

¡Viva San Judas! **by Michael Witry**

You Need: two differently-colored 10-sided dice, tokens, a game master, at least 3 other players

Setting:

One year ago, the government of San Judas was overthrown in a coup. Unfortunately, the country's political factions couldn't decide who would serve as the new president. They appointed General Camacho, who is eighty-six years old and on kidney dialysis, as the caretaker president.

The time is coming for the General to appoint his successor, and every crisis gives his cabinet members a new opportunity to gain the General's blessing.

Characters:

The player characters represent members of the San Judas cabinet. Roll a d10 to determine which cabinet position you hold. (If you get the same position as another player, you can re-roll, or maybe the General accidentally appointed someone new to the post without removing the previous holder.)

- 1 Police Commissioner
corrupt cops, seized evidence, shiny badge
- 2 Foreign Minister
insincere diplomats, gifts from foreign dignitaries, champagne
- 3 Minister of Agriculture
machete-wielding farmers, meat that's probably safe for consumption, tractor
- 4 Minister of Sport
drunken soccer players, bribes from FIFA, metal cleats
- 5 Minister of Culture
ivory tower university professors, state-owned broadcasting, statues of previous presidents
- 6 Labor Minister
hordes of unemployed, selectively-enforced regulations, hard hat for photo ops
- 7 Chief Justice
illiterate judges, pardons, itchy robes
- 8 Minister of Tourism
sleeping customs agents, hotel tax revenue, fresh coats of paint
- 9 Environmental Minister
burned-out biologists, stop work orders, endangered fruit bats
- 10 Treasurer
bespectacled tax collectors, Swiss bank account, your signature on bank notes

Choose one gaudy and expensive object you own that sums up your personality.

Examples: gold-plated refrigerator, Hummer with Our Lady of Guadalupe mural, triptych of Che Guevara painted on black velvet, Ph.D. from Harverd [sic.] University, family tree tracing your descent from Julius Caesar.

PCs have two other attributes: Publicity and Aggrandizement.

-Publicity. Pick a rating from 3 to 8. A high number means you prefer to do things in public, a low number means you prefer to act secretly. Roll under your rating on the Publicity die to do things in public. Roll over to do things secretly.

-Targeting. Pick a rating from 3 to 8. A high number means you prefer to do things to make you look good, a low number means you prefer to do things to make other people look bad. Roll under your rating on the Targeting die to do things that help yourself. Roll over to do things that hurt someone else.

The Crisis:

Roll 2d10: one for the type of crisis that's going on in San Judas, one for the site of the crisis.

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| 1 | Bankruptcy | Casino |
| 2 | Strike | Airport |
| 3 | Sewage Leak | Presidential Palace |
| 4 | Epidemic | Russian Embassy |
| 5 | Hurricane | Power Plant |
| 6 | Methamphetamine | Beauty Pageant |
| 7 | Espionage | Army Base |
| 8 | Disrespectful Children | University |
| 9 | Sinkhole | Cathedral |
| 10 | Divorce | Cockfight Arena |

Conflict Resolution:

For every significant PC action, the GM will determine whether it is public or private, and whether it helps the PC or hurts someone else. The player will roll the Publicity die and the Targeting die. Each roll that "beats" the PC's rating on that die is a success. Each roll that exactly equals the PC's rating on that die is a hit. Each roll that does not beat or equal the PC's rating on that die is a failure.

2 Successes: Your action makes things a little better, but you don't get any credit for it.

1 Success, 1 Hit: Your action makes things a little better, and the success is front-page news. Take a Reputation token.

1 Success, 1 Failure: Your action makes things a little better, but makes something else worse. You do, however, get credit for things getting slightly better. Take a Reputation token.

2 Hits: Your action doesn't make anything better or worse, but it does make you look good. Take a Reputation token.

1 Failure, 1 Hit: Your action makes things worse, but if you can explain, to the GM's satisfaction, how your action actually made things better, take a Reputation token.

2 Failures: Your action makes things worse, but you don't get blamed for it.

Conflict Resolution Example. Miguel Santos Vargas wants to sneak into General Camacho's office and bribe him. The GM rules that this is a private action, so he'll need to roll over his rating on the Publicity die to succeed, and it's an action that benefits Santos, so he'll have to roll under his rating on the Targeting die to succeed. Santos has a 4 in Publicity and a 5 in Targeting. He rolls a 7 on the Publicity die and an 8 on the Targeting die. With one success and one failure, Santos succeeds in bribing the General, but was someone listening in on the transaction?

Reputation Tokens:

You can spend a Reputation token to re-roll a die - your own or somebody else's. You can also spend a Reputation token to prevent another PC from taking an action that would allow them to roll the dice if you explain to the GM's satisfaction how you were able to use your cabinet position to obstruct their action.

Every time you gain a Reputation token, you gain an additional token if your action was consistent with the profile of your cabinet position.

Winning:

The player with the highest Reputation at the end of the session is the General's choice to become the next president.

GM Notes:

In San Judas, reputation is more important than results... which is why every institution in San Judas, from the largest government agency to the mom and pop store, is entirely incompetent and bounces from crisis to crisis. Successes are small: a bankrupt company gets a three-month loan, a memorial is erected for victims of a disaster, a scandal is covered up. Failures are big: the company's bankruptcy drives all its creditors out of business, the disaster killed the commander of the Air Force, a foreign ambassador is threatening to cut development aid if the scandal isn't fixed.

You can kill PCs. If this happens, the PC is replaced by a family member of the player's choice, who holds the same post, has the same ratings, and has the same Reputation as their deceased predecessor.

If you're having trouble deciding how things get better or how things get worse, ask the player, before the roll, "What's the best thing that could happen, and what's the worst thing that could happen?" With a success, the player gets a milder version of the "best thing." With a failure, the player gets something worse than the "worst thing."

The GM's word is law and may override silly notions of "fact." Feel free to rule that a die that appears to display one number actually displays another number. Use this power to reward extraordinarily funny ideas, or to reward players who provide you with out-of-character bribes.

You are encouraged to wear mirrored sunglasses.