

I Loathe A Parade

This 4th of July murder mystery takes place in Elmtown, a community of 12,000 people noted for its annual Independence Day parade. Mayor Joe Possumz, who's just announced that he'll be running for his fourth term in the fall elections, is in the reviewing stand, waving at the parade while wearing his now-famous, red-white-and-blue bowtie.

As the final drum-and-bugle corps passes by, the mayor bites into a hot dog coated with traditional brown mustard and topped off with a dark-green dill pickle. When he finishes the culinary treat, Possumz wipes the perspiration off his brow, smiles faintly at the crowd and collapses. To the amazement of those nearby, the local doctor rushes to him, checks for a pulse, and pronounces him dead.

More about the Elmtown parade:

Twelve years ago, when Mayor Possumz was first elected to office, the Elmtown parade was a ten-minute affair, consisting of four units and a lot of fire trucks. With the mayor's backing, the parade has become a holiday extravaganza. The 80-plus units in the parade now take two hours to pass by the official civic reviewing stand, strategically positioned in front of City Hall where the mayor gazes with pride at the event that he has built and nurtured.

But, any politician is only as secure as his last controversial decision ... and the mayor has made many enemies over the years. Could one of them have done him in as he was enjoying the latest version of his most noteworthy accomplishment?

The suspects ...

Rhonda Ripley

Owner of Horsebalm Stables. She and her team of riders have been fixtures in the parade for the last 10 years.

Rocky the Clown

A favorite with the kids of Elmtown. Behind the greasepaint is alderman Rockwell Kenmore, who planned on running against the mayor in the upcoming election.

Mona Minski

Head of the Elmtown "Marching Mommas." Every 4th of July, she relives her cheerleading days at Elmtown High School by marching in the parade and leading cheers all the way down Elm Street.

Albert Ames

Leader of the Elmtown Civic Band. He plays the piccolo and is renowned for his solo in "Stars and Stripes Forever." Albert knows when anything in Elmtown is off-key.

Dottie Pinewood

Cubmaster of Cub Scout Pack 1776. She takes pride in winning the annual prize for best float in the 4th of July parade.

Vern Fullerton

The part-time weatherman at the local TV station, WORM. He was the grand marshal in the parade, riding in a vintage Model A Ford.