

Session/Game: Private Dicks-1 **Date:** May 27, 2026

#1: Case of the Wandering Steve

Campaign Date: February, 1947, Week 3

The McNulty Agency:

Eric Magnum (Craig)

Ranngley Wade Melman (Bob)

Palmela Hansbury (Andrew)

Pudge Matheson (Pete)

Judge: Dave N.

Prologue

February 15, 1947, it was cold and dark in Molesburg, the kind of day that made you wish you were hunting iguana in New Mexico or crabbing in Florida, anything other than manning the office at the McNulty Agency, while the smell of pine tar wafted up from the distributor on the first floor. Madeline hit the buzzer and sent in a woman that looked like a shave groundhog that had been hit in the face with a lump of firewood.

"You the DEEtective?" she shrieked.

I nodded and said, "That's what it says in my wallet."

"I'll give you \$200 that I got from pawning my Aunt Muriel's jewelry, if in you drag back my no-account husband."

Yep, that's how the story began. Wonderful.

Log:

Mrs. Myrna Putz hired the agency to find her husband Steve Putz, who had vanished or more likely run off a week before. Steve was on a temporary layoff from Grand Products as the factory was retooling (from making bombs to making ovens). Myrna said that Steve's best pals were Ernie Gibson (crazy for Jazz) and Paul Chicolini (crazy for spaghetti).

Because Magnum knew Mary Numbers, who was the book-keeper at Grand Products, he and Palmela hopped into his jeep and drove down the factory. They easy pass through the doorman to see Mary and discuss Steve and his buddies. Mary is able to give them Chicolini's address—487 2nd street.

Pudge and Ranngley decide that if Ernie is such a Jazz fan, they should look for him at some Jazz clubs. Ranngley knew Johnny Suds, the bartender at the Jazz Pit in Broadly, which seemed a good place to start. Neither man felt it would be comfortable to take Pudge's jeep on a cold winter night and it wouldn't look cool to the Jazzbos to show up in a jeep, so Ranngley tried to break in and hot wire Palmela's sports car, but had no luck. Pudge decided to just call a cab.

Once Pudge and Melman arrive at the Jazz Pit, they see that the Jazz Hep 5 were on stage. Pudge, who had brought his trumpet with him for just such an opportunity, asks to sit in with with the band. It took much pleading and \$5, but they let him jam with them, and he actually impressed some beatniks sitting at he bar. Meanwhile, Melman asks Johnny Suds the bartender if he knew Ernie Gibson. It turns out that Ernie was sitting right behind Melman, through a wild stroke of luck. Ernie is terrified and refuses to talk, and eventually a set of 3 street tough intervene and warn Melman off. Melman draws his gun and warns them to lie down or fall down. The toughs call his bluff and rush forward, but Melman pistol whips them

until the can take no more and back off. Meanwhile, Pudge convinces Ernie to meet and talk outside, around the corner. Melman joins them just as three gangsters come out from the back room.

At Chicolini's apartment in Popeton, Magnum and Pamela find him at home, but he won't talk, being as scared as Ernie. Palmela then inflicts the dreaded Spaghetti Treatment, breaking all the spaghetti in his apartment into tiny couscous sized pieces and threatening to do the same to him. He breaks and spills his guts.

Both Ernie and Chicolini separately tell the identical story to each pair of detectives. Ernie, Paul and Steve had all been hired by gangsters to become drug mules, carrying in heroin from Pittsburgh by bus. Steve was on a run right now and was set to drop his packet at the McCrory's Dime Store in Broadly in a few hours.

The entire team reassemble and drive over the 5 and 10. Among all the annoying customers, they spot Steve near the back. Three gangsters make themselves known and pick up the package from Steve. Pudge rushes in and starts beating on one gangster who had emerged behind the cash register. Melman and Magnum start pounding on the other two. Its a messy brass knuckles brawl, until Pudge's nerve breaks and he flees outside. One of the other gangsters starts shooting, wounding Magnum. Magnum and Melman figure that all bets are off and begin to shoot back. Magnum shoots down the guy who wounded him and also accidentally shoots and wounds the cashier, who calls him a miserable dingus. Melman shoots down the other two gangsters.

Robert Scooperson of *Morning Gazette* happened to be at the lunch counter and began to take a large number of photographs of the fight. An old coot sitting near Robert rushed to the phone booth and called the police. When the fight was over, Palmela spills lots of information to Scooperson including that the McNulty Agency had foiled this drug plot. When the police arrived, they were willing to believe the detectives since the big bag of heroin was sitting right there. Despite Palmela's attempt to excuse Steve's involvement, the cops were set on taking him in for questioning. However, Melman gave them each \$20 and convinced them to let Steve walk.

The next morning the whole city (including the gangsters) were able to read all about how the McNulty Detective Agency had foiled a drug smuggling delivery, complete with pictures. Also, Pudge was considering trading in his jeep and buying a nice sedan that the whole team could ride in.