

## **Alexander Theodore Emerson; corrupt Old West small town mayor**

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**ST:** 10 [0] Thrust 1d-2, Swing 1d  
**DX:** 9 [-10] Basic Speed 4.75, Move 3, Dodge 3  
**IQ:** 13 [30]  
**HT:** 10 [0]

*Total Points:* 33.5 Points

*Advantages:* Status 2 [10]; Wealth (Comfortable) [10]

*Disadvantages:* Cowardice [-10]; Gluttony [-5]; Overweight [-5]; Reputation -2 (as corrupt and cowardly, to everyone) [-10]

*Quirks:* Intimidated by his brother; Lets power and authority go to his head. [-2]

*Skills:* Accounting-12 [2]; Administration-15 [6]; Carousing-12 [8]; Diplomacy-13 [4]; Guns (Pistol)-10 [.5]; Law-12 [2]; Politics-13 [2]; Riding (Horse)-8 [1]; Savoir-Faire-14 [1]

### ***Equipment***

Emerson carries some type of small, concealable pistol appropriate for the era such as a .41 double derringer or a .32 pepperbox.

### ***Appearance***

40 years old; 5'5"; 175 pounds; a short and pudgy man with close-cropped black hair and beard - both with noticeable traces of gray - and wearing an out-of-style but still presentable suit.

### ***Biography***

Alexander Emerson is the mayor of a small, dying mining town in western Colorado. Until three years ago, however, he had never been west of the Hudson River, having spent most of his adult life as a clerk in a Boston law firm. And he probably would have remained there until he died of old age, except that he suffered a series of financial disasters - all orchestrated by his ne'er-do-well brother, Peter - that left him penniless. Desperate, he stayed late one night at the office, supposedly to finish some clerical work. Instead, he cleaned out the firm's vault - holding over \$3500 at the time - and fled Boston in the middle of the night.

He stayed for several months in a half-dozen tiny towns on his trek west, working as a clerk and once - in Kansas - as a judge. By the time he arrived in Colorado, his ill-gotten gains were nearly gone, spent to help him escape justice. At that time, he ran into a familiar face - his brother, Peter Vincent Emerson, now known as the gunslinger Lefty Hayes. "Lefty" was also on the run from the law; after the robbery at Alexander's firm, Boston police first suspected Peter, even thinking Alexander's disappearance was foul play. Lefty escaped, but unlike his brother, headed west until he hit Arizona. There, he met up with a small band of outlaws - small both in number, and ambition - and committed robberies across Arizona and New Mexico, finally winding up in Colorado.

The town in which the brothers reunited was dying, the local silver mines starting to play out. Most of the better citizens had left town and the population was down to only 20% of its peak level. The current mayor had lost popularity and crime was on the rise; the brothers saw their chance. (Or, more accurately, Lefty saw his chance.) Emerson ran for mayor, backed by some strong-handed support from Lefty and several thugs he managed to collect. Emerson proved successful in the election, and promptly appointed Lefty to the position of town marshal. The ex-mayor and outgoing marshal bitterly

contested the outcome of the election, and the week after Emerson took office, a gunfight ensued. After half an hour, only the Emersons' people were left standing. Since then, Emerson has run the town in a high-handed fashion, primarily under the "guidance" of Lefty.

Emerson is completely disliked by the townsfolk, even those who voted for him. He is easily cowed by his younger brother, but is happy as long as he has enough power and wealth to lord it over the locals. Since there is effectively no resistance to his "rule", there is little doubt that he will continue to be re-elected mayor as long as he and his brother are alive. (It is important to note that Lefty's men will not follow Emerson's orders unless his brother specifically tells them to.) Ironically, Emerson is a reasonably competent mayor when his brother doesn't interfere with him; unfortunately, Lefty interferes constantly.

### ***Canonicity:***

Alexander Emerson uses standard **GURPS** rules.

### ***What If?***

Emerson is useful in any setting in which there are frontier regions with little regular law enforcement; such settings are common in most fantasy and science fiction campaigns.

If the GM wants to make life easier on the PCs, the former mayor and town marshal didn't get involved in a gunfight with the new town power. They are still around, perhaps, controlling something important - like the silver mine, or the judge - so that the Emerson brothers aren't in complete control. This gives the PCs the chance to play the two sides off against each other. (See the movies "A Fistful of Dollars" or "Yojimbo" for ideas...)

Details on Lefty Hayes and his men have been left intentionally vague. They should be specifically tailored to fit the power level of the party. In general, Lefty should be built on about 25 points less than the best PC gunfighter, with Guns and Fast Draw skills one level lower. His men - all of whom are deputies - should be built on 40-60 points and should easily be worse with Guns than the average PC (about 2 or 3 levels worse). There should be one (in a realistic campaign) to three (in a cinematic campaign) thugs per member of the party.

### ***Adventure Seeds***

*We Want Our Money, Mr. Emerson:* For fear of being embarrassed publicly, Emerson's Boston law firm covered up the theft, the partners making up for the shortage. They have, however, hired a detective - perhaps a Pinkerton, depending on the time period - to track down Mr. Emerson and get the money back (plus interest, plus the detective's fee's, of course - they are lawyers, after all). The PCs can be the detective and his assistants, or perhaps hired guns the detective has picked up to help him as he has gone further west (and further out of his element). Of course, Emerson has no intention of repaying the money, and since there is no warrant on him - but his brother, on the other hand, is wanted - the party will have to decide how to proceed. (As incentive, the PCs are entitled to 10% of any moneys recovered, divided equally among them).

*The Peasants Revolt:* The remaining townsfolk have gotten fed up with the iron rule of the brothers, especially Lefty's. They hire the party to drive out the pair using any means necessary. While a showdown is the obvious choice, another option is for one of the PCs to simply try to beat Emerson in the next election (conveniently, due in a few weeks' time). This offers much more opportunity for roleplaying (though a gunfight after a winner is announced can still be thrown in). If the previous mayor is still around, an interesting three-way election race could develop... (It should be noted that the previous mayor, while moderately honest and popular, was also incompetent).