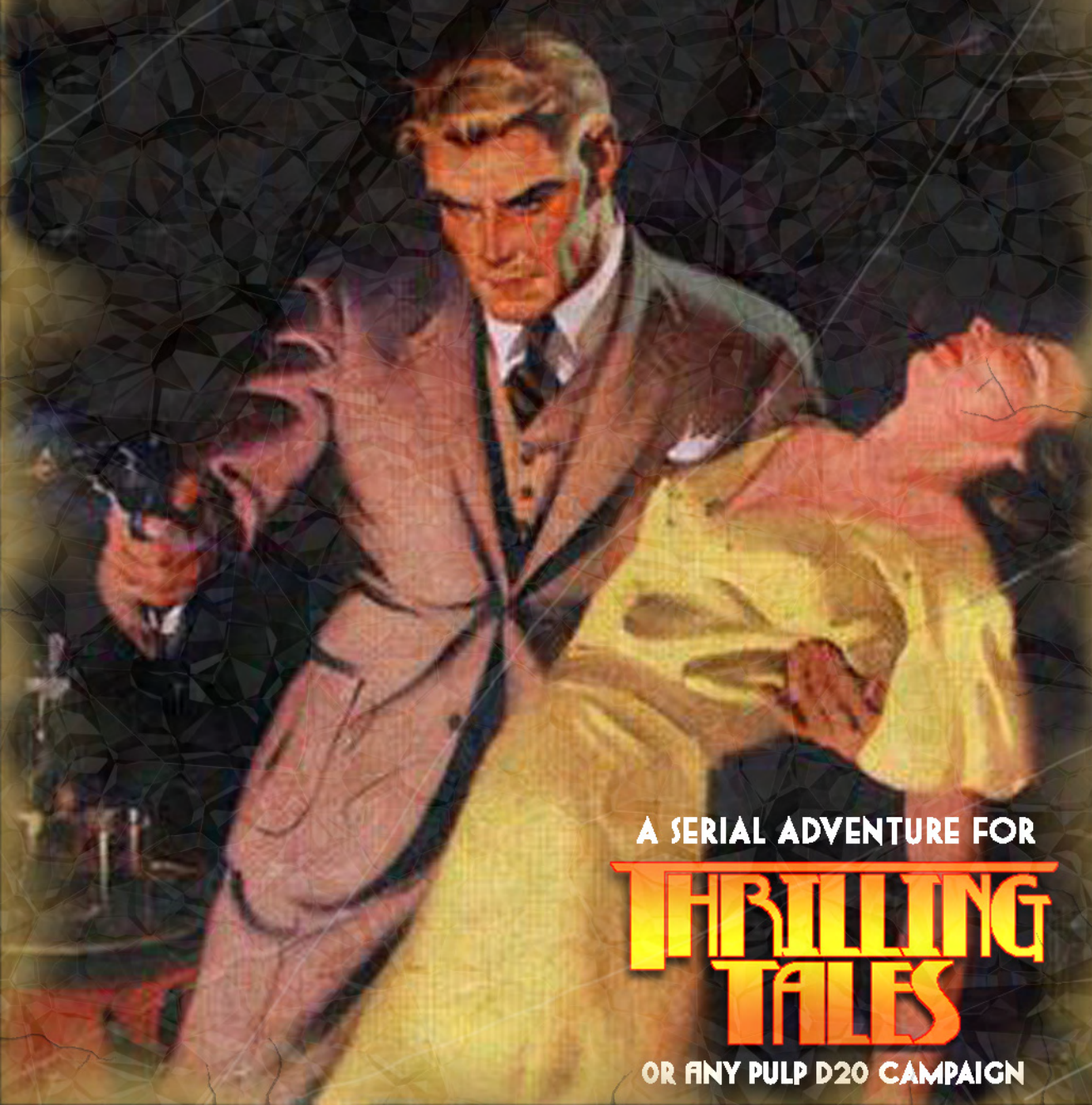


# CRIMSON EMPEROR

CHAPTER ONE:

## POLITICS OF TERROR

Still only  
**10¢**  
(x 20)



A SERIAL ADVENTURE FOR

# THRILLING TALES

OR ANY PULP D20 CAMPAIGN

# CRIMSON EMPEROR, CHAPTER ONE:

# POLITICS OF TERROR

by  
Walt Ciechanowski

## INTRODUCTION

"Politics of Terror" is the first adventure in *The Crimson Emperor* serial. While it can be played on its own, it is designed to connect to the following adventure, "The Scorpion Syndicate." Notes are given below on using both approaches. "Politics of Terror" is designed for characters of 9th-11th level. There are many character types that would fit in this adventure.

Men of Mystery and other vigilantes would be perfect for this adventure. They have ears on the street and will be interested in saving those threatened by mob activity.

Ace Reporters and journalists will want to cover the Presidential race, and Sen. Morrison in particular.

G-Men may be sent by the government to keep an eye on mob activity in response to threats to Sen. Morrison's well-being.

Gumshoes and other urban PCs may simply get caught up in events, or are associated with more directly motivated PCs.

Because of its political nature, this scenario is

presumed to take place in the fall of 1936. The GM can adapt this to other Presidential election years, but minor adventure details may need to be changed. Specifically, Senator Morrison is a hero of the common people because of

his zeal to end the Depression, tax the rich, and break the mobs. The Depression angle would have to be dropped in a

campaign that took place before 1929.

Sen. Morrison's platform would reflect appropriate contemporary worries (if the GM sets this in the 1944 election year, Morrison would have a "how can we fight enemies abroad if we don't fight our enemies at home" theme).



GMs who have read or run *The Mind Murders* will notice similarities in mob names, specifically the Marciano and Duffy mobs. As stated in that product, these mobs can be substituted for any two rival mob families in an ongoing campaign. Similarly, the adventure takes place in "the City," leaving the GM free to use his city of choice.

## BACKGROUND

Senator Stuart Morrison is a political maverick. He is running as an Independent with a groundswell of popular support from the masses of citizens hurt by the Depression. His supporters tend to gloss over his disregard for checks and balances when he was a governor (which Sen. Morrison describes as “cutting through red tape to get things done for the people”), and they believe he can effect real change as President. The newspapers have nicknamed him “Steamship Stu” for his ability to disregard the political winds against him and chug upriver on the fiery coals of his own ambition and popular support.

While the affluent are worried about his tax proposals, organized crime is more concerned about the tactics he’d introduce to enforce order. Steamship Stu has been talking a great deal about broadening the powers and scope of the Federal Bureau of Investigation to take down the mobs. Now, the mobs are organizing to ensure that he doesn’t get elected. In Chapter One, the mobs use street tactics to chip away at his support, culminating in the firebombing of a hotel. In Chapter Two, a hit man is hired to assassinate Sen. Morrison while he is on the train to his next campaign stop. The PCs must hinder the mob efforts and protect Sen. Morrison from the assassination plot.

If this adventure is being used as part of the Serial, the hit man and his enforcers are brainwashed. While they have been hired to assassinate Sen. Morrison, they are conditioned to fail. The reason why will be made clear in a future installment.

## SECRET SQUADRON MEMBERS:

Set your Decoder to Code X-4:

**3-18-18 21-26-17-21-23-22-15-1-**

**19-15-16-5-21 12-15-18-18**

**17-7 7-4-19-7-5-20-7-20**

**19-14-22-16-26-8-14 5-7-4-19**

**2-7-3-22!**



## Hey, Doesn't this Senator Sound Familiar?

History buffs will notice similarities between the fictional Sen. Morrison and the real Sen. Huey Long, better known as "the Kingfish." While the author has drawn inspiration from Sen. Long and the 1936 Presidential campaign, there are key differences between the two senators. Sen. Long was assassinated in 1935, before the Presidential primaries. Sen. Morrison is also aggressively attacking organized crime, which to the best of the author's knowledge was not a key position of Sen. Long. Sen. Morrison's personal history is completely fictional.

In any case, GMs and players should remember that this is pulp fantasy, not an accurate historical (GMs running this as a serial will feel the full impact of this distinction in the latter parts of the serial). In this adventure, the bad guys are organized crime, not an outspoken Presidential candidate.

## STAND-ALONE ADVENTURE

As the first part of the serial, "Politics of Terror" is very easy to adapt to a standalone adventure. Simply run the adventure as written. The only choice a Game Master would have to make is to determine whether the Hit Man really was brainwashed. GMs who prefer a straightforward resolution can simply make the assassination attempt on Senator Morrison's life genuine (and perhaps substitute a real historical candidate for the fictional senator). GMs who would still like to use the brainwashing angle will simply have to create their own reasons for sending an assassin who is brainwashed to fail.

The GM can set this adventure during primary season, allowing for Morrison to be knocked off by the official party candidate.

## SERIAL ADVENTURE

As the first part of the serial, "Politics of Terror" is run as written. Players should choose characters that have reasons to stick together, for they are going to share in a number of adventures. Serial notes are placed in this adventure to ensure that the GM maintains continuity among the various adventures.



# CHAPTER ONE: ROLLING OUT THE BLOOD-RED CARPET

In this chapter, the local mobs have decided to make life difficult for Sen. Morrison and his supporters. Things heat up on the night before Sen. Morrison's train is due. Depending on how the GM is introducing the PCs to the adventure, the PCs may be victims of mob crime or a reaction to it. The following is a list of minor mob encounters that the GM can insert into the adventure. Not all of them need be used, but there should be enough of them to drive the point home that organized criminals do not want to see Sen. Morrison elected. The only encounter that should be used is the mobster coup de grace, the firebombing of the hotel from which Sen. Morrison is expected to make a campaign speech tomorrow.

## FORESHADOWING

PCs with their ear on the street may be able to anticipate some of the below events so that they are on hand to prevent them. With a Knowledge (streetwise) check (DC 15), the PC will learn that the local mobs are planning disturbances. A Gather Information check (DC 20) will reveal the time and place of one of the below events. A Gather Information check (DC 25) will reveal the plot to torch the hotel.

**Serial Note:** If the PCs stop the hotel burning, a second attempt will be made by a rival mob. This will start to suggest some coordinated effort among even rival mobs to influence this campaign. The ties suggested here will be revealed in "The Scorpion Syndicate."

## LEANING ON THE LOCALS

Several low-ranking mobsters will canvas the local businesses, encouraging storeowners

and patrons to steer clear of any rallies for Sen. Morrison. While the mobsters may make veiled threats, they will not do any actual harm to the storeowner or his property. This is a good encounter for Gumshoes and other urban PCs who would otherwise not be involved. The Gumshoe could simply be sipping a cup of coffee at a counter as a mobster walks in and harasses the owner.

## HARASSING THE PRESS

The local mobs will pressure Ace Reporters and newspaper editors to portray Sen. Morrison in an unflattering light. There are two ways a GM may construct an encounter with this: proactive and reactive.

With a proactive approach, the mobsters wish to influence the reporting of Sen. Morrison's visit. If a PC is an Ace Reporter or newspaper editor, he may be given an invitation to meet with a high-ranking mob official for dinner (the GM may freely choose which mob; if there is more than one reporter PC, then different mobs may attempt to influence each). The PC will be gently but firmly escorted to a noted mob restaurant. The visit will be cordial, but the mobster will indicate his desire for an accurate portrayal of Sen. Morrison's troubling campaign agenda. The dinner will end with an appropriate bribe and a thinly veiled threat should the Ace Reporter not play ball.

**Serial Note:** If the PC has met one of the mob bosses before and the GM chooses to use the mob boss for this scene, then the PC should be allowed to make a Sense Motive check (DC 20). Success means that the PC feels that there is something "off" about the mob

boss (which will be revealed in “The Scorpion Syndicate”).

With a reactive approach, the mobsters are reacting to an already published article or radio newscast that portrayed Sen. Morrison in a flattering light. The mobsters will be eager to ensure that the reporter or editor in question will not make the same mistake again. The victim in this encounter can either be a PC or NPC, as appropriate.

Basically, the victim is attacked while vulnerable at night (at a bus stop, walking to the steps of his apartment, walking down the street from a restaurant, etc). Four mobsters suddenly accost him. They are concerned about the lies and inaccuracies he’s been spreading about Sen. Morrison. They feel it’s necessary to beat some sense into him. One mobster will pull a gun to ensure that the victim doesn’t try to be a hero while the other three rough him up a little. It is not their goal to kill him or even seriously injure him.

An appropriate PC (such as a Man of Mystery) could come upon the scene and help the victim out. Once the mobsters feel the tide turning, they will flee. In either case, they will make their threat known: stop favoring Sen. Morrison or we’ll be back, and we won’t be so soft on you next time.

## POSTER PATROL

This encounter is designed for a Man of Mystery, police officer, or any PC walking the streets at night. The PC comes upon the scene below and wades into the action to protect the campaign worker.

This scene is similar to the mobster’s reactive approach in “Harassing the Press.” A Morrison campaign worker is hanging posters along the street. Four mobsters approach him and insist that he reconsider whom he’s supporting. They will not hurt him if he hands over his remaining posters and scrams. If he



stands firm, the worker is in for a beating. The mobsters won't be as gentle with him as they would the Ace Reporter. It is up to the PC whether to intervene, but the mobsters will offer the warning to "make sure you don't vote for the wrong candidate" as they fight and/or flee.

## **CAMPAIGN HQ DRIVE-BY**

This encounter is designed for any PC walking the street in the early evening, although an Ace Reporter could be inside the storefront interviewing campaign workers.

A sedan drives past the building while a mobster with a Tommy gun riddles the storefront with bullets. The objective is to scare, not to harm, so the shooter will aim high. Alternatively, a brick with a threatening note could be tossed through a window, or a small firebomb could be tossed inside.

## **HOTEL ASSAULT**

This is the "big" event of the night and it occurs in the wee hours of the morning. The city hotel sponsoring Sen. Morrison's city campaign speech will be firebombed.

The plan is simple. Night watchmen will be bribed to "take a walk" so that a small group of mobsters can enter the hotel with gasoline cans. They proceed to spill gasoline all over the main conference room (where the speech will take place) and light a match. The flames quickly engulf the room and spread through the rest of the building.

This fire will provide the PCs several opportunities to play hero. Many people will be trapped on the upper floors and require rescuing. The GM is encouraged to use falling ceilings, collapsing floors and staircases, and spreading flames to full effect. Ace Reporters will be sent to the scene as soon as possible. The message is clear: Senator Morrison is not welcome here.

## **LEGWORK**

If the PCs try to discover who was responsible for the fire, a Gather Information check (DC 20) will reveal the mob behind it. Unfortunately, there is no evidence tying them to the crime.

PCs looking for future crimes will find out something interesting with a Gather Information check (DC 15). One mob (not the one responsible for the hotel bombing) is bringing in a hit man to take out the Senator. This Hit Man is to ensure that the Senator does not make it to his next destination alive. A Gather Information check (DC 20) reveals the Hit Man to be Gus the Ghost, who is notorious in another city.

# CHAPTER TWO: LAST STOP

In this chapter, notorious mob hit man Gus the Ghost is hired to assassinate Sen. Morrison. Interestingly, Gus the Ghost resides in a different city, making his hiring all the more interesting. Gus has secured a job as a train waiter and plans to assassinate Sen. Morrison after he leaves the city by train. By the end of this Chapter, Gus the Ghost will make his attempt and is doomed to fail.

If the PCs did some legwork in Chapter One, then they are already aware of Gus' plan. If not, then the GM will have to give them the information another way. The best way is for the GM to call for Knowledge (streetwise) checks (DC 15). The street is abuzz with rumors about Gus the Ghost and Senator Morrison.

**Serial Note:** If this information leak seems a bit sloppy, then it's because it is. The mob wants the information known, for purposes revealed later in the serial.

## RESEARCH ON GUS THE GHOST

Some PCs, especially Ace Reporters and Men of Mystery, may wish to research all they can on Gus the Ghost. Since Gus usually operates in a different city, the PCs will have to go to the library or dig through a newsroom's archives or out of town papers in order to find anything useful.

A Research check (DC 20) will reveal that Gus the Ghost identifies himself as August Moore, a small-time mobster who was gunned down by a rival mob over a dispute with a prostitute. Moore's body was identified and given a burial. Three weeks later, members of that rival mob involved with the hit started dying. A message scrawled on the wall in the victim's blood would

read, "For killing me." Moore's methods were so subtle that he even slew one mobster in bed while his moll slept next to him. She awoke the next morning to find him dead, his throat slit.

Intrigued, the authorities exhumed his coffin and found it empty. It appeared that August Moore really did rise from the grave. The local newspapers immediately coined him "Gus the Ghost." He became a hit man for hire, specializing in getting into secure locations and using quiet methods, such as knives and garrotes, to kill his victims. PCs with any kind of "Sixth Sense" ability will determine that Gus probably intends to hit Sen. Morrison while he is alone.

## FOLLOWING THE SENATOR

Sen. Morrison will not be swayed by mob tactics. If anything, it only strengthens his resolve. He will use every opportunity to point out that this is exactly why the FBI needs to be reformed and why Congress must pass his proposals to crack down on organized crime.

Three people usually accompany the Senator on his campaign. Martin "Marty" Bloom is his close friend and campaign manager. Anyone who wants to talk to Morrison usually has to get through him first. Paul Garrett is Sen. Morrison's personal bodyguard, hired after Morrison received threats while still governor. Finally, Gladys Price, news journalist, is constantly by Sen. Morrison's side. He has given her complete access to his campaign to insure accurate reporting.

When the Senator arrives in the morning by train, he will make a brief speech on the train platform about the need to crack down on organized crime. There are no threats to his

life, although PCs who make a Knowledge (streetwise) check (DC 15) and a Spot check (DC 15) will notice some mobsters keeping an eye on the Senator.

With the original hotel in ruins, Marty Bloom will make hasty arrangements at another hotel. This should alarm PCs, as hasty planning usually leads to large gaps in security. Still, the rest of the day goes by uneventfully. At dinner, Sen. Morrison will make his fiery, populist campaign speech. A few high-ranking mobsters are in the audience, stone-faced, but no moves are made on the Senator.

During the night, Sen. Morrison will invite Miss Price to his room. While this may raise eyebrows (Sen. Morrison is married), nothing life-threatening will happen to the Senator at this time.

The next morning, Sen. Morrison makes a final short speech and boards the train. It is here that Gus the Ghost's plan goes into action.

## TRAIN RIDE OF DEATH

By this point, the PCs may become discouraged that nothing untoward is going to happen to the Senator. The GM may wish to gently remind them that the threat was that the Senator "will not make it to his next destination alive." This should prompt them to board or watch the train.

Sen. Morrison has his own privately rented car attached to the back of the train. He normally keeps his team with him, and he is suspicious of anyone who tries to gain access, as "his enemies are everywhere."

Gus' plan is simple. He has hired a few mobsters to ride the train as passengers. During the first few hours of the train ride, Gus will play his role as waiter to the Senator, studying the layout of Morrison's private car as well as gaining the trust of the Senator's party. During one of these visits, when Gus

sees Gladys scribbling notes, he apologizes for not having a pen to take their orders. Gladys helpfully does it for him, giving him a sample of her handwriting in the process.

PCs making a Gather Information check (DC 10) will notice that the same waiter caters to the Senator's party. If they keep an eye on the waiter, a Spot check (DC 20) will enable them to see him writing something on paper (the forged note). A Sense Motive check (DC 15) reveals that he intends to pass off the note to someone else.

Just prior to the hit, Gus will slip Gladys a note. The message claims to be from someone who has a huge scoop on Morrison and wants to share it with her in the lounge car. Curious, Gladys will excuse herself to meet him. As Gladys waits in the lounge car, Gus carries a forged note to Marty. This note is in Gladys' handwriting, a forgery, explaining that she received some disturbing news and was breaking her association with them. He shares the news with Morrison, who tells him to find her and take care of it. Marty takes his leave.

PCs who are either in the lounge car or at least watching who is going to and from the back will spot Gladys heading for the lounge and taking a seat. A Sense Motive check (DC 15) will reveal that she is anxious, as if waiting for someone. If she is approached, Gladys will initially be very friendly (she believes the PC could be the contact with the scoop). Once she realizes he isn't, she will sigh and say that she doesn't like to be kept waiting, especially when she could be with Morrison. A PC with a Sixth Sense ability will realize that she's been baited out of the car.

Marty will enter the lounge soon after, clutching a piece of paper in his hand. A Sense Motive check (DC 10) will reveal that he seems furious with Gladys. He hands her the paper and demands to know what is the meaning of this? Both of them are confused, and smart PCs will realize that a trap is being sprung.

With Gladys and Marty out of the way, Gus will give a silent signal to the mobsters. Two mobsters will make their way through the train to the back, while a third climbs up on the roof. It is important to note that the mobsters are also brainwashed so that they will not harm the Senator (they may attack, but they are programmed to miss or flee once Gus fails).

PCs who don't follow Gladys (or Marty) to the lounge car may have an opportunity to see the mobsters making their way back to the Senator's car. They try to look casual, so the PCs will have to make an opposed Sense Motive check against the mobsters' Bluff checks. They can also make a Spot check for concealed weapons (the mobsters get a +4 modifier to the roll). If the mobsters are approached, they will attack the PCs. They'll engage in fisticuffs first, only drawing their pistols if things are going badly for them or the PCs draw first. If the PCs stall the mobsters long enough, Garrett will join the fray.

PCs who make a Listen check (DC 20) will hear the third mobster running on the roof.

Gus will walk into Morrison's car to alert him of the impending attack. This will spur Garrett, the bodyguard, to exit the car to intercept the mobsters. The mobster on the roof will come down on the other side so that there is no escape for the Senator out back. Gus will pull a gun from his tray and prepare to shoot Morrison. At this point, Gus' brainwashing forces him to fail in his attempt. After a couple of tries, Gus becomes confused (he's not used to failure). While he is confused, Morrison pulls out his pistol and shoots him in self-defense.

How this plays out depends on the PCs' actions. If the PCs have a chance at preventing the assassination, they may incapacitate Gus before he breaks the conditioning. In this case, Gus will have no idea that he's brainwashed. If they arrive after the second shot, they may be able to hear Gus' confusion with a Listen check (DC 10) and/



or notice that he drops his gun with a Spot check (DC 10). A Sense Motive check (DC 15) reveals that Gus has lost interest in killing Morrison, at least for the moments in which he is still alive. Morrison will draw his pistol and shoot Gus unless it is clear that the threat has been dealt with. Once Gus goes down, the mobster outside will leap off the train.

Even if the PCs suspect something weird is going on with Sen. Morrison, they will have little time to act on it. A Sense Motive check (DC 15) against Sen. Morrison will reveal that he has no idea why the assassin missed; he just considered himself lucky. Garrett will soon burst in with a couple of the conductors, ordering everyone else out of the room. Marty and Gladys will arrive soon thereafter, and Gladys will want to interview any PCs who were involved.

## EPILOGUE

Regardless of whether this adventure is used as a standalone adventure or part of a serial, the initial outcome is the same. The newspapers will all be trumpeting about how Steamship Stu survived an assassination attempt. His popularity has only increased as a result of this mob action. Sen. Morrison will praise the PCs as friends, encouraging them to look him up if they ever need anything.

If running this adventure as a standalone, the GM can simply have history take its course. As an Independent, Sen. Morrison has a perhaps insurmountable obstacle to beat the Democratic and Republican candidates. Franklin Roosevelt wins the election and history returns to normal. A cynical GM could have Sen. Morrison drop out of the race for mysterious reasons or fail to survive another assassination attempt. If the primary option is used, Sen. Morrison simply loses.

If running this adventure as part of *The Crimson Emperor* serial, the GM should leave the election up in the air for now, as the next part of the serial takes place before the general elections. Players should be encouraged to keep the same characters throughout the serial unless circumstances deem otherwise.

## DRAMATIS PERSONÆ

### Senator Stuart “Steamship Stu” Morrison

Stuart Morrison is a very colorful character. Though short in stature, he makes up for it in presence and attitude. Steamship Stu is proud of his humble beginnings and how he pulled himself up by the bootstraps. He grew up in a slum as his mother worked long hours in a sweatshop. His father was a boxer who didn't know when to quit and died in the ring when Stu was very young. Stuart enlisted and fought in the Great War, and when he came back he swore he'd make something of himself. He joined a labor union, during which he met Marty Bloom. The two became fast friends and Stuart harbored a desire to attain a leadership position within the union. That hope was dashed when the anti-communist “Palmer Raids” purged the union of its current leadership and led to the dissolution of the union. When Attorney General Palmer's feared “Communist Revolution” failed to take place on May 1, 1920, Stuart seized an opportunity.

He spoke out against the government's treading on people's rights, which propelled him to the city mayor's office. With Marty at his side, Stuart's appeal grew and he eventually became state governor. He turned his eye toward the U.S. Senate just as the economy was collapsing, and he was a vocal opponent of President Hoover. While initially a supporter of President Roosevelt, Stuart now hopes to capture the presidency for himself.

Stuart Morrison is a scrapper. He backs down to no one and he cares little for threats. He rails against government impotence and the crime syndicates because it's popular and crucial to his election campaign. His response to Marty's warnings to tone down his rhetoric was to hire a bodyguard and pack heat. If he has a weakness, it's for attractive women. While Stuart considers himself a family man,

he can't help pursuing women he meets on the campaign trail. Currently, reporter Gladys Price is satiating his hunger for the time being.

**Charismatic Ordinary 5/Dedicated Ordinary 4:** CR 8; Medium-size human; HD 9d6; hp 30; Mas 10; Init +5; Spd 30 ft; Defense 16 (+5 class, +1 dexterity); BAB +5; Grap +6; Atk +6 melee (1d6+1 nonlethal, unarmed strike); Full Atk +6 melee (1d6+1 nonlethal, unarmed strike) or +6 (by weapon) or +6 ranged (by weapon); FS 5ft. by 5 ft.; Reach 5 ft; AL Himself; SV Fort +5, Ref +5, Will +6; AP 0; Rep +9; Str 12, Dex 12, Con 10, Int 13, Wis 16, Cha 15.

**Occupation:** Celebrity (bonus class skill: Diplomacy).

**Skills:** Bluff +16, Diplomacy +21, Gather Information +16, Intimidate +18, Knowledge (behavioral sciences) +7, Knowledge (civics) +9, Knowledge (current events) +7, Knowledge (streetwise) +11, Sense Motive +17.

**Feats:** Athletic, Attentive, Brawl, Confident, Deceptive, Improved Initiative, Personal Firearms Proficiency, Simple Weapon Proficiency, Renown, Trustworthy.

**Possessions:** Stuart carries a pistol in a shoulder holster. He is always impeccably dressed and fond of a gold pocket watch he picked up in France during the war.

## Martin “Marty” Bloom

Marty Bloom is Sen. Morrison’s campaign manager and one of his oldest friends. Marty is a balding, middle-aged man of very slight build, but he makes up for it with a sharp mind and perseverance. Marty Bloom carefully orchestrates all of Sen. Garrison’s important speeches. Indeed, Sen. Morrison’s campaign platform is more Marty’s creation than his own.

Marty Bloom is dedicated to Sen. Morrison and will do everything in his power to protect him. He disapproves of Morrison’s dalliance with Ms. Price and does what he can to keep it out of the papers. He also fears that this affair will give the reporter some control over Morrison.

**Smart Ordinary 4/Dedicated Ordinary 4:** CR 7; Medium-size human; HD 8d6-8; hp 20; Mas 8; Init +1; Spd 30 ft; Defense 15 (+4 class, +1 dexterity); BAB +5; Grap +5; Atk +5 melee (1d3 nonlethal, unarmed strike); Full Atk +5 melee (1d3 nonlethal, unarmed strike) or +5 with weapon or +6 ranged (by weapon); FS 5ft. by 5 ft.; Reach 5 ft; AL Morrison; SV Fort +2, Ref +3, Will +7; AP 0; Rep +4; Str 10, Dex 12, Con 8, Int 15, Wis 16, Cha 13.

**Occupation:** Academic (bonus class skills: Gather Information, Knowledge (civics), Research).

**Skills:** Bluff +8, Craft (Writing) +12, Diplomacy +5, Gather Information +10, Knowledge (behavioral sciences) +10, Knowledge (business) +10, Knowledge (civics) +10, Knowledge (history) +9, Knowledge (streetwise) +12, Listen +11, Research +13, Sense Motive +15.

**Feats:** Attentive, Cautious, Deceptive, Educated, Meticulous, Personal Firearms Proficiency, Simple Weapon Proficiency, Studious, Trustworthy.

**Possessions:** Marty Bloom carries a small pistol at Morrison’s assistance for protection. He usually has a collection of newspapers with him as well as a pad of half-written speeches.

## Paul Garrett

Paul Garrett is a former soldier and police officer that impressed Sen. Morrison while he was governor, stopping a would-be assassin during a political speech. Paul was offered a great sum to retire from the force and become the governor’s full-time bodyguard. Paul has followed Morrison to the Senate and now as a presidential candidate. He is fiercely loyal to the Senator.

Paul does tend to stand out in a crowd. He is a tall, stocky man with a baldhead and handlebar mustache. He likes to wear his clothes loose, which gives him an unkempt appearance. He has an incredible eye for detail.

**Fast Ordinary 4/Strong Ordinary 4:** CR 7; Medium-size human; HD 8d8+8; hp 50; Mas 13; Init +7; Spd 30 ft; Defense 21 (+8 class, +3 dexterity); BAB +7; Grap +11/+6; Atk +11/+6 melee (1d8+2 nonlethal, unarmed strike); Full Atk +11/+6 melee (1d8+2 nonlethal, unarmed strike) or +9/+4 with weapon or +10/+5 ranged (by weapon); FS 5ft. by 5 ft.; Reach 5 ft; AL Morrison; SV Fort +4, Ref +6, Will +3; AP 0; Rep +1; Str 14, Dex 16, Con 13, Int 11, Wis 12, Cha 8.

**Occupation:** Law Enforcement (bonus class skills: Intimidate, Listen).

**Skills:** Intimidate +7, Listen +11, Sense Motive +5, Spot +6, Treat Injury +3, Tumble +10.

**Feats:** Advanced Firearms Proficiency, Brawl, Combat Reflexes, Combat Throw, Defensive Martial Arts, Improved Brawl, Improved Initiative, Personal Firearms Proficiency, Quick Reload, Simple Weapon Proficiency.

**Possessions:** Paul always keeps a pistol and extra ammunition on him. He also carries a pair of brass knuckles.

## Gladys Price

Gladys Price is a dedicated young journalist who is fascinated by Senator Morrison. She first interviewed him when he was a governor and found herself captivated by his presence. She has populist leanings, which garnered her his respect due to her favorable reporting of him. When Sen. Morrison announced his intention to run for the presidency, Gladys asked to accompany him. Always happy to have favorable press, Morrison readily agreed. Gladys wires regular updates on the Morrison campaign to her newspaper, which resells the column around the country.

Gladys is an attractive young woman with flame red hair. While she had no designs on the Senator, she reciprocated his advances when offered. She realizes that this could hurt her integrity if word got out, but Morrison's smooth words and the promise of a future job in the White House has enabled her to continue the affair.

**Serial Note:** Gladys Price may return with a larger role in "the Crimson Veil," the fifth and final adventure in the serial. If the PCs befriend her now, they may be able to use her help later.

This stat block uses **Advanced Class: Ace Reporter** from Adamant Entertainment. Relevant special abilities from that work are asterisked (\*) and reproduced below.

### Smart 3/Dedicated 3/Ace Reporter 4:

CR 10; Medium-size human; HD 6d6+4d8+10; hp 47; Mas 12; Init -1; Spd 30 ft; Defense 14 (+2 class, -1 dexterity); BAB +6; Grap +6; Atk +6/+1 melee (1d3 nonlethal, unarmed strike); Full Atk +6/+1 melee (1d3 nonlethal, unarmed strike) or +6/+1 with weapon or +5 ranged (by weapon); FS 5ft. by 5 ft.; Reach 5 ft; AL Morrison; SV Fort +6, Ref +3, Will +12; AP 75; Rep +6; Str 10, Dex 8, Con 12, Int 14, Wis 15, Cha 15.



**Occupation:** Investigative (bonus class skills: Craft (writing) Gather Information).

**Skills:** Bluff +14, Craft (writing) +12, Diplomacy +8, Disguise +11, Forgery +4, Gather Information +16, Knowledge (civics) +10, Knowledge (current events) +12, Knowledge (streetwise) +10, Listen +13, Research +14, Search +16, Sense Motive +16, Spot +10.

**Feats:** Alertness, Attentive, Confident, Creative, Dodge, Educated, Focused, Iron Will, Meticulous, Personal Firearms Proficiency, Simple Weapon Proficiency, Studious.

**Talents:** Savant (search), Trick, Empathy, Skill Emphasis (gather information)

**Class Features:** Press Pass\*, Expense Account\*, Taking Notes\*, Well-Traveled, Check the Facts"

**Possessions:** Gladys Price always carries a paper and pen with her. She also keeps a typewriter nearby.

**Press Pass:** Even a starting Reporter is known by the paper they work for. Your Press Pass immediately identifies you as a Reporter, therefore your Press Pass lets you automatically pass the Recognition Check as a 'Reporter' (and thus incur either the +4 bonus or -4 penalty, depending on their bias towards reporters, for Bluff, Diplomacy, Gather Information, Intimidate and Perform.) Note that, if you want to use your personal reputation and Name, you must do a Reputation Check as usual-- this only identifies you as 'a member of the Press'.

**Expense Account:** Upon becoming a Reporter, you are given additional support when working on a story. You may temporarily gain a Wealth Bonus equal to your level as an Ace Reporter for any rental or service needed to advance the article you're working on. You have to be able to contact your editor (by phone, telegram, or in person) to use this. Note this allows rental (not purchase) of items such as formal wear as well as cash to cover a bribe, bail, travel bill, or hotel stay necessary for your story. The GM serves as your 'editor' in deciding if it's truly an article-related expense. You can only use this ability once per day, and can only use it for a number of times equal to your Ace Reporter level, after which you must file the story with your editor before another Expense Account is drawn up for you.

**Taking Notes:** Ace Reporters of level 2 or higher know how to report on a fight—even if they're in it. At the start of any fight where you are not personally under immediate attack, you can declare you are simply staying put and Taking Notes. While you write, the fight will continue-- but anyone who wants to attack you has to make a Will check at a DC of 25 or else find someone else to attack, until all other opponents are eliminated. Mind you, if you're the last of the good side still standing, you'll definitely have to put down that pencil. You, of course, can take no other action than 'take notes' during the fight.

**Check the Facts:** By level 4 and later, Ace Reporters are experts at piecing together the facts of a story-- and are unafraid of interviewing antagonists directly. By Checking the Facts, you can induce opponents into boasting by stating your current theory about what is happening.

The villain must make a Will saving throw at a DC of 10 + Ace Reporter's class level + Ace Reporter's Charisma modifier. If they fail the save, they must either confirm your theory, or state at which point your theory breaks down. They need only state where your theory errs (if at all), and do not have to give you further information, but they must be truthful. And if you're fortunate, the villain may be prone to monologuing at length once they get going. This talent may only be used once per villain in any given adventure.

## Harry “Gus the Ghost” Reynolds

There's a logical explanation as to how a murdered and buried mobster survived: he didn't. August Moore was killed. What no one knew was that he had an older brother who looked a lot like him. August Moore's real name was August Reynolds. He changed it in order to protect his relatives from any mob repercussions. He pretended that he was raised in a Catholic orphanage. Still, he was very close to his brother and when he died his brother swore vengeance.

While Harry did get vengeance on August's killers, he discovered that he enjoyed the life of a hit man. His military training served him well in this regard. Using a bit of psychological warfare, Harry created a mystique regarding his brother's death. He moved the body while the soil was still fresh and buried him in the family cemetery. He adopted his brother's identity (an easy feat given their close resemblance) and he used methods of killing that would unnerve potential targets.

Unfortunately, someone got a hold of Harry and brainwashed him into taking a futile assassination job against Senator Morrison. Harry has no idea that he is being set up to take a fall, and he will want vengeance against those who did this to him should he break free of the mind control. Of course, he'll be in a whole heap of trouble by then.

**Fast 3/Infiltrator 7:** CR 10; Medium-size human; HD 10d8+20; hp 64; Mas 14; Init +6; Spd 30 ft; Defense 20 (+8 class, +2 dexterity); BAB +5; Grap +6; Atk +6 melee (1d6+1 lethal or nonlethal, unarmed strike); Full Atk +6 melee (1d6+1 lethal or nonlethal, unarmed strike) or +6 (by weapon) or +7 ranged (by weapon); FS 5ft. by 5 ft.; Reach 5 ft; AL The Job; SV Fort +5, Ref +9, Will +4; AP 94; Rep +4; Str 12, Dex 15, Con 14, Int 15, Wis 13, Cha 10.

**Occupation:** Criminal (bonus class skills: Disable Device, Disguise).

**Skills:** Balance +9, Bluff +3, Disable Device +10, Disguise +8, Escape Artist +10, Hide +12, Listen +7, Move Silently +10, Search +8, Sense Motive +4, Sleight of Hand +8, Spot +6, Tumble +8.

**Feats:** Acrobatic, Blind-Fight, Brawl, Dodge, Improved Initiative, Personal Weapons Proficiency, Point Blank Shot, Precise Shot, Simple Weapon Proficiency, Stealthy.

**Talents:** Evasion, Uncanny Dodge 1.

**Class Features:** Improved Evasion, Improved Implements, Improvised Weapon Damage, Skill Mastery, Sweep.

**Possessions:** Harry prefers to carry a knife, garrote wire, and a pistol while on jobs. He also has a lock picking set. In this adventure, Harry has a complete waiter uniform and carries tools and equipment (such as a lighter) that a waiter would normally carry.

## Mobster Thugs

This stat block is for the various thugs in the adventure. The GM should feel free to modify this if he needs to adjust the power level. GMs with the Thrilling Tales: Gamemaster's Guide to Pulp Adventure may wish to substitute the Mook rules by ignoring the hit points stat.

**Fast Ordinary 2/Tough Ordinary 2:** CR 3; Medium-size human; HD 2d8+2d10; hp 26; Mas 11; Init +0; Spd 30 ft; Defense 16 (+6 class); BAB +2; Grap +2; Atk +2 melee (1d6 nonlethal, unarmed strike); Full Atk +2 melee (1d4 knife) or +2 ranged (by weapon); FS 5ft. by 5 ft.; Reach 5 ft; AL Chopper Charlie or the Sultan; SV Fort +2, Ref +2, Will +0; AP 0; Rep 0; Str 11, Dex 11, Con 11, Int 10, Wis 10, Cha 11.

**Occupation:** Military (bonus class skills: Knowledge (Tactics), Move Silently).

**Skills:** Climb +2, Intimidate +5, Knowledge (Tactics) +2, Listen +2, Move Silently +5, Search +3, Sense Motive +2, Spot +4, Survival +2, Tumble +2.

**Feats:** Advanced Firearms Proficiency, Brawl, Personal Firearms Proficiency, Simple Weapons Proficiency, Toughness.

**Possessions:** Thugs typically carry a pistol (use the Colt M1911 as a default) and a knife. Some thugs will carry a Tommy Gun.



Weapon	Dmg	Crit	Type	Range	ROF	Mag	Size	Weight	Pur. DC
Thompson M1928 SMG	2d6	20	Ballistic	30 ft	S, A	20, 30, 50	Large	11 lbs	18

### Thompson "Tommy Gun" M1928 Submachine Gun

The quintessential mobster weapon, the Tommy Gun is the symbol of the pulp genre. Prior to 1934, this weapon was readily available at local gun shops. The most distinctive features of the Tommy Gun are the drum magazine (while not listed in the stat block, 100 round drums did exist) and the vertical foregrip (removed from later versions).