

Interlude: Moving Violation

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A Modern Interlude

Interludes are short encounters, designed for modern d20 System games, in which the heroes find themselves in a situation all too common in everyday life: speeding tickets, rude waiters, long waits in the hospital emergency room, chance encounters at airport terminals, and so on. These brief encounters can be dropped into an evening's adventure to give the heroes a little "slice of real life" diversion from the main excitement—and maybe just a chance to shine, in situations that, for a change, don't involve enemy agents, serial killers, alien conspiracies, or any of the campaign's grander themes.

Interludes are opportunities for extraordinary people—the heroes—to tackle life's little problems in their own extraordinary way.

"Moving Violation" puts the heroes in a situation no one enjoys: being stopped in their car by the police. In this case, though, it's the worst possible time—the heroes are on their way back from a combat encounter. The heroes have to decide whether to bluff, run, or fight—and the Game-master has to be prepared for each eventuality. It doesn't matter which hero is driving the vehicle, or what level or mix of classes they are. All "Moving Violation" requires is that the characters be leaving the scene of a combat in a vehicle.

The Setup

The heroes have just left the scene of a violent confrontation, and they're driving just a bit too fast when they pass a police speed trap. A police cruiser pulls out after them, lights flashing and siren whooping, and tries to get them to pull over. If the heroes elect to run, the GM has a chase to adjudicate. (See "Developments," below.) But if the heroes *do* pull over, read the following text aloud:

Two uniformed police officers exit their car and approach yours, one on either side. The one on the driver's side says, "I need to see your driver's license and proof of insurance, please." Then he takes a harder look at you and asks, "Have you been in a fight?" then glances at his partner and casually puts his hand on his holstered pistol.

The police officers (Carson on the driver's side, and Abramowitz on the passenger side) have noticed the signs of violence—scrapes, bruises, perhaps some blood or blood splatter—and they're immediately suspicious. Although they're not necessarily aware of the battle the heroes just left (even if it wasn't too far away), it's their job to find out exactly *why* the people in the heroes' car look

like they've just been in a fight. These officers *might* be convinced to let the heroes go away if they have a convincing explanation for their injuries, but if any of the heroes has a plain and visible gunshot or knife wound, they should expect to be at least detained, and possibly arrested.

GMs can use the low-level police officer archetype to represent Carson and Abramowitz. See the *d20 Modern Roleplaying Game*, Chapter Eight: Friends and Foes.

Developments

The heroes have to deal with the police one way or another. Lying is probably the best option, but the officers might not buy the heroes' story. Fighting or fleeing are short-term solutions, at best; the consequences, if the heroes are ever caught, could be disastrous.

Fleeing

Fleeing might ultimately allow the heroes to escape, but even if the heroes don't stop, the police only need one round get the heroes' license plate number, which presents another long-term problem. If the heroes *don't* get lose them, Carson and Abramowitz are joined by another patrol car once every minute. After five minutes, a police helicopter arrives, tracking the heroes' car; news helicopters might show up around the same time, breaking into local programming to put the chase on the air.

Unless the heroes have a particularly good driver behind the wheel, talking their way out of the situation may be their best option. In order for this to work, though, they need to have a plausible story explaining away their visible injuries, and, more importantly, cover up anything that might motivate the police to detain the heroes—or search their vehicle. Because once the police put together a carload of bruised and bleeding people with a nearby crime scene, the heroes' lives get much, much more difficult.

Weak Story: When the police initially ask the heroes about their injuries, the heroes are already in trouble. The police want their answer from the driver (because the driver is responsible for the vehicle and its passengers), and so it's the driver who has to make a Bluff check opposed by the officers' Sense Motive checks. Carson and Abramowitz get one check apiece; even if one of them buys the driver's story, the other one might notice something the first one overlooked. (Use the same Bluff check for both Sense Motive checks.) If the heroes succeed, the police send them on their way. (See "Resolutions," below.)

If the driver's Bluff check fails, the two officers order the driver to get out of the vehicle (and just the driver; if anyone else tries to get out, the police order them to get back inside). Carson then frisks the driver. (See "Concealed Weapons," below.)

Searching the Vehicle

Each time an officer looks into the vehicle's interior, that officer can make a Spot check. If the police find *anything* suspicious (weapons or blood, for example) they take everyone into custody. If they find signs of violence (spent shell casings, or a body—live or dead) the police arrest the heroes.

A Spot check in this instance involves a cursory inspection of the seats and the floor. The police notice any unconcealed weapons, blood, or injuries with a DC 10 Spot check. They aren't actually allowed to make a more thorough search of the car unless they see something suspicious—which could be anything that looks out of place—*then* they get to make Search checks, and are authorized to open the trunk or other closed compartments, and also search any bags, boxes, luggage, or similar containers they find. Again, anything suspicious that they find prompts them to arrest the heroes, or at least take them into custody.

Concealed Weapons: Carson and Abramowitz can find hidden weapons in two ways: by looking in the car windows (particularly when talking to the driver), or by frisking a hero. Each police officer who looks in the car gets a Spot check (in addition to the check for the car itself), opposed by the heroes' Sleight of Hand checks. Don't forget the modifiers for the size of whatever they're trying to hide (see Chapter 4: Equipment, in the *d20 Modern Roleplaying Game*).

If the police decide to frisk a character, Carson makes a Search check (with a +4 circumstance bonus) opposed by the hero's Sleight of Hand check. While he is doing this, Abramowitz watches the rest of the heroes (perhaps getting another Spot check, if the other heroes are still in the vehicle).

If Carson finds a concealed weapon, he takes the hero into custody. Even if the hero has a license and a concealed-carry permit, the police still need to determine if the weapon has been used recently. (They check firearms for partly-empty magazines or spent casings; they check melee weapons for signs of blood.) If they find any evidence that the weapon has been used in some form of assault, they arrest the hero.

Even if the police don't find anything on the first hero, they bring out the rest of the heroes for the same treatment, having them line up on the side of the road, and frisking them in turn. While they're

doing so, another patrol unit arrives, adding two more officers. While the new officers watch the heroes, Carson and Abramowitz then search the vehicle from end to end, looking in the trunk and even under the seats.

Injuries and Blood: Assuming the heroes have made an effort to conceal any injuries or blood (under a jacket or blanket, for example), the police officers both get a Spot check, opposed by each hero's Sleight of Hand check, to notice anything visible. A hero has visible injuries if he was hit by a piercing, slashing, or ballistic weapon, or suffered a critical hit from a bludgeoning weapon. A hero has blood on him if he was in a square adjacent to a character who was killed with a piercing, slashing, or ballistic weapon, or a character who suffered a critical hit from a bludgeoning weapon. (The police are less interested in energy damage, since it isn't necessarily a sign of violence.) Modify the Sleight of Hand check by the size of the weapon that was used; refer to the "Concealed Weapons and Objects" chart in the rulebook.

If the police find injuries on a hero, they detain that hero until an ambulance arrives, and send him to the nearest hospital with a police escort. The character may later be arrested, if the police connect the hero to the scene of the combat. If they find blood, though, the police immediately arrest the hero, and send for a field forensics specialist to gather evidence. (See "In Custody/Under Arrest," below.)

Resolutions

"Moving Violation" has a few different possibilities for how it turns out.

Things Get Rough: If any of the heroes shows *any* sign of aggression, the officers draw their pistols and order the offenders to get on the ground. Assuming the hero complies (or is made to), the officers handcuff him and put him in the back of their car. If the heroes don't comply, the police use any means necessary, including firing their weapons, to subdue the heroes (though they prefer using their tonfas or pepper spray). Should they succeed in subduing any heroes (and aren't themselves subdued), they place those heroes under arrest.

In Custody/Under Arrest: If the police take a hero into custody, they move him away from the rest of the heroes and handcuff him, while one officer stands guard over him. If the police *arrest* one of the heroes, they handcuff him and put him in the back of the patrol car. In either case, the hero has one more chance to make a Bluff check to convince the police to let him go. The police get a +5 circumstance bonus to their Sense Motive

checks for a hero in custody; the bonus increases to +10 if the hero is under arrest. Once the police have the hero in cuffs, they're much less interested in letting him go. Even if they can't immediately determine what crime has been committed—or where—they need to gather evidence and hold the suspects in case they *do* find a crime scene (though they can only hold the heroes for 24 hours without charging them with anything).

“Drive Carefully”: If the hero tells a good enough lie, Carson checks the driver's license for outstanding warrants (and make sure that the vehicle hasn't been reported as stolen or otherwise

used in a crime), then gives the driver a speeding ticket. If the police noticed any injuries, even if the heroes successfully explained them, the police urge the heroes to drop by a hospital and have their injuries looked at. (And remember that hospitals are required by law to report gunshot wounds to the police.)

Experience Awards

Treat “Moving Violation” as an EL 2 encounter. Multiply the experience award by 150% if the heroes bluff their way out of the situation.

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