

# TIMEWATCH

# BEHIND ENEMY TIMES



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Pelgrane Press



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*These adventures are dedicated to our Kickstarter patrons, and the knock-down, drag-out ezern vs. saphosaur battle they inspired. When you read the end of The Hatching Time, be aware — this is for you. Thank you.*

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# INTRODUCTION

*"Humanity must fall. Cities must burn. We must create a crèche, and our children shall claim that which is already truly theirs."*

— scent marker of an ezeru queen

The saying is that God must have loved beetles, because the Divine sure made a lot of them. There are close to 400,000 species of beetles in the world, making up a whopping 40% of all insects in the world and 30% of all animal life. In comparison, there are 5,416 species of mammals. Why so many beetles? They're extinction resistant; very, very few families of beetles have ever died out.

Let's drill down to a particularly loathsome member of the beetle family. There are at least 4,600 species of cockroaches, and the species dates back to the Carboniferous period 320 million years ago. Roaches landed in the Americas from Africa in the year 1625. Some species have elaborate social structures including shared shelter, collective decision-making, communication, and the ability to recognize kin. It's impossible to estimate how many cockroaches exist in the world, but it's believed that there may be an average of 36,000 roaches per infested apartment building in the United States — and there are roughly 30 million apartment buildings in the US. That puts an estimate at 700 trillion in the US alone.

In comparison, there are about 319 million people in the United States alive today. Humans are outnumbered 2 million to 1 in the US, and we can't even guess at the worldwide ratio.

## MEET THE EZERU

Okay, that's a revolting bit of trivia. It's also the reason that in the great extinction event of at least one alternate reality, when humans eradicated themselves in nuclear fire and poisoned the atmosphere and the seas, beetles managed to stick around. They thrived, they evolved, and over millions of years they developed abilities that humans would never have suspected. These huge, advanced beetles called themselves **ezeru**, and they learned to open up new worlds for hunting. They would infest and colonize parallel realities and exo-planets, and with psychic techniques for stepping between worlds they began to spread across galaxies.

And then, in the snap of a finger, their entire existence was unmade. Everything they ever had accomplished vanished, and only those ezeru who had been stepping between worlds or dimensions when the change occurred managed to survive. They emerged onto an Earth that had never known the ezeru, and the same biological drive that had kept them alive for so many millions of years kicked into high gear. They would preserve their species. They would *restore* their species. And that meant research.

Scuttling backwards through time brought them the answers they needed. Hideous interfering meat-creatures from millions of years ago known as "humans" apparently engineered history so that the ezeru never evolved. The remnants of the ezeru started to breed at the fastest pace possible and gradually infested the time stream. From the shadows between the ticks of a clock, they spied on humanity and slowly began to understand what changes were needed to bring the ezeru's future back into existence. It's possible that a more technological species could engineer their own radioactive weapons, but the ezeru are creatures of convenience whose natural tendency is to feed off the work of others. They opted for a multi-pronged approach to gather nuclear weapons, breed the next generations of their species, and manually create their future paradise.

*Behind Enemy Times* examines this ezeru quest, providing missions that directly or indirectly involve ezeru. We realize that there are plenty of people out there who aren't big fans of beetles; as a result, you may see ezeru making only a passing appearance in several of these missions. They're out there, though, hiding in the darkness between seconds, waiting for the opportunity to scuttle forward and save their future. If they get to feed on the hated humanity in the process? All the better.

Read more about the ezeru on p. 173 of the *TimeWatch* core RPG book.

## OVERVIEW OF BEHIND ENEMY TIMES

*Behind Enemy Times* is a series of missions for the *TimeWatch* RPG, in which you face the fearsome ezeru, and stop them from turning the Earth into a post-nuclear wasteland. You can run the adventures in any order, with the sole proviso that you run *The Hatching Time* last.

### THE GADGET

An obsessive 24th-century collector (and disembodied brain) tries to steal the first working atomic bomb for his own personal museum. As Agents work to stop him, ezeru slip in to steal his collection of nuclear warheads.

### THIEF IN THE NIGHT

Sophosaurs (sentient velociraptors from an alternate history) destroy human culture by systematically stealing the creativity and memories of history's greatest thinkers. Agents unravel the scheme to prevent it from ever occurring.

### TIME WILL TELL

A rogue *TimeWatch* memory technician has teamed up with William Tell to destroy oppression throughout history. The Agents must undo Tell's actions in a way that does not create paradox, never letting him know they're saving his victims, or they could inadvertently destroy *TimeWatch's* Citadel.

### REBEL HEART

Against their will or knowledge, the Agents are burned by their own superiors and put into deep cover to infiltrate a rebellion against *TimeWatch*.

### HATCHET AND AXE

Ezeru spies trigger nuclear war in the 1960s with an unexpected change to history, helping 19th-century social reformer Carrie Nation in a way that creates catastrophe 70 years hence.

### THE HATCHING TIME

Ezeru plan to hatch millions of eggs in the heart of New York City, and they're willing to flood the city with radiation to do so. It takes careful investigation and tricky alliances to defeat an ezeru queen once and for all.



## HOW TO RUN THESE ADVENTURES

*Behind Enemy Times* consists of multiple linked missions, but there's no need to run them in a particular order — or, in fact, run all of them at all. With the exception of *The Hatching Time*, these missions can be run in whatever order you choose, either as a one-shot or as a linked series of adventures. That means that you should pick and choose what you love most, jettison the rest, and have fun.

*TimeWatch* is a game that thrives on customization and house rules. Feel particularly free to alter plots, personalities, and quantities (or the very nature) of foes. Add new technology, make things up, and in conjunction with your gaming group customize the world of the future. Your players will thank you.

## ALTERNATIVES FOR THE ENTOMOPHOBE

If you're not a big fan of cockroaches, however — and who is? — you may wish to swap them out for another nonhuman and alien species that serves the same purpose but has similar or identical abilities. Changing the outer appearance of an antagonist without dramatically altering the abilities is a time-honored tradition that works well in *TimeWatch*. *The Hatching Time* in particular will require customization if you

take this approach, but removing the presence of insects from your game may be worth the trouble.

## EXAMPLE: THE CONSTRUCTED

These refugees from a nuclear wasteland have replaced their irradiated and rotting flesh with the skin of their victims, creating a crazy-quilt patchwork of skin tones and extra body parts. Their mutant powers allow them all the same abilities of the ezeru, and they are furious about being separated from their flesh-mines of living, squirming human limbs.

## EXAMPLE: NANOBLADES

Tiny sentient robots from a nuclear future will rule the Earth, inheriting it from humans who destroyed themselves and their now-uninhabitable planet. Nanoblades are miniscule nanobots who can adapt their function and combine with one another to achieve any number of goals. Nanoblades are powered by background radioactivity, and ever since they were accidentally carried backwards in time by an errant time traveler, their programming requires them to ensure their own survival. They create metallic armored shells with the ability to exactly duplicate the appearance and memories of any human infested with their microscopic probes.

## EXAMPLE: ASCENDED

A tiny subsection of humanity responded to nuclear devastation by evolving into ineffable creatures of pure light, power, and luminous thought. No one at TimeWatch understands how this happened, or whether it occurred naturally or after genetic experimentation. Regardless, the Ascended delight in possessing people, interfering in historical events, and acting like superior and unpredictable know-it-alls. They believe that it is in the best interest of humanity to eradicate great swaths of the population in nuclear fire. That fact that humanity does not agree is largely irrelevant.

## SIDE MISSIONS: NUCLEAR CLOSE CALLS

Only have an hour to play and you want a quick encounter? An ezeru close call with nuclear disaster may be the answer.

Appallingly, there have been numerous Cold War incidents in real life where the big red nuclear button was almost pressed by the USSR, the United States, or other nuclear powers. There's no question that this has happened in real history far more often than anyone without high-level security clearances knows. A few of these incidents have recently come to light; if you want an actual historical near-catastrophe to drop into your game as a quick encounter, or as a method for rounding out a longer mission with an ezeru ploy, these make good hooks.

## MINUTEMAN: SEPTEMBER 25TH, 1983

**Hook:** What appears to the Soviets to be five Minuteman nuclear missiles launched from Montana is actually sunlight reflecting off of clouds over the silo locations. One Soviet officer who shouldn't have been on duty makes the decision to report a system malfunction instead of a valid US attack.

**True History:** Stanislav Petrov was a 44-year-old lieutenant colonel in the Soviet Air Defense Forces. US-Soviet tensions were already high, as weeks prior on September 1st, 1983, Soviet fighters had shot down a Korean airliner, killing all 269 people onboard because the airliner was flying through prohibited Soviet airspace.

On September 25th, 1983 Petrov arrived at a secret base outside Moscow in preparation for his 8 p.m. night shift. He was a replacement duty officer, overseeing a team of 120 technicians and military officers who monitored the Soviet Union's nuclear early warning system that looked for signs of a US military strike. Petrov wasn't supposed to be there that night: he was a military scientist and not a career soldier, but his superior officer was unavailable that evening, so Petrov was called in instead.

At 12:15 a.m., a large backlit red screen lit up with the word *LAUNCH*; it had detected the launch of a nuclear missile from the United States. The new satellite array that Petrov's team had set up reported that a Minuteman II nuclear missile had been launched from a silo in Montana and was headed towards Moscow.

While alarms sounded and 120 control room personnel looked up to Petrov's command post on a mezzanine overlooking the room, Petrov had brief minutes to decide whether or not to believe the system. His job was to verify the strike to his commander on the other end of a hotline. If he gave the go-ahead, they would retaliate by launching hundreds of missiles back at the United States. It was a difficult decision because the Soviets were using a new system of satellites that Petrov had helped to build. The satellites were new, but so far reliable.

Petrov asked himself: "Why a single missile?" The Soviets expected a massive US strike if any strike would be made. He called the duty officer in the Soviet Army's headquarters and reported a system malfunction and a false alarm. As he hung up, the system reported that a second missile had been launched — then a third, fourth, and fifth over the next five minutes. Regardless, Petrov asked himself, "Why would the Americans launch five missiles when they had hundreds?" so he called in additional malfunctions.

That was the correct decision, as no missiles ever arrived. What the system thought was engine flare from launched missiles was actually flashes of sunlight reflecting off of clouds over Montana silos. Petrov never received an official recognition or commendation for his decision. Petrov didn't seem to mind; he has been quoted as saying, "It was my job. I was simply doing my job, and I was the right person at the right time, that's all."

**Alternate History:** Ezeru make sure that Petrov's superior officer, the correct duty officer, is available for duty that night so that Petrov is not present.



Alternatively, perhaps ezeru saboteurs make sure that five missiles really *were* launched from the Montana missile base, and it's up to TimeWatch to prevent that or destroy them mid-flight.

**The Mission:** After 1983 ends in a nuclear holocaust, TimeWatch Agents must infiltrate either US or Soviet nuclear operations to find the saboteurs and prevent the nuclear exchange.

**Research:** “Stanislav Petrov”, “Futility Closet podcast episode 83 — Nuclear Close Calls”

## B-59: OCTOBER 27, 1962

See the introduction to *Hatchet and Axe*, which can be stripped from that adventure and run separately. This incident is one of the top five known times that we've come closest to nuclear war, and it remains one of the most frightening.

## DEFCON 2: OCTOBER 28, 1962

**Hook:** A US major mistakenly gives eight nuclear launch crews the codes to launch their missiles. A captain second-guesses him and prevents nuclear war.

**True History:** The Cuban Missile Crisis remains one of the tensest, most volatile periods in US/Soviet relations. If one side had launched missiles the other would have massively retaliated, and it's only by skillful diplomacy and tremendous luck that the world made it through the early 1960s without a nuclear exchange.

The day after a Soviet submarine, *B-59*, almost purposely launched a nuclear-tipped torpedo off the coast of Cuba (see above), American crews at secret bases in Okinawa, Japan, nearly started a war by mistake. There were four secret missile bases in Okinawa, each with two launch control centers; each center had a seven-person launch crew and 4 Mace B cruise missiles mounted with Mark 28 nuclear warheads. The combined yield of the 32 missiles was 1,000 times the yield dropped on Japan during World War II. The Okinawa station was at DEFCON 2. Should it have reached DEFCON 1, the crews would have been prepared to launch missiles with only a minute's notice.

In the early morning of October 28, 1962, the usual mid-shift radio transmission to the launch crews contained the launch codes for a missile launch of all 32 missiles. The launch crew captains were understandably confused, as the bases weren't yet at DEFCON 1 and the major transmitting the codes seemed relaxed and unstressed instead of angry, fearful, or tense.

Captain William Bassett, the senior field officer for the shift, tried to confirm with the major. The launch code was repeated. At this, one of the eight launch officers ordered his crew to proceed to launch; Bassett ordered two officers to go over and shoot the lieutenant if he tried to launch without verbal authorization from the senior officer in the field, or without a raise to DEFCON 1. Bassett called the major and demanded either a verbal launch confirmation or a stand-down order. Apparently realizing what he'd almost done, the startled major

issued an immediate stand-down order.

The major was court-martialed a month later.

**Alternate History:** It's fairly clear that ezeru have either replaced or mind controlled the major, or through sabotage have switched less important codes for the actual launch codes. The plot was still foiled by Bassett. In order to achieve war, ezeru need to replace Bassett with a shape-shifted duplicate who won't question the launch order.

**The Mission:** When the war starts in 1962, it was the Americans who launched first out of Okinawa, Japan. Find out why and stop it. This is especially challenging because the bases' locations are secret, and security is incredibly tight.

**Research:** “William Bassett nuclear close call”, “the Okinawa Missiles of October”, “498th Tactical Missile Group Kadena Air Base, Okinawa”

## SO MANY MORE...

There are many more close calls, including one where a bear climbing a fence in Duluth accidentally scrambled fighter jets with nuclear-tipped missiles. They're worth reviewing, if for no other reason than to understand the ezeru stratagems.

**Research:** “Whoops, Apocalypse! Strangehistory.net” and “bear on fence Volk nuclear”

## ADDITIONAL SUPPORTING CHARACTERS IN BEHIND ENEMY TIMES

You may wish reoccurring supporting characters to appear across missions, whether allied, hostile, or an infuriating mixture of the two. The following are some possibilities that you can slot into any mission you choose.

### AGENT SPARROW (ELLE SPENSER)

This MI-13 British chrontal intelligence agent is loosely based on Emma Peel was a time traveller. She is from a secret British Military Intelligence agency that specializes in unusual and irrational phenomena, and she has made a name for herself in intelligence circles by being exactly where she needs to be at the correct time. She does so with the use of a captured time machine. Sparrow doesn't spend a lot of time flitting from one time period to the next; instead, she travels to the future, researches the past, and inserts herself at points where she can be most effective. MI-13 maintains a large number of counselors whose job is nothing more than reminding Sparrow who she truly is, effectively spending Reality Anchor as if it was going out of style in order to help neutralize the chrontal instability she builds up on every mission.

Sparrow is largely incorruptible and has Britain's best interests in mind, not those of TimeWatch or the “proper” time stream. Agents might find themselves at cross-purposes on one mission, only to be working side by side with her on the next. She is exceptionally prepared, something that has come to annoy more than one of her enemies. Luckily, she's hilarious

and witty to banter with, loyal to her friends (mostly) and her country (always), seldom holds a grudge, and is diplomatic enough to smooth over disagreements with TimeWatch. It doesn't hurt that she's developed a countermeasure to MEM-tags; if one is activated on her, she is whisked back to MI-13 headquarters instead.

Agent Sparrow may help make sure the Allies win WWII by stealing back *The Gadget* from Hitesh Chen in the 24th-century; might be investigating Creator's Syndrome in *Thief in the Night*; could be infiltrating the rebellion in *Rebel Heart*; or could be loaded down with clues that the Agents lack in NYC during *The Hatching Time*.

### Agent Sparrow's Stats

**Defense:** Hit Threshold 4, Armor 1, Health 14

**Offense:** Scuffling +2, Shooting +3; Damage Modifier +0 (martial arts), +2 plus concussive (low-profile concussive beam pistol), Stun 5 (amplified Taser)

**Abilities:** Tempus 20; Authority 1, Charm 1, Spying 2

**Special Abilities:** Clock Out (cost 2), Flashback (cost 5), Oracle (cost 1), Technology (cost 2), Teleport (cost 2)

**Misc:** Stealth Modifier +1

**Description:** Agent Sparrow is a dark-skinned, cheerful British woman in her early 30s. She has a superb smile, biting wit, useful gadgets, and extreme competence.

## HEINRICH AND HELGA VON BRANDT

This couple hunts occult and technological artifacts for Hitler's Thule Society, and it's never entirely clear if they are husband and wife or brother and sister — or both. They are tall, cool in demeanor and bearing, precise, and lethally efficient. They seek artifacts that will give Germany an advantage in World War II, and they're not afraid to use the artifacts they find to gather even more advantages. The Von Brandts and their disposable unit of elite soldiers have achieved inefficient and imprecise time travel, so occasionally appear in eras other than their own.

While they're not necessarily deadly enough to make primary adversaries, the Von Brandts have an infuriating habit of showing up at already tense circumstances at the absolutely worst time. If you need a dramatic complication, a nuclear weapon inconveniently stolen, or a TimeWatch agent murdered and robbed, the Von Brandts and their lackeys are delighted to assist.

The Von Brandts might be researching occult cures to Creator's Syndrome to save their beloved Furher in *Thief in the Night*, making sure that the Gadget stays captured in *The Gadget* (and convincing Chen to steal a few more bombs while he's at it), or stepping into RDS-1 in *Time Will Tell*.

### Heinrich Von Brandt's Stats

**Defense:** Hit Threshold 4, Armor 2 (occult charm), Health 14

**Offense:** Scuffling +3, Shooting +2; Damage Modifier +1 plus Stun 5 (poisoned sword cane), +1 (pistol)

**Abilities:** Tempus 15; Bureaucracy 1, High Society 1, Intimidation 2, Taunt 1

**Special Abilities:** Branching Point (cost 4), Clock Out (cost 2), Extra Action (cost 2), Seize Initiative (cost 2), Venom (cost 2)

**Misc:** Alertness Modifier +1, Stealth Modifier +1

**Description:** Heinrich is rail thin, with thin blond hair and militarily stiff posture. He enjoys taunting his foes before destroying them utterly.

### Helga Von Brandt's Stats

**Defense:** Hit Threshold 4, Armor 2 (unnatural luck), Health 14

**Offense:** Scuffling +1, Shooting +3; Damage Modifier +1 (stiletto), +2 (pistol with cursed bullets)

**Abilities:** Tempus 15; Bureaucracy 1, High Society 2, Intimidation 1, Taunt 1

**Special Abilities:** Clock Out (cost 2), Extra Action (cost 2), Psychic (cost 2), Summoning (cost 3 — Nazi Mooks)

**Misc:** Alertness Modifier +2, Stealth Modifier +1

**Description:** Helga is thin, with an aquiline nose and long blonde hair. She lords her superior social status over others, and tends to simper and curry favor with those who have an even more regal background. She is the crueler and more thorough of the pair.

### Nazi Cultist of the Thule Society Stats

**Defense:** Hit Threshold 4, Armor 1, Health 1

**Offense:** Scuffling +1, Shooting +2; Damage Modifier +0 (knife), +1 (pistol)

**Abilities:** Athletics 8, Vehicles 3

**Misc:** Alertness Modifier +1; each cultist has an occult charm given to them by the Von Brandts. When hit, roll a d6; on 4–6 they stay up due to unnatural vitality, on 1–3 they drop as per normal.

**Description:** Nazi thugs with better uniforms, these occult soldiers are loyal but not necessarily inventive.

## ALEXANDER MINNELL

This late 19th-century TimeWatch agent has been corrupted by ezeru. He now acts as a shadow agent for them, doing their bidding. Minnell was turned by ezeru identifying his parentage and threatening to destroy the very existence of Minnell's wife. He now suffers from Stockholm Syndrome; over time Minnell has managed to convince himself that his secretive sabotage and spying is for the best, and that it's acceptable if the ezeru win after all, just as long as his own family back in the 1880s remains safe. It'd be nice to say that this is because Minnell has been mind controlled, but really? He's just a coward.

Minnell acts for the ezeru in situations where a shape-shifted roach wouldn't be able to gain access to a location, or where trusted TimeWatch agents are needed. He may befriend the Agents, only to betray them later. If the Agents suspect a spy

or saboteur, Minnell will work hard (and use time travel) to establish an alibi.

Minnell may have infiltrated Chen's home as a spy in *The Gadget*, have assumed the role of a double agent in *Rebel Heart* or *Time Will Tell*, be a servant or friend to Carrie Nation in *Hatchet and Axe*, or be acting as a watchman for the ezeru in *The Hatching Time*.

## Alexander Minnell's Stats

**Defense:** Hit Threshold 4, Armor 1, Health 10

**Offense:** Scuffling +2, Shooting +2; Damage Modifier +0 (improvised club), +2 (beam pistol), Stun 5 (PaciFist)

**Abilities:** Tempus 20

**Special Abilities:** Clock Out (cost 2), Flashback (cost 5), Help Yourself (cost 5), Oracle (cost 1), Summoning (cost 3 — one ezeru), Technology (cost 2), Teleport (cost 2)

**Misc:** Stealth Modifier +3 (until noticed — impersonator mesh)

## SHARADA HAJARNAVIS

Sharada is a bureaucrat in TimeWatch with far more control over operations than most people suspect. She is an Indian woman who dresses in traditional dress, but only in the traditional mourning color of white. She has never said why or for whom she is mourning, although hundreds of agents have wondered.

Sharada is a master of bureaucracy and red tape. She manages the briefing officers and agent handlers, but often takes a hands-on approach with problematic agents or those who have had particular success. She can clear organizational impediments if she likes you, or make your life a hell of minor inconveniences and paperwork if she doesn't. Woe betide those who get on her bad side.

One might expect Sharada to be a minor paper pusher, given her supervisory role and delight in the petty appearances of power. That would be a mistake. Sharada has been at TimeWatch longer than any other living agent, and it's said that she is both a deadly combatant and completely willing to sacrifice lives in order to achieve her goals. If she involves herself personally with a mission, expect collateral damage and particularly vitriolic revenge against TimeWatch's enemies.

Sharada might appear in any mission. She is Galahad's superior in *Time Will Tell*, it's she who orders the Agents burned in *Rebel Heart*, and she'll unleash the metaphorical hounds of war (well, TimeWatch agents of war) if the Agents call for help during *The Hatching Time*.

## Sharada Hajarnavis' Stats

**Defense:** Hit Threshold 4, Armor 2, Health 15

**Offense:** Scuffling +3, Shooting +3; Damage Modifier +1 (energy knife), +2 plus disintegration (modified beam pistol), Stun 5 (PaciFist)

**Abilities:** Tempus 30; Authority 3, Bureaucracy 3

**Special Abilities:** Clock Out (cost 2), Flashback (cost 5), Help Yourself (cost 5), Oracle (cost 1), Technology (cost 2),

Teleport (cost 2)

**Misc:** Stealth Modifier +3 (until noticed — impersonator mesh)

## USMAN MOHAMMAD

Usman is a 21st-century African memory technician assigned to the Agents. It's his job to create false memories in anyone the Agents slap with a MEM-tag. He is a minor character at best, and may be someone that the Agents never meet, but if they have friendship or a relationship with him (as defined by spending a Bureaucracy point during a mission) Usman is happy to do them minor favors. He's not particularly serious, and has been known to use MEM-tagged subjects for practical jokes.

Usman is the Agents' main memory technician at the Citadel. If the Agents need background information during *Time Will Tell*, Usman can give it to them.

## Usman Mohammad's Stats

**Defense:** Hit Threshold 1, Health 3

**Offense:** Scuffling +1; Damage Modifier -1 (fist)

**Abilities:** Tempus 8; Bureaucracy 2

**Special Abilities:** Technology (cost 2)

**Misc:** Usman has unhindered access to the Citadel's memory modification facilities

## CALLIOPE RHEE

Calliope is a Korean American gun dealer from the late 22nd century. She operates out of Singapore in a shining crystal office building that rises above the city. She is a solid entrepreneur, a deadly combatant, a knowledgeable informant, and a smuggler of illegal time weapons. She can get almost any weapon for a price, but her price is seldom money; more often she asks for a favor, such as dropping a sealed envelope in a particular place and time, smuggling a baby dinosaur, or helping save someone who is losing a fight. If you need an unusual weapon or need to know who has one, Calliope is an excellent source.

Calliope may appear any time the Agents need remarkable weaponry. Offering the Agents 1 or 2 points lower on the Preparedness Difficulty if they get their gear from Calliope will cement her as an ally (more or less) to the Agents, as well as a source of future mission hooks and adventure ideas.

## Calliope Rhee's Stats

**Defense:** Hit Threshold 4, Health 12

**Offense:** Scuffling +2, Shooting +2; Damage Modifier +0 (throwing knives), +1 (pistol), +2 (beam pistol)

**Abilities:** Preparedness 20, Tempus 13; Spying 2

**Special Abilities:** Extra Action (cost 2), Flashback (cost 5), Mastermind, Technology (cost 2); +4 Damage modifier when attacking with surprise

**Misc:** Alertness Modifier +1, Stealth Modifier +3

# THE GADGET

## OVERVIEW

History is full of collectibles, but some are far more dangerous than others. In this adventure the Agents patch up a minor tear in time, only to find that it was caused by something far more serious. Tracking the paradox back to its source leads them to an obsessive collector, overenthusiastic ezeru, and a nuclear threat.

## BACKGROUND

### THE PLOT

“The Gadget,” otherwise known as the Trinity bomb, was the first nuclear weapon ever tested. A monomaniacal 24th-century collector of historical weapons of war, Hitesh Chen, has decided to acquire the Gadget for his collection of weapons of mass destruction. In doing so his primitive time tunnel opens up a choral rift that attracts TimeWatch’s attention. The Agents track the bomb back to the beginning of the Holocene epoch, deal with the thieves, and address the problem with the collector himself. Unfortunately, it turns out that ezeru have as much of an interest in nuclear weapons as Hitesh Chen does, and show up to steal the collection of weapons before the Agents can dissolve that tributary of time.

### TIMELINE

This mission takes place primarily in 1945’s American Southwest, the Holocene era of approximately 12,000 BCE, and in a Dubai skyscraper in the 24th century.

## THE MISSION

The Agents’ mission begins simply: deal with a rogue mammoth. The reason for the mammoth’s appearance is complex, however, and leads Agents to their real goal: recover a stolen prototype atomic bomb, convince the thief to stop stealing nuclear artifacts, and deal with the ezeru who plan to abscond with it for themselves.

## BRIEFING

It’s recommended that you begin the Agents in the heart of the action of *Mammoth*. If you prefer to begin with a standard briefing, however, use or customize the following.

*Your briefing officer points to a holographic map of a small town named Tularosa, New Mexico. “Agents in 20th-century America have reported a woolly mammoth rampaging through a desert community. We suspect that there’s some sort of naturally occurring time rip that the creature has blundered through, but you should conduct a thorough investigation. Deal with the mammoth, make sure it isn’t remembered, and solve the problem of how it got there.”*

## LIKELY ADVENTURE PATH

**Mammoth.** The Agents are dispatched to 1945 New Mexico to investigate a rip in the time stream. There they find a rampaging woolly mammoth wreaking havoc along a motorway in a small town. They must defeat the mammoth, convince locals that they saw something other than the truth, and discover where the mammoth came from. Tracking it several days back along the road, they find a closing rip in space-time — and a surprising amount of secret military activity.

**Trinity.** The Agents learn that the Trinity nuclear test should have been detonated earlier in the week, but the bomb never exploded. Further investigation reveals that there is a massive and paranoid cover-up to conceal that the bomb and a portion of its tower entirely disappeared during a lightning storm overnight, along with the 25-year-old engineer named Don Hornig who was babysitting it.

**Holocene.** Traveling back to the night that the Gadget disappeared, they observe the entire top of the 30-meter-tall tower (along with the Gadget) vanish in a purple wormhole. Following the choral signature leads them to the Holocene era, where a team of private soldiers and engineers ready the bomb for packaging and transport. The Agents deal with the acquisition team, possibly freeing Don Hornig in the process. Whether directly or by sabotaging the time tunnel, the Agents either prevent the bomb’s theft or follow its trail.

**The Collector.** The Agents visit the collector, either at the time he expects his new acquisition to arrive (when he is a

disembodied brain kept alive in a mechanical braincase) or in his youth (when he is a living man.) There they fight for their life against his forces, and find a method to stop the collector from collecting famous and lost nuclear weapons.

**The Ezeru Assault.** A future version of the collector arrives to inform them that his collection is being looted, even as the time stream it exists in is self-destructing. In the disintegrating timeline ezeru are plundering the nuclear weapons, preparing to bring them to a secret stockpile. The Agents defeat the ezeru and save the nuclear weapons, or detonate them to prevent the ezeru theft.

## MAMMOTH

**Scene Type:** Intro

**Lead-Outs:** Trinity, Holocene

**Summary:** The mammoth walked through a rip in space-time; there's unusual activity in the nearby desert

You were scrambled out of the TimeWatch Citadel in order to investigate a chronal aberration in 1945 New Mexico. Your

Want something more exotic than a mammoth? Swap out the mammoth for a giant *Carnufex carolinensis* (the "Carolina butcher") from 230 million years ago at the end of the Triassic. Sliding around the timeline and the temporal location of *Holocene* makes the plot a little less logical (why would they use the more dangerous Triassic as a base of operations? Clearly, because that's where the 24th-century time rip led to!), and you'll have to do some customization of the mission, but c'mon – giant 3-meter-tall bipedal crocodile.

Go Google it. You'll see what we mean.

### CAROLINA BUTCHER

**Defense:** Hit Threshold 3, Armor 1, Health 30

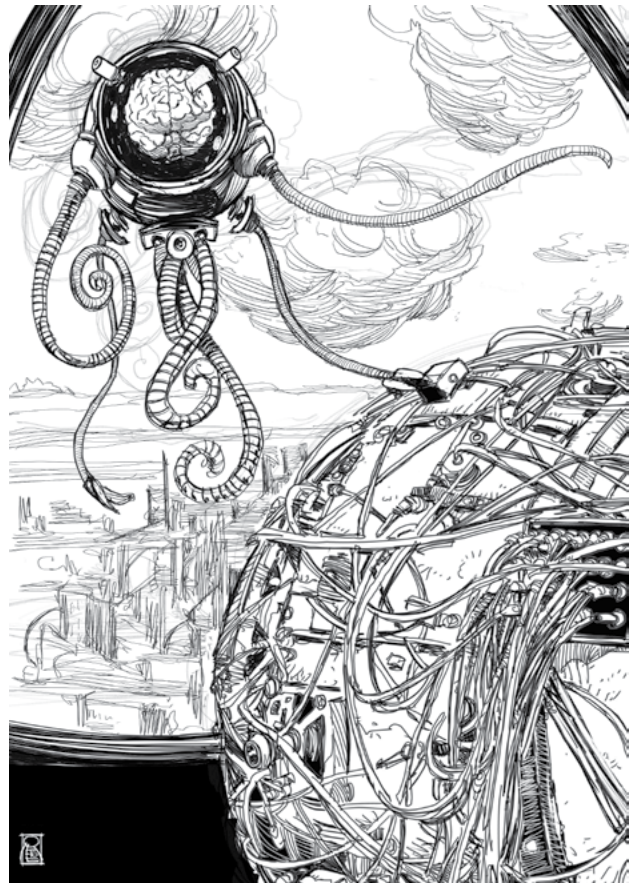
**Offense:** Scuffling +2; Damage Modifier +6 (bite – 1 Point-Blank target)

**Abilities:** Tempus 20

**Special Abilities:** Lightning Speed (cost 2), Seize Initiative (cost 2), Strength (cost 0)

**Misc:** Alertness Modifier +2

**Description:** A hissing, scuttling creature of fangs and hunger, the Carolina Butcher is prey-driven and very hungry indeed.



briefing officer wasn't sure what was happening, but the ripple effects were getting worse as more people saw it; you were told to go, take stock, and solve the problem.

Arriving in the small town of Tularosa, New Mexico (east of the White Sands testing range, about 72 kilometers southeast of the secret Trinity testing site), on July 20, 1945, the Agents hear screams and a deep bellowing as soon as their autochrons deliver them to somewhere unseen. A bull mammoth is loose in the center of town. Bleeding from a dozen gunshot wounds and berserk with anger and pain, the mammoth is trying to crush anything and everything it sees. Townsfolk are mostly hiding and taking cover; the trail of devastation has resulted in flipped cars, crushed buildings, and multiple wounded and dead.

### CLUES AND BENEFITS

- ▶ **History (Ancient):** Mammoths originate from the Pliocene and Holocene era. This one is definitely freshly prehistoric; there's no chance it's been frozen and then thawed, cloned, or any other method that doesn't involve time travel.
- ▶ (core) **Timecraft:** Chronal radiation measured by the tethers suggests that this slid through some sort of paradoxical time rip. It didn't come through a time machine; instead, the chronal signature indicates that it emerged from a

direct rip in space and time. Unless closed by TimeWatch, such rifts seldom heal themselves.

- **Outdoor Survival:** The bull mammoth is likely insane from the paradoxical journey. Calming it would be challenging, and impossible while it was in pain; luring it out of town (likely using **Taunt**) would be more likely.

It's up to the Agents to deal with the problem and to convince everyone in town that they *didn't* just encounter an actual woolly mammoth. They can do so with Interpersonal ability spends, MEM-tags, convincing roleplaying by the players, or (most efficiently) by going back in time and stopping the mammoth before it reaches town. This triggers a D4/L4 Paradox test for every Agent, since it changes a known fact (that there was a mammoth in Tularosa).

It's likely that the Agents will wish to track the mammoth back to where it first entered this era and stop it there. Anyone with **Outdoor Survival** or **Notice** can follow its trail. This may take some time, as the mammoth has wandered the White Sands testing range for four days before arriving at the town.

If the Agents delay or arrive deliberately after noon on July 20th, 1945, the mammoth has been killed by locals using hunting rifles. Over fifteen people have been slain, and the knowledge that a woolly mammoth appeared in New Mexico makes the newspapers and news services world wide. The government quickly gets involved, shutting down the town as it performs its own investigation. The best tactic in this case is for Agents to suffer paradox and deal with the mammoth before it ever reaches the small town of Tularosa.

## Bull Mammoth

**Defense:** Hit Threshold 4, Armor 2, Health 40

**Offense:** Scuffling +2; Damage Modifier +6 (crush), +4 (tusks), +3 (trunk — 2 Point-Blank targets with one attack)

**Abilities:** Athletics 16

**Special Abilities:** Strength; the trunk attack can target more than one creature at once — roll a separate test for each target

**Misc:** Stealth Modifier -2

This is a particularly dangerous foe for an early encounter, but it can be easily targeted with ranged fire. Agents who spread themselves in a circle, and who use **Taunt** to keep each other safe, should be able to down the mammoth with a minimum of painful trampling.

## INTERESTING PEOPLE IN TOWN

**Sheriff:** Jim Robles keeps the peace, not that there's much crime other than some rambunctious kids. He's an older man with a significant belly and a magnificent mustache.

**Local Gossip:** Agnes Meriwether, a waitress at the Coffee Corner, loves keeping track of what's happening in town. She's in her early 50s, friendly, and excellent at her job. She calls people "hon" and asks insightful questions. She also cooks completely delicious pie. Mmm, pie.

**Local Painter:** Martin Cassidy is a thin, wiry man who paints landscapes and abstract art. He claims to have extremely

vivid dreams, and probably drinks more whiskey (amongst other substances) than he should. Martin is sensitive, and sometimes gains prophetic visions of past times, future times, and alternate realities. He can't control it, and he drinks heavily to self-medicate.

**Military Intelligence:** Corporal Bill Hampton is stationed in Tularosa as a military intelligence spy and observer, keeping his eyes open for strangers. He knows what's happened at the Trinity site, but his military discipline is strict; it would take a clever deception just to get him to admit that he's involved with the Manhattan Project at all. He doesn't know about the Gadget or what happened out in the desert, but he's been ordered to report anything odd. The Agents, if noticed, probably qualify.

## Gossip in Town

There has been massive military activity down in Alamogordo and Holloman Air Force Base over the past few days. Trucks driving in, planes overhead, and no one has said what (if anything) is going on. The locals are speculating; some folks are saying that there's a secret prison there and everyone has escaped, but no one really believes that. With the arrival of the mammoth, now people are saying that there might be some huge science installation for something crazy like time travel. No one really believes that, either... especially if the mammoth attack is avoided or covered up.

Martin Cassidy the artist was spreading a rumor that all those trucks and planes were there because something important had been stolen, but he got visited by some men wearing suits, and now he's claiming it was just gossip he had made up. If approached by the Agents, it takes an Interpersonal spend (or buying some of his paintings) to get him to open up due to the governmental intimidation he's suffered. He confides that he'd been sober a few nights back and had dreamed that a tall scaffold in a wasteland was picked up and carried away by blue-suited strangers. He woke up thinking that there was a tear in the world that made him feel sick, and that feeling has still not gone away. He's been dreaming of strange places, full of grass and animals and air, and in his dreams he's always prey.

## THE TIME RIP

Following the mammoth's trail, or tracking the choral radiation from its levels of paradox, brings the Agents to an isolated desert gully where the dry air crackles and hums and smells like a different age. Here an incidental time rip caused by the kidnapping of the Gadget ripped apart the world. The mammoth (and a handful of other animals, if the GM wishes) emerged while it was open. It's since started to slowly knit itself shut, but is easy to reopen; spending a point of **Timecraft** can either seal or open the rift once again, as the Agents prefer.

Investigation of the rift indicates that the paradox that ripped it open stemmed from another, larger impossibility 50 kilometers away to the northeast. They can triangulate the location of the Trinity site with half an hour of studying the rift location.

If the Agents decide to follow the radiation signature back to the Holocene, they aren't be able to get an exact reading on the origin. (If they use their autochrons to time travel back and await the mammoth coming out of the time rip, they can either pass through the time rift themselves or get an exact coordinate on its origin. Proceed to *Holocene*.)

## WRAPPING UP

This scene ends when the Agents have defeated or nullified the mammoth, have erased the memory from people's minds, and decide to investigate either where the mammoth came from or why there is unusual military activity nearby.

## TRINITY

**Scene Type:** Alternate

**Lead-Ins:** Mammoth, Holocene

**Lead-Out:** Holocene

**Summary:** The Gadget was stolen with a time tunnel

On July 16, 1945, J. Robert Oppenheimer and the Manhattan Project tested the first atomic bomb by exploding it in the desert near White Sands. While there were 130,000 people working on the project, very few understood the scope of the project or even could guess at its ultimate goal. The weapon they were constructing would be by a factor of ten the deadliest weapon that humanity had ever built. In true history, the bomb was successfully tested on July 16, after the bombs meant for Japan were already loaded onto a transport plane. In this history, a history where a mammoth runs amok across New Mexico, someone has stolen the bomb before it ever could be detonated.

The result was chaos. Military leaders at the highest level spent days panicking and desperately trying to find a productive solution. Had it exploded in an impossible, unpredictable manner? Had a saboteur stolen it? How to explain the lack of footprints, and the missing tower, and the missing engineer who had spent that night babysitting the bomb 30 meters up in a small corrugated metal hut at the top of the tower?

They couldn't explain it. The decision was made instead to cover up the incident, to drop the bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki as planned, and to hope for the best.

The TimeWatch Agents may know this if they move forward in time and check historical records; more likely they have been led to the bomb site while investigating the rogue mammoth. The problem, however, quickly becomes evident.

## THE TRINITY SITE

Agents may approach the Trinity testing site before, during, or after the theft. To do so they need to avoid military patrols and electrified fences warning them out of the testing area.

## Before the Theft

The scaffolded tower in the desert is built months prior to the actual test, as is the bunker fifteen kilometers away, from where the scientists would observe the explosion. Once the tower is built it is inspected daily but not continually guarded.

Security is tight as the Gadget is transported, with a dozen heavily armed soldiers accompanying the device, but most of the personnel on the scene are scientists and highly qualified workers whose job is setting up and positioning the Gadget. It takes most of a day before the Gadget is positioned in the corrugated steel shack atop the tower, hooked up, and readied for the next day's test. Once engineer Don Hornig climbs up the scaffolding with his lawn chair to settle in for the night on watchdog duty, all other personnel depart. Although the periphery of the test zone is patrolled and guarded, no one other than Don Hornig is within fifteen kilometers of the test site.

## During the Theft

The theft occurs at 3:30 a.m., during the height of the thunderstorm. A spherical time tunnel opens with a vibrating roar and surrounds the tower; coruscating purple light floods the desert, and the temporary rip in the fabric of space-time makes reality look as if it were a movie screen rippling in a high wind. The tunnel remains open for approximately 30 seconds, and then disappears with a thunderclap. In its wake the bottom of the scaffolding remains, sheared off cleanly, but the top of the tower (including the bomb and Don Hornig) have vanished.

Residual choral radiation linking this location to the Holocene location of the time tunnel lasts for approximately an hour after the tunnel closes. Agents who investigate the area during that period are able to get a lock on the correct temporal location of the time tunnel.

The theft isn't discovered by the military until just before dawn, when a Jeep drives out to check on Hornig. The area quickly fills with scientists, soldiers, and crime scene investigators.

## After the Theft

The location of the Trinity bomb test is scoured for evidence of what happened to the Gadget and missing engineer Don Hornig. Hundreds of forensic scientists and soldiers surround the tower's location; barbed wire fences stake off a huge ring around the site.

The remains of the scaffolded tower are barely standing. They appear as if a huge sphere of reality just vanished, taking the Gadget, the top of the tower, and the metal box Don Hornig was sitting in overnight during the rain storm. The metal struts of the tower are sheared off cleanly. Oppenheimer postulates that the tower was hit by lightning and something impossible happened, but he isn't yet sure. The government decides to cover up the theft and goes ahead with the bombings on Hiroshima and Nagasaki without a proper test.

The Trinity site is virtually impossible to examine privately within two months following the incident. It is constantly guarded by dozens of soldiers, and monitored for radiation

and electromagnetic fluctuations by a parade of bewildered scientists. While the Agents' impersonator mesh may help them bypass the human guards, it has no effect against the guard dogs or remote security measures used to secure the site.

Options for examining the area after the theft is discovered include using **Authority** and **Disguise** to pull rank or impersonate a scientist, making extremely difficult **Unobtrusiveness** tests (Difficulty 8), or moving forward in time two months or more until security dies down somewhat.

**Research:** "Gadget first atomic bomb 1945", and take a look at the photos

## Military Guard

**Defense:** Hit Threshold 4, Armor 1, Health 7 (or 3, if a Mook)

**Offense:** Scuffling +1, Shooting +2; Damage Modifier +0 (baton), +1 (bayonet), +1 (pistol, or assault rifle)

**Abilities:** Athletics 8, Vehicles 3

**Misc:** Alertness Modifier +1

## Military Scientist

**Defense:** Hit Threshold 3, Health 3

**Offense:** Scuffling +0, Shooting +2; Damage Modifier -1 (flailing fists), +1 (pistol)

**Abilities:** Athletics 4, Tinkering 15; Hacking 1, Science! 1

## CLUES AND BENEFITS

- ▶ **Military Tactics:** When the bomb was stolen, there was one engineer babysitting the bomb and no one else within fifteen kilometers, the minimum safe distance — and those scientists were in bunkers. Regardless, there were no foreign footprints in the mud around the test site.
- ▶ **Science!** The bomb was hanging from a metal tower 30 meters tall. It wouldn't have been difficult for someone to sabotage the device if they knew what they were doing, but that's not what happened. Instead, the entire bomb disappeared along with 15 meters of the top of the tower.
- ▶ **Timecraft:** Lingering chronal radiation of a very specific nature links the theft back to the Holocene era. A targeted time tunnel could have opened here and sucked everything within a 15-meter radius through it. That sort of technology is rare and seldom used, as it tends to be indiscriminate in what it brings along. It also tends to have side effects such as temporarily opening other time rifts nearby.
- ▶ **Outdoor Survival:** The thunderstorm that night was severe, and the tower wasn't hit by lightning. Whatever caused this wasn't related to the storm.
- ▶ **History (Contemporary):** The actual bomb test in true history went off without a hitch. Despite the risk of spies and saboteurs, no one interfered with the Trinity test. The results were enough to convince President Truman and top military commanders to drop the atomic bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki, putting a premature end to World War II. Eliminating this initial test could have two

historical results: either the government continues with untested atomic bombs on Japan or it cancels the planned weapon drop until further testing can occur.

## WRAPPING UP

At the end of *Trinity*, the Agents know that the bomb was whisked through time back to the Holocene era, and they likely know it was done through a time tunnel. They won't know who took it, or why.

## Holocene

**Scene Type:** Core

**Lead-Ins:** Mammoth, Trinity

**Lead-Outs:** Trinity, The Collector

**Summary:** The Gadget was stolen by a 24th-century collector, with a space-time rip leading into his home

Starting roughly 12,000 years ago, the Holocene epoch actually continues to today. The glaciers retreated, tundra gave way to forests, humans began to thrive — and a certain group of time thieves set up a base for stealing historical trophies for their employer.

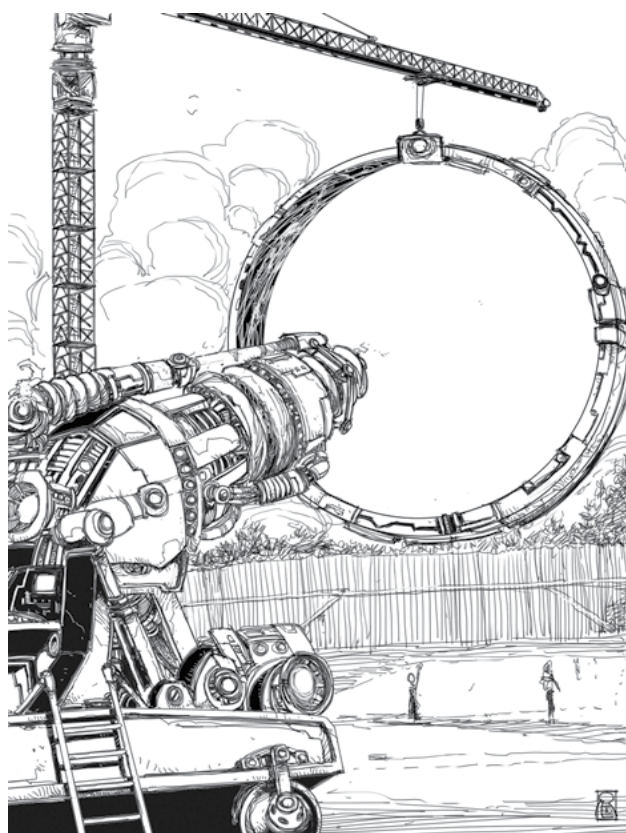
You won't find that last bit in the history books, though.

The employees of trillionaire Hitesh Chen are using a secure compound in the Holocene (in roughly 11,825 BCE) as their base of operation for a complicated and involved program of historical theft. Chen is as rich as Croesus and is as obsessive as they come; as a self-proclaimed military genius, it is his dream to own the authentic copies of history's greatest inventions. He's unconcerned with how he gains these objects; he just wants them; so he's hired cutting edge chronal scientists to acquire them for him. Unfortunately, the only technology available to these scientists is time-hole technology, and that tends to be inexact. It can draw an item from another location, and occasionally rips holes in space and time that briefly allow easy passage between the two locations, but the science is far from robust.

The scientists identify a vulnerable time and location for the object they wish to acquire, then fire up the time-beam. If their aim is correct the object (and anything and anyone within 15 meters) is instantly transported to their location. If not, they spend a day repairing and readying the time tunnel and try again.

Agents who reach the Holocene via the mammoth's time rift arrive several days after the Gadget has already been passed on to Chen's skyscraper in the 24th century; the unintended time rift opens about 50 kilometers south of the walled compound, but **Outdoor Survival** or **Hacking** can pinpoint the compound's location via pollution emissions or radio signals. That doesn't stop Agents from using autochrons to move backwards a few days, of course, if the Agents wish to arrive at the compound before the Gadget is stolen.





## THE COMPOUND

The Chen compound is surrounded by 5-meter-tall, 2-meter-thick stone walls with electrified barbed wire, powered by a 24th-century mini-fusion reactor from inside the compound. The compound's defenses are designed to stop animal attacks instead of infiltration by intelligent creatures, and security is significant, but Agents can enter simply by time traveling or teleporting inside.

The compound has a large central courtyard that houses the time tunnel and any cargo it collects. Around the edges of the courtyard are the bunkhouses, the laboratories, the armory, the engineering shops, and the power plant. These facilities hold 50 people in relative comfort.

The main purpose of the compound is to house and operate Chen's time tunnel technology. The time tunnel requires maintenance and repair after every use, so Chen's technicians fire the beam, inspect and pack up the cargo, repair the equipment, run diagnostics, and prepare the equipment for a second use the next day. It's obvious to Agents that this technique is far more primitive than their own autochrons, and it's no exaggeration that Chen's employees would give their lives to acquire an autochron if they knew they existed.

Hitesh Chen uses the Holocene as an intermediary base for safety; when you're in the habit of stealing antique nuclear devices for a personal collection, and you're using unstable time travel equipment to do so, it's safest to not bring the unstable equipment directly into your own skyscraper.

Travel between the base and Chen's skyscraper is

accomplished by a persistent rip in the fabric of space and time, a link that connects one room in the Holocene compound with a room in Chen's massive 24th-century Dubai skyscraper. In fact, Chen built the skyscraper because the rip already existed dozens of meters in the air and Chen wanted to research it to take advantage of its possibilities. This rip makes transportation of people and materials back and forth between the two times very easy. Agents who wish to seal this rip permanently can do so by expending 2 points total of **Timecraft** (from more than one Agent if necessary).

Given that the Agents have time machines and want to prevent the Gadget from being stolen, they can either travel to the future to retrieve it, stop it from being passed on to the future, or suffer paradox and prevent it from being stolen in the first place.

## The Chief Scientist

Chen's chief scientist is a brilliant researcher named Dr. Elaine Bree. Bree is conflicted; she loves her salary, and even more than that she loves being on the bleeding edge of choral research. What she doesn't love is Chen's dictate that she steal historical nuclear weapons for him. She is deeply worried that what she's doing is immoral and unethical, but her greed for knowledge has so far overcome her principles. A sensitive Agent might be able to use this guilt to manipulate her.

## Dr. Elaine Bree

**Defense:** Hit Threshold 3, Health 8

**Offense:** Scuffling +0, Shooting +2; Damage Modifier -1 (flailing fists), +2 (beam weapon), Stun 5 (neural disruptor)

**Abilities:** Tempus 15, Tinkering 15; Science! 2

**Special Abilities:** Restabilize, Technology (cost 2)

## Infiltrating the Compound

The compound uses security cameras, infrared sensors, and electrified barriers to keep out the local fauna. Agents trying to infiltrate through the outer defenses must make a Difficulty 6 **Burglary** test to get inside. If they decide to time travel inside instead, one Difficulty 6 **Unobtrusiveness** test is required instead to ensure that their arrival location doesn't accidentally attract attention. These tests can be Piggybacked if desired.

The number of personnel at the base depends on when the Agents arrive. See below. Most non-guards are unarmed, but any of the supporting characters attempt to defend themselves if their lives or their friends' lives are put at risk.

## The Time Tunnel

This vast beam projector looks like it was taken out of a 1960s sci-fi movie, then melded with unthinkable advanced electronics. A huge beam projector in the courtyard is aimed through an even larger metal hoop suspended from a crane. When activated, the hoop focuses the time beam and creates a direct tunnel between two different eras. During those brief periods

(approximately 30 seconds) a two-way tunnel is formed, and objects and individuals in the target area of the time tunnel's destination are drawn through the hoop to the tunnel's location. The hoop is huge, 10 meters in diameter, large enough to clip off and steal large objects.

### Sabotage

The relatively primitive nature of the time tunnel (at least compared to an autochron) means that it is relatively easy to sabotage if Agents can approach it. Then again, the number of feedback and alarm systems on the time tunnel means that almost any attempt at sabotage is detected long before the device is activated, allowing the problem to be found and fixed.

**Unobtrusive** Agents can detectably sabotage the device with a simple Difficulty 6 **Tinkering** test, or sabotage it undetectably by succeeding at a continuing **Tinkering** challenge with a total Difficulty of 20.

If guards have any reason to suspect sabotage, they immediately do two thorough sweeps of the compound for outsiders. They then systematically and carefully examine every employee in the compound via ID and DNA confirmation, then search their living space and keep cleared people in a single building until someone gives the all clear. Chen's private soldiers take security very seriously once they think there may be a legitimate threat.

The advantage of triggering this security procedure is that use of the time tunnel will be delayed, and the number of civilians who could become involved in a fight is reduced; the disadvantage is that guards will travel through the rift to report and bring in additional guards into the compound.

Of course, it's possible for the Agents to take out the time tunnel with no subtlety whatsoever, using **Preparedness** to produce a bazooka to blow the thing into pieces. This triggers D4/L4 Paradox tests for the Agents as they ensure that the Gadget is never stolen. Direct assault on the time tunnel obviously attracts an extreme, concerted effort to apprehend the Agents.

### Before the Theft

The compound is on a state of low alert, with three guards watching for animal attacks, nine guards present but off duty, and no other heightened security. Twenty noncombatant technicians prepare the time tunnel for its next use. As a result, there's quite a bit of activity in the compound, but it's solely related to construction and calibration.

Agents attempting to infiltrate the compound in this state have their **Unobtrusiveness** Difficulties lowered by 1 point, until discovered or something alerts the compound to a threat.

### During the Theft

The compound is on a state of high alert, with 20 guards alert and active. Thirty noncombatant technicians and scientists work to operate the time tunnel from the nearby bunker and laboratory within the compound, and 10 noncombatant laborers are on hand to move the Gadget from the courtyard where it arrives to the room with the time rip, and from there

to Chen's museum. While there are 60 people on site, none are actually in the courtyard while the time tunnel is active; the device is considered too dangerous to be near while operating.

Purple energy leaks out from the active time tunnel, and jagged rips of energy seem to tear apart the sky around the compound. It's this energy that opens up the tear that a panicked mammoth rampages through (see *Mammoth*).

Immediately after the theft, the time tunnel shuts down and guards and laborers swarm the courtyard. Don Hornig is taken into custody, and the Gadget is carefully lifted and packaged for transport into Chen's skyscraper. Eight guards and all the laborers accompany Hornig and the Gadget back into the future, where the Gadget is set up in Chen's museum and Hornig is taken to meet Chen himself.

### After the Theft

The compound spends a day on high alert, just in case of any trouble, then returns to low alert with fewer guards and more technicians doing maintenance on the time tunnel. Three guards are on duty at this time, with nine guards sleeping or off duty. Difficulties for infiltrating the base are reduced by 1; all personnel are more relaxed and less alert, unless the Agents have given them a reason to be anxious.

### Holocene Guard

**Defense:** Hit Threshold 3, Health 1

**Offense:** Scuffling +2, Shooting +2; Damage Modifier -1 (fist), +1 (rifle), Stun 4 (long-range neural disruptors)

**Abilities:** Tempus 8

**Description:** Dedicated and loyal, but not suicidally so.

### Solving the Problem

It's relatively simple for the Agents to ensure that the Gadget is never stolen, as simple as sabotaging the time tunnel. The question they then need to ask is "who planned to steal it in the first place, and who owns the compound?"

#### Clues and Benefits

- ▶ **Architecture:** Agents can identify which parts of the compound hold the laboratories, armory, dormitories, jail cell, and offices.
- ▶ **Authority:** Agents can order information about the compound and Hitesh Chen out of anyone who believes that they're actually in charge.
- ▶ **Bureaucracy:** The Agents pose as investigators or middle management hired by Chen, checking on the operation.
- ▶ **History (Ancient) or History (Future):** Despite the fact that they're in the Holocene era, an Agent's tether can recognize fresh 24th-century pollutants in the air; this indicates that there is an open time portal exchanging atmosphere.
- ▶ **Intimidation:** As with Authority, Agents can bully information out of a captured antagonist.

- ▶ **Hacking:** Agents gain access to the compound's computer systems, supplying Hitesh Chen's name and the compound's complement of personnel. Accessing the time tunnel's protected control systems requires a 1-point **Hacking** spend or a Difficulty 6 **Tinkering** test from an Agent with **Hacking**.
- ▶ **Military Tactics:** The locations, patterns, and tactical strength of the guards can be assessed.
- ▶ (core) **Timecraft:** Chronal radiation indicates the location of the time portal in the compound.

## WRAPPING UP

At the end of this scene Agents have disabled the time tunnel, are aware of the rip in time and space that leads to the 24th century, and either they have prevented the theft of the Gadget (and the kidnapping of Don Hornig) or they know where to go look for them.

## THE COLLECTOR

**Scene Type:** Time Repair

**Lead-In:** Holocene

**Lead-Out:** The Ezeru Assault

**Summary:** Chen obsessively collects nuclear weapons

## HITESH CHEN

No matter when the Agents meet Hitesh Chen, one thing is certain: he is brilliant, obsessive, materialistic, and covetous. He loves *things*, and when he has focused on a particular collection he wants it to be the best collection in the world. At the moment, Chen is focused on military history, and in particular the history of weapons of mass destruction.

As a result, his skyscraper (currently the fourth tallest in Dubai, much to Chen's dismay) has a penthouse floor filled with famous items of history that he has bought or stolen with the help of his illicit time tunnel. He has Saddam Hussein's store of chemical weapons secretly stolen out of Iraq before they were found, the various nuclear weapons that have fallen from planes or sunk in ships but which were never found, numerous nuclear devices that went missing from the Soviet Union at the fall of the Cold War, and many more. All are displayed, live but protected by force fields, in his museum. The Gadget will be his crowning achievement, the jewel on his crown — until he gets bored with it and desires something more interesting.

Chen changes over the years, depending on when the Agents travel to meet him. At the time that the Gadget is stolen, on the other side of the time rip Chen has replaced his failing body by becoming a mechanical brain. Five years prior he is an elderly 86-year-old man accompanied by a bodyguard, and both his age and his fortunes decrease as the Agents travel backwards in time to meet him.

Of half-Chinese and half-Indian parentage, Chen has had a variety of spouses both male and female. All have been stunning physical specimens, although he has tired of them quickly when their intellect never measures up to their appearance. At the time he steals the Gadget, Chen is married to the world's most famous male model, a young Italian man named Scipio who hasn't minded being hitched to a floating brain in exchange for the material wealth it has brought him. Chen has his husband accompany him everywhere he goes, and grows mildly agitated and far less patient when he's separated from his spouse.

Chen is a narcissist and utterly lacks empathy, considering most other humans outside of his immediate family and friends to be objects instead of people. He is so used to his every desire being immediately fulfilled by staff that any refusal comes as a surprise to him. He might strike others as petulant or spoiled when his desires are denied. He delights in exceptional beauty, and he demands that the people he sees daily be of remarkable appearance; Chen is happy to pay for plastic surgery to ensure that this remains the case.

## Hitesh Chen, Braincase-Clad Disembodied Brain

**Defense:** Hit Threshold 4, Armor 2, Health 15

**Offense:** Scuffling +0, Shooting +2; Damage Modifier +2 (beam weapon), Stun 5 (neural disruptor)

**Abilities:** Tempus 20; High Society 2, Military Tactics 2

**Special Abilities:** Cybernetics (cost 2), Flight (cost 2 to exceed a slow hover), Regenerate (cost 0 — regain 2 Health at the beginning of each turn), Spider Climb (cost 1 to sprout mechanical spider legs from the braincase), Technology (cost 2)

**Misc:** Alertness Modifier +2; vulnerable to Stun effects — all Stun tests made by the disembodied brain are at +1 Difficulty

## Hitesh Chen, Tycoon

**Defense:** Hit Threshold 3, Health 10

**Offense:** Scuffling +0, Shooting +2; Damage Modifier -1 (fist), Damage Modifier +2 (beam weapon)

**Abilities:** Athletics 3; High Society 2, Military Tactics 1

## Fatma Salim, Bodyguard

**Defense:** Hit Threshold 4, Armor 1, Health 12

**Offense:** Scuffling +2, Shooting +2; Damage Modifier +0 (martial arts), +2 (beam weapon), Stun 5 (neural disruptor)

**Abilities:** Athletics 8, Medic 4, Vehicles 8

**Special Abilities:** Cybernetics (cost 2), Seize initiative (once per scene; cost 0 — can interpose herself in front of anyone else within Point-Blank range, taking an attack meant for that person); Scuffling and Shooting rise to +3 against anyone who has attacked her guarded client

**Misc:** Alertness Modifier +4 (biometric threat sensors); Stealth Modifier +1 (chameleon suit)

**Description:** Fatma always accompanies her human

employer (Chen dismisses her after shedding his flesh and becoming a disembodied brain). She willingly gives her life for her employer.

## THE MUSEUM

The Gadget is taken by laborers directly into Chen's secret museum, a sun-drenched space with tall ceilings and floor-to-ceiling windows that's located on the top floor of a 181-story skyscraper in 24th-century Dubai. This space is entirely filled with atomic memorabilia: stolen nuclear missiles that were thought lost during military operations, original papers, holographic recordings of scientists lecturing, and mock-ups of dummy weapons that look correct but which are replicas of the originals. Chen's disembodied brain floats about the room, mechanical sensor filaments brushing against nuclear warheads, imaging the raw devastation held within, and feeling immensely powerful and important because he is the one to control them.

The Gadget is Chen's greatest theft to date. He fetishizes nuclear weapons and destructive technology; in another lifetime he might be a bomb maker or a weapons magnate instead of a trillionaire and a socialite. He's dreamed of the Gadget ever since he was a boy. His intent is to interview and record Don Hornig's accounts of the Manhattan Project, but never return him to the past.

## BEFORE THE GADGET'S ARRIVAL

Once the Agents understand Chen's involvement and nature, they may decide to intercede with him in the past, long before he settles on weapons of mass destruction as a collecting obsession. Any time before Chen sheds his body qualifies, so he isn't a floating brain in a mechanical fishbowl at this point.

The Agents have wide latitude as to their approach and technique for redirecting his interests. Chen's decision to focus on weapons is directly attached to his fear of dying and the loss of control assumed when he shed his elderly flesh in order to become just a brain; he wasn't too sane to begin with, and suddenly the idea of having nuclear missiles at his command really appealed to him. Anything the Agents can do to befriend him and redirect his obsession might work, so long as the GM thinks the approach is plausible and convincing.

Chen's cybernetic bodyguard Fatma Salim is unthinkable loyal (quite literally; Chen has had her brain chemistry adjusted so that she defends him instinctively) and extremely deadly against threats. She refuses to leave his side unless ordered directly by Chen.

## AFTER THE GADGET'S ARRIVAL

Chen (as a disembodied brain) spends several days in his museum, personally overseeing the installation of the Gadget into its display case. He is exact and tyrannical, working without sleep but expecting his much-more-human laborers to do the same. After a week nonstop of hovering near the Gadget and circling it, memorizing its every curve and connection,

Chen returns to his normal routine. He comes back into the museum several times a day for months, all to appreciate his collection.

He is intrigued by the arrival of strangers, and converses with them even as he electronically summons his guards. If he understands that the Agents are time travelers, he orders them captured or killed, but the guards will not enter the museum until permitted by Chen (or unless they have reason to believe that Chen's life is in danger).

Chen is a scintillating conversationalist, even if he does tend to return to his favorite subjects again and again. It takes remarkable roleplaying to convince him that his obsession is at all dangerous; in this future Chen knows that despite the vanished bomb, the World War II nuclear attack on Japan proceeded as it did in true history.

Chen prefers to retreat and let his guards fight for him, but attacks if his life is in danger. He has one fail-safe; the Gadget and other nuclear devices are wired to his sentience. If Chen dies, every bomb detonates automatically 30 seconds later.

## Chen's Guard

**Defense:** Hit Threshold 3, Health 1

**Offense:** Scuffling +2, Shooting +2; Damage Modifier -1 (fist), +1 (pistol), Stun 4 (Long range neural disruptors)

**Abilities:** Athletics 6

**Description:** Dedicated, loyal, and well trained.

## RESCUING DON HORNIG

Hornig is being kept by Chen in a locked suite several floors below the museum. He is easily found by questioning any of Chen's employees with **Authority** or **Intimidation**; **Architecture** can also allow an Agent to bring up the building's floor map.

A pair of armed guards stands outside the door to Hornig's spacious but locked suite of rooms.

If the Agents prevent the Gadget from ever being stolen in the first place, Hornig will have never been captured.

## Hornig's Guard

**Defense:** Hit Threshold 3, Health 6

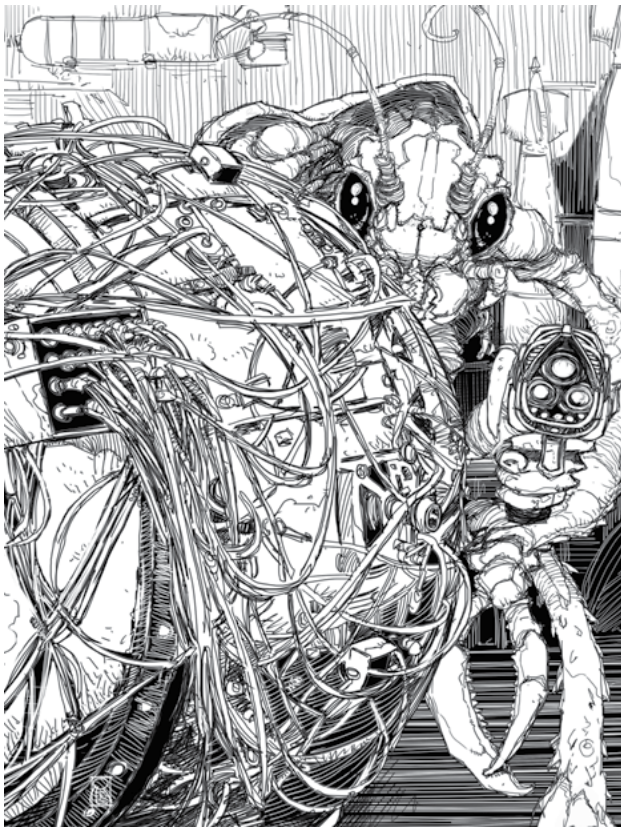
**Offense:** Scuffling +2, Shooting +2; Damage Modifier +0 or Stun 4 (brass knuckles), +1 (pistol)

**Abilities:** Athletics 6, Vehicles 3

**Description:** Strong and loyal, not smart.

## WRAPPING UP

This scene ends when the Agents have convinced Hitesh Chen not to collect the Gadget, whether they're talking to his younger human self or his older disembodied brain self.



## THE EZERU ASSAULT

**Scene Type:** Antagonist Reaction

**Lead-In:** The Collector

**Summary:** Ezeru desire nuclear weapons!

Ezeru who have been sent through time to gather extraneous nuclear weapons find their way into Chen's suite, following the hole punched through the fabric of space-time by the time tunnel into the Holocene, and then sensing the rip into the 24th century. They have two options: attack and steal the weapons while the Agents are present or raid the weapons from a disappearing future that the Agents have caused never to exist.

There are three ezeru drones; an ezeru hunter waits in between seconds but does not emerge unless the drones are destroyed. As GM, use your best judgment as to whether a final, tougher enemy would wipe the floor with the Agents or whether it would provide an exciting end to the mission. If the latter, the hunter emerges as the last drone falls.

## IF THE AGENTS CONFRONT CHEN AS A FLOATING BRAIN

If the Agents convince Chen to return the Gadget, and they redirect his nuclear obsession in the "present" of the 24th century, the ezeru attack before the weapons can be returned.

They arrive at exactly the point where a conversation with Chen or his guards might bog down. The result is likely a three-way conflict between Chen's troops, the Agents, and the ezeru determined to steal the Gadget and all other nuclear weapons stored there.

## IF THE AGENTS CONFRONT CHEN AS A LIVING MAN

Clever or experienced Agents may solve the problem of the stolen Gadget by making sure it never gets stolen in the first place. This is effective but stymies the lurking ezeru; when that reality begins to fade away, the insects rush the vanishing museum and quickly move to steal the nuclear weapons before they can never have been collected.

In that vanishing future, the disembodied brain of Chen doesn't take this lying down. Realizing that the universe seems to be disintegrating and that giant beetles are stealing his nuclear trophies, he seizes on the unlikely solution of warning his younger self. Chen's force of will keeps him alive as his history vanishes (effectively, he makes his Paradox test to avoid fading away yet), and he flees back through the rip between eras into the Holocene. If the Agents have closed the time rip, Chen can still navigate it alone due to primitive chronal technology built into his braincase, but the effort drives him even more insane; roleplay him accordingly.

Once in the Holocene, Chen is flooded with new memories of a past he never had. He now remembers the Agents speaking to him in his youth, convincing him not to collect weapons of mass destruction. These memories compete with his original memories, and Chen is doubtlessly confused. He orders his technicians to fire up the time tunnel and send him back to his own youth, so that he can talk to himself while the Agents are there. The paradox of this is extreme, and causes Chen's brain to fade rapidly once he arrives, but Chen expects to have enough time to warn the Agents that all his nuclear weapons are being stolen by alien monstrosities.

If the Agents do nothing, the ezeru acquire all of Chen's weapons of mass destruction and set them aside for use in their master plan of global annihilation.

Thanks to Chen's guidance, Agents can return to the fading, fragmentary reality by having one Agent spend a **Timecraft** or **Paradox Prevention** point when clocking into the dying alternate future of Chen's skyscraper. They encounter ezeru mid-pillaging, lifting nuclear devices and piling them into a single large mound. The ezeru intend to glue the weapons together by coating them with noxious bile, then clocking out simultaneously with all the weapons in tow.

This fight in a disintegrating reality is an excuse for surreal special effects; items and walls fade away as the world boils into nonexistence, and the ezeru are in a rush to steal the weapons before they vanish.

## CHEN'S DEMISE

If Hitesh Chen is slain while in the same time period as the nuclear weapons, his fail-safe goes off and the weapons detonate

30 seconds later. If the timeline is already vanishing, this might be one method for killing a lot of ezeru at once. The devastation can be stopped by Agents with **Hacking** succeeding in a continuing challenge with a total difficulty of 12; if using Chen's braincase as part of the attempt, the Target Difficulty drops to 8.

## Ezeru Drone

**Defense:** Hit Threshold 4, Armor 3, Health 15

**Offense:** Scuffling +3 (+2 when impersonating a human), Shooting +1; Damage Modifier +2 (hideous clacking pincers), +3 (jagged mandibles), +1 (pistol), +4 (acidic bile), Stun 6 (psi-active bile)

**Abilities:** Tempus 12

**Special Abilities:** Clock Out (cost 2), Extra Action (cost 2), Impersonation (cost 2 — psychically links the ezeru drone to a single human or animal encased in the ezeru's paralytic bile), Lightning Speed (cost 2), Resist Stun; drones can attack by spitting acidic or paralytic bile within Close range

**Misc:** Alertness Modifier +1, Stealth Modifier +1

**Description:** A standard ezeru drone is sly, deadly, reliable, but not particularly creative. They follow instructions superbly but usually lack the inspired planning or quick thinking of creatures that *aren't* tied into a massive insectoid hivemind. When circumstances change quickly on an ezeru and it doesn't have time to plan, it often responds with brute force.

Drones are the most common ezeru, bred for food gathering, warfare, and work. They are armored, possess multiple clawed arms, have vicious pincers, and can spew acidic or psi-active bile on enemies.

In their natural form, ezeru drones prefer to use natural weapons; their pincers and claws are well suited to combat, and are significantly more dangerous to human flesh than most weapons would be. When disguised, they use whatever weapons are close at hand, but prefer to let other humans do their work for them so that their disguise is not ripped or compromised by injury. Their acidic bile can boil flesh.

Ezeru typically stun a victim with their paralytic bile and coat them in psi-active mucous cocoons. This keeps the victim unconscious, and allows the ezeru to duplicate their voice and appearance so long as the cocoon stays relatively (within several kilometers) near the psychic host. If the psi-active mucus is shattered and scraped away, that portion of the ezeru's flesh-mask also dissolves, revealing hard brown chitin behind it.

## Ezeru Warrior

**Defense:** Hit Threshold 4, Armor 4, Health 25

**Offense:** Scuffling +3 (+2 when impersonating a large animal), Shooting +2; Damage Modifier +3 (razor-sharp chitin), +4 (jagged mandibles), +4 (acidic bile), Stun 7 (psi-active bile)

**Abilities:** Tempus 18

**Special Abilities:** Clock Out (cost 2), Extra Action (cost 2), Flight (cost 2), Impersonation (cost 2 — psychically links the ezeru drone to a single animal encased in the ezeru's paralytic bile), Lightning Speed (cost 2), Resist Stun; warriors can attack by spitting acidic or paralytic bile within Close range

**Misc:** Alertness Modifier +1

**Description:** Ezeru warriors, sometimes called the Hungry Ones, are far less common than drones. These massive rhino-sized insects are bred by their queen for battle, and a single one might be the equal of a fully equipped TimeWatch team (especially if they don't find a method to bypass its armor). They are limited in their ability to impersonate others, and typically choose to impersonate large animals such as horses or cows when moving amongst humans. Expect nearly impregnable armor, razor-sharp leg-blades, acidic spittle, the ability to fly in short hops, and unpredictably creative tactics. Any hit from an ezeru warrior leaves a painful and itchy radiation burn behind.

Their major disadvantage is that they require large amounts of food, and the disappearance of nearby livestock or gutting of local food stores may reveal their presence to agents hunting them if the warrior is not canny. They are naturally highly radioactive, and can often be tracked by Geiger counters and other sensors.

Warriors can "gift" human servants with the Clock Out ability and the one-time pool of 10 Tempus to use it. They do so by vomiting special bile upon them; doing this also gives the human Distortion (Temporal) and drives them completely insane. It's usually saved as a gift for their most useful human pawns.

## WRAPPING UP

The mission ends (ideally) when the Gadget was never kidnapped from New Mexico, and when Hitesh Chen's obsession or ability to steal nuclear devices is eliminated. This may involve the Agents battling ezeru trying to steal Chen's collection, but that's not mandatory.

# THIEF IN THE NIGHT

## OVERVIEW

An unexpected 24th-century spaceship disaster leads the Agents to uncover a massive conspiracy that fundamentally changes human culture. Unraveling the mystery leads the Agents forwards and backwards in history, ending in an Old West showdown with the fate of human culture at stake.

## BACKGROUND

### THE PLOT

A sophosaur clan has learned the hard way that a direct assault on human history can lead to punishing ramifications. The clan's alpha opts for a more subtle approach, using a lethal device to surreptitiously steal the memories and creativity of humanity's greatest thinkers across history. The goal isn't to hoard the stolen memories of great women and men, although that's a major benefit; instead, it's to make humanity believe that anyone tremendously creative will die an early and demeaning death.

The chilling effect from thousands of years of creative paucity is the worst vengeance that the sophosaurs can think of. It isn't just that great artists die; the *fear* of an early death dissuades many remarkable humans from ever following their muse. Great art, philosophy, literature, and thought never come into being, lessening humanity's achievement simply out of the fear that creativity always means death. "Creator's Syndrome," as it's come to be called, becomes one of the driving forces of human culture... or really, of the lack of it.

The sophosaurs use human agents for their dirty work, adding irony by ensuring that humans are doing this to themselves. The human agents also separate the clan from direct involvement; no one wants TimeWatch interference, and a human agent means that the plot is less likely to be traced back to sophosaurs.

The sophosaurs' agents, commonly referred to by the phiosoraptors as "thieves," steal memories by clocking into a victim's sleeping chambers when the victim is alone. The agent places a crystal helmet on the sleeping victim's head, triggering a seizure that rips away the victim's memory and creativity.

The thief hides a time travel interdiction device, removes the helmet, and clocks out to their next target's location. Thieves usually target 3 to 5 victims per day, twenty minutes or less of work in exchange for substantial pay. At this rate, the three main thieves steal over 3,000 humans' memories and creativity in a year of work, slowly and methodically chipping away at human culture one genius at a time.

Hrss'k has three primary human thieves who steal memories for him, along with as many other thieves as you choose to add. For the purpose of this adventure, you should choose one or more thieves who seem to be fun to roleplay. Thieves act independently of one another, and don't know the other thieves. All three thieves have been psychically manipulated by the sophosaurs who recruited them; their innate disgust and dissatisfaction with humanity has been amplified, as has their sense of anarchy and independence. That may work against the sophosaurs if anyone else tries to recruit them, but it helps ensure that the thieves have no second thoughts about using the helmet.

The Agents first hear of Creator's Syndrome while investigating a failed 23rd-century space mission, where they discover during their investigation that the most formative disease in human history is a medical condition they've never heard of. The Agents need to discover the disease's cause, track down a thief by staking out a historical genius, trace the thief's handler, and follow the handler back to the sophosaur village of Venganza. There they may explore a mine or face down the sophosaurs' alpha in an Old West gunfight. Along the way they may also encounter ezeru determined to save the life of an unexpected human: J. Robert Oppenheimer, architect of the atomic bomb.

The alpha sophosaur Hrss'k is a canny, natural leader. He is huge, brutal, experienced, and clever; he believes that the best prey never realizes it is being hunted until it has unwittingly led the hunter to its lair. Hrss'k is a leader who protects his clan mates by using deception, placing unwitting servants and a series of safeguards between his clan and his human prey. He's learned this the hard way; his clan has attempted cultural revision several times before, and each time the change has been noticed and reversed by TimeWatch. He's disgusted by these failures, which he feels make him look weak.

His current solution is to devalue humanity's achievements

through a concerted, gradual process of slow destruction. This approach turns out to be one of the most important attacks on human culture in history, and his success is predicated on maintaining a low profile until it is complete. Like water slowly eroding a rock, Hrss'k hopes that his attack on human culture won't be noticed until it is too late to prevent.

Hrss'k originated his plan after discovering a vein of highly psi-active crystal hidden beneath the 19th-century Texas scrubland. His clan of several hundred sophosaurs are mining the crystal and crafting it into psychic tools to assist the thieves. Disguised as humans and nestled in their small South Texan town of Venganza, they store the stolen memories in a vast crystalline matrix beneath the dusty streets.

Stealing human memories eventually causes the victim to slip into violent dementia, although the damage to the human brain takes several weeks to surface. The victim ends their life confused and angry, knowing that they had once achieved greatness and never being able to remember what those achievements were. Hrss'k targets human creators who have already reached some great achievement, even if they are not yet at the end of their lifetime accomplishments. He does this because seeing a great person fall is a much better object lesson to humanity than never having great culture emerge at all; this also keeps the timeline closer to its true path, allowing him to better predict victims and results. Instead of changing time by making one crucial change at a single pivot point, Hrss'k is attempting the far more difficult act of changing hundreds of smaller pivot points that have a great cumulative effect. So far it's working, and the smaller alterations to the timeline haven't set off TimeWatch's automated chronal alarm systems.

All that changes when a spacecraft crashes into Beijing, killing hundreds of thousands. The spaceship captain is a Chinese woman whose popular writing in retirement is so inspirational that it inspires humanity to strive towards the stars. Targeting her for Creator's Syndrome results in TimeWatch's attention, beginning a chain of events that may unravel the entire sophosaur plot.

## PRIMARY ANTAGONISTS AND SUPPORTING CHARACTERS

In rough order of appearance, the antagonists and Adversaries the Agents may encounter include:

### Captain Ling Zhigang

A 23rd-century Chinese taikonaut, Ling has Creator's Syndrome and is not entirely rational. You know that to be the case because she has murdered and beheaded her entire crew, keeping their heads around to perform the duties their disloyal bodies weren't willing to complete. Ling is a brilliant roboticist and author.

### Angelica Hsieh (a Thief From Early 2100s Onwards)

Angelica is a 19-year-old woman who grew up in cybernetic-filled slums, who mastered dirty street fighting by the time she was 14, and who considers every trip into the past or future to be an act of rebellion against the cyberized patriarchy she detests. She has coal-black hair, extensive tattoos, and overly lush and expensive clothing (a reaction to suddenly gaining money after she grew up with none). Angelica is Chinese English by birth, and has packed an exceptional amount of hard living into her brief life span. She distrusts kind or generous motives, and takes delight in rebellion and anarchy.

Angelica grew up in Hong Kong during the misery of the early 22nd century, a time of environmental disasters, failing economies, nuclear fallouts, and abject hunger. She is largely without hope for humanity and is constantly angry; consumed with self-loathing and disgust for the establishment, she is delighted to do whatever she can to ensure the toppling and overthrow of her time's hierarchy. Angelica doesn't know or care who she's really working for. She likes the money that she's using to support her infant daughter (who she sometimes takes on missions with her, when the little girl is asleep), and she loves the chance to stick it to the people who have made her world into a hell. She has been told that her actions will make the 23rd century simpler, less complicated, and less polluted. Angelica isn't sophisticated enough to understand that she's being played for a fool. She may reconsider if someone can make her feel hope — but what are the chances of that?

Angelica's handler calls herself Guadalupe; as far as Angelica knows, Guadalupe is human but Mexican, probably in Hong Kong illegally. Guadalupe meets Angelica every morning in the year 2122, at the edge of a sewer outflow pipe in the partially flooded utility tunnels beneath the city. She knows that Guadalupe has never been late, that she hands her the materials and information she needs for the day (usually one helmet, one time rod, and three interdiction devices, one for each day's three targets), and that she's still there waiting for Angelica when she returns a few seconds after she leaves. Angelica is then paid and instructed to go spend time with friends, an activity that helps restore her lost chronal stability by emphasizing her sense of self. Angelica says that the one time she went to meet her boss with a friend, Guadalupe never showed up, and Angelica had her pay docked for a week — so she must have some way to observe the area from afar.

"Guadalupe"'s true identity is a female sophosaur named Sibrin. Sibrin has the meeting area covered with tiny hidden crystals that record light like cameras and transmit it psychically to anyone psychic who requests it. Non-psychics can draw squiggly images from these crystals by making a Difficulty 6 Tinkering test to interface them with a tether.

Before she meets Angelica each morning Sibrin typically travels to the meeting area the night *after* she meets Angelica, where she checks the camera feed. She then goes back in time to her meeting if nothing seems amiss. Agents arriving to lay a trap may be observed by this system if they do anything that might alert Sibrin later that evening.



## Angelica Hsieh's Stats

**Defense:** Hit Threshold 4, Health 12

**Offense:** Scuffling +2, Shooting +0; Damage Modifier +0 (favorite homemade knife), Stun 5 (stolen neural disruptor)

**Abilities:** Burglary 8, Tempus 12; Hacking 1, Spying 1, Taunt 1

**Special Abilities:** Clock Out (cost 2), Technology (cost 2 — minor technology only)

**Misc:** Alertness Modifier +1, Stealth Modifier +1

## Jackson Cooper (a Thief From Mid-1800s Onwards)

Jackson is an escaped slave and pit fighter from Alabama who headed west to work on the railroads in the 1860s. He was run out of numerous towns due to the color of his skin, and left for dead in a Texas gulch after a disagreement with the racist foreman turned ugly. He's in his early 30s, still muscular, with a bitter and suspicious disposition that is totally justified by the way he's been treated in the past. He was recruited by a Mexican man (or rather Sibrin, a disguised sophosaur) named Salvador who told him that he could become rich while striking a blow against the people whose hatred and prejudices have caused him so much pain. Jackson didn't need much convincing. He's not an educated man, but he is proud, self-reliant, and intelligent. Jackson takes great care during his missions and is usually ready for ambush. He insists on no more than three targets a day, as any more than that exhausts him (due to chronal instability, not that Jackson understands what that is.)

Jackson becomes furious if treated as anything other than an equal. He isn't willing to risk his life for the mysterious benefactor who gave him this job, but he knows that if he gives out information, he'll never work at it again. He has to be convinced that it's the end of the line before he is willing to talk.

"Salvador"'s true identity is a female sophosaur named Sibrin. Sibrin meets Jackson every morning just before dawn in a forest just north of 1866 San Antonio, Texas. Jackson knows that Salvador has never been late, that he hands him the materials and information he needs for the day, and that he's still there waiting for Jackson when he returns a few seconds after he leaves. Jackson is then paid and instructed to go spend time with friends, an activity that helps restore his lost chronal stability by emphasizing his sense of self.

Sibrin has the meeting area covered with tiny hidden crystals that record light like cameras and transmit it psychically to anyone psychic who requests it. Non-psychics can draw squiggly images from these crystals by making a Difficulty 6 Tinkering test to interface them with a tether.

Before she meets Jackson each morning Sibrin typically travels to the meeting area the night *after* she meets Jackson, where she checks the camera feed. She then goes back in time to her meeting if nothing seems amiss. Agents arriving to lay a trap may be observed by this system if they do anything that might alert Sibrin later that evening.

## Jackson Cooper's Stats

**Defense:** Hit Threshold 4, Health 12

**Offense:** Scuffling +2, Shooting +1; Damage Modifier +0 (dirty fighting), +1 (someone else's pistol; Cooper doesn't carry a lethal weapon of his own), Stun 4 (sap)

**Abilities:** Burglary 4, Tempus 14; Outdoor Survival 1, Spying 1

**Special Abilities:** Clock Out (cost 2), Lightning Speed (cost 2)

**Misc:** Alertness Modifier +1, Stealth Modifier +1

## Ehecatl (a Thief From Early 1500s, Both Onwards and in the Past)

Ehecatl is an Aztec priest from Tenochtitlan who believes that he has been specifically chosen by the gods as a spirit of divine vengeance. Ehecatl is not an agreeable or charismatic man; he is abrupt, odiferous, rude, and argumentative. He carries a huge chip on his shoulder about his place in his city's hierarchy, and he has great hatred for the Spanish conquistadores who captured it in 1521. His sophosaur contact Sibrin came to him in the guise of a feathered serpent after Tenochtitlan fell, and promised him retribution against the invaders if he assumed the role of divine servant. Ehecatl agreed immediately. He now considers himself an agent of the gods. He places "the helmet of sin" on no fewer than five targets per day, and wishes he could complete more.



Ehecatl is the most competent and experienced of the sophosaur agents, as well as the best combatant. He completes missions in both the future and the past, and has no compunctions or guilt whatsoever about his actions. He remains somewhat sympathetic, as his bitterness is driven by the near eradication of his people by invaders, but it's difficult to see this beneath his angry exterior. Ehecatl dresses in the traditional dress of his people and disguises himself only reluctantly.

The feathered serpent is, of course, the sophosaur Sibrin in disguise. Sibrin's technique with Ehecatl is identical to her technique with the other two thieves, except that Sibrin times Ehecatl's missions so that the zealot returns just as the sun rises, and that she assigns the more robust (and slightly more insane) Aztec priest five victims per day instead of three.

## Ehecatl's Stats

**Defense:** Hit Threshold 4, Health 15

**Offense:** Scuffling +3, Shooting +0; Damage Modifier +2 (jagged sacrificial knife; successfully hitting the same person twice in one round inflicts an extra 1d6 Health damage)

**Abilities:** Burglary 8, Tempus 20; Intimidation 1, Military Tactics 1, Spying 1

**Special Abilities:** Clock Out (cost 2), Extra Action (cost 2), Strength (cost 0)

**Misc:** Alertness Modifier +2, Stealth Modifier +2

## Chzznizkt

This ezeru drone has assigned itself to protect Oppenheimer from Creator's Syndrome. If the Agents never interfere, Chzznizkt murders Jackson Cooper just before he steals J. Robert Oppenheimer's memories. Chzznizkt then impersonates Oppenheimer for the rest of his life, helping ensure that the atomic bomb will be discovered. As this is the one incident in recorded history where a theft fails, it may be investigated by the Agents.

## Sibrin (a.k.a. Guadalupe, Salvador, and the Feathered Serpent)

All three of these handlers are actually the same disguised female sophosaur. Sibrin is an accomplished spy, liar, and manipulator who is fiercely loyal to both Hrss'k and her clan, but who is cowardly about the possibility of death. She keeps a psychic crystal charm that instantly whisks her to safety if she is ever injured (if her Health drops to 0 or below); TimeWatch Agents can follow this path with their autochrons if they react within two rounds. Following Sibrin back to the outskirts of Venganza is one way to uncover the town. Sibrin uses this escape method as a last resort, as Hrss'k would disembowel her if he learned she had been so sloppy.

## Hrss'k (Alcalde Husk)

The alpha sophosaur Hrss'k serves as the alcalde (mayor) of the small Texas town of Venganza, disliking his human

disguise but recognizing it as necessary. There he presides over the psi-crystal mine and the plot to destroy human culture. Hrss'k is a red-scaled sophosaur the size of a draft horse; in human disguise he appears to be a heavy, broad-shouldered Mexican man with a long beard. If you ever wonder what Hrss'k would do, answering "what seems cleverest?" followed by "what seems the cruelest?" will usually give you the right answer. His only loyalties are to his clan and his ego, and it's unclear which bond is stronger.

## Chazar (Sheriff Salazar)

Hrss'k's second in command is a sophosaur philosopher named Chazar who handles day-to-day strong-arming in Venganza. He is in charge of making sure that the mine runs smoothly, that the stolen memories are encoded in the psychic matrix, and that the interdiction devices and time spires are crafted without interruption; Hrss'k may believe the plan is his own, but that's only because Chazar encourages him to believe this. He will gladly give his life for the alpha and the tribe, but he won't throw it away foolishly.

## TIMELINE

The Agents start aboard the *Divine River*, a spaceship outside the orbit of Mars and returning to Earth, in 2263. They then travel to one of many possibilities to investigate; one likely choice is Paris in 1784 to meet Ben Franklin. They may also visit Oppenheimer in 1942. They will then travel to ambush the thief's handler in either 2122, 1866, or 1521, and reach the heart of the scenario at the town of Venganza in the 1820s.

## THE MISSION

### LIKELY ADVENTURE PATH

**The Divine River.** Agents discover that the ship's captain has dementia and has murdered the rest of her crew. Checking medical logs, they learn she suffered a seizure and contracted Creator's Syndrome. The Agents use the ship's computer to learn about Creator's Syndrome, and find the powdered remains of a crystal interdiction device in the captain's bunkroom. Using time travel to place cameras reveals a thief in the night stealing the captain's memories.

Circumstances make it difficult for the Agents to directly save the captain, so they must choose another victim of Creator's Syndrome to set a trap for the thief.

At the end of this scene, the Agents know about Creator's Syndrome, know they need to catch a thief to learn more, but know they cannot easily do so on the *Divine River*.

**To Catch a Thief.** Whether they go to meet Benjamin Franklin, Leonardo da Vinci, or some other historical genius, the Agents must arrive two months early and set a trap for the thief.

If the Agents stake out J. Robert Oppenheimer, the one genius who supposedly survives the attempted theft of his

## THIEVES' GEAR

The human thieves are given three pieces of gear: a crystalline helmet that steals memories, a multifaceted crystal that acts as a temporal interdiction device, and a crystal spiraling rod that allows them to time travel to a specific location at a specific time.

**Helmet:** The helmet activates automatically when placed on a human head, and brutally removes the victim's creativity and most-prized memories. This is typically accompanied by seizures and brain damage. The helmet can store up to five people's memories in it at once; most commonly it is used three times before being returned and replaced.

**Interdiction Device:** An interdiction device prevents time travel for a period of time in both the future and the past once it is activated. The devices in this mission stop time travel in a several kilometer radius for two months before, and two months after, their activation. Only a time travel device that has already been paired with the interdiction device (such as the travel spires) can bypass the interdiction effect.

Interdiction devices are difficult and complicated for TimeWatch to construct, requiring the expenditure of 2 points of Timecraft and 1 point of Science!. Sophosaurs in this adventure have an easier time making psychic versions of the device due to their reserves of psi-active crystal. Sophosaur-constructed interdiction devices look like chunks of crystal the size of a baby's fist. They have innumerable facets and reflect light beautifully. Facets crumble as the device decays over its two-month span, leaving a dull sphere of crystal that collapses into fine crystalline dust as the effect finally ends.

When someone attempts to time travel into an interdicted period, they fail. Time travelers can either slide along the interdiction to seconds before its earliest effect (thus trapping them for four months in the interdicted time period) or along it to just after the interdiction ends. The beginning of this mission assumes that the Agents attempted to time travel to the *Divine River* during its return to Earth, encountered the interdiction, and chose to arrive at the end of the interdiction.

**Travel Spire:** The travel spire is a slim spiral crystal rod. Each travel spire is preprogrammed by the sophosaurs to take a thief to exactly the best time and place to use the helmet; its usage is not affected by the interdiction device (as they have already been paired), and each spire takes the thief to between three and five successive victims before returning the thief to their home time, seconds after they departed. The spire also has an emergency mode which whisks the thief quickly through time in the event of a time chase, leaving them on an uninhabited and lush South Pacific tropical island in the 1100s at the end of the chase. Sibrin knows that if a thief does not return from their mission, she should look for them on the island.

memories, move to *What's Bugging Oppenheimer?*

At the end of this scene, the Agents know that a thief has a handler who gives them their tools and who pays them, and they know where and when the handler is next meeting the thief.

**What's Bugging Oppenheimer?** If the Agents travel to learn how Oppenheimer survived having his memories stolen, they learn that he was replaced by an ezeru instead. The ezeru is not necessarily hostile, but doesn't allow its identity to be revealed.

**The Handler.** The Agents head to confront Sibrin, who is disguised as the appropriate thief's handler. Where and when this occurs depends on which thief the Agents have questioned. Sibrin avoids confrontation and calls in reinforcements to aid herself, and flees automatically if badly injured. She can be followed. If not caught, the Agents may have to target a different thief to get the information they need.

At the end of this scene, the Agents know of Venganza but likely don't understand its true significance.

**Venganza.** The Agents find a 30-year-old, isolated Old West town with a working mine. The town is entirely populated by several hundred sophosaurs disguised as humans. Infiltrating the mine reveals crafting shops for crystalline technology, a vast crystal matrix where human memories are stored, and storerooms of raw crystals dug from the earth.

Calling out the town's sophosaur mayor or the sheriff leads to a showdown on the town's main street. Most townsfolk will not generally involve themselves unless the alpha begs for help, something he is unlikely to do, but the fight will be difficult regardless. Defeating the alpha allows the Agents to Intimidate the sophosaurs of Venganza.

At the end of this scene, the Agents know of the crystal mining. Whether or not Hrss'k is still alive, they have chosen a strategy to stop Creator's Syndrome before it ever begins.

**No Crystals for You.** Since the stolen memories cannot be returned to the victims they were stolen from, the only way for the Agents to stop Creator's Syndrome is to prevent sophosaurs from ever mining the psi-active crystal.

In order to fully stop Creator's Syndrome and solve the mission, the Agents must destroy or seize the psi-active crystal beneath Venganza before it is ever discovered by sophosaurs, or must strike an agreement with the clan before they begin their plan of vengeance. The Agents can call in TimeWatch resources if necessary to mine it themselves centuries prior, to destroy it utterly, or to do something even more creative. If any notable sophosaurs from Venganza were left alive at the end of *Venganza*, they may time travel back to this scene to stop the Agents from eliminating their future successes.

## THE DIVINE RIVER

**Scene Type:** Core

**Lead-Outs:** To Catch a Thief, What's Bugging Oppenheimer

**Summary:** Creator's Syndrome is a new disease, and it's caused by humans

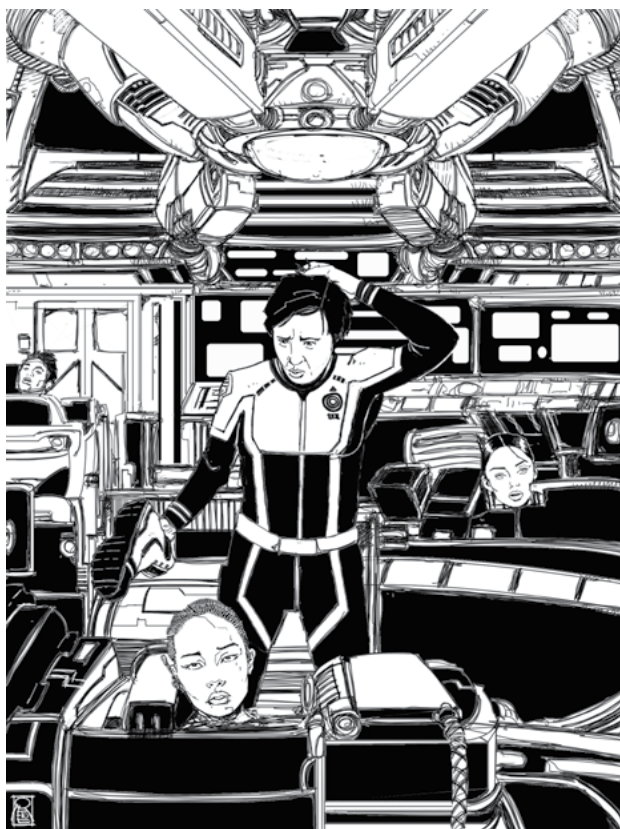
The year is 2263, and the Chinese spaceship *Divine River* is returning from its multiyear, successful trip to visit Saturn. Taikonaut and roboticist Captain Ling Zhigang should live until her late 90s, bright and intelligent the entire time; the memoir she writes upon returning inspires a new generation to aim for space. Her crew of 12 returns safely amidst vast global triumph, and the aspirational publicity from the achievement ushers in a new renaissance for human science and culture.

Instead, the returning *Divine River* crashes into Beijing, killing hundreds of thousands.

## THE MISSION

The Agents are dispatched to find out why, and to prevent the tragedy. It's recommended that you begin in medias res with the Agents arriving on the ship at the end of the interdiction effect, as noted in the sidebar above. If you choose to begin the mission with a briefing from their handler at TimeWatch's Citadel, expect a more chaotic beginning; the Agents may decide to arrive on one of Saturn's moons, for instance, and you'll want to make sure they don't end up haring off on a red herring before the real mission ever starts.

The small 12-person crew means that stowing away on the spacecraft or arriving onboard during the mission and trusting on impersonator mesh to keep you safe is an unlikely proposition. Every member of the crew has seen each other non-stop for years, and they know every centimeter of the ship. A breathing stranger (or multiple strangers, even disguised) arriving onboard while crew members are alive triggers weight alarms and atmospheric alarms from the ship's computer.



## WHAT'S HAPPENING ON THE SHIP

Of the original 12 taikonauts, only the captain is still alive. Creator's Syndrome has made her paranoid and irrational. Five weeks ago she systematically asphyxiated the crew, then cut off each person's head with a bread knife from the galley. In her delusional state she believes that she has done them a kindness; while their bodies were plotting against her, she believes that their heads are still loyal, so she just eliminated their disloyal and traitorous bodies. None of the crew's severed heads have complained, so she's sure she took the correct action.

The captain spends all of her waking hours on the *Divine River*'s bridge, coexisting with the severed heads of her dead crew members. Meanwhile, their decaying bodies float slowly in zero-G near where they were killed. The captain has lowered atmospheric controls on most of the ship, so upon the Agents' arrival the cargo bay has no lights, no gravity, and low heat. An Agent with **Hacking** can easily restore these once (or if) the ship's computer has given them access.

## THE CARGO BAY

*As you clock in to the Divine River, you immediately notice three things: you're floating, it's cold, and it's completely dark. You're currently hanging in zero gravity somewhere inside the first manned spaceship to Saturn, a 12-person mission launched by the Chinese in 2259. It's returning four years later from a multiyear mission to*

**Computer:** "Security systems activated."

**Player:** "Forget this. I spend a Hacking point; later I'm going to go back to her programming team and give myself admin access to all systems, using voice recognition." (spends Hacking point)

**Computer:** "Processing... I apologize, doctor. Voice recognition confirmed. It's nice to see you again. How may I be of service?"

*Saturn, a mission that historically was an incredible success. You're here because in this timeline, instead of the mission being a success, the spaceship crashes into downtown Beijing and kills hundreds of thousands. Your job is to figure out why, learn who was responsible for the change, and stop it from ever happening.*

*You've arrived onboard about six weeks after you intended to. Your autocrons hit some sort of interdiction effect, and unknown chroral radiation completely blocked time travel into the ship. You've arrived as soon as the effect ended as you could. So now you hang in complete darkness somewhere inside the ship. What do you do?*

The Agents clock in onboard the *Divine River* inside the main cargo bay, floating in the chilly darkness. There is absolutely no light or gravity, and the temperature is cold (about 40°F, or 4°C). They have arrived about six weeks after they originally intended to; the *Divine River* is currently slightly less than a month away from Earth orbit.

The Agents are floating in the middle of the room, about twenty feet from the cargo-packed ceiling, floor, and walls. The cargo bay is a large room, with cargo packed in strapped-down crates against the floor, ceiling, and walls. The cargo is mostly full of mineral samples and atmosphere samples from Saturn and her moons. There are no extraterrestrial living organisms in the cargo bay.

Creating light is as simple as asking a tether to make light. Once there's illumination, it's clear that the bay has two possible openings: a large loading door leading to an outside airlock, and a smaller interior door with a computer access panel next to it.

## Security Alert

The captain is alerted to the Agents' presence in the cargo bay as soon as any Agents speak; as soon as an Agent touches a wall, ceiling, or floor; as soon as the space is illuminated; or as soon as the Agents attempt to access the ship's computer. In her paranoia, she quickly attempts to deal with the problem by activating the ship's mining robots that are also stored in the cargo bay.

*As soon as the light fills the room, you see other lights turn on across the room: robotic sensors on three spiderlike mining robots packed tightly up against the wall. As you react, they start to extend tentacular maneuvering legs. Their optical sensors have focused on you.*

This fight can be avoided in several ways, including someone with **Hacking** using **Tinkering** to deactivate one robot at a time (see stats below), good old-fashioned violence (try not to shoot through the ship's hull...), and stunning the robots with electricity or a Pacifist.

There is up to one mining robot per every two player characters.

## Mining Robot

**Defense:** Hit Threshold 4, Armor 2, Health 10

**Offense:** Scuffling +1, Shooting +2; Damage Modifier +1 (pistoning jab), +2 (welding laser), +2 plus drag target (tethering harpoon)

**Abilities:** Tempus 8

**Special Abilities:** Cybernetics (cost 2), Spider Climb (cost 0), Unfeeling; a hit with the harpoon drags the target one range closer

**Misc:** Alertness Modifier +2, Stealth Modifier -1

**Description:** A robot the size of a mini-fridge with extending metal tentacles for movement, a tethering harpoon (useful for reeling in targets or drawing itself closer), and a welding laser. For Agents with **Hacking** who have access to the ship's computer, these robots can be deactivated one by one with a Difficulty 5 **Tinkering** test that overrides the captain's control.

Once the robots are defeated, the room goes quiet once again; the captain is cowering in the bridge, shoe in hand, waiting for the intruders to arrive. At the GM's discretion, the captain may also attempt to open the airlock to eject the Agents into space. If so, they have 30 seconds or more warning as warning beacons light; see below.

## The Ship's Computer

The ship's computer is not fully sentient, but has advanced-enough AI to give that impression. The ship's computer identifies as female. She is not deranged, although her safety protocols have been neutralized by the captain. She refuses to respond to any Agent commands (including restoring gravity or lights, or opening the door) until an Agent has hacked into her. This can be done by spending a **Hacking** point; it's up to the player whether this means that they hack directly into her systems, or that they later go back in time to give their current selves a backdoor into her systems. The latter, of course, is generally funnier, and means that the computer's voice greets them warmly.

Once a hack is established, the computer politely gives whatever information the Agent requests. She doesn't volunteer information unless asked. Such information may include:

- ▶ **How many living crew members are there?** One from an original 12.
- ▶ **How did they die?** Loss of oxygenated blood to the lungs. The computer doesn't know details, as the captain has somewhat incompetently scrubbed this data from her memory. She has a record of life support shutdown on the day they died, however.
- ▶ **When did they die?** Approximately five weeks ago, over the span of four hours.

- ▶ **Is anyone alive?** Yes, the captain.
- ▶ **Where is the captain?** On the bridge.
- ▶ **Is the captain healthy?** No. She is not sleeping or eating well.
- ▶ **Is the captain aware of our presence?** Yes, she is currently observing this discussion through internal security cameras. (These can be deactivated with a successful Difficulty 4 **Burglary** test.)
- ▶ **Are there cameras throughout the ship?** Yes, everywhere but the private bunkrooms in the dormitories.
- ▶ **Can you show us video logs?** These are currently off-line and must be enabled manually from the bridge.
- ▶ **Are there currently any other organisms onboard?** No, only the player characters.
- ▶ **Have there at any time been other organisms onboard?** Unknown. Exactly two months prior, air filters in the dormitories picked up foreign dust and particulate matter, but no other creatures have been observed. (The thief who stole the captain's memories brought some dust and foreign atmosphere with him or her.)
- ▶ **Does the captain still have access to environmental controls?** Yes, and is currently acting to seal and vent this cargo bay. That process will initiate in approximately 30 seconds. (A rapid Difficulty 4 **Tinkering** test from someone with **Hacking** can negate that command. A Difficulty 6 **Tinkering** test can lock the captain out of the life support and airlock systems.)

## THE SHIP'S INTERIOR

The ship's exact floor plan isn't particularly important, as there's little or no tactical combat while onboard. The *Divine River* was constructed in orbit and has never needed to be aerodynamic, so is boxy instead of sleek. The dormitories are on a lower floor and the science labs, sick bay, mess hall, and bridge are forward of the cargo hold. There are many other sections of the ship than are mentioned here, including propulsion, laboratories, vehicle bays, and more. Feel free to invent descriptions for these areas if needed, or ignore them if they aren't.

### Corpses Aplenty

The hallway door out of the cargo bay is locked; opening it requires computer access or a Difficulty 4 **Burglary** test. Floating on the other side of the door (or lying, if artificial gravity has been turned back on by the computer) is a headless corpse. The corpse is of a crew member, one of the atmospheric experts, and his head is nowhere to be found.

#### Clues and Benefits

- ▶ **Medical Expertise:** The body died of asphyxiation. The head was severed with a rough sawing blade after death. The crew member has been dead for approximately five weeks.
- ▶ **Notice:** The beheading occurred in the hallway outside of the cargo bay. Clumps of dried floating blood litter the

## WANT MORE COMBAT?

Although this investigative scene doesn't necessarily require it for pacing purposes, it's easy to add a fight by placing a dangerously hacked robot in front of the bridge to guard the captain. This is the upside of having a paranoid, delusional roboticist in charge of the mission.

### DEFENSEBOT

**Defense:** Hit Threshold 4, Armor 2, Health 10

**Offense:** Scuffling +2, Shooting +2; Damage Modifier +2 (metallic blades), +2 (welding laser)

**Abilities:** Tempus 8

**Special Abilities:** Cybernetics (cost 2), Extra Action (cost 2), Strength (cost 0), Technology (cost 2), Unfeeling

**Misc:** Alertness Modifier +2, Stealth Modifier -1

hall. Blood spatter suggests that the head was carried away in the direction of the bridge.

- ▶ Searching the ship quickly reveals other decapitated corpses; motivated Agents can compare their biometrics to the crew log and confirm that all crew members except for the captain have been killed in this manner. No heads can be located.

## THE BRIDGE

With no one left alive on the ship except for the captain, movement through the corridors to the bridge is unhindered. The ship is silent except for the omnipresent rumble of the engines and the background sound of essential machinery.

- The door to the bridge is locked and sealed.
- ▶ A Difficulty 6 **Burglary** test can open the door.
- ▶ A Difficulty 6 **Tinkering** test by an Agent with **Hacking** can open the door.
- ▶ Agents could teleport onto the bridge in their autochrons, making a standard Travel test.
- ▶ The video feed to the bridge is live, and the captain has forgotten to turn it off. Any Agent with **Spying** or with computer access can view it. If displayed, Agents see the scene described below, albeit with fewer sensory details.

*The air on the bridge smells awful, like rotting meat. Captain Ling Zbigang is a middle-aged Chinese woman. You've seen pictures of her, a proud and commanding soldier. Now you see her hunched over*

## CREATOR'S SYNDROME

In this timeline, Creator's Syndrome is the single biggest cultural force in human history. It has accurately been described as proof of God, a God who strikes down those impudent enough to overstep their natural and humble boundaries. Everyone in the civilized world knows about Creator's Syndrome, and most people fear it (or in some cases get angry that it has never affected them). Endless research papers have been written about it, with no conclusions; it has affected great thinkers as far back as ancient Greece or before, and continues to strike great and notable creators. What confounds scientists is the seeming intentionality of the syndrome, where it only affects those who have grown famous for their brilliant accomplishments.

The syndrome almost never strikes people who have not already achieved fame. It usually affects creators in the prime of their creative life, while they are engaged in what might be their best work.

Culturally, the result has been that great art is circulated privately and underground, or (more often) posthumously. Scientific achievements still occur, but with fewer great leaders or technology visionaries. Museums are rare, and there would be relatively little to show in them.

**GM Note:** Creator's Syndrome is an ongoing force that changes the world around the Agents even as the adventure progresses. Any Agent with a rating in *Paradox Prevention* may notice this. For instance, an Agent with *Paradox Prevention* might see a framed quote from Lao-tzu on the captain's wall, only to have it vanish, never having been there at all, as the investigation progresses. This effect is subtle and not noticed by most people, but it's important. Should the Agents unduly delay their investigation, it's possible that the *Divine River* never launches in the first place and slowly fades away from around them.

*and covering in her command chair, aiming a shoe towards the door as if it were a gun.*

*Around the bridge, the severed heads of each of her fellow crew members sit in the command position they'd have been in if alive. Their blank, dead eyes stare into emptiness.*

The captain is scared, paranoid, and delusional. She's convinced that her shoe is a weapon, that the decapitated heads around her are living crew members, and that the Agents are invaders who shouldn't be there. (One of these three beliefs is correct.)

### Captain Ling Zhigang

**Defense:** Hit Threshold 3, Health 8

**Offense:** Scuffling +0, Shooting +1; Damage Modifier -1 (flailing fists), +nil (shoes aren't actually guns)

**Abilities:** Tempus 10, Tinkering 12; Hacking 1, Science! 1

**Special Abilities:** Technology (cost 2)

Interpersonal abilities can calm the captain and get her to speak rationally.

- ▶ **Authority** makes her instinctually obey a superior officer.
- ▶ **Reassurance** calms her down and gets her to trust the Agents.

Once calmed, Captain Ling Zhigang can speak clearly (if irrationally) about recent events.

- ▶ She killed the other crew members because their minds were clear, but their bodies wanted to mutiny and depose her. As a result, she saved each of them by killing their bodies but letting their heads still continue their work.

She's very proud of this solution, and expects that she will receive a medal for it once she returns home.

- ▶ She doesn't know why the crew members became treasonous. She thinks they were jealous of her, so they lied and claimed she was sick. She'd know it if she was, wouldn't she?
- ▶ She remembers being a little sick about two months ago. She thinks her head hurt. She doesn't remember it clearly. Agents can accompany the captain to sick bay to test her, or access her medical logs to check her condition.
- ▶ Ling does remember her crew members saying she had Creator's Syndrome, and just remembering this agitates her and makes her very angry and afraid. She isn't able to clearly explain what Creator's Syndrome is (the Agents have not heard of it previously), but the ship's computer can easily explain it.
- ▶ She's badly homesick and wants to go home, to the apartment in Beijing where her granddaughter lives.

### Clues and Benefits

- ▶ **Hacking** or **Research:** Using its voice interface, the ship's computer can report back facts about events on the ship that it is aware of. It does not draw conclusions or inferences.
- ▶ **Research** or **Spying:** A video record exists for every day of the mission, showing every part of the ship except for private crew rooms. These videos show the captain systematically isolating, asphyxiating, and defiling the crew members five weeks prior.

- ▶ **Hacking:** Crew member logs and the captain's logs can be accessed from the bridge. The logs are encrypted, which is no obstacle to an Agent with **Hacking**. Crew member logs reveal a growing concern with the captain's health over a three-week period after her seizure, as she repeatedly demonstrated memory loss and confused behavior. The logs privately consider the logistical and public relations ramifications of removing the captain from her duty, and describe private crew discussions about whether the captain has Creator's Syndrome. Not a single crew member initially wished to relieve her of duty, as she is an immensely popular public face of the Saturn mission and it would tarnish her legacy if she was relieved of duty, but on the morning of their deaths the medical officer decided that it was finally necessary to do so. No log describes Creator's Syndrome; they treat it as if it is an omnipresent and well-known fact of life.
  - ▶ The captain's log shows growing paranoia and erratic thinking. Her log entries show a declining number of unique words, indicating mental degradation.
- ▶ The ship's computer can give a history of Creator's Syndrome if asked by anyone with **Research**.

## SICK BAY

The medical bay contains sealed medical records of every crew member; they are easily available to any Agent with **Hacking**, although the logs only make sense to an Agent with **Medical Expertise**.

## Clues and Benefits

(core) **Medical Expertise:** Medical records indicate that crew health was good, with the expected quantity of minor medical conditions during the multiyear voyage. The only unusual incident occurred to the captain two months prior. She suffered a seizure while sleeping. Although she seemed to recover within two days, preliminary diagnosis is the onset of Creator's Syndrome. She disagreed and resumed command of the vessel three days after her seizure. Subsequent brain scans show a marked decrease in neurological functioning with rapid decay in the memory and judgment sections of the brain; the medical officer confirms the diagnosis of Creator's Syndrome and judges the captain unfit for duty. This is noted several hours before the crew members' deaths five weeks prior.

- ▶ **History (Future):** No Agent has ever heard of Creator's Syndrome before, although the logs discuss it as if it were something universally known.

## CREW DORMITORIES

Other than a few dead bodies, the only dorm room of interest is the captain's cabin.

## Clues and Benefits

- ▶ **Timecraft:** Until very recently, the ship was blanketed by a chronaton interdiction field that blocked and interfered with time travel. This field is now fading, but remains strongest in the captain's quarters.
- ▶ **Notice or Science!:** The captain's room has a higher quantity of dust than expected.
- ▶ **Science!:** The dust is crystalline and psi-active in nature.
- ▶ Upon examination of the room (**simple search**): Hidden underneath the captain's bunk is a larger pile of dust that probably was a larger crystal that has since disintegrated.
- ▶ **Science!** or **Timecraft:** That dust used to be an interdiction device which stopped time travel. Based on other evidence, it's likely this device was first triggered two months ago, and prevented time travel for two months in either direction.
- ▶ **Timecraft:** Crystalline "technology" is fairly rare and is usually psychic in nature. Most crystalline technology is crafted by nonhuman species such as sophosaurs and Europeans (psychic body-controlling aliens from the moon Europa, discovered by astronauts several decades in the future).
- ▶ **Spying:** Unlike the rest of the ship, there are no surveillance cameras in the crew rooms.

Clearly, someone activated the interdiction device and left it here the night the captain had her seizure. The question is who, and why.

## MESS HALL

The mess hall isn't particularly notable other than for the decapitated crew member body on the floor, and the gore-coated bread knife tossed into the sink. This is the knife that the captain used to saw off her crew's heads. Fingerprints on the knife match the captain's, although it contains DNA from every crew member due to the blood.

## SOLVING THE CRIME

The key mystery the Agents need to solve is "what is Creator's Syndrome, and how did the captain get it?"

Normally this would be simple for time travelers: they'd go back in time two months to the night that Captain Zhigang had her seizure, stake out her bunk room in person or with a camera, and find out what happened — or stop it entirely, weathering any resulting paradox.

## What Won't Easily Work

This scenario is deliberately set up so that this is difficult or impossible on the *Divine River*.

- ▶ Due to the now-disintegrated interdiction device, the Agents cannot time travel onto the ship any earlier than four months ago (two months before the captain had her seizure).



- ▶ The vessel is too small (and has too effective a ship's computer) for multiple people to secretly stow away, and impersonator mesh will not function due to the close-knit and self-contained nature of the crew. The taikonauts would notice additional, unexpected people.
- ▶ The mass of additional people staying on the vessel will affect speed, food, and life support.
- ▶ Additional people on the vessel will trigger a Paradox test (D4/L4) since the Agents know they weren't originally onboard.

These challenges make it possible but suboptimal to stow away or suddenly appear on the ship, then stay for two months waiting for the captain's seizure.

## What Will Easily Work

While no official video cameras are placed inside of the crew quarters, Agents will doubtlessly be curious of what happened to the captain. Agents can place a microscopic camera in the captain's quarters before the interdiction device goes into effect. This can easily be done during the ship's initial construction in Earth's orbit a decade prior, or even during the mission, soon before the interdiction device takes effect.

- ▶ An Agent with **Spying** can go back in time to hide the camera; at the GM's discretion, this might be played out in case complications or paradoxes result. The Agent must make two Travel tests, one to travel and one to return, and a Difficulty 6 **Unobtrusiveness** test. If the Agents hide the camera while the ship is in flight but they already asked the ship's computer if any other creatures had entered the ship, they also need to make a D4/L4 Paradox test.
- ▶ Spending an **Architecture** point allows an Agent's future self to go back in time and hide the camera during the ship's construction. Agents who decide to do this can immediately access the video on their tether. No Travel tests are needed.
- ▶ Spending a **Spying** point allows an Agent's future self to go back in time and quickly hide the camera while the *Divine River* is en route to or from Saturn. Agents who decide to do this can immediately access the video on their tether. No Travel tests are needed. If the Agents hide the camera while the ship is in flight but they already asked the ship's computer if any other creatures had entered the ship, they also need to make a D4/L4 Paradox test.

Once a camera has been hidden in the past, Agents can access the camera's feed.

## What Happened to the Captain

Here is what they see the night that Captain Zhigang had her seizure; edit this description based on the location of the camera and the identity of the thief (see p. 23).

When the Agents investigate the attack on the captain of the *Divine River*, use whichever of the three thieves seems like the most fun to roleplay. All three are competent in combat, but they're not going to be any match for a well-prepared,

lurking team of TimeWatch Agents. They're not intended to be. Uncovering the thief in the night is the next clue in leading the Agents to a solution, and a well-conceived ambush should be successful with a minimum of effective reprisal.

*Until 2 a.m. ship's time, the captain lies in bed asleep. At 2 a.m. there is a purple swirl in the room and a person stands there holding a thin crystal rod. Choose one of the three thieves from p. 23 and describe them accordingly.*

*The person looks around the room, reaches into a loose bag at their side, and pulls out a faceted crystal helmet. The person walks to the bedside and smoothly, as if through long practice, places the helmet on the sleeping captain's head. The captain's body contorts in a massive seizure.*

*The thief ignores the thrashing captain and removes a chunk of crystal from the sack. The chunk of crystal gets hidden beneath the bed, the non-shimmering helmet gets removed from the unconscious captain, and the thief holds up the thin crystal rod. Another purple swirl, and the thief is gone — leaving the captain sprawled unconscious across her cot, still twitching.*

## Clues and Benefits

- ▶ **Timecraft:** The thin, spiral crystal rod is a non-technological time travel device, likely psychic in nature. Such things are rare because sources of pure crystal that is psychically resonant are difficult to find. If that is a real human using it, and not a sophosaur in disguise, then the purity of the crystal is almost unique; most humans can't usually easily use psychic devices.
  - ▶ Rating of 2+: The rod is known as a travel spire, and is what most sophosaurs use to time travel.
- ▶ **Timecraft:** The device placed under the bed is definitely a non-technological interdiction device, likely psychic in nature. It decays into dust as its ability to prevent time travel runs out. Given that the thief time traveled away after the device was activated, the thin crystal rod was likely attuned to the interdiction device, ignoring its effect.
- ▶ **History (Ancient, Contemporary, or Future,** depending on the thief): They gain a rough idea of the thief's origin time period. This varies depending on the thief.
- ▶ **Medical Expertise:** The effect of the helmet on the captain is consistent with massive brain damage. The helmet's shimmering effect suggests that it was storing something taken from the captain's brain.
  - ▶ Rating of 2+: If memories or experience were somehow stolen and recorded in the helmet, it's unlikely that these could be restored to the captain after the fact.

## Putting It All Together

After **Researching** on the ship's computer and observing a video of the thief in action, Agents should be able to deduce the following:

- ▶ Thousands of people across history have been afflicted with Creator's Syndrome, which causes premature dementia.

- ▶ Fear of Creator's Syndrome has badly crippled human cultural development.
- ▶ Creator's Syndrome is manufactured, not natural.
- ▶ Creator's Syndrome appears to be caused by people (or one very busy person) who are time traveling and directly stealing memories from sleeping people of note.
- ▶ If any time traveling thief has ever been caught, the ship's computer doesn't know of it (with one exception; see *What's Bugging Oppenheimer* on p. 36).
- ▶ The interdiction device and the *Divine River's* relatively small confines make it difficult or impossible for the Agents to apprehend the thief here onboard, because the Agents would need to arrive two months early and live onboard the ship.
- ▶ It would be relatively simple to apprehend the thief at a different victim's bedside.
- ▶ The ship's computer can provide a comprehensive list of victims.

## WRAPPING UP ONBOARD THE DIVINE RIVER

Agents can seize the ship's controls or direct the computer to automatically go into orbit when they reach Earth in three weeks. The Agents don't necessarily need to save Ling or remove her from the ship; by fixing the timeline that gave her Creator's Syndrome, they restore her to the correct timeline.

It's worth noting that because multiple thieves work to devalue human achievements, the world literally becomes worse the longer the Agents spend in it. An Agent visiting the Louvre might see great statuary, then return an hour later to find that the sculpture never existed — along with any other artistic works that were inspired by the original art. If the ship's computer gives the Agents the total number of affected artists, any Agent with a rating in **Paradox Prevention** notices that number continue to grow. It takes tracking down one of Hrss'k's thieves in the night, capturing them and questioning them to discover and unravel the plan.

## TO CATCH A THIEF

**Scene Type:** Core

**Lead-In:** The Divine River

**Lead-Outs:** What's Bugging Oppenheimer, The Handler

**Summary:** The thief reports to a human handler named Sibrin

Having determined the problem, the Agents need to trap a thief in order to find out who's behind Creator's Syndrome.

## NARROWING DOWN THE POSSIBILITIES

If they can't easily reach the *Divine River's* captain, the Agents need to pick a different target. They won't suffer for choice; virtually every person known throughout history for great cultural or historical achievement is a target for Creator's Syndrome. So how do you help the players avoid analysis paralysis and choose a good target?

The players will ask for examples of people who succumbed to Creator's Syndrome. Here's a vastly incomplete list of 30 people. While it doesn't begin to encompass contributions from non-Western nations, and badly under-represents the role of women in creative endeavors, it's skewed towards names that players may easily recognize. Pick and choose a handful of these names to tell players when they ask for examples, or toss these and make up your own list of creators you admire.

**Research:** "people who changed the world", "great geniuses of history"

- |  |                           |
|--|---------------------------|
| ▶ Ada Lovelace   | ▶ Joan of Arc             |
| ▶ Alexander Graham Bell  | ▶ Leonardo da Vinci       |
| ▶ Alexander Hamilton   | ▶ Louis Pasteur           |
| ▶ Archimedes of Syracuse   | ▶ Ludwig van Beethoven    |
| ▶ Sir Arthur Conan Doyle   | ▶ Martin Luther King, Jr. |
| ▶ Augustus Caesar  | ▶ Michelangelo            |
| ▶ <b>Benjamin Franklin</b><br>(see sidebar)  | ▶ Nikola Tesla            |
| ▶ Bi Sheng   | ▶ Queen Elizabeth I       |
| ▶ Charles Darwin   | ▶ René Descartes          |
| ▶ Thomas Edison  | ▶ Socrates                |
| ▶ Albert Einstein  | ▶ Sun Tzu                 |
| ▶ Galileo Galilei  | ▶ Voltaire                |
| ▶ George Washington  | ▶ Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart |
| ▶ Hero of Alexandria   | ▶ William Shakespeare     |
| ▶ Sir Isaac Newton   |                           |
| ▶ J. Robert Oppenheimer<br>(not affected; see <i>What's Bugging Oppenheimer</i> p. 36) |                           |

Players will usually decide to pursue victims for whom they have more details. For instance, if you tell them that Benjamin Franklin had a seizure on Sept 8th, 1784, while he was in Paris, and George Washington had a seizure the day after leaving the US presidency in 1797, but that Leonardo da Vinci had a seizure some time in 1513 after returning to Rome, players are much more likely to investigate Franklin or Washington than da Vinci.

After choosing a handful of victims for the Agents to investigate, quickly look them up on the Internet to learn the dates of their greatest achievements; Creator's Syndrome will have struck them soon thereafter, and they will die within several years after Creator's Syndrome sets in.

The Agents need to decide what famous person they choose to use as a trap. This can be a challenge to GM because you

don't necessarily know anything about the historical genius or the time they live in. There are a few choices:

- ▶ **Pick a future celebrity.** This is least satisfying for players but easiest to GM because you can make up the entire person, personality, and location. As long as it takes place after the early 21st century, no one can tell you that your information is inaccurate.
- ▶ **Stack the deck.** If you mention your preferred historical target at least three times, and give an in-game reason why they'd be easier than average, players will often pick up on the hint either consciously or subconsciously.
- ▶ **Lay railroad tracks.** If you want to ensure that the Agents go to a particular time and place without debate or uncertainty, have residual chronal energy from the captain's cabin lead them to a particular time and location. They can follow this blindly, or spend a Timecraft point to know the time and location. The Agents will then be able to follow the thief from the *Divine River*, but won't necessarily know who the next target is — and they come into the new location two months prior to the next theft, due to the interdiction device. By using this method, you can steer them to your preferred next victim but still leave some uncertainty and mystery about the victim once they arrive.
  - ▶ If you particularly like complicating the lives of your Agents, steer them to a time and location where more than one famously creative person lived at the same time.
  - ▶ Research: "Allahakbarries cricket"

## SETTING THE STAGE

Agents need to know five things about a potential victim they're using as bait.

- ▶ What was the victim famous for?
- ▶ When should the victim have died in the true timeline, and when did he die of Creator's Syndrome?
- ▶ When did the victim suffer a seizure, and how old were they at the time?
- ▶ Where was the victim living?
- ▶ What was the victim like?

Quick Internet research will help you easily recreate any historical figure that the players choose. You don't need to perfectly simulate an unknown era; you just need a rough idea of who they were and where they might have been sleeping, and anything else can be quickly improvised.

## PROHIBITED TIME TRAVEL

Agents need to arrive two months prior to the victim's seizure in order to avoid the interdiction device. This allows for some fun, fast roleplaying. Like a montage in a TV show, go around the table once and ask each player to tell you something interesting their Agent does during the two months of downtime between their arrival and the victim's seizure. For instance, if Agents are targeting Benjamin Franklin in 1784 Paris, they may Disguise themselves and befriend him; become

## EXAMPLE: BENJAMIN FRANKLIN

- ▶ Franklin was a famous statesman, philosopher, diplomat, and inventor who helped shape the fledgling United States of America.
- ▶ He should have died in 1790 at age 84. Instead, he died in 1787 at age 81.
- ▶ Franklin suffers a seizure the night of Sept 8th, 1784, at age 78. He had hosted a drunken poetry reading that evening, and was found insensible by servants the next morning.
- ▶ Franklin was living in Paris, in a manor house borrowed from a friend.
- ▶ Franklin was incredibly witty and good at banter. He also had a weakness for both drink and beautiful women; in 1777 his amour was Madame Brillon, and in 1780 he proposed marriage to Madame Helvetius (who rejected him).

his intimate companion; learn how to bake croissants; apprentice themselves to an artist who hasn't yet fallen to Creator's Syndrome; or even insinuate themselves into Franklin's home as a servant. The details aren't tremendously important, but these two months of downtime when the Agents can't time travel or teleport can be used by players to round out their Agent's interests.

## THE CRUCIAL NIGHT

Agents will wish to set up an ambush for 2 a.m. on the night in question, assuming they know the correct date when their targeted victim has their memories stolen. Describe the location, the people in the house, the temperature, and any night sounds that the waiting Agents may hear. Ask for **Unobtrusiveness** tests to make sure that the Agents remain hidden, and **Disguise** or **Burglary** tests when needed to infiltrate the bedroom.

It's worth remembering that the Agents are exceptionally competent. We recommend that you not make it unnecessarily difficult or resource-intensive to lay the ambush, especially if that delays the fun that occurs once the ambush is sprung.

The thief is the same one from the *Divine River*, unless you wish to switch them out for a different thief. Sibrin has never told the thieves what the helmet or the interdiction crystal truly do. They're being paid well to not ask questions, and only Jackson Cooper feels any hesitation or guilt — but not yet enough to stop. They have been told that if anyone ever asks, they are to say that the helmet takes an image of the victim's memories before they can be struck down by Creator's Syndrome — but it's unlikely that any of the thieves actually believe this.

**FIGHT! FIGHT!**

Want more action? Sibrin has backup standing by to aid any thief that doesn't return from a mission at the correct time. If you want to prolong the mystery, this backup should be up to a half-dozen other humans (mind controlled and not privy to any valuable clues, memories, or information) who are trained in combat. If you don't need to hide the sophosaur involvement, the backup can be one to three sophosaur hunters in human disguises. Either way, the game flows more smoothly if the reinforcements appear a few rounds after the thief is captured, time traveling in to free the thief and attack any potential foes.

**THUG**

*Defense:* Hit Threshold 3, Health 6

*Offense:* Scuffling +2, Shooting +1; Damage Modifier +0 or Stun 4 (brass knuckles), +1 (pistol)

*Abilities:* Athletics 6, Vehicles 3

*Description:* Mind-controlled muscle, plucked from the same era as the thief.

**SOPHOSAUR HUNTER**

*Defense:* Hit Threshold 4, Armor 2, Health 18

*Offense:* Scuffling +3, Shooting +2; Damage Modifier +2 (claws and teeth), +2 (crystalline beam weapon)

*Abilities:* Tempus 15

*Special Abilities:* Disguise (cost 1), Extra Action (cost 2), Lightning Speed (cost 2); if two Scuffling attacks (using Extra Action) hit the same target in the same round, the second attack does an additional +2 damage

*Misc:* Alertness Modifier +2

*Description:* Sophosaur hunters are warriors and food gatherers. They patrol borders, hunt for the pack, and coordinate to take down more dangerous prey. Their actions are guided by their clan's philosophy, but they tend to be focused on more immediate concerns than sophosaur philosophers are. Even in clans that espouse nonviolent philosophies, hunters will reluctantly kill to protect their own.

Hunters are swift and agile, competing to see who can down their foes the fastest. They use Lightning Speed and Extra Action to dart in and out of combat. Expect coordinated attacks against one individual target until it drops, at which point hunters move on to the next target. They focus on killing healers and technology users first, but they take particular joy in eviscerating anyone who exhibits poor or crude taste in art, song, or thought. They typically attack refined or sensitive enemies last.

Agents should make a Difficulty 4 **Unobtrusiveness** test when the thief arrives, applying the thief's Alertness Modifier to the Difficulty as appropriate. If the test fails for any Agent, the thief acts first in combat. If all Agents succeed (or, if Piggybacking, if the primary Agent succeeds), any of the Agents can act first in combat.

Ehecatl may try to fight it out, but Angelica Hsieh and Jackson Cooper are likely to try and flee on their turn. Any Agents touching the thief when the travel spire triggers are

carried along with them in a time chase.

Agents can follow a thief's trail through time if they leave within two rounds. A time chase might carry them:

- ▶ running through a vast herd of bison in the American Great Plains
- ▶ running through a Roman chariot race
- ▶ running in a dinosaur stampede
- ▶ running through a postapocalyptic wasteland

Use rules for time chases on p. 73 of the core *TimeWatch* rules.

## WRAPPING UP THE CAPTURE

This scene ends when a thief is captured or killed. Questioning, or analysis of the travel spire in the case of a deceased thief, leads the Agents to meet the disguised sophosaur handler Sibrin in *The Handler*.

## WHAT'S BUGGING OPPENHEIMER?

**Scene Type:** Alternate

**Lead-Ins:** Divine River, To Catch a Thief

**Lead-Outs:** To Catch a Thief, The Handler

**Summary:** Ezeru know Creator's Syndrome is a sophosaur plot

Research with the ship's computer indicates that the one creative person who survived Creator's Syndrome may have been physicist J. Robert Oppenheimer, the wartime head of Los Alamos Laboratory during World War II. According to a 1954 memoir from one of Oppenheimer's fellow scientists at Los Alamos, Oppenheimer was sleeping over at the lab on June 13, 1942, when a loud ruckus sounded from his office. The fellow scientist was nearby at the time and wrenched open the locked door, only to allegedly find massive inhuman creatures struggling over Oppenheimer's body. The scientist lost consciousness and awoke to find Oppenheimer fine, no apparent damage to the office, and even the kicked-in door repaired or replaced. Oppenheimer denied any trouble, and managed to cover up the fellow scientist's claim that Oppenheimer's furniture had "been taken away and replaced with exact duplicates." The truth of what happened never came out, and Oppenheimer never succumbed to Creator's Syndrome.

In truth, ezeru learned that Oppenheimer had suffered Creator's Syndrome and never led the quest for the atomic bomb. An ezeru named Chzznizkt scuttled through time to the day before his seizure, paralyzed him, and shape-shifted to take his place. When Jackson Cooper arrives to steal Oppenheimer's memories, Chzznizkt kills and devours him, along with any reinforcements sent by Sibrin. It also knocks Oppenheimer's curious co-worker unconscious. The ezeru then restores the office to its correct appearance, places Oppenheimer back in his office chair, and revives him before clocking out.

Effectively, this means that Oppenheimer never contracts Creator's Syndrome, and that Jackson Cooper is destined to die at the ezeru's hands if he continues to steal memories for long enough. The ezeru recognize that this is a sophosaur plot, based on Cooper's smell, but they don't particularly care.

If the Agents decide to pay a visit to Oppenheimer, they find that the interdiction device was never set, allowing them to time travel directly to the time and location they wish. They encounter both Jackson Cooper and the ezeru (along with a second identical ezeru in the hallway outside disguised as a janitor) at the exact same time. A judicious expenditure of Interpersonal points might get the combatants to stop

attacking long enough to talk, and the ezeru might even be able to indicate the temporal coordinates that Jackson Cooper arrived from. They're as friendly as a cockroach, however, and it takes great charm on the part of the Agents to make the encounter anything but combative. If the Agents save Jackson Cooper's life, he is much more likely to treat them with friendship and share information about his job.

## Chzznizkt, Ezeru Drone

**Defense:** Hit Threshold 4, Armor 3, Health 15

**Offense:** Scuffling +3 (+2 when impersonating a human), Shooting +1; Damage Modifier +2 (hideous clacking pincers), +3 (jagged mandibles), +1 (pistol), +4 (acidic bile), Stun 6 (psi-active bile)

**Abilities:** Tempus 12

**Special Abilities:** Clock Out (cost 2), Extra Action (cost 2), Impersonation (cost 2 —psychically links the ezeru drone to a single human or animal encased in the ezeru's paralytic bile), Lightning Speed (cost 2), Resist Stun; drones can attack by spitting acidic or paralytic bile within Close range

**Misc:** Alertness Modifier +1, Stealth Modifier +1

**Description:** A standard ezeru drone is sly, deadly, reliable, but not particularly creative. They follow instructions superbly but usually lack the inspired planning or quick thinking of creatures that *aren't* tied into a massive insectoid hivemind. When circumstances change quickly on an ezeru and it doesn't have time to plan, it often responds with brute force.

## THE HANDLER

**Scene Type:** Core

**Lead-Ins:** To Catch a Thief, What's Bugging Oppenheimer

**Lead-Out:** Venganza

**Core Clue:** The sophosaur handler reports to superiors in the Old West town of Venganza

The thieves don't have direct contact with Hrss'k or the sophosaurs back in Venganza. It's safest for Hrss'k if he keeps his humans at arm's length — even if sophosaurs have very short arms indeed. To this end, he uses a handler named Sibrin who travels between the three different times, taking a different guise each time in order to supply and instruct the thieves.

Details on when and where each thief meets their handler are under the description of the thieves on p. 23. None of the thieves suspects that their handler is not human. Under duress a captured thief tells the Agents about their handler, and when and where they meet, but Sibrin's security precautions mean that the Agents may need to be careful so as to not alert the sophosaur to their interference. Agents can keep trying by jumping back to previous meetings, so long as they don't mind making D4/L4 Paradox tests for each meeting they change through their interference.

Sibrin is remarkably clever, but she's no martyr, and she folds under **Intimidation**. She's had her memories edited by Hrss'k so that she can only tell others about Venganza and

Alcalde Husk as if it were a human town. She tells Agents that she has been hired by the alcalde to help with the mission of moral certitude that her thieves help her with. Due to the mental interference, she truly believes this while talking to the Agents; **Falsehood Detection** reveals that she clearly knows she's telling the truth. Ask the Agents if anyone wishes to spend a point of **Falsehood Detection**; if they do, tell them that Sibrin seems to be repeating her descriptions somewhat by rote, as if from a script, and the quality of her voice changes slightly into a monotone. Agents might deduce that although Sibrin believes she's telling the truth, she might be mind controlled or have had her memories edited.

Enterprising Agents might knock Sibrin unconscious, slap a MEM-tag on her, and have TimeWatch's memory alteration technicians investigate. They can do so by having an Agent spend a **Bureaucracy** point. The technicians return Sibrin physically healed and with all of her memories intact — something that might be quite dangerous for the Agents.

Regardless, Sibrin or her own crystal travel spire can show Agents the correct coordinates to travel to. If they want, they can travel to the correct time but somewhat away from the location Sibrin specifies.

## Sibrin, Sophosaur Mindwhip

**Defense:** Hit Threshold 4, Armor 1, Health 12

**Offense:** Scuffling +1, Shooting +2; Damage Modifier +2 (claws), +2 plus Stun 5 (psychic mindwhip)

**Abilities:** Tempus 20

**Special Abilities:** Disguise (cost 1), Mental Attack (Mental Damage — cost 0, Domination — cost 3/round)

**Misc:** Alertness Modifier +2

**Description:** Sophosaur mindwhips are typically female and are chosen from the wittiest conversationalists in the clan. Mindwhips consider ripping a foe apart with claws or teeth to be a sign of weakness, and prefer not to use physical violence against prey unless absolutely necessary.

Mindwhips specialize in stunning and mind controlling their enemies. They can use Mental Attack to dominate their prey or directly attack Chronal Stability. Their psychic mindwhip Shooting attack does physical damage to the target while triggering a Stun 5 test. Interestingly, this psychic mindwhip stuns a victim into insensibility by projecting extreme pleasure, happiness, and peace. Sophosaurs consider this a good death, and edible prey killed by mindwhips is believed to taste particularly delicious.

Mindwhips usually serve as diplomats and explorers. Their combination of good social skills and engaging personalities usually distracts enemies from the hunters circling in from behind.

## VENGANZA

**Scene Type:** Core

**Lead-In:** The Handler

**Lead-Out:** No Crystals for You

**Summary:** Discover the crystal mine and workshops

An open prairie. The howl of an empty wind. The distant sound of church bells. And nestled in the middle of nowhere, with no road leading to or from, is a town named Venganza.

The town of Venganza was founded by the sophosaur Clan of Silent and Inevitable Wit (or “the Inevitable”) in the early 1800s. The town serves as a place for the sophosaurs to live while they excavate and craft psi-active crystal from the nearby mine. Anyone looking at the town might reasonably wonder how the mine's output gets sold, considering that there's no railway or road into the area. That's all right; there's a reason that Venganza has a sizeable Boot Hill for its size.

A constant strong interdiction effect covers the town. Without a mental password from Sibrin or Sibrin's own travel spire, Agents cannot time travel or teleport within 150 kilometers of Venganza.

It's important to remember that Venganza isn't a true Old West town, it's an Old West town as envisioned by time traveling velociraptors who are masquerading as humans. As a result, it clings to and promotes popular western clichés such as the wide and dusty main street, the saloon with a player piano, the sheriff's office, the hotel with convenient balconies for ambushes during a gunfight, and the like. Only the outer shells of the buildings look like stereotypical Western architecture. Inside, the buildings are adapted for sophosaur comfort, and any human seeing them would immediately know that something was wrong.

Overall, Venganza looks like a realistic human town. Observant visitors might notice that there's no barber, there's a particularly large slaughterhouse, and the local herd of cattle



seems larger than it needs to be. The epitaphs scrawled on the Boot Hill crosses are also a giveaway, should anyone read them.

*“A traveling salesman who refused to leave”*

*“A woman and two sons, seeking shelter from a storm”*

*“Inquisitive gunslingers”*

*“Family in lost stagecoach”*

*And similar generic, uncaring epitaphs.*

Approximately 300 sophosaurs live in Venganza. Most are effectively noncombatants, although they’d personally defend themselves if threatened. Each has a psychically generated human disguise that they’re required to wear in public, although they may revert to their true appearance when underground in the mine or out of sight from public view.

## THE APPROACH

Agents following Sibrin’s coordinates arrive behind Boot Hill, hidden from the town. A scout can investigate; from the top of Boot Hill they can see the sheriff’s office, the mayor’s office, the hotel, the saloon, the stables, and several houses, all stretching along the long, wide, dusty street through town. At the end of the road is the underground crystal mine, a squat series of buildings with a huge pile of mine tailings piled nearby.

If Agents strut into town like gunslingers and call out the mayor/alcalde (Husk, a.k.a. the alpha sophosaur Hrss’k), he has no choice but to oblige. To decline a challenge of his authority would result in Hrss’k’s expulsion as alpha, so he must meet the Agents in open combat. He happily cheats, however, putting allies on nearby roofs and balconies and having “Sheriff” Chazar back him up in the fight.

Hrss’k is incredibly dangerous. He’s alpha for a reason; his biggest weakness is that he can easily be goaded into taking unwise actions in order to look strong to the rest of his tribe. Any Agent with **Taunt** recognizes this weakness, and can exploit it for the rest of the scene (instead of for just one round) by spending a point of **Taunt**.

## THE SHOWDOWN

Hrss’k prefers to take down an enemy in one-on-one combat, like an Old West showdown. He attempts to make this occur if the Agents approach down the middle of the street like traditional gunslingers. Overall, Hrss’k cares as much about prestige and style as he does success; given a choice between leaping through a glass window to surprise his foe, or walking through a doorway, he’ll pick the showier option every time.

Chazar backs him up in a fight so long as the mayor isn’t locked in ritualistic single combat. A handful of additional townsfolk (townsraptors?) join in from roofs or balconies, but they are not trained combatants and are downed easily.

## Hrss’k, Sophosaur Alpha

**Defense:** Hit Threshold 4, Armor 2, Health 30

**Offense:** Scuffling 20 (3-3-3-3-3-2), Shooting 6 (2-2-2); Damage Modifier +3 (claws and teeth), Stun 6 plus Destabilize (psi-blast)

**Abilities:** Tempus 24; Intimidate 2

**Special Abilities:** Destabilize (cost 2 — triggered along with Stun when psi-blasting), Disguise (cost 1), Extra Action (cost 2), Lightning Speed (cost 2), Psychic (cost 2), Seize Initiative (cost 2)

**Misc:** Alertness Modifier +2

**Description:** Sophosaur alphas control each sophosaur clan, and are equally likely to be male or female. There is usually only one alpha per clan, ascending after a philosophical and physical struggle for dominance ends with other challengers exiled, slain, or thoroughly disgraced. Raptors who win such a battle typically gain additional size, weight, and power over several years. Expect alpha sophosaurs to be strong in body, mind, and cultural certitude.

Alphas are typically clever, fast, hardy, and remorseless. It’s their task to make difficult decisions for the good of the clan, and they do so with no hesitation or regrets. Other members of the clan obey them without hesitation. An alpha’s psi-blast is more powerful than that of lesser sophosaurs, and has a high chance of instantly stunning foes or ripping apart the Chronal Stability that keeps time travelers in place.

A good alpha uses all tools available to it, including crystalline technology, the environment, unorthodox allies, and time travel to win a fight. Surrender is rare once battle is joined, and don’t expect any sophosaurs to surrender or sue for peace until the alpha is defeated.

## Chazar, Sophosaur Philosopher

**Defense:** Hit Threshold 4, Armor 1, Health 14

**Offense:** Scuffling +1, Shooting +1; Damage Modifier +1 (smallish claws), Stun 5 (psychic stab)

**Abilities:** Tempus 20

**Special Abilities:** Clock Out (cost 2), Disguise (cost 1), Flashback (cost 5), Mastermind, Oracle (cost 1), Psychic (cost 2), Seize Initiative (cost 2)

**Misc:** Alertness Modifier +2

**Description:** Sophosaur philosophers are the clan instructors, historians, advisers, masterminds, and strategic thinkers. They determine the clan’s purpose in the world, build crystalline matrices and psychic devices, and instruct the clan in the proper philosophical doctrine. If a clan philosopher detests humanity, it’s a fair bet that the entire clan will follow suit.

A philosopher isn’t particularly hardy, but they don’t need to be. They’re deadly planners, improvisers, and tacticians. The Stun effect from their psychic stab works by triggering instinctive, profound terror. With access to time travel and a willingness to risk paradox if it benefits their clan, philosophers often jaunt into the future to assess various risks to their community, all so they can take countermeasures to change that future when necessary. Philosophers plan “little surprises” such

as deadly ambushes that take advantage of the information they've learned in potential futures. Other sophosaurs consider these to be hilarious and heroic, worthy of stories for years to come.

## THE MINE

The mine looks remarkably similar to mines you've seen in movies: dirt and stone ceilings with wooden cross-braces, cramped tunnels, psychically powered dinosaur-designed drilling tools, just the normal stuff you'd expect. The mine tunnels are a maze that anyone lacking **Architecture** or **Outdoor Survival** has difficulty navigating; if under duress and hurrying, Agents without these abilities have a 50% chance to take an incorrect fork and temporarily lose their way.

Agents who enter the mine during a shift need to make **Unobtrusiveness** tests whenever they pass a group of sophosaur miners or craftsmen; there are about 60 sophosaurs laboring in the mine at any time when it is in operation (usually during all daylight hours). Agents who enter between shift changes when almost no one else is in the mine can move freely once past the guard at the surface.

### Mine Guard, Sophosaur Hunter

**Defense:** Hit Threshold 4, Armor 2, Health 18

**Offense:** Scuffling +3, Shooting +2; Damage Modifier +2 (claws and teeth), +2 (crystalline beam weapon)

**Abilities:** Tempus 15

**Special Abilities:** Disguise (cost 1), Extra Action (cost 2), Lightning Speed (cost 2); if two Scuffling attacks (using Extra Action) hit the same target in the same round, the second attack does an additional +2 damage

**Misc:** Alertness Modifier +2

**Description:** Sophosaur hunters are warriors and food gatherers. They patrol borders, hunt for the pack, and coordinate to take down more dangerous prey. Their actions are guided by their clan's philosophy, but they tend to be focused on more immediate concerns than sophosaur philosophers are. Even in clans that espouse nonviolent philosophies, hunters will reluctantly kill to protect their own.

### The Storerooms

The portions of the mine that have already been cleared have higher ceilings and now act as storage for raw psychic crystal, workshops for fashioning crystal into helmets and other devices, and the vast and terrible crystalline matrix that holds the whole of stolen human achievement. One room holds shelf after shelf of helmets, another holds locked chests of interdiction devices, and a magnificent cavern holds a vast coral-like flickering of psychic storage. It's here the full helmets are drained, and it is this repository that the sophosaur philosophers use to plan their attacks against humanity. The memories put into this array can never be restored to the humans they were stolen from; in order to restore these people, the Agents need to ensure that they were never stolen in the

first place.

Any Agent who attempts to tap the stored memories directly must make a Difficulty 8 **Chronal Stability** test. If successful, the Agent gains fragmented memories from a hundred different artists and philosophers, the Agent gains a 2-point pool of Trivia that lasts for the duration of the mission.

## THE POSSE

If the Agents find themselves overwhelmed by Hrss'k and Chazar, they may decide to temporarily retreat. To do so with their autochrons they must pass outside of the interdiction field surrounding the town. Hrss'k, Chazar, and a few other hunter raptors form a posse and chase down the Agents. This may provide a good opportunity for ambush.

## SUCCESS

If the Agents publicly humiliate or defeat Hrss'k, Chazar claims to be alpha; if they defeat him as well, the clan reluctantly acknowledges the Agents as worthy of respect. Members of the clan then speak with the Agents, although they will not allow themselves to be governed by them.

If one of the Agents is a sophosaur, and that Agent is key in defeating Hrss'k, they may find themselves appointed alpha by the townsfolk even if that's not their preference.

How the Agents treat the clan may have future repercussions, especially when they encounter the same clan a hundred years later in *The Hatching Time*.

## NO CRYSTALS FOR YOU

**Scene Type:** Conclusion

**Lead-In:** Venganza

**Summary:** Destroy the crystals before the sophosaurs can use them

Whether or not the Agents have confronted and defeated Hrss'k in Venganza, knowledge of **Science!** suggests that the most effective way to truly prevent Creator's Syndrome from reoccurring is to mine or destroy the psi-active crystals before the sophosaur clan ever discovers them. Agents can accomplish this by traveling back in time to 1799 or earlier. There are several methods the Agents can use:

- ▶ If they wish to take the crystals for themselves, a 2-point **Bureaucracy** spend (from two different Agents if necessary) can allow them to draw on TimeWatch resources to mine the crystals themselves. The Agents don't need to oversee this process personally; TimeWatch personnel arrive during prehistory, use futuristic mining techniques and equipment to excavate all the crystal over several years, and then clean up the site. Agents need to make a D6/L6 Paradox test because they're invalidating events that they know have happened, but the exchange is probably worth it. Claiming the crystal means that any sophosaur Agents have the Difficulty of future Preparedness and Tinkering



tests reduced by 1 when trying to acquire psi-active crystal-line technology.

- ▶ If they wish to destroy the crystals, they can do so by using **Preparedness** and requisitioning something like an ultrasonic beam or an earthquake generator from the Citadel. Activating such a device shatters enough of the crystal to make it useless for the sophosaurs' purpose.
- ▶ The Agents can encounter Hrss'k's clan before they reach the site of Venganza, defeat the alpha then, and command the clan to find another location to settle. This is only truly effective if a sophosaur Agent is involved when battling the alpha. If this method is chosen, the clan feels some loyalty (or at least respect) for the Agents, and can be called on later to perform a service or favor.

## THE FINAL OFFENSE

If Hrss'k is alive in the future and actively mining crystal when the Agents go back in time to destroy the same, there is a good chance that he feels history changing out from underneath him. This is entirely at the GM's discretion; if the Agents are spoiling for a climactic fight, use this encounter. If they aren't, allow their victory to be unimpeded.

If Hrss'k senses time changing around him, he gathers the closest sophosaurs, and they time travel back to ambush or lay a trap for the Agents. They likely attack and try to kill any TimeWatch personnel attempting to mine or destroy the crystal, and focus on the Agents as soon as they make themselves into available targets. Use combat stats from *The Showdown* and *The Mine*.

When the crystals become permanently unavailable to the sophosaur clan, the Agents feel history snapping back into place, and the mission is complete.

# TIME WILL TELL

## OVERVIEW

A botched incursion into TimeWatch HQ leads to the revelation of an inside job — a former temporal technician has suppressed a number of Anomaly Alerts which would normally notify TimeWatch of changes to the timeline. The Agents must diagnose and correct the temporal alterations scattered across several centuries without being discovered by the saboteur's past incarnations or his still-at-large accomplice... William Tell, a man he recruited in 14th-century Switzerland.

## BACKGROUND

Victor Dimaguiba was a temporal technician working in TimeWatch's Citadel until an internal review uncovered several occasions where he had accepted bribes from an agent to circumvent some of the regulations around memory modification procedure. The agent received a sternly worded note in his file; Dimaguiba was fired. Normally that means a mindwipe and a return to normal history. Frustrated by his life in his own present day, Dimaguiba opted instead for the romance of history... and embarked on some illegal chrono-tourism with an autochron he shouldn't have possessed.

Which is how he wound up in Altdorf, Switzerland, in 1318, sharing a pint or five with a personal idol — William Tell. The beer can likely be blamed for Dimaguiba spilling the beans about time travel... and for Tell believing him.

And Tell proposed a grand crusade — using the autochron to travel throughout time and liberate the oppressed from tyranny, just as he had already done in Switzerland. Dimaguiba initially objected — he'd *worked* for TimeWatch, and the official line was ingrained: preserving history good, altering history bad. But Tell had a fresh perspective on things. Tyrants, Tell figured, always want to maintain the status quo. And if he never bucked the system, Austria wouldn't have been kicked out of Switzerland. TimeWatch, as Tell understood the explanation, is so afraid of the possibility of Making Things Worse that they have surrendered any chance of Making Things Better. They've raised the *status quo primo* to a religious ideal. But Tell believed that it's always worth taking the gamble on making the world a better place.

Dimaguiba was persuaded by Tell's fervor. But people had tried to "fix" history before, and TimeWatch had always thwarted them. The trick would be to convince TimeWatch that their modified timeline *was* the status quo primo — not only would it prevent TimeWatch from interfering, but the organization would actively *defend* the changes. All Dimaguiba needed to do was to alter the official databases after each temporal disruption to prevent the system flagging an anomaly, which simply meant doing something widely considered impossible — infiltrate a facility that exists outside of time and space. But he figured out a way to do it.

Their plans accelerated when Dimaguiba made contact with Restoration, a group of chrono-rebels sympathetic to his scheme, who helpfully provided suggestions as to disruptive scenarios which might advance Tell's cause. Of course, if he had realized that this particular cell was in fact a disguised ezeru hive-cell using his sabotage of the TimeWatch databases to conceal its own preparations for ezeru-forming history, he might have been more reluctant to utilize its ideas...

After successfully masking five disruptions — five tyrants deposed, rebellions inspired, or futures reshaped; five anomalies kept secret from TimeWatch — Dimaguiba slipped up, and was captured in the Citadel. Tell remains loose with an autochron, awaiting Dimaguiba's return to Edirne in 1442. TimeWatch's Citadel is in constant danger of falling to excess paradox, and this manipulation of their own records is a risk they cannot take. It's up to the TimeWatch team to carefully dismantle the Jenga tower of temporal anomalies before it can collapse, and take all of history with it.

**Research:** "William Tell"

## THE PLOT

Using an autochron to sneak into the Citadel is essentially impossible — arriving outside designated secure transit areas triggers alarms, and the secure transit areas themselves are, well, secured.

So Dimaguiba doesn't use an autochron. He gets TimeWatch to pick him up itself via tachyon beam retrieval, using a filched MEM-tag. Since MEM-tag subjects are always unconscious, security in the tachyon beam facility is light. But Dimaguiba has it all carefully timed — he is drugged unconscious, but

Tell administers a carefully timed antidote before sending the MEM request. Dimaguiba is alert moments after the tachyon beam process is complete, and a PaciFist serves to incapacitate the surprised retrieval technician. He accesses the database on the internal network, makes his modifications to recorded history, alters security logs, and then uses the MEM facility's own memory-implant equipment to leave the technician with the memories of a completely routine MEM job before beaming himself back to rendezvous with Tell.

This worked perfectly five times. But on number six, it all went wrong. A brief delay between activation of the MEM-tag and the pickup — a mis-calibration at one end or the other — meant that instead of the antidote restoring Dimaguiba to consciousness moments *after* the tachyon journey, he awoke moments *before*. With the inevitable result that he arrived in the MEM facility as, in technical terms, a raving loon.

With Dimaguiba unavailable as a source of usable intelligence, TimeWatch technicians have turned to the security logs and database in an effort to uncover a lead. Dimaguiba has erased or altered the pertinent entries, but data forensics has recovered some fragments — they've positively identified several tachyon retrievals linked to the same MEM-tag ID. And, of course, the spatio-temporal coordinates of this most recent MEM-tag activation are unaltered.

The TimeWatch team is tasked with identifying where and when the timeline has been altered and making adjustments. But the Citadel always runs dangerously close to the paradox limits, so it's important not to introduce additional paradox to those coordinates — Dimaguiba must still make his prior incursions, which means he must believe his alterations have been successful. Adjustments must ideally be made without his becoming aware that his designs have been thwarted.

If the Agents encounter and identify the ezeru infiltrators who are nudging Tell and Dimaguiba in certain directions, these adversaries also need to be dealt with.

## Incident Classification

Tell's meddlings can be loosely categorized in two ways — those where he sets ripples in motion which lead to a disruption, and those where he actively perpetrates the disruptive event. Given the necessity of keeping him from realizing that his plans are being undone, the Agents have certain limitations on how they can deal with a given anomaly.

When Tell and Dimaguiba depart a given tempero-spatial locale before the primary disruptive event occurs, confident that the right dominos are falling, the Agents have the greatest latitude. For example, if the saboteurs' objective is the death of a king, and their meddling has been to convince the queen to poison him, the Agents might speak to the queen to talk her out of following through; MEM-tag the queen and have her memories altered; alert the king to the assassination attempt; switch out the queen's poison or slip the king an antidote; etc. With Tell and Dimaguiba no longer on the scene to observe the resolution, the Agents can play it however they like.

On the other hand, if Tell is directly involved, it gets more complicated for the Agents. This time, Tell shoots the king with his crossbow. If he doesn't see the king fall, Dimaguiba

does not follow through with a Citadel infiltration run that the Agents already know took place, resulting in paradox the Citadel cannot afford.

If the shooting takes place in private — the king's personal chambers, for example — all that is required is to convince Tell that the assassination was successful. Providing a decoy target — a dummy or robot, a disguised Agent, a hologram; allowing the king to be shot but keeping him alive, whether via armor or urgent medical intervention; capturing Tell before the shot, MEM-tagging him to insert a memory of a successful assassination, then releasing him; etc. Worst case, should the king actually die, it might prove necessary to replace him long term with a cosmetically altered impersonator from TimeWatch's Relocation Division.

If the shooting is in public before large numbers of chronally native witnesses, options narrow further. It might be possible with sufficient Paradox Prevention to allow the witnesses to see the king fall (an anomalous event which never happened in the original timeline) if it is later revealed (after Tell and Dimaguiba have departed) that the assassination failed — the mild bobble in the time stream of "that time a lunatic shot at the king but missed" is the sort of anomaly that temporal inertia can accommodate. Once again, altering Tell's memories to make him think his mission was successful is a possibility. A desperate option might be to round up and MEM-tag all the witnesses after the event.

Major Galahad of TimeWatch can explain to the Agents that sometimes, it's not necessary to MEM-tag bystanders: "Bors and Percival were *right there* when I was recruited. Two guys in impersonator mesh appeared out of thin air, talked to me a little, and then we all vanished. Turns out they told Arthur later that I was carried off to heaven by angels. (That's the one and only time I've heard angelic attributes ascribed to Colonel Gilgamesh...) People come up with explanations for themselves, as long as there's some room for doubt about just what happened."

## Temporal Incidents

These summaries of Tell's escapades are explored in more detail below.

### Vlad Tepeş

**Incident:** 1442

**Primary Effects:** 1460s/70s

Vlad III Dracula ruled the Principality of Wallachia — on and off — after the deaths of his father, Vlad II Dracul, and elder brother Mircea II. He developed a reputation for sadism and extreme cruelty, torturing and killing whole villages; one report cites a forest of twenty thousand impaled corpses outside his capital.

When Vlad III was 13, he was sent to the Ottoman Empire as a hostage, the result of a treaty his father signed to obtain Ottoman aid in reclaiming his throne. His traumatic experiences during this time shaped him into the sadistic impaler he would become.

Tell's meddling to prevent the reign of terror involved infiltrating the Ottoman court in 1442, and convincing the sultan Murad II that seeing Vlad II on the Wallachian throne was in his best interests. With this attitude emplaced, Murad was more inclined to grant aid to Vlad II, and did not insist upon the hostage clause in the treaty. Vlad III would thus be less... remarkable... as a ruler upon his succession.

## Congo Free State

**Incident:** 1872

**Primary Effects:** 1885

Between 1885 and 1908, 10 million Congolese died under the oppressive rule of King Leopold II of Belgium. Leopold acquired sovereignty over the "Congo Free State" at the Berlin Conference in 1885, in large part due to the preparatory efforts of famed explorer Henry Morton Stanley in establishing Leopold's interests in the region.

Tell's solution is to prevent Stanley from mounting his Congo expeditions. After Stanley's famous 1871 rendezvous with Dr. David Livingstone near Lake Tanganyika, Tell arranged to inject Stanley with *Trypanosoma brucei* protozoa — replicating the effect of the bite of an infected tsetse fly, and afflicting Stanley with sleeping sickness. (This was selected as both unlikely to arouse suspicion, and also as a karmic justice — it's believed Stanley's later expeditions would contribute to the spread of the disease into previously unaffected regions of Africa.) Stanley would die within months; his exploration of the Congo would never occur; Leopold's case for sovereignty over the Congo would fall short at the Berlin Conference.

## Porfirio Díaz

**Incident:** 1876

**Primary Effects:** 1877–1911

Tell's first "mission" was one he felt echoed his own history. Porfirio Díaz became president of Mexico in 1877, and while his 35 years in office saw stability and economic growth in a country that had long lacked both, his achievements came at the expense of the working populace. Hundreds of thousands were ousted from their land and impoverished, forced into debt bondage, beaten or worked to death by the wealthy masters of the haciendas; Díaz's rigging of elections and suppression of dissent made a change of leadership appear unlikely, leading eventually to the Mexican Revolution in 1910.

At this early point in his crusade, Tell resorted to a technique with a proven track record, and shot Díaz in the face with a crossbow before his original ascension to the presidency in 1877.

## Hospital Ship Armenia

**Incident:** 1941

**Primary Effects:** 1946

On November 7, 1941, a German bomber sank the Soviet hospital ship *Armenia* with a torpedo. Between five and seven thousand civilian and military casualties — evacuees from Sevastopol and Yalta — resulted.

The ezeru have projected that one of the victims of the disaster would have contributed significantly to Soviet atomic research in later years had he survived to reach Tuapse, increasing the odds of nuclear holocaust during the Cold War. Tell's mission is to shoot down the Heinkel He 111 before it can launch its torpedoes; his crossbow possesses sufficient AA capability from futuristic enhancements to accomplish the task.

The ezeru have a few agents amongst the refugees aboard ship, who will resist efforts by TimeWatch to restore the original events.

## Steves Jobs and Wozniak

**Incident:** 1976

**Primary Effects:** 1990s/2000s

The ezeru infiltrators have provided Tell with a recommended scenario — burning down the Jobs garage in Los Altos where Steve Jobs, Steve Wozniak, and some friends are producing the Apple I boards that will lead to the formation of the Apple Computer Company. Removing Apple as a technological powerhouse in later decades will alter the development of consumer electronics in a fashion that is presumably favorable towards the ezeru agenda.

## Abraham Lincoln

**Incident:** 1865

A prime example of where Dimaguiba's corruption of the TimeWatch databases has obscured the events of the original timeline. Dimaguiba has altered records so that TimeWatch believes that John Wilkes Booth is *supposed* to assassinate Abraham Lincoln on April 14th. In fact, in the original history, Lincoln survived.

Booth's diary reveals that William Tell was one of his role models. Hardly surprising, given that the Swiss patriot *traveled through time* to personally convince him of the necessity of Lincoln's death. Not only do the Agents need to prevent Lincoln's death, they also need to deal with the fact that Booth is in possession of information about time travel that he should never have received.

As an additional complication, TimeWatch has records indicating that only a week ago (Citadel time) a mission was mounted in response to an Anomaly Alert, where events failed to correspond to history as recorded in the TimeWatch databases. So the Agents need to work around an earlier TimeWatch team whose mandate is to ensure Lincoln dies on schedule... and do it without allowing paradox to rise to unacceptable levels. It's quite possible, if you have played *Rebel Heart*, that this earlier TimeWatch team is going to be responding to past or future versions of the Agents themselves, working undercover

in a rebel cell to ensure Lincoln's survival.

If that doesn't make it all difficult enough, this scenario was handed to Dimaguiba and Tell by the ezeru infiltrators, and they have some agents of their own in play to ensure things proceed according to plan...

## TIMELINE

Agents begin in 1896, investigating sabotage on the disassembled Statue of Liberty. They return to the Citadel, head to the Ottoman Empire in 1442, then travel to two or more incidents in 1872 Congo Free State, 1876 Mexico, 1941 mid-Atlantic Ocean, 1976 California, and 1865 Washington, DC. The mission ends in 576 Syria.

## THE MISSION

The full mission is detailed in the second scene, *A Man Insane*. The mission for the introductory scene, *Torch Song*, is surprisingly accurate: a nuclear device detonates in 1896 New York City, and its installation may be linked to unusual activity on the Statue of Liberty earlier in the year. The Agents are given an exact time and date to investigate a single unusual police report dug up in the archives, to see if the report of late-night construction is linked to the explosion. Their mission is to find and eliminate the bomb, as well as the people who have planted it.

No briefing is necessary for this initial scene; instead, start the Agents off on site.

## TORCH SONG

**Scene Type:** Time Repair

**Lead-Out:** A Man Insane

**Summary:** Prevent nuclear detonation and uncover ezeru activity

Bedloe's Island, New York, 1896: The Statue of Liberty arrived in pieces the year prior. The great concrete pedestal on Bedloe's Island was completed in April, and assembly of the statue's iron framework is nearly finished, though the copper skin is yet to be affixed. Everything is an open skeleton of girders and ironwork... and due to the size limitations of the pedestal, there was no room for safety scaffolding...

Two odd data points present themselves. Firstly, at this time of night construction should have long finished for the day, but there are occasional flashes of light visible within the framework. And secondly, the tethers are reporting emissions consistent with a nuclear device somewhere in the vicinity of Lady Liberty's torch...

Access to the pedestal is controlled by a US Army security patrol under the command of Sergeant Joe Boyd. If given sufficient reason to divulge information, he can confirm that a foreman and a couple of workers arrived after hours to install a generator that will be required by the morning shift. Under

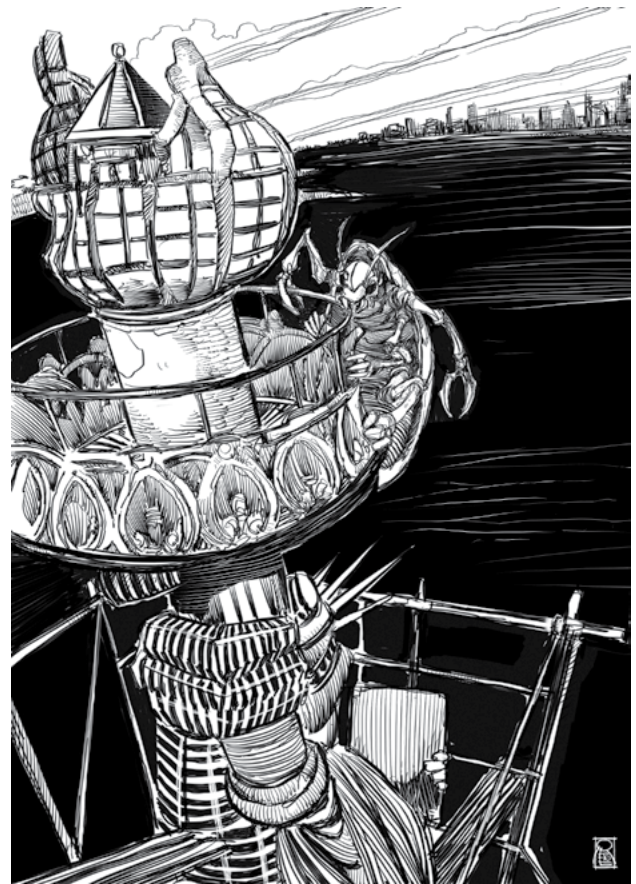
default circumstances, Boyd does not permit random persons into his area of responsibility, and needs to be convinced or otherwise circumvented.

The foreman, Frank Micheli, and his two workers Tommy and Roy, are in fact ezeru drones installing a nuclear bomb in the torch for detonation at a later time. If it becomes evident that his plans have been discovered or that TimeWatch are on the scene, he orders his workers to attack while he climbs the ladder up to the torch chamber to activate the device.

## ALTERNATIVE SETUP

If your players like to jump straight into the action, it can be assumed that the finessing of Sergeant Boyd and the initial verbal confrontation with Micheli have already taken place. One Agent is dangling 45 meters above the concrete pedestal by an ankle tangled in cables; Tommy the ezeru has jumped into the cab of a crane and is swinging a large girder towards the other Agents; Roy the ezeru is tearing away his flesh-mask to engage with pincers and mandibles, and Micheli is pressing the button to activate a two-minute countdown while cackling about how TimeWatch will never prevail against the glory of the ezeru queen. *Go!*

Three ezeru drones is not a full incursion group; this strongly suggests that Micheli and his hive mates are merely a small part of a larger ezeru operation underway, though nothing limits the rest of the operation to 19th-century New York.



Further investigation is definitely warranted; however, almost exactly as the bomb threat is neutralized and the drones overcome, the Agents receive a Priority Recall to the Citadel on their tethers.

## CLUES AND BENEFITS

- ▶ **Notice, Spying:** Spotting activity in Statue
- ▶ **Hacking, Military Tactics, Science!:** Detecting nuclear emissions
- ▶ **Authority, Architecture, Bureaucracy, Forgery:** Convincing Boyd (There are plenty of alternatives for bypassing him without convincing him of legitimate purposes)
- ▶ **Falsehood Detection, Notice, Science!:** Recognizing ezeru
- ▶ **Military Tactics, Timecraft, Trivia:** Deducing wider ezeru involvement

## A MAN INSANE

**Scene Type:** Core

**Lead-In:** Torch Song

**Lead-Out:** Tell the Truth

**Summary:** A (now-insane) former memory tech has been altering databases, and possibly history

Major Galahad calls the Agents into his briefing room. While he recognizes the seriousness of a loose ezeru group interfering with the timeline, he currently ranks that as his *second* priority.

Galahad throws up a projection on the holotank of a man in a stasis chair, immobile but babbling incoherently. “Three hours ago,” Galahad explains, “our choral retrieval techs beamed this man into the Citadel. He was conscious — which should never happen — which in all likelihood accounts for his current mental state. Not carrying any identification, and his biometrics are not on file, but one of the techs actually recognized him. He used to work here, at the Citadel... so he *should* be on file. And that suggests our databases have been compromised.

“And that, agents, is why this Victor Dimaguiba concerns me more at this instant than ezeru sabotage. I need you to figure out what a fired TimeWatch technician was doing in the Ottoman Empire in 1442, why he isn’t in the computer, and how he ended up in a loony chair in my sickbay in the most secure installation in all of human history.”

Galahad holds up a finger. “Without, of course, any travel back or forward here in the Citadel. I was a field agent myself — I know most of you think regulations are there to stop you doing your job — but there are no free passes on this one, boys and girls. If I catch any of you messing with paradox inside this facility, then — if it doesn’t trigger the Big Bang and destroy all of TimeWatch, I’ll make you wish it had.

“Any access issues, go through my desk — I’ll arrange clearance. Good luck.”

## CLUES AND BENEFITS

Interviewing techs (**Authority, Charm, Intimidation, Reassurance, Falsehood Detection**):

- ▶ Neither tech is complicit in these events.
- ▶ Dimaguiba was fired for accepting bribes from an agent to bend certain policies and regulations around memory modifications.
- ▶ Dimaguiba was good with computers.
- ▶ When the techs scanned the MEM-tag signal, the subject registered as unconscious. Dimaguiba must have regained consciousness in the time between the scan, and the activation of the tachyon beam — a window of 15–30 seconds tops.
- ▶ The exact spatio-temporal coordinates of the tachyon retrieval are logged.

Performing tests on Dimaguiba (**Medical Expertise**):

- ▶ There is a drug in his system which causes unconsciousness, but in a small quantity that would only knock him out for a few minutes.
- ▶ The drug causes almost no lingering effects or disorientation once the primary effect wears off.
- ▶ He is definitely not faking the psychological trauma of experiencing a tachyon beaming.

(core clue) Speaking with Dimaguiba (**Reassurance**):

- ▶ Dimaguiba is mostly spouting gibberish, but if he is sufficiently calmed, a few semi-coherent phrases can be discerned.
- ▶ “We’re Making Things Better.”
- ▶ “Murad sees it now.”
- ▶ “Get back quick; he’s waiting.”
- ▶ And, if pressed about who “he” is, “Time Will Tell.”

(core clue) Following up on the Murad reference (**History (Contemporary), Research**):

- ▶ Murad II was sultan of the Ottoman Empire in 1442.
- ▶ TimeWatch’s Temporal Early Warning System has just flagged an Anomaly Alert a couple of decades later which may be related. The reign of Vlad III Dracula of Wallachia in the 1460s and ’70s is displaying little of the brutality and sadism which TimeWatch’s databases indicate should be present; in 1443 Murad II assisted Dracula’s father Vlad II to reclaim Wallachia from usurpers.

Investigating Citadel computers (**Hacking**):

- ▶ There is no employment history or personnel file for Victor Dimaguiba, despite people remembering his working at the Citadel.
- ▶ There are traces that a personnel file was deleted a couple of months ago.
- ▶ That date coincides with some anomalous data in the security logs, indicating tampering there also.
- ▶ Similar anomalies occur on at least two other occasions since then.



- ▶ Power usage logs indicate that tachyon-beam equipment ran on all three occasions, but the chronal retrieval logs contain no matching data.
- ▶ If the chronal retrieval logs were altered, it may be possible to reconstruct the original data from traces or backups, but that's not a quick process.

## CITADEL PARADOX

Normally in this sort of circumstance, the Agents could time travel back to a time when Dimaguiba was sane, and question him then. That doesn't work here because any paradox directly involves the Citadel. It's a tradeoff; having your headquarters built inside the sub-quantum anomaly preceding the Big Bang means that it's almost impossible to break in and you seldom get undesired company. The price of that is that it's paradox that triggers the Big Bang and starts our universe, destroying most of TimeWatch at the time. To prolong that day, Agents may take no risks whatsoever about paradox when the Citadel is involved. Changing time so that Dimaguiba never showed up insane inside the Citadel would be too dangerous.

If you want mechanics for this event, feel free to roll a die when Citadel-based paradox occurs; the Citadel doesn't self-destruct on a 2–6. This safety range decreases by 1 every time it occurs.

## TELL THE TRUTH

**Scene Type:** Core

**Lead-In:** A Man Insane

**Lead-Out:** Adjustment Scenarios

**Summary:** Uncover Tell's five mnemonic phrases of his secret missions

The first time the Agents enter 1442 Edirne, Ottoman Empire, it is likely they are investigating Dimaguiba's last departure coordinates.

William Tell, posing as a Hungarian diplomat, has spent some weeks in Edirne convincing Murad II to provide aid to Vlad II of Wallachia. His objective accomplished, he has made a rendezvous with his partner, Victor Dimaguiba, in order to assist Dimaguiba to once again infiltrate the Citadel and suppress evidence of their meddling with history.

Barring interference, Tell meets with Dimaguiba in a secluded garden within the sultan's palace. After a short conversation, Tell injects Dimaguiba with a hypodermic. Dimaguiba shortly collapses; Tell waits half a minute then affixes and activates a MEM-tag. After a few seconds, Dimaguiba vanishes as the tachyon beam locks onto the signal. Tell settles back to wait; he is calm for five minutes, is restless for the next five, and after that departs to retrieve his autochron from his guest quarters and flee for another time and place.

If the Agents attempt to capture Tell, it should prove a one-sided contest — he is unarmed and not expecting trouble, and the rendezvous spot was chosen for privacy. Interrupting the sequence before Dimaguiba is retrieved risks paradox at the Citadel; afterwards it's clean from a paradox perspective. (Should Tell escape to more populated areas of the palace, he can call for aid from the sultan's guards; should he reach his quarters he can retrieve his crossbow and autochron and make more of a fight of it.)

If Tell is taken into custody, he can be interrogated — briefly in the field or more thoroughly at the Citadel — and can be forced to give up the information he recalls of the previous missions he and Dimaguiba have carried out to alter history. This is, however, not as much as the Agents might hope... Dimaguiba is a memory modification technician, and after each incursion into the Citadel to modify evidence, he used a jury-rigged MEM-machine stashed in a safe house in 4th-century Alexandria to remove most of the details of their sabotages from his own and Tell's memories, leaving only simple mnemonic phrases regarding the intended outcomes to ensure they didn't inadvertently repeat a job they'd forgotten they had already undertaken.

Tell does, however, retain all details of the Ottoman mission, as Dimaguiba has not yet purged those memories.

Major Galahad steps in to issue a directive, at this point — while the anomalies Tell has produced must be corrected, it is imperative that Dimaguiba's prior infiltrations of the Citadel occur; given the extensive investigation that has already been carried out, any discrepancy in that regard results in paradox in the Citadel's timeline. This is an unacceptable risk; therefore, whatever actions the Agents take to preserve the timeline must nevertheless result in Dimaguiba and Tell proceeding under

an assumption they have succeeded in their purpose on each occasion.

Tell himself had selected several scenarios based on his own historical understanding — provided by Dimaguiba and a trip to the 27th century for the hypno-education that also gave him the grounding for understanding temporal theory. As well as his foray into Ottoman diplomacy, he had also interfered with the formation of the Congo Free State by poisoning an explorer in 1872, and assassinated future Mexican president Porfirio Díaz in 1876.

He and Dimaguiba had also undertaken several missions at the behest of some coconspirators, men who shared the dream of improving history. At their recommendation, Tell convinced John Wilkes Booth to assassinate Abraham Lincoln; he personally burned down a Los Altos garage in 1976; and he shot down a German bomber from the deck of the Soviet hospital ship *Armenia* in 1941.

What Tell cannot reveal — since he is unaware of it himself — is that Dimaguiba's helpful contacts are in fact ezeru infiltrators, using the idealistic saboteurs as pawns to advance their own agenda.

(core clue) The mnemonics phrases that Tell retains as indicators of the jobs he and Dimaguiba have undertaken:

- ▶ Congo Free State
- ▶ Porfirio Díaz
- ▶ RDS-1
- ▶ United States v. Microsoft Corp.
- ▶ Abraham Lincoln

## EZERU INFILTRATORS

It is possible the Agents might capture a past-Dimaguiba and interrogate him. He has undergone the same memory-wipe procedures as Tell, and can thus provide little additional information, but one thing he knows (which Tell does not) are the coordinates of his meeting with the men he believes to be part of a Temporal Underground. They are not; they are ezeru.

Should the Agents elect to crash this party (literally — Dimaguiba met with his contacts at a banquet in the palace of Louis XIII in 1630 Paris) to get a look at the Underground contacts, they discover that they recognize them — the three men are Frank, Tommy, and Roy, whose future incarnations they have already encountered in New York 1896 in *Torch Song*.

If the ezeru drones are confronted, they flee, possibly resulting in a time chase. As mere drones, they are willing to commit suicide to avoid capture — causing the Agents who have already met their older versions some paradox problems, even apart from the potentially fatal effect on any bystanders and resultant damage to local history (ezeru suicides tend to the messily explosive).

## ADJUSTMENT SCENARIOS

**Scene Type:** Time Repair

**Lead-In:** Tell the Truth

**Lead-Out:** The Ezeru Architect

**Summary:** Save history while making Tell think it has been changed

It is not necessary to include all of these incidents — depending on the time available for the game, some can be omitted. The Abraham Lincoln mission connects with the *Rebel Heart* adventure, and is also the most complex in terms of parties involved; most others range between low-moderate and trivial in complexity. The Lincoln mission should occur last, and leads the Agents to a final confrontation with the ezeru.

Dimaguiba's corruption of TimeWatch's databases means that determining what has changed in a given scenario (with the exception of the Vlad Țepeș scenario for which the databases remain unaltered) and backtracking to a triggering event may be more obscured than the Agents are accustomed to. Information accessed through the Agents' tethers corresponds to the altered chronology instead of the original timeline. If a general time/space locality can be determined (likely via **History (Contemporary)** applied to one of Tell's mnemonics), this can provide a narrow focus for the data recovery teams to concentrate on in order to reconstruct the original records. This is still a time-consuming process at the Citadel end, and Galahad is anxious to resolve the entire crisis so that proper focus can be returned to the ezeru situation.

Note: Tell's entire crusade is based on the premise that TimeWatch hides behind claims of responsibility to preserve the status quo primo. Tell feels that the end of preventing an atrocity justifies the means of altering history. Correcting his adjustments, therefore, essentially means reinstating those atrocities.

Major Galahad reminds the Agents of TimeWatch's purpose should he have any concerns about their commitment to the preservation of the original timeline. However, ultimately the Agents need to determine for themselves where their true calling lies.

## VLAD ȚEPEȘ

**Incident:** 1442

This is the mission which resulted in Dimaguiba's apprehension; as such, it was the last undertaken by the saboteurs from the perspective of their own chronology. It was also one of the more labor-intensive jobs for Tell, requiring him to spend weeks "under cover" in order to accomplish his objective. The Agents have the opportunity to extract full detail about this sabotage from a captured Tell, since his memories of the events have not been tampered with.

**Original Chronology:** Vlad II Dracul, until recently Prince of Wallachia, is in Edirne hoping to convince Sultan Murad II of the Ottoman Empire to support him in ousting his usurper and reclaiming his throne. Murad imposes a condition



whereby Dracul's teenaged son is sent to the Ottoman court as a hostage. It is believed the suffering Vlad III undergoes during his tenure as a hostage shapes him into the brutal despot history records — Vlad III Dracula, a.k.a. Vlad Țepeș, a.k.a. Vlad the Impaler.

**Altered Chronology:** Tell has also arrived at the Ottoman court under the guise of a Hungarian diplomat, Stefan Rohonsi. He has been impressing on Murad the potential value in seeing Dracul back in power; if Murad sees sufficient inherent benefit to the arrangement, he demands less stringent terms in exchange for his aid, no hostages are required, and Vlad III does not become a monster.

Tell summons Dimaguiba and departs the court (or, perhaps, is kidnapped by the Agents' past selves) once he is confident his efforts have swayed Murad to his point of view on the matter of hostages. This gives the Agents a brief window in which to reverse Murad's opinion between Tell's exit and the ratification of an arrangement with Dracul.

The Agents might prepare to take best advantage of this time by establishing their own cover identities in advance, either while Tell is at court or before his arrival. Strategies for influencing Murad to insist on hostages might include discrediting "Rohonsi"; throwing doubt on Dracul's value as an ally (though not so much as to prevent the alliance outright); or providing reason to suspect Dracul's loyalty requires strong incentives.

Apart from Tell's faux Hungarian, Murad has other advisers who may lean towards the position of either Rohonsi or the Agents, and Dracul himself takes an active role in the negotiations. Swaying enough of the right people also has an influence on Murad's decision.

## "CONGO FREE STATE"

**Incident:** 1872

**Primary Effects:** 1885

Due to the nature of Tell's meddling in this scenario, the actual correction of his sabotage is trivial once it is identified. If the Agents cure Stanley of sleeping sickness sometime between his infection in 1871 and his death a few months later, he survives to play out his role in the original timeline. Tell has departed the scene immediately after infecting Stanley, so no special processes are necessary to avoid paradox.

**Original Chronology:** In 1877, explorer Henry Morton Stanley completes his expedition to explore the Congo region of Africa. He later takes service with King Leopold II of Belgium, who leverages Stanley's work to demonstrate control of the area at the Berlin Conference of 1885. Leopold is granted legal recognition as ruler of nearly a million square miles and 30 million people — the Congo Free State. In the 23 years until Leopold is forced to cede his rule of the region, estimates of Congolese deaths resulting from his regime run around ten million.

**Altered Chronology:** Tell infects Henry Morton Stanley with sleeping sickness in December of 1871. Without Stanley's preparatory efforts, Leopold is unable to mount a successful

bid for the Congo region at the Berlin Conference.

Research is initially of little use, as the TimeWatch databases show no record for the search term "Congo Free State." **History (Contemporary)** provides the link between the mnemonic and the Berlin Conference, and the significance of Leopold II.

Investigation at the conference reveals no trace of Tell or Dimaguiba. Leopold's bid for sovereignty over the Congo region is voted down due to insufficient demonstration of exploration and surveying of the territory; instead, the land is divided and ceded to France and Portugal.

A focus on restoring database records relating to the Berlin Conference indicates how instrumental Stanley's work was to Leopold's bid in the original timeline, but the current state of the database indicates Stanley's death early in 1872, prior to any contact with Leopold.

Once Stanley is identified as a key figure, the Agents should be able to determine the nature of his condition and provide treatment; with extended surveillance in 1871, they might even encounter Tell administering the injection that infects Stanley, though this is unnecessary for a successful resolution of the scenario.

## "PORFIRIO DÍAZ"

**Incident:** 1876

**Primary Effects:** 1877–1911

Tell's mnemonic here should lead the Agents fairly directly to the sabotage itself — a **Research** query on "Porfirio Díaz" locates the information in the TimeWatch database that a revolutionary by that name was shot with a crossbow in Mexico in 1876. Correction of the incident while avoiding paradox is more complicated.

**Original Chronology:** Porfirio Díaz, commanding 5,000 rebel troops, engages 3,000 government troops under the command of General Ignacio Alatorre at Tecocac. The professionalism of Alatorre's troops outweighs their numerical disadvantage, and Díaz is close to ordering a withdrawal when his ally General Manuel Gonzalez arrives with a force of 1,000 cavalry, turning the tide and resulting in a victory for Díaz. Díaz became president of Mexico in 1877; his tenure leads to the Mexican Revolution in 1910.

**Altered Chronology:** Tell assassinates Díaz with a crossbow during the Battle of Tecocac. Díaz's subordinate orders a retreat before General Gonzalez arrives; in the resulting disorder, Alatorre is able to defeat the rebel forces in detail. President Lerdo de Tejada retains his office.

The Agents should be able to readily pinpoint Díaz's death by crossbow as the defining moment of this scenario. The challenge they face: allowing Tell to believe he has succeeded in killing Díaz, while at the same time keeping the rebel forces from withdrawing long enough for Gonzalez to arrive. Whatever their plan, they need to execute it amidst the fire of several thousand breech-loading rifles...

Díaz is standing on the roof of an abandoned farmhouse to observe the progress of the battle, in the company of two

of his senior officers; several squads of rebel soldiers are in the vicinity. Tell shoots from the cover of one of the farm's outbuildings. Tell clocks out with his autochron once he sees his bolt strike home. (A battlefield is a dangerous place, after all, and the rebels will be hunting for the assassin.)

## "RDS-1"

**Incident:** 1941

**Primary Effects:** 1946

The mnemonic here gives a hit on a **Research** query of TimeWatch's databases — the codename for the first Soviet atomic weapons test at Semipalatinsk on September 3rd, 1946. (Western intelligence estimates were that they would not achieve a successful test until at least 1953.)

A focus for reconstruction of original timeline data eventually turns up the discrepancy here — RDS-1 should not have occurred until late in 1949.

**Original Chronology:** On November 7, 1941, the Soviet hospital ship *Armenia* is sunk by a torpedo launched from a German bomber. Among the 5,000+ casualties is a scientist named Igor Grigorenko. In 1945, the detonation of atomic weapons by the United States prompts Stalin to assign a higher priority to the USSR's own atomic program, and they produce a successful test in 1949.

**Altered Chronology:** Tell saves the *Armenia* by shooting down the German bomber with an anti-aircraft crossbow bolt.



Igor Grigorenko survives, and is assigned to the Soviet nuclear program. He writes a paper which convinces Stalin to start pushing for a working atomic bomb in 1943, even before the detonations at Hiroshima and Nagasaki, and is one of the key developers on the project. The successful test in 1946 spurs an even more frantic arms race during the Cold War.

A reconstruction of the RDS-1 historical data and a comparison with Dimaguiba's altered information highlights Grigorenko as an anomaly — he is a key player in the nuclear program of the altered timeline, and absent in the original history. However, **Research** alone is insufficient to discover the branching point — the records of the *Armenia* disaster did not contain names of all the casualties, so there is nothing written to indicate that Grigorenko was supposed to die on the ship. (**Research** can determine that Igor Grigorenko worked in Sevastopol before WWII.)

The Agents likely need to interview Grigorenko to learn of his passage aboard the *Armenia*, at which point **History (Contemporary)**, **Military Tactics**, or **Trivia** might put up a red flag — that ship was never supposed to reach port in Tuapse!

Aboard the *Armenia*, Tell departs the scenario after shooting down the Heinkel He 111. To preserve history, the Agents must ensure the ship still sinks... or, at the very least, that Grigorenko never joins the nuclear program.

This scenario, however, is not one of Tell's own devising; it was supplied to Dimaguiba by his contacts... who are, of course, ezeru infiltrators. The ezeru have agents aboard the *Armenia* to ensure that Grigorenko reaches Tuapse alive. If they determine that TimeWatch are also on the ship, they act to frustrate whatever plans the Agents devise...

## "UNITED STATES V. MICROSOFT CORP."

**Incident:** 1976

**Primary Effects:** 2001

**Research** on the key phrase directs Agents to a record in the altered databases — an antitrust law court case in which Microsoft Corporation was found guilty of abusing monopoly power and forcibly dissolved in 2001.

When database records are reconstructed, the discrepancy is apparent — in the original timeline, the Department of Justice settled the case and the corporation remained intact.

**Original Chronology:** In 1976, Steve Jobs and Steve Wozniak form the Apple Computer Company. The existence of a credible competitor in the home computer market is one factor that leads to the DOJ settling the antitrust case against Microsoft.

**Altered Chronology:** Tell burns down the Los Altos garage in which Jobs and Wozniak are working on the Apple I computer boards; the Apple Computer Company never exists. One downstream effect is the dissolution of Microsoft Corporation in 2001; another is that widespread penetration of mobile computing to the consumer market is significantly delayed.

The idea of taking down an abusive monopoly appealed

to Tell's crusader instincts; however, retarding the global IT presence during the nuclear age is the true goal of the ezeru infiltrators who suggested the scenario to Dimaguiba.

Investigation around the altered circumstances of the anti-trust case should reveal the absence of Apple and its products from the revised timeline. Backtracking and some directed **Research** eventually uncover the branching point — the *Los Altos Town Crier* records the deaths of Steve Jobs, 21, and Steve Wozniak, 26, along with several other residents in a house fire in 1976.

Tell waits until he has confirmed that both Steves are working late in the garage before jamming the door shut and setting the structure ablaze. He hangs about to be certain nobody exits the building while it burns before departing to rendezvous with Dimaguiba.

To preserve history, the Agents need to ensure both Steves survive, and also that they are either able to meet their deadline to supply the Apple I computers to their customer or otherwise possessed of sufficient capital to proceed with their business venture.

## "ABRAHAM LINCOLN"

**Incident:** 1865

The corrupted database records that Lincoln was assassinated by John Wilkes Booth on April 14th, 1865. The reconstruction of original data in this section of the historical record is complicated by prior adjustments that have taken place — on no fewer than five occasions, the ezeru have attempted to have Lincoln killed earlier in his lifetime, and in all cases their plots have been thwarted by TimeWatch. As a result, the historical record is a patchwork of the original timeline, the various tweaks and counter-tweaks to leave things in a “close enough” state after the ezeru meddling, and the corrupt data that Dimaguiba has imposed on top of everything.

**Original Chronology:** Abraham Lincoln serves out his second term as president of the United States.

**Altered Chronology:** Unwittingly acting at the behest of the ezeru infiltrators, Tell convinces John Wilkes Booth of his identity, and exhorts him to assassinate Lincoln.

## Special Briefing

Major Galahad assembles the Agents after focus is drawn to this key phrase.

“The techs have made a first analysis pass on the Lincoln data. As some of you know, Lincoln has been the target of the ezeru on several occasions, and we’ve sent agents in to block their attempts. So even before Dimaguiba fiddled the data, the records around this scenario are less than pristine. I want to be certain we have all our ducks in a row before we pull the trigger — save this one for last to give the techs more time with it.”

**Once the other scenarios have been resolved, Galahad provides further information.**

“We’ve recovered our original timeline data. And the Booth

assassination would appear to be the result of Tell’s meddling — the status quo primo has Lincoln surviving another six years before dying of thyroid cancer. So the basic objective is plain — stop Booth from killing Lincoln.

“There’s a complicating factor, though. A week before Dimaguiba was apprehended, Citadel-time, a team responded to a routine Anomaly Alert, triggered on the conditions dictated by the corrupt data. In other words, they’re in 1865 to ensure that Lincoln dies on Dimaguiba’s schedule. They haven’t reported back, which is good in one sense — if they’d reported success, we’d have even bigger paradox issues to deal with. But you all know the most likely reason for radio silence.

“If we’re lucky, they haven’t reported in yet because you’re going to intercept them and instruct them to wait until after you return, Citadel-time. We know that Lincoln is someone the ezeru like to go after, though, so we can’t discount the possibility that they ran into a hive-group in 1865.

“Find out what Tell told Booth. If he knows too much, we can have him reconditioned once you set the timeline in order. I’ll have the Relocation Division start prepping a stand-in, in case killing Booth winds up being necessary to keep Lincoln alive.”

Tell has indeed imparted problematic knowledge to Booth. Booth had already considered William Tell one of his personal heroes and role models; Tell has leveraged this by introducing himself and explaining the existence of time travel, before convincing Booth that he’s the man to kill Lincoln.

The ezeru have several drones in Washington to observe the operation. If it should become apparent that Booth has decided to back down from his conviction and leave Lincoln alone, they capture and cocoon him so one of the drones can take his place at Ford’s Theatre and proceed with the plan. (It needs to be a Booth, of one flavor or another, who kills Lincoln in order to match Dimaguiba’s fudged records and avoid alerting TimeWatch.)

If the ezeru discover the presence of either TimeWatch team (even though one is acting in support of their agenda, the drones don’t have the subtlety required to discriminate between the two), they act to eliminate them.

The earlier TimeWatch team (an ambitious GM might somehow find a way to make them earlier incarnations of the Agents sent to stop them, but the paradox headaches involved might prove insurmountable!) are investigating to determine the cause of the Anomaly Alert that dragged history away from the course they believe to be the proper one. Exactly what they discover depends on the actions of Galahad’s Agents, since they are the only actors in this scenario attempting to thwart the assassination.

There are two main potential paradoxes the Agents must account for. The first, as in the other scenarios, is to ensure that Tell and Dimaguiba make their usual incursion into the Citadel to modify data following a perceived success of their goals. The second is to prevent the earlier TimeWatch team from making their scheduled report to the Citadel a week before Dimaguiba’s capture. Since their ultimate fate is thus far unknown, the Agents have a variety of avenues to achieve this (including allowing them to be discovered and eaten by ezeru drones).

If the Agents have already played through *Rebel Heart*, they may have already worked to save Lincoln. If so, the Agents are right back in the same time, needing to stay out of sight from their earlier incarnations in that time or risk paradox.

## THE EZERU ARCHITECT

**Scene Type:** Antagonist Reaction

**Lead-In:** Adjustment Scenarios

**Summary:** Eliminate Tell's secret puppeteer in Syria, 576

Ezeru can potentially be encountered in four separate locales during the course of this investigation: 1896 New York, 1941 aboard the *Armenia*, 1865 Washington, and (if tracked down) 1630 Paris. Use standard ezeru stats for these encounters, should they occur.

The assorted elements are being coordinated by an ezeru architect who has set up shop in Syria in 576 CE, where the city of Antioch has just suffered a major earthquake. Raging fires and aftershocks consume what is left of Antioch, while the hundreds of thousands of casualties provide the architect with ample sustenance to maintain control over the assorted drones it has dispatched throughout time.

The architect's drones are out on assignment, but it retains a security presence in the form of an ezeru warrior.

Some few of the drones (like Frank Micheli) have acquired local host disguises in their destination times, but most (including Tommy and Roy, and most of those assigned to Washington) have transported their cocooned Syrian hosts with them for convenience.



they snatch terrified refugees from the streets.

The warrior is heavy, armored, built like a cockroach crossed with a rhinoceros. The architect, by contrast, is slender and delicate in appearance, with long spindly limbs moving quickly and jerkily yet precisely.

The architect busily constructs a great sculpture from left-over body parts in between mouthfuls — essentially a mind-map representing significant loci in time and space, a diagram detailing the plan it has crafted to reshape history and assure the rise of the ezeru millennia in the future. It is entirely incomprehensible to a human mind, of course, but it is plain that each goblet and organ has been laid with exquisite care. Each aftershock disarranges the tableau to an extent, but the architect restores everything to its proper place without evidence of frustration.

The architect is content to continue building, directing its warrior to deal with intruders. Should the Agents deliberately disturb the arrangement, however, the architect becomes enraged, and fights to the death to protect its work.

While it continues to manipulate its creation, the architect can activate its Destabilize special ability by adjusting the position of key elements of the sculpture. The Agents receive a flash of memory of a recent event from their current mission, but altered from their recollection of how that event transpired, and must make a D4/L4 Paradox test. If the warrior is in dire trouble, the architect can recall one of its drone groups — likely the familiar trio of Frank, Tommy, and Roy (whom

## CLUES AND BENEFITS

- ▶ **Anthropology:** Visual examination of ezeru drones wearing Antioch flesh-masks allows identification as Syrian, pre-Industrial Revolution. Likewise for inspection of cocooned hosts if they are recovered.
- ▶ **Timecraft:** The ezeru affinity for natural disasters is known. **History (Ancient):** The Antioch earthquake was the greatest natural disaster to befall pre-IR Syria.
- ▶ **Science!** Traces of ash and soil on ezeru or cocooned hosts can be sourced to the fall of Antioch.
- ▶ **Reassurance:** If any cocooned hosts are recovered alive, they can be convinced to explain where they were taken from.

If the ezeru are not encountered, or if they escape or bodies are not recoverable, Major Galahad has had a backup team continuing to work the case of the ezeru encountered in New York while the Agents deal with Tell and Dimaguiba, and their efforts turn up the Antioch connection.

A showdown with the architect and its warrior occurs amidst burning buildings, aftershocks, and handfuls of desperate survivors attempting to escape the destruction of the city. Neither ezeru is bothering to conceal its true form, savoring the horror of their victims as much as the tender flesh as

the Agents may have already killed once or twice — if so, this is an earlier incarnation and the resultant paradox costs the architect an additional 3 Tempus).

If the architect is enraged, it ceases to employ temporal manipulations and instead relies on its Lightning Speed and Universal Attack abilities as those rapid, precise jerks of its forelimbs become a threshing machine of death.

## AFTERSHOCKS

During the battle, earthquake aftershocks may throw combatants off their feet and collapse nearby burning buildings. On the second round of fighting, an aftershock hits and lasts two rounds. All Difficulties rise by 2 during this period, and combatants must make an **Athletics** test to both move and attack in the same combat round.

### Ezeru Architect

**Defense:** Hit Threshold 4, Armor 3, Health 20

**Offense:** Scuffling +3, Shooting +1; Damage Modifier +2 (piercing forelimbs), +3 (jagged mandibles)

**Abilities:** Tempus 25

**Special Abilities:** Clock Out (cost 2), Destabilize (cost 4 — all targets in Close range), Lightning Speed (cost 2), Resist Stun, Summoning (cost 3 — drones), Universal Attack (cost 1 per target)

**Misc:** Alertness Modifier +3

**Description:** The rare ezeru architect is appointed by its queen to oversee and coordinate an incursion into a particular reality. Surveilling multiple operations and manipulating history across different time periods requires significant energy expenditure, requiring the architect to ingest vast quantities of

food — for this reason, an architect is likely to establish its command post at the locus of some natural disaster where bodies are apt to be in ample supply.

## CONNECTION TO REBEL HEART

If you also run the *Rebel Heart* adventure from this book, the Agents revisit the Lincoln assassination scenario.

*Rebel Heart* has the Agents working with a rebellious organization opposing TimeWatch. Once again, TimeWatch is attempting to enable Lincoln's death while the Agents try to prevent it.

The exact nature of the rebellion's origin in *Rebel Heart* is left to the GM, although the mission assumes it is Restoration, a group who believes that TimeWatch is implementing its own version of history instead of true history. To link the two adventures, it may be best to determine that the rebellion is intended to counter this perceived corruption in the upper echelons of TimeWatch. The organization's mission has always been to maintain the status quo primo, but somewhere along the way one of the top officers has decided there is occasional virtue in some judicious tweaking... perhaps inspired by Tell's crusade, but with a moral certainty that with all of TimeWatch's resources, *he* can do it better and smarter. (Depending on how the character of Major Galahad fits in your campaign, he may even be the officer with the brainstorm... or perhaps his superior Colonel Gilgamesh.)

The exhaustive research into the Lincoln scenario carried out by Galahad has provided the data the officer needs to decide that the future is better served by Lincoln's death after all, and that is the outcome TimeWatch is working to preserve under his watch. The Agents, working with the rebels, must prevent it once again... and in so doing, risk encountering their earlier selves contending with Tell and the ezeru agents.

# REBEL HEART

## OVERVIEW

The Agents are burned out of TimeWatch ranks, summarily ejected and attacked because their future selves apparently defect from the ranks and join a rebel group. While investigating this apparent betrayal, the Agents learn that they're so highly trusted that they've been set up as deep-cover double agents, tasked with rooting out ezeru infestation of an anti-Time-Watch rebel group.

## BACKGROUND

### THE PLOT

A cell of the rebellious organization Restoration, led by a man named Matthew Tanner, has been using ezeru weaponry against TimeWatch agents during scenes of historical disruption. TimeWatch has realized that Restoration is attempting to mislead them into thinking ezeru are involved, but ezeru weaponry has to be supplied by ezeru. They want that connection, and the rebel cell, shut down.

Restoration consists primarily of former (and occasionally current) TimeWatch agents who believe that TimeWatch is manipulating history to its own ends, and not to “true history” — if there even is such a thing. Restoration researches the incidents that TimeWatch intercedes in, attempts to determine who truly decides what history is preserved and what history is erased, and eventually hopes to eliminate TimeWatch itself. In the meantime, maintaining their secrecy is all-important; the rebel group persists by utilizing a cell structure, frequent memory wipes, and misdirection.

Determined to learn the queen's location from Restoration, TimeWatch has hatched a devious plan to place some of their best agents amongst the rebels: the player characters. The trick is doing so without even the Agents knowing that they have been assigned to a top secret mission; if the Agents attempt to keep a secret, inquisitors at Restoration will ferret out the truth. To manipulate the Agents into place, TimeWatch burns the player characters and completely disavows them. It informs a different group of TimeWatch troubleshooters that the Agents have turned rogue, and dispatches the

troubleshooters to capture the Agents after their last successful mission for TimeWatch.

The supervisors hope that cutting off support and harassing the Agents will cause them to follow the one avenue of investigation left open to them, a mission instructing them to investigate the reappearance of a presumed dead TimeWatch agent named Anthony Nicol.

TimeWatch is well aware that Nicol has joined Restoration, and is currently trapped in East Berlin at the worst possible time. If the Agents are convincing enough, Nicol inducts them into the rebellion as well. Once the Agents are trusted, TimeWatch is confident that the Citadel will be able to make contact, explain the situation, and have them complete the true mission. They'll explain earlier if everything goes completely off the rails.

Whether the cell is shut down and the ezeru connection discovered depends entirely on the Agents.

## TIMELINE

Events begin for the Agents when they are **Burned** circa 5.33 million BCE. Following the last mission briefing they've received takes them to East Berlin **Behind the Wall** to rescue Anthony Nicol in 1964, and **Breaking Through**. To prove their loyalty to the Rebellion they must go to the **Last Days** of the Berlin field office.

Inducted into the Rebellion the Agents find out they are in **Deep Cover**, assigned to get close to Matthew Tanner in 1930 to learn the source of the ezeru weapons. First they must take part in **The Assassination of Abraham Lincoln... Again** in 1865, a mission they might revisit (or have already visited) in the mission *Time Will Tell*.

If the Agents do a good job they could end up on a **Bug Hunt** in 814 or find **Time to Defect** in 1980.

Note that this mission has the Agents — the player characters — butting heads with other TimeWatch agents. For ease of nomenclature, TimeWatch agents who *aren't* the player characters are referred to in this mission as troubleshooters.

## WHICH REBELLION?

Several possible Rebellion groups are presented in the *TimeWatch* core rules. The default candidate in this mission is Restoration, but that's not the only option. If you prefer a different ideology behind TimeWatch's closest enemies, consider Crosstime — another group with primarily human members — or one of the more specialized organizations.

The ultimate aim of the Rebellion group presented in this adventure is to create a divergent timeline to protect themselves from TimeWatch, so several other groups (such as Judgment Day and Clockwork Chronal Entertainment) might also be potential candidates. Knowing which particular group is involved should inform how you portray the group, and you may wish to alter the way they operate and their goals accordingly.

Alternatively, their exact identity need not be important to the Agents. Any group that opposes TimeWatch could simply be referred to as the rebellion. Agents may think they are just fighting different branches of the same organization, unaware they are distinctly different groups. Only when the Agents actually join up with the rebellion might they realize that each have their own agenda and that grouping them all together is insulting.

## THE MISSION

### LIKELY ADVENTURE PATH

More than most, this mission has the potential to stray from expected timing. Players respond differently about getting betrayed, caught up in a conspiracy, and supposedly drummed out of TimeWatch.

**Burned.** The Agents are betrayed and attacked by other TimeWatch members during a bogus mission assignment at the Zanclean Deluge. They're left with the clue that TimeWatch operative Anthony Nicol in 1964 Berlin might know why.

**Behind the Wall and Breaking Through.** Nicol was arrested by the Stasi in 1964. Agents must help him escape in order to learn what he knows; he insists on bringing an English spy named Edward Baker with them. Nicol is secretly a rebel, and rescuing him will help him trust the Agents. He invites them to the Rebellion, and offers to introduce them to his cell leader, so long as they help him steal communications equipment from a local TimeWatch safe house.

**Last Days.** The Agents and Nicol purloin equipment from under TimeWatch's nose.

**Deep Cover.** Nicol arranges a meeting between the Agents and his superior Matthew Tanner. Tanner asks them to help prevent the assassination of Abraham Lincoln. During this scene the Agents are also contacted by a trusted friend at TimeWatch, and informed that they've been deliberately set up to infiltrate the rebel organization.

**The Assassination of Abraham Lincoln... Again.** Stopping Lincoln's assassination is trickier than one might think. If they succeed, Tanner supplies them with his source for ezeru weaponry, taking them to **Bug Hunt** to the lair of

an ezeru queen.

**Time to Defect.** The Agents extricate themselves (unless they've actually defected for real or have become actual double agents), dealing with Tanner and returning to TimeWatch. In this scene they learn that Tanner has been subverted by ezeru, and is a mass murderer who deliberately set up TimeWatch operatives to die in Pompeii. This information can be used to loosen his authority on his fellow rebels.

## BURNED

**Scene Type:** Intro

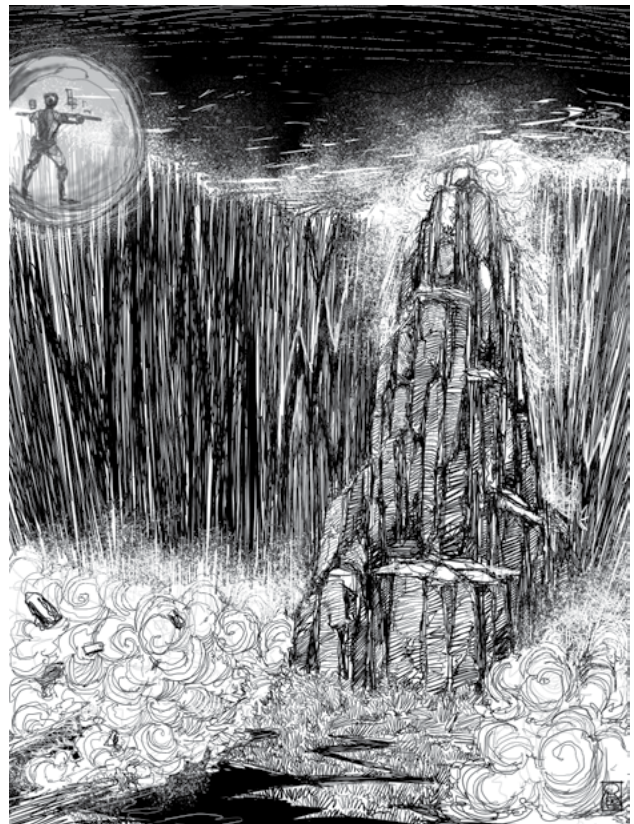
**Lead-Out:** Behind the Wall

**Summary:** Agents have been disavowed and are hunted; "Anthony Nicol" in 1964 East Berlin might know why

The first scene takes place shortly after the Agents have successfully completed another mission for TimeWatch. If they need time to recover after the last mission give them time to recuperate. They should be alone with no other members of TimeWatch around.

## THE GREAT FLOOD

If you lack a better opportunity, the Agents are ordered to investigate an anomalous energy signal at the start of the Zanclean Deluge 5.33 million years ago, when water from the



Atlantic Ocean poured past the Strait of Gibraltar and filled the Mediterranean Basin in a period of several months to two years. With a kilometer-tall waterfall 1,000 times the volume of the Amazon River, this was the greatest flood the world has seen, and a mountain peak at the head of the falls makes for a nice backdrop for combat and betrayal.

The anomalous energy signature that the Agents were sent to investigate exists, incidentally, buried under stone atop the rock outcropping extending out from the flood waters. It's a small fusion reactor with enough of a shielding leak that it's clearly designed to be detectable. Pick an Agent with **Science!**; that Agent can tell that based on the design and engineering, they themselves placed that beacon there at some time in the future. The casing of the generator is oddly made out of nickel (core clue); the Agent may associate this (correctly) with the name Anthony Nicol, a name they'll hear shortly (see below) and a name their future self apparently wants them to follow up on.

**Research:** "Zanclean flood"

## AMBUSH

Future, loyal TimeWatch troubleshooters have been dispatched by their briefing officer to this location, with orders to neutralize the Agents before they can rebel and betray TimeWatch. It doesn't take a historian to realize that this premise might be flawed and the ambush might be the very thing that causes the Agents to rebel, and the troubleshooters even asked about that; they were assured by their briefing officer that this wasn't the case, that their data on this was ironclad, and that the troubleshooters should stop asking questions.

The troubleshooters' approach depends on your group and how they respond to threats. If they work well in a team the troubleshooters try to separate and isolate them; if the group needs time to prepare, the troubleshooters attack suddenly, giving them little opportunity to put together a plan.

The troubleshooters don't know that this is a ruse or that anyone is being set up, but an Agent with **Bureaucracy** might notice that the troubleshooters are relatively junior operatives, with significantly less experience than the Agents.

Alternatively TimeWatch might send an experienced team that has been fully briefed on the situation. Its job is to frighten the Agents with overwhelming force, ensuring that they run but making sure that they are unharmed. This approach is notoriously uncertain in most RPGs — who runs? — but is doubtlessly entertaining in a "there are 20 armed drones approaching your location, what do you do?" frame of mind. Thinking of this approach as a big-budget action movie, with an unlimited budget and all the SFX stops pulled out, might be a good approach for making an impression on the Agents that they're wanted.

When the assault begins, the group begins to receive a message via their tether from the Citadel but find the signal is being blocked. This is when the TimeWatch troubleshooters attack using shock tactics to keep them off balance, with one troubleshooter making a clear effort with Hacking to block the signal while his teammates shout how important it is that they don't get the message.

The Agents may be familiar with the troubleshooters attacking them and attempt to reason with them. The troubleshooters are polite, or even sympathetic, but they're professionals doing a job; they make it clear that they can't take any chances and that they need to act now before the Agents can join the Rebellion.

As per usual tactics, the troubleshooters attempt to use Pacifists to neutralize the Agents. Agents might decide to willingly surrender, hoping to plead their case or get a better explanation of what is going on. That's a completely reasonable solution. Once they do, the now-captive Agents overhear the troubleshooters arguing as to whether they kill the Agents here and dump the bodies in the flood, or kill them and exile the bodies in an alternate timeline.

An argument erupts amongst the troubleshooters, and the Agents can use this confusion to try to escape. If they are really struggling assistance comes in the form of masked figures. This could be members of the Rebellion or later revealed to be the Agents themselves (in which case there could be a scene in which they come back to help their younger selves).

Should the Agents successfully defeat the troubleshooters they can interrogate their captives. While much of their information is incomplete, they learn that in their near future they join the Rebellion after being dispatched to 1964 Berlin. Their involvement is damaging enough that the troubleshooters have been sent back to prevent their recruitment by rebels.

## HOW TO HANDLE BEING BURNT

Without player buy-in, a premise that turns their trusted organization against them is bound to be upsetting to unsuspecting players. What works well in a movie or a television show (*Burn Notice* springs to mind) doesn't always work in a roleplaying game unless the players are onboard. Here are some options for making sure this goes smoothly.

- ▶ At the mission's start, one Agent receives a vague communication that's possibly from their future self, urging them to run when given the chance — that some orders come from on high, and not everyone can be trusted.
- ▶ If you have the opportunity, foreshadow the betrayal even further by having clues about this betrayal and the Rebellion sent to an Agent for an entire mission prior. *Doctor Who's* "Bad Wolf" plot arc is a masterful example of slow, repetitive foreshadowing.
- ▶ Should the Agents get in touch with a trusted adviser at TimeWatch, they're told an order has come down from on high and that they should run, not submit — and the friend will find a way to get in touch with them later.
- ▶ The Agents' autochrons no longer take them to the Citadel; neither do the autochrons of any other operatives they defeat.
- ▶ Even if they find a way to contact the hostile troubleshooters' briefing officer (who presumably knows why the group has been burned), that officer is from the future of the Citadel, and it's an execution- or exile-level offense for operatives to travel to the Citadel in the relative future or past; the resulting paradox could be what triggers the Big Bang and destroys TimeWatch.



- ▶ If the group surrenders and agrees to come in for questioning, the Agents are disarmed and arrested. In Time-Watch, an old friend (your choice of supporting character, but someone loyal to the group) breaks them out, explaining that the order has come down to have them summarily executed, and they need to escape — now. They can figure out why afterward.

## CUT OFF

For now the Agents are on their own. Their autochron refuses to take them to the Citadel, and an automated message indicates that their clearance has been suspended. If they contact other members of TimeWatch they find themselves under attack almost immediately (since once the troubleshooters have a lock on where the Agents are they can travel there and attempt to capture them once the Agents send their message).

Past allies and contacts are interrogated by troubleshooters to give up their location. Some allies might appear to help the Agents only to set them up for another ambush. This should foster a general sense of mistrust and paranoia in the group.

Any assets they might have are seized, but they are left just enough so they can continue to operate in the field. The Agents might be suspicious of their tether's AI, and this can lead to some tense scenes. Are their tethers working with TimeWatch or is their overriding loyalty to their user?

The Agents are now the ones who are being investigated by TimeWatch, and it is their own future that is being altered. They need to be far more cautious about the way they operate as anything that could get them noticed in history brings more troubleshooters down upon them.

It should be clear to the Agents that if they ever want things to go back to normal they need to investigate the message they received.

## THE MESSAGE

Once the Agents defeat the troubleshooters (or at least the one blocking the signal) or leave their proximity, the blocked message can be decoded and examined. It appears to be a standard mission briefing informing them that TimeWatch has located a presumed dead operative, Anthony Nicol. If asked, a troubleshooter explains that this mission was when the Agents went rogue, and that couldn't happen again.

Nicol was an experienced operative who was lost on his last mission to Pompeii. His mission was to investigate anachronistic technology discovered in 1980 preserved in the ash. He traveled back to the date of eruption of Mount Vesuvius in 79 CE. He was never heard from again, but the anachronistic technology vanished from the timeline, so it was believed he had died completing the mission.

TimeWatch researchers have discovered Nicol's name in Stasi records declassified after the German Reunification. It indicates that Anthony Nicol was captured as a suspected British spy and interrogated at the Stasi headquarters on October 14th, 1964.

The files relating to his capture and his fate were lost when

the Stasi destroyed files in 1990 and the subsequent looting. With only this date to go on the Agents are requested to free Nicol, find out what has happened to him since Pompeii, and determine where his loyalties lie.

## WHAT IF THE AGENTS GO BACK TO POMPEII?

Rather than go to Berlin, Agents might decide to investigate what happened on Nicol's last mission. This takes them to 79 CE, when hundreds died in a volcanic eruption. As will later be revealed by Nicol, an interdiction device shut down all autochrons in the vicinity, meaning that they will likely die unless they can run awfully fast.

An Agent with **Outdoor Survival** can find a place to temporarily shelter from hot ash; one with 2 or more points of **Timecraft** or **Paradox Prevention** (or one of each) can spend 2 points total to briefly override the interdiction effect and escape. Finding Nicol's mission team in the chaos and disaster is unlikely at best.

Use the standard TimeWatch stats for an agent, and customize them for individual troubleshooters as needed.

## Rival Agent

**Defense:** Hit Threshold 4, Armor 1, Health 12

**Offense:** Scuffling +2, Shooting +3; Damage Modifier +0 (improvised club), +2 (beam pistol), Stun 5 (PaciFist)

**Abilities:** Tempus 20

**Special Abilities:** Clock Out (cost 2), Flashback (cost 5), Oracle (cost 1), Technology (cost 2), Teleport (cost 2)

**Misc:** Stealth Modifier +3 (until noticed — impersonator mesh)

**Description:** Hostile and rival TimeWatch agents are as varied as the player characters. More experienced agents have even more tricks up their sleeves.

## BEHIND THE WALL

**Scene Type:** Core

**Lead-In:** Burned

**Lead-Outs:** Breaking Through, Last Days

**Summary:** Nicol will help them if they break him out

Agent Anthony Nicol was arrested on October 9th, 1964, after scouting out the Stasi (ministry for state security) headquarters. He'd tracked down a captured British spy, Edward Baker, and planned to help him escape, but a Stasi spy in the tenement building where he was staying got suspicious of him and had him picked up by one of the Stasi arrest minivans.

Nicol did his best to hold out and hasn't yet revealed his true nature despite the extreme methods of interrogation. Wise enough not to bring any advanced technology with him into East Berlin, the Stasi has little to go on other than his forged papers.

They've come to the conclusion that Nicol is also a British spy. They plan to extract as much information as they can before attempting to exchange him to the British for the return of one of their own agents. When the British secret service denies all knowledge of Nicol he is shot while "trying to escape."

During his confinement Nicol has won the confidence of Edward Baker. He has promised that if he does manage to escape he'll help Baker make it over the wall. What Nicol doesn't know is that Baker is actually a double agent.

A TimeWatch troubleshooter has also tracked the Agents to the location. Using Authority and Bureaucracy he has spent several months infiltrating the Stasi. He has interrogated Nicol but his main goal is to catch the Agents when they attempt a rescue.

## EAST BERLIN, CITY OF SPIES

The Agents arrive on October 14th, 1964, and find that Berlin is a city divided. Soviet-controlled East Berlin erected the Berlin Wall overnight in 1961 to prevent a mass exodus of those fleeing to the West. The people are watched and controlled by the secret agents of the Stasi and its informants. The heightened level of surveillance makes it difficult for the autochron to pick spots that aren't being observed.

Agents notice how grey and drab the city is, aside from the bright propaganda of the Soviet forces. People can be seen queuing for everything, as rationing is still in full effect. Meat and vegetables are scarce while fruit is a luxury.

This rationing extends to building materials. The interiors of most of the buildings the Agents enter are 10 years out of date, with linoleum, plastic furniture, and beige found in most homes. Repairs are patchwork affairs, with flickering lights and crumbling walls found throughout the districts.

Families have been separated by the sudden erection of the Berlin Wall. Few voice their grievances as they are well aware that their neighbors could be reporting to the government. Any sign of dissent, and they may receive a visit from the Stasi or be bundled into a grey arrest minivan right off the street.

This atmosphere of fear is sure to affect the Agents. Their impersonator mesh helps make people uninterested in them, but this either gives the impression that they are powerless citizens or members of the Stasi. If they keep their impersonator mesh activated, supporting characters might react with fear or hostility if approached.

It is all too easy for the Agents to draw attention to themselves. Asking strange questions, obtaining restricted goods, or trespassing plants the suspicion that they are either spies in the ever watchful Stasi or those who wish to curry favor with the government by reporting strangers to the city.

The **Spying** ability can be very useful in East Berlin. It allows Agents to spot fellow spies, notice when surveillance is being conducted, and locate potential drop sites or other ways to contact agents for either side.

## LIBERATING NICOL

The Agents know roughly where and when they can find Nicol, although they don't necessarily know why he's important or why they were instructed to retrieve him. Getting him out without raising an alarm is no easy matter.

The Stasi headquarters is an imposing complex, consisting of several buildings each several stories high. There are rooms full of classified files, offices for senior officers, a cafeteria, departments dedicated to picking through trash for signs of treason, phone line operators fielding calls of suspicious activities, and of course the interrogation rooms and prisoner cells.

Agents who want to familiarize themselves with the layout of the buildings could travel forward in time past the reunification of Germany into the last decade of the century when the Stasi headquarters was turned into a museum. Any Agent with **Architecture** is assumed to have already have done so.

Using an autochron can get the Agents inside, but with so much activity they find themselves in whatever unused office or broom closet it can find. This can be a problem if there is someone right outside, who might wonder where Agents have come from.

**Disguise, Forgery, and Authority** could convince others that the Agents are Stasi agents. This gives them a small window of opportunity to wander the building until their documentation or presence can be questioned.

A more daring ruse is for an Agent to get themselves captured by the Stasi. Any suspicious activity could see them picked up and escorted to the headquarters for interrogation. They could be put in a cell close to where Nicol is held.

Anyone who is captured needs to be careful that they don't allow advanced technology to fall into the hands of the Stasi. If it does they have to recover their autochron, tether, and anything else from the evidence room. If they were able to slip their impersonator mesh past the guards this could aid them in escaping.

**Unobtrusiveness** is vital as the Agents explore the building and try to find Nicol.

**Burglary** can come in useful to obtain reports or information about where Nicol is being held.

**Bureaucracy:** If the Agents take time to study the file on Nicol, they learn that the Stasi officers suspect that he is a spy and that they plan to trade him with the British.

- ▶ A 1-point spend reveals that the Stasi officers are getting frustrated that the British deny any knowledge of Nicol and suggest it would be simpler if he had an accident during his transfer to a Stasi prison.
- ▶ A 2-point spend indicates that one particular officer [the undercover TimeWatch troubleshooter] has conducted interrogations numerous times, and his superiors indicate that his line of questioning was strange, such as asking if he'd been to Pompeii.

Once the Agents locate Nicol he is initially suspicious and requests that they help both his friend Edward Baker and himself get into East Berlin. He indicates that the presence of Edward will ensure they don't try any of their "tricks."

Nicol mentions the mysterious Stasi officer who asked him

questions that might be related to his previous missions with TimeWatch.

He also reveals that during the interrogation they'd make prisoners sit on cotton cloth and place it along with the prisoners' undergarments so that, should a prisoner escape, their sweat can be used to give dogs their scent. To avoid being tracked they should destroy these jars, along with any records about Nicol being there.

The Agents could use **Forgery**, **Authority**, or **Bureaucracy** to persuade others that they are transferring Nicol and Baker. This could give them access to Stasi prisoner transport, allowing for a fast getaway.

They could create chaos, releasing other prisoners, starting a fire, or otherwise causing a distraction. In the confusion they might be able to get Nicol and Baker out. If they get stopped or all else fails they can use **Scuffling** and **Shooting** to fight their way out.

If the Agents follow Nicol's suggestion and successfully manage to remove all evidence of his presence in East Berlin the Agents need to make a D6/L6 Paradox test, as they've just removed their reason for being there.

The biggest problem the Agents face is the TimeWatch troubleshooter. Prior to traveling to this moment he investigated how the Agents helped Nicol escape. He puts obstacles in their way such as locking the door they planned to escape through, questioning prisoner transfer forms, and organizing guards to mount a defense against any attack. He tries to be subtle, but he might accidentally tip his hand with his foreknowledge, revealing his true identity.

This gives the Agents a taste of life as a rebel, where TimeWatch always appears to be one step ahead. Luckily for them TimeWatch doesn't want its troubleshooter to succeed so have denied him access to backup or the resources he'd need to ensure the Agents fail. Instead, he is just an unexpected complication.

## Nicol

**Defense:** Hit Threshold 4, Health 12 (currently 6)

**Offense:** Scuffling +2, Shooting +3; currently no weapons

**Abilities:** Tempus 20

**Special Abilities:** Clock Out (cost 2), Flashback (cost 5), Oracle (cost 1), Technology (cost 2), Teleport (cost 2) (none usable until reunited with his gear)

## Stasi Thug

**Defense:** Hit Threshold 3, Health 6

**Offense:** Scuffling +2, Shooting +1; Damage Modifier +0 or Stun 4 (brass knuckles), +1 (pistol)

**Abilities:** Athletics 6, Vehicles 3

## BREAKING THROUGH

**Scene Type:** Alternate

**Lead-In:** Behind the Wall

**Lead-Out:** Last Days

**Summary:** Agents must prove their humanity to Nicol before he levels with them

Once they've escaped from the Stasi headquarters Baker directs the Agents to a contact he knows in East Berlin who can hide them while they plot their next move, Ada Geiszler. Ada Geiszler lives on the ground floor of her tenant building and so they can come and go without being noticed.

Ada is in her 60s and looks after her granddaughter Frieda, who is 8 years old. The wall went up when Frieda's mother and father were in West Berlin, and they've been unable to return. Ada is helping Baker in the hopes that he will be able to smuggle Frieda past the border to rejoin her family.

While Nicol only requests that the Agents help Baker and himself cross the wall, Baker insists any plan they come up with should include getting Frieda across as well. If the Agents are being generous they might also consider helping Ada escape as it is likely that she'll be picked up for helping spies sooner or later.

## CROSSING THE BERLIN WALL

Finding a way to get around the Berlin Wall is a challenge that many faced in East Berlin. Encourage the Agents to be creative and not spend too long planning. Remind them that both the Stasi and TimeWatch are hunting them. Any minute there could be a knock at the door or TimeWatch troubleshooters appearing in the room.

If they struggle for ideas Baker and Ada can make suggestions based on knowledge of how others have beaten the security, providing both the advantages and flaws of any plan. Leave the final plan up to the Agents.

Vary the Difficulty Numbers of any challenges based on how creative the Agents' plan is, how you wish to pace this section of the adventure, and how much tension you wish to invoke. The Berlin Wall is a challenging obstacle, and getting across shouldn't be taken lightly, but if the Agents are struggling or becoming frustrated lower the Difficulty Numbers they face.

The simplest thing for the Agents to do is simply use their autochrons to ferry people across to West Berlin. The problem is that without access to the Citadel they can't use MEM-tags to remove the memory of time travel from their passengers. They could knock people unconscious with Pacifists and ferry them, although multiple trips might result in unwanted Chronal Stability Loss. Ferrying people on an autochron without removing the memory allows locals to know that time travel exists, and triggers D4/L4 Paradox tests for any Agent involved.

The Agents could target the various checkpoints, such as the famous Checkpoint Charlie. Given the recent escape the Stasi is watching these border crossings closely but there is still a chance. **Forgery** and **Disguises** can hide the identities of those attempting to cross, while **Charm** could distract the guards.

The Agents don't necessarily have to have Forgery to obtain documents that can fool the guards. The Munich Playboy Club membership card closely resembles diplomatic passports, enough so that simply flashing it convinces an unob-servant guard that the holder can pass straight through. All the Agents need do is join the club or steal a membership card from a member.

Baker and Ada may suggest they use the Tränenpalast (Palace of Tears). This is a train station with a route into West Berlin. It gained its name for the tearful farewells that routinely occur as East Berlin residents, unable to board the train, say goodbye to loved ones.

With so many people Agents could use **Unobtrusiveness** to slip onboard. They'd just need to hide their presence until after they crossed into West Berlin, just as long as the authorities didn't stop the train. If that did happen they could use the **Vehicles** ability to take control of the train and push through any blockades.

The **Vehicles** ability would also be useful if Agents decide to drive through a checkpoint. Convertibles are easy to hire, and **Tinkering** can lower the suspension and remove the windscreen to allow them to drive under the barrier. It might be a tight squeeze depending on how many people they are attempting to smuggle across.

If they are bringing more than two people they might try to hide them within the cargo of a large van. This could be within the body of a large musical instrument such as a piano or concealed within the frozen carcasses of pigs. They will just have to hope that the checkpoint guards don't inspect their load too closely.

Those looking for a more stealthy approach can try to physically scale the wall. Watch towers, guard dogs, and barbed wire all stand in their way, but there are a variety of ways to achieve this. There are buildings situated close enough to the Berlin Wall that **Athletics** could be used to leap from a window or roof top, straight into West Berlin. Whether the jumper walked away from the landing is another matter. High tension cables also run straight over the wall. If the Agents are able to reach them they can use the cables to clamber across or use a zip-line to pass straight over the head of the guards beneath.

These escape routes might be too physically demanding for Ada and Frieda so the Agents could try to find a way to go under the wall. Secret tunnels exist along with the sewer system. **Burglary** and **Unobtrusiveness** can be used to make their way through these dank, dark subterranean tunnels without being detected while they try to avoid the tight confines inducing claustrophobia in their party.

The Agents' biggest advantage is they possess time travel. This allows them to seek out whatever resources they require and put plans in motion that help them in 1964. For example, they could take advantage of the exchange of spies at the Glienicke Brücke (Bridge of Spies), using **Bureaucracy** and **Disguise** to replace the British and American agents being released back to the West in exchange for captured Soviet agents.

Whatever plan they come up with, no matter how well thought out, TimeWatch stops them from becoming too complacent. Just when they think they are in the clear they might spot a troubleshooter or suffer an unexpected bit of bad luck

that could only be the influence of a time traveler.

If things do go badly Baker can be pulling strings behind the scenes. As a Soviet undercover double agent his superiors want him back in the West. They can't make it look too easy, but they hold back and look the other way just long enough for the Agents to get Baker across.

Throughout it all Nicol is watching to see how the Agents handle the situation, and most importantly, how much they sympathize with the plight of the people in East Berlin. He attempts to subtly influence them, drawing parallels between TimeWatch and the Stasi while gauging how individual Agents feel about rebelling and overcoming oppression.

## FREEDOM

Once the Agents have successfully arrived in West Berlin, Nicol thanks them for upholding their side of the bargain. Baker heads to an allied embassy to make contact with his government (Nicol waves him off, claiming he'll join him later), and if Ada and Frieda were smuggled across they join up with their overjoyed family.

Nicol leads the group to a safe house where he hid his autochron and other equipment. He is now willing to reveal his past. He explains that he'd become increasingly dissatisfied with the way TimeWatch was being run, especially as he'd seen that time could change in small ways, but they still weren't allowed to help people.

He'd begun to gain support amongst other high-ranking members of TimeWatch and felt that those behind the organization were close to listening to him. So he thought he was just being sent on a routine mission to Pompeii to investigate the preserved anachronistic technology.

In 79 CE he discovered a rebellious Restoration cell run by Matthew Tanner. It had recovered the anachronistic interdiction technology from the volcano and believed that TimeWatch were going to use it to cause the historic eruption.

Nicol wasn't sure what to believe, but to his horror the device activated, shutting down all autochrons in the area. Nicol now believes that the device was a trap, designed to strand time travelers so they'd be caught in the devastation that followed.

Only Tanner and Nicol escaped alive, the rest of the rebel cell dying as hot ash and lava covered the area. It took them months to get their autochrons working, and since then Nicol has been helping Tanner recruit new members.

If the Agents reveal their own troubles with TimeWatch Nicol suggests that TimeWatch was unaware that he was a member of the Rebellion. Now they know the truth they might become members of the Rebellion as well, which is what TimeWatch is trying to prevent.

Should the Agents suggest that they don't want to join the Rebellion Nicol points out that it doesn't matter as TimeWatch no longer trusts them. If the Agents are going to survive they need the Rebellion, even if it just to find a way to escape their former organization.

Before Nicol is willing to take them to meet Tanner and the rest of the Rebellion cell he wants them to obtain TimeWatch communication equipment from their field office in Berlin,

1945. Nicol explains that if they come bearing gifts Tanner is much more likely to trust them.

## Edward Baker, Double Agent

The Soviet double agent “rescue” from the Stasi sets about a change in history. Originally he defected, spending the rest of his life in Russia with a new identity, but the chance to send him back to Britain was too good an opportunity to pass up.

Baker used information he claimed to have stolen from the Stasi to unmask a number of Communist spies operating in Britain. Of course these were low-ranking agents whose loss didn't greatly impact the Soviet's infiltration.

Gaining a reputation as a spy hunter Baker could control where the MI5 searched and personally ensure that important Soviet agents passed the vetting process. As long as a few token spies were uncovered Baker could continue to undermine the intelligence agency's efforts to locate foreign agents.

This continued to weaken the British government through the '70s and '80s, with several large Soviet spy rings operating and most large organizations being infiltrated. Allies in the West lost confidence in Britain, with America in particular seeing them as a hotbed of Red activity.

Baker's cover was finally blown in 1985, but he was able to successfully flee the country with several dossiers full of confidential government secrets. This was enough information for Russia to successfully blackmail the British for decades to come, effectively turning it into a puppet state.

All of these changes happened in the shadows so history is largely unaffected. Only the political scene shifts while those living in the UK find themselves in a country plagued by paranoia and corruption, where anyone could be a Soviet spy.

## LAST DAYS

**Scene Type:** Core

**Lead-Ins:** Behind the Wall, Breaking Through

**Lead-Out:** Deep Cover

**Summary:** Agents must prove themselves to Nicol before he trusts them

The TimeWatch Berlin field office was established to prevent time travelers from assassinating Hitler. Chronologically TimeWatch have had personnel stationed in Berlin since Hitler was appointed chancellor of the NSDAP-DNVP Party on January 30, 1933.

The safe house has a concealed basement storing communication equipment, computers, and a records room (for documents not kept digitally). In addition, there are resources available for visiting troubleshooters to rest and recuperate between missions to preserve the timeline.

On the 20th of April, 1945, Allied forces are at the city gates and the death of Hitler is fast approaching. The field office is no longer needed, and so the personnel stationed there are shredding documents and dismantling equipment to send back to the Citadel. Nothing can be left behind.

All these events have been recorded but the constant shift in history has meant some of the finer details have altered. During the shelling of the city the safe house takes a direct hit, killing several TimeWatch operatives and destroying the remaining equipment.

Nicol read a report on the operation and was part of a team that scoured the area once the city had surrendered (on the 8th of May) to ensure that there was nothing left behind to contaminate the timeline.

Now Nicol wants the Agents to go back and steal communication equipment right from under TimeWatch's noses. Unfortunately the information he has didn't include the exact time when the building was hit.

## I NEED A SAFE HOUSE

Agents might be worried that they'll be apprehended if they walk into the TimeWatch field office. Nicol admits that it is a risk but believes that most of the personnel in the field office were from an earlier period, before the Agents would have been wanted by the organization. Nonetheless, they shouldn't stay long and they shouldn't do anything to make the TimeWatch agents question their presence.

Due to the choral shifting of agents and equipment the Agents' autochrons are likely to drop them a few city blocks from the safe house. The darkness of the night is disturbed by flashes of light and the roar of explosions as the city is shelled.

German troops, consisting of members of the Hitler Youth and soldiers old enough to have served in the first World War, rush to fortify the city. Residents either cower or rush to find safety from the assault as their homes are destroyed or burn.

This is a just a small taste of the chaos and devastation caused by the war. Agents must navigate their way to the safe house, knowing that at any minute they might be caught in the shelling or challenged by panicking troops. Luckily for them the focus of the city is outwards rather than inwards.

At the safe house the Agents encounter numerous TimeWatch members. Most assume that the Agents are there to help with the dismantling, and they are quickly assigned the task of taking apart equipment or destroying documents.

The more valuable equipment is being placed in crates before they are loaded on to choral nets to be sent back to the Citadel. As the shelling gets closer nonessential personnel begin to spin up their autochrons so they can prepare to leave.

While most are rushing to get the final equipment into place there is the chance for the Agents to interact with the operatives, who ask questions about their familiarity with the field office and if they know if they get the job completed.

It should weigh on the Agents that these operatives are risking their lives and that if they warn them of the imminent shelling they might save their lives. This would, however, make the personnel suspicious and possibly compromise their cover.

Obtaining the communication equipment presents challenges of its own. A crate is too big and heavy for a single autochron. **Tinkering** can be used to reprogram a choral net to take a crate to a place of the Agents' choosing instead of the Citadel, but a failure could indicate that their efforts have been noticed.

Structural damage to the building can expose recesses in the walls big enough to hide a crate within. If the Agents can get it inside and conceal the hiding place they can retrieve it in the future.

If a TimeWatch operative becomes suspicious what are the Agents prepared to do to prevent their cover being blown? Incapacitating the operative means they'll likely die in the imminent shelling unless the Agents can find a way to get them to safety. Any conflict they do engage in needs to be resolved quickly before the alarm is raised.

If the Agents only narrowly escaped TimeWatch troubleshooters in 1964 they could find that they've been tracked down to the safe house. Any such pursuers have a very short time to inform the TimeWatch personnel at the safe house what is happening and arrange a search.

Use the shelling of the building at a dramatically appropriate moment when the Agents have successfully obtained the communication equipment or are about to. The building begins to collapse allowing the Agents to complete their plan and escape.

It is possible that this gives them a short reprieve from their pursuers. If the Agents' presence was detected at the field office some speculate that some of the unidentified bodies recovered from the site belonged to them. It isn't until later sightings of the Agents are received that the hunt resumes.

If the Agents saved the lives of TimeWatch troubleshooters then they are looked upon more favorably within the organization. While the high-ranking officers (who are aware of the ruse) insist the Agents are still wanted renegades, those who hear about their good deeds are not as aggressive in their hunt and may question the orders they've been given.

## Generic Agent

**Defense:** Hit Threshold 4, Armor 1, Health 12

**Offense:** Scuffling +2, Shooting +3; Damage Modifier +0 (improvised club), +2 (beam pistol), Stun 5 (PaciFist)

**Abilities:** Tempus 20

**Special Abilities:** Clock Out (cost 2), Flashback (cost 5), Oracle (cost 1), Technology (cost 2), Teleport (cost 2)

**Misc:** Stealth Modifier +3 (until noticed — impersonator mesh)

## DEEP COVER

**Scene Type:** Core

**Lead-In:** Last Days

**Lead-Out:** The Assassination of Abraham Lincoln... Again

**Summary:** The Agents were burned to give them sufficient cover for infiltrating Restoration

Once they've obtained the communication equipment Nicol trusts them sufficiently that he arranges a meeting with Matthew Tanner. This is conducted onboard the airship R101 on October 4th, 1930, the airship's final flight.

Matthew Tanner invites the Agents to a late evening meal in the dining room as the ship flies over London, toward the English Channel. At around 8:20 p.m. there is a light rain outside, with the weather predicted to worsen.

Tanner explains that the Rebellion meets in places like the airship because they are dangerous for TimeWatch to follow. Pursuing them there could also cause the TimeWatch agents to alter history. The additional presence of the Agents on the airship has some small influence on the timeline, but a larger group might have disastrous consequences. Furthermore if anyone does overhear their discussion they're all fated to die soon.

Matthew Tanner explains a little of his background, explaining he invented a time machine to undo the death of his wife but was thwarted by TimeWatch. He has experienced a number of divergent timelines, including those where things are better for humanity, and believes that TimeWatch only maintains the status quo to preserve its existence.

Once they know his background he makes his case for the Rebellion. They have time machines and so can potentially help everyone. This could result in further problems but they literally have all the time in the world to fix those problems. TimeWatch doesn't want to even try and improve history.

Nicol has vouched for them, but Matthew is not entirely convinced that they have what it takes to join the Rebellion. He sets them the task of formulating a plan to prevent the assassination of Abraham Lincoln, as Matthew believes that timeline will improve if he is allowed to live.

He reminds them that they'll have to deal with TimeWatch who will be trying to undo their actions before they've done anything. The communication equipment they've stolen gives them an advantage, allowing them to tap into the local TimeWatch field office to find out what it's planning.

If the Agents refuse or indicate reluctance to join the Rebellion Matthew points out that they need his group more than the Rebellion needs them.

Matthew gives them time to think on his offer and arranges to meet them at the tavern in Surrattsville, Maryland, at 10 a.m. on April 14th, 1865. He finishes his meal, leaves, and autochrons away.

## REVELATION

Having made contact with Tanner, the Agents' superiors in TimeWatch believe it is now time to make contact. They send someone that the Agents trust to make contact with them, such as a familiar briefing officer.

They make every effort to put the Agents at ease so that they understand they are not under attack. This could occur on the R101 after Tanner has left, or they might receive a message via their tether so that a meeting can be arranged. The Agents could be given the option of setting the terms of this meeting, so that they feel they have control.

Their TimeWatch contact firstly reveals that the organization does not believe that they are part of the Rebellion. They were chosen for a secret mission to go undercover to infiltrate the group but it had to look convincing, hence the ruses.



The Agents are provided with reports on a number of investigations where the rebel cell led by Tanner had disrupted history. He's been witnessed using ezeru bio-weapons, and that might indicate that he knows the location of an ezeru hive. The Agents are to discover the depth of Tanner's involvement with the ezeru; the contact reveals that there have been choral echoes of a conflict against an ezeru queen, and if Tanner is responsible, they want to know now.

If this requires completing a mission for the Rebellion so be it. Once the Agents have obtained the ezeru queen location (if there is one) any alterations to history can be fixed. They should be advised that in order to keep the operation secret only a few know their true role and so they can expect resistance from other TimeWatch members.

This is an opportunity for the Agents to request any additional resources from TimeWatch. The organization takes steps to plant equipment and information in the field so the Agents can obtain it without raising suspicion. The Agents are also promised further incentives if they complete their mission and manage to capture or eliminate Rebellion members.

Note that if the Agents avoid joining the Rebellion or go to great lengths to clear their name this scene can occur earlier. If convinced to continue their mission Agents have to work a little harder to undo the consequences of their earlier actions and make the Rebellion believe they do really want to be members.

If the Agents have a history of interfering in their own past their TimeWatch contact might indicate that this whole plan was their idea or at the very least they volunteered. This may or may not be the truth.

**Research:** "R101"

## THE ASSASSINATION OF ABRAHAM LINCOLN... AGAIN

**Scene Type:** Core

**Lead-In:** Deep Cover

**Lead-Outs:** Bug Hunt, Time to Defect

**Summary:** Save Lincoln's life

Preventing the assassination of Abraham Lincoln on April 14th, 1865, in Washington, DC, allows the Agents to get into the mindset of a rebel. They need to locate key moments that they can alter in order to change the outcome. They need to take into account that TimeWatch will be trying to undo these changes or push history back on to the right track.

The Agents should meet Tanner and the rest of his Restoration cell at Surrattsville. This building combines both a tavern and a post office. Owned by Mary Surratt, mother of Booth's coconspirator John Surratt, the building holds

arms, ammunition, and supplies that John Wilkes Booth and David Herold will collect that evening as they escape from Washington.

In preparation for their plan to alter history Tanner has rented a room to conceal a box of ezeru eggs. He plans to place some in the tavern and at the theater during the operation. If the Agents search his room they likely find them with little effort.

Tanner introduces the Agents to other members of the Rebellion (see *Fellow Rebels*) and encourages the Agents to make use of their skills. They listen to the Agents' ideas and allow them to take the lead but make suggestions based on their experiences of dealing with TimeWatch.

## FELLOW REBELS

The other members of the Rebellion serve to give faces to an organization that the Agents would normally oppose. Through their interactions with the Agents they reveal their motives and should elicit some sympathy.

During the course of their plan these members trust the Agents. They are staking their future on their decisions and hoping that this isn't a TimeWatch trick. Agents must decide whether they betray these members or allow them to escape.

You don't need to use every rebel presented here. Select those that complement the characters of the Agent and best fit into the plans they typically assemble.

### Petronius

Part of the gladiator rebellion led by Spartacus in 73 BCE. For two years they fought against the might of the Roman Republic, freeing other slaves. He would have died on the battlefield if not for the Rebellion.

Physically intimidating, Petronius is a born fighter. It is his belief that everyone deserves to be free, whether it be from the bonds of chains or time. If he must continue to fight or suffer so that others can be freed that is a sacrifice that he is willing to make.

Petronius may appear to be a brute, but he has a big heart and is furiously loyal to his teammates. He is there to act as a human shield or provide a shoulder to cry on in equal measure.

### Petronius' Stats

**Defense:** Hit Threshold 4, Armor 2, Health 16

**Offense:** Scuffling +3, Shooting +1; Damage Modifier +1 (sword)

**Abilities:** Tempus 15; Military Tactics 2, Streetwise 1

**Special Abilities:** Clock Out (cost 2)

### Wade Roche a.k.a. "Chrome Mongoose"

A hacker from the late '90s Wade's specialty was accessing restricted data. While he made a substantial amount of money

selling corporations' secrets to competitors his passion was releasing classified government documents on to the Internet.

He came to the attention of TimeWatch when he began to put together data that revealed the existence of time travelers. Before they could silence him for good the Rebellion helped him escape. Since then the Chrome Mongoose has been the team's resident hacker and technical wizard.

Wade is painfully aware that he isn't attractive or athletic, so he hides behind his persona of the Chrome Mongoose. He often felt that he was born too soon but soon found that the development of the Internet and the rise of social networks leave him cold.

### Chrome Mongoose's Stats

**Defense:** Hit Threshold 4, Health 8

**Offense:** Scuffling +0, Shooting +0; Damage Modifier +0 (improvised club), +1 (pistol)

**Abilities:** Tempus 15; Hacking 3

**Special Abilities:** Clock Out (cost 2), Flashback (cost 5), Oracle (cost 1), Technology (cost 2), Teleport (cost 2)

### Min Liang

Originating from 1352 Min Liang's village came under attack by troops rebelling against the Mongol Yuan dynasty. A time traveler attempted to save the village but was Pacifisted by a TimeWatch operative.

In the resulting massacre both time travelers were killed, drenching Min Liang in their blood. More through luck than skill Min Liang was able to activate the TimeWatch operative's autochron, saving her from certain death.

Min Liang spent some time in the 17th century on a pirate ship, cutting her hair short to disguise her gender. During this time she adopted a small capuchin monkey she named Sun Wukong.

The Rebellion encountered and recruited Min Liang while gathering pirate treasure to fund their operations. Min Liang has proved a valuable member, gifted both at disguise, theft, and close range combat.

Curiously examination of the bloody autochron she recovered indicates one or more of the time travelers she encountered was a direct descendant. As the only living member of her family left this has left Min Liang very concerned for the future that awaits her children.

### Min Liang's Stats

**Defense:** Hit Threshold 4, Health 12

**Offense:** Scuffling +2, Shooting +2; Damage Modifier +1 (sword), +1 (pistol)

**Abilities:** Tempus 15; Spying 1, Streetwise 1

**Special Abilities:** Clock Out (cost 2), Teleport (cost 2)



## Jamie Piper

In a divergent timeline where the Jacobite uprising turned out differently and Bonnie Prince Charlie kept the throne Jamie Piper had a good life in 1759, with a loving family. That was until he met a TimeWatch operative who used him to find out what had been altered.

Whisked into the past Jamie unwittingly helped change the outcome of the uprising, erasing his future from history. Overcome by choral instability he was presumed dead by TimeWatch. In fact he was saved by Restoration.

Now Jamie fights alongside them to restore his timeline and help others who have had their reality taken away from them. He passionately believes that all divergent timelines have a right to exist and that TimeWatch are evil for believing otherwise.

A piper for his clan Jamie is intrigued by the power of music. He has become adept at learning how to play musical instruments and is a skilled song writer. While skilled with a dirk he has helped the team more than once using his musical abilities.

## Jamie Piper's Stats

**Defense:** Hit Threshold 4, Health 12

**Offense:** Scuffling +1, Shooting +1; Damage Modifier +0 (dirk), +1 (pistol)

**Abilities:** Tempus 15; Reassurance 2

**Special Abilities:** Clock Out (cost 2), Teleport (cost 2)

## OPTIONS FOR THE AGENTS

Agents need to be much more proactive during this sequence. **History (Contemporary)** gives the Agents a basic knowledge of the events, and the players should have these facts to hand so that they can put their plan together.

Below you'll find possible actions that the Agents might pursue:

### Warn Abraham Lincoln

This is the course of action that is least likely to work. Indeed there were many close to Lincoln that believed that he was aware that he was going to be assassinated. On April 1st Lincoln dreamt that mourners in the East Room of the White House told him that the president had been assassinated, a dream which he had several more times leading up to April 14th.

Not even an attempt on his life could persuade Lincoln to be more cautious. In August 1864 an unknown assailant shot the hat off his head while riding his horse at night just outside of Washington.

Agents can still attempt to warn or frighten Lincoln. They might even be responsible for the above premonitions (possibly using drugs or holographic technology to provide these visions) and mysterious assassination attempt (taking care not to actually kill the president).

**Intimidation, Charm, Military Tactics,** and **Spying** could all be used to influence Lincoln and convince him of

the wisdom of increasing his security. A 1- or 2-point spend of each increases the security present at the Ford's Theatre but nothing can persuade him from going.

The main reason for this is that Lincoln suffers from what would today be diagnosed as clinical depression but was then called melancholy. To combat these dark moods Lincoln would raise his spirits in works of humor so will not miss the chance to see the comedic play *Our American Cousins*.

Furthermore Lincoln had contracted smallpox during the Gettysburg address. His symptoms have become increasingly worse, affecting his routine at the White House. He knows that blindness and crippling arthritis are in his future so death holds little fear for him. **Medical Expertise** can identify these conditions. A 1-point spend can temporarily alleviate the symptoms while a 2-point spend can cure them (along with some future medicine).

All of this depends on the Agents being able to get close to Lincoln. Given his lax security they shouldn't have too many problems from local forces, but TimeWatch might put obstacles in their way, particularly if the encounter is likely to be recorded.

If the Agents do influence Lincoln TimeWatch may attempt to persuade him that he does need to die on April 14th, 1865. They might do this through mental suggestion or take him to the future to show him the legacy he will leave behind.

Warning Lincoln should just be one part of the Agents' plan.

### Apprehending or Neutralizing John Wilkes Booth

The most obvious means of preventing the assassinating might be to target the assassin. This requires the Agents to know something of Booth's plan and movements during the historic day so that they might sabotage the attempt.

John Wilkes Booth was a Confederate sympathizer and well-known actor. From 1864 he'd plotted variously to kidnap or kill the president, although he met with little success. The assassination plot on April 14th, 1865, was hastily assembled.

At noon Booth visited Ford's Theatre in order to pick up his mail. While there he learned from the theater owner's brother that Lincoln, Ulysses Grant, and their wives would be attending a performance of *Our American Cousins*.

Booth booked the box next to the president, with only a thin dividing wall between them. It was a simple matter for him to bore a small peephole so he could see his target later than night.

Returning to his boarding house he asked the owner, Mary Surratt, to travel to the Surrattsville tavern to ask her tenant, John Lloyd, to prepare the arms that had been stored there.

Sometime during the afternoon either Booth or fellow conspirator Michael O'Laughlen learned that Grant and his wife weren't attending the play. Instead, they had headed to Union Station, departing for Philadelphia, with O'Laughlen onboard to attempt to assassinate Grant later.

By 7 p.m. Booth had assembled his coconspirators. Lewis Powell was to kill Secretary of State William H. Seward and George Atzerodt was to kill Vice President Andrew Johnson.

David E. Herold was to take Powell to Seward's home and help him escape. Only George Atzerodt voiced reluctance as he did not want to become an assassin.

Lincoln and his party (including Major Henry Rathbone and his fiancée, Clara Harris) arrived late, at 8:30 p.m. after the play had begun. The play was briefly halted and the orchestra played *Hail to the Chief* while the audience gave a standing ovation.

Booth entered his own box around 10:25 p.m. Having performed in *Our American Cousins* several times he was familiar with the play and waited until the actor Harry Hawk delivered a particularly funny line.

Using the roar of laughter to cover the noise of his attack, he stealthily entered the president's box and shot Lincoln in the back of the head with a Philadelphia Deringer. Major Rathbone attempted to grapple Booth but was slashed several times by the assassin's dagger.

Booth made his escape by leaping onto the stage, and, being familiar with the layout of the theater, escaped on a horse waiting for him outside.

Any public altercation with Booth prior to the assassination attempt is not likely to go well. Booth is a celebrity and so can quickly gather support from anyone in earshot. Any accusations are likely to fall on deaf ears and if the police are called it is the Agents who find themselves under arrest.

Agents might decide to attack Booth in private, perhaps ambushing him in his room or when he is otherwise alone. Booth may or may not be armed but is not a skilled fighter. He does have protection in the form of the troubleshooters assigned to monitor his movements, who come to his aid.

With enough planning it is entirely possible Agents could incapacitate or kill Booth. TimeWatch can react to this several ways. It may use a troubleshooter disguised as Booth to fulfill his role. Alternatively it can influence one of his coconspirators to take the role of the assassin (O'Laughlen makes a good candidate if troubleshooters can approach him before he boards the train).

The Agents might take a more subtle approach, attempting to stop Booth from learning about Lincoln's visit to the theater. If they can ensure his mail is brought to him he has no reason to visit the theater that day, and if he does go the Agents can try to make sure no one mentions the president's arrival.

This is likely a short term solution as Booth would likely hear of it sometime during the day. If not TimeWatch troubleshooters could make sure that the information falls into his hands. At the very least it might throw off his timing, and it is possible that he might not be able to reserve the box next to the president's, making reaching him a little more difficult.

They may target his coconspirators. If Booth didn't have any support he might think twice before attempting his plan. The very fact that he had an escape plan suggests that he wasn't willing to die for his cause. This does require the Agents to target more people, but this also means it is more difficult for TimeWatch to monitor and protect each member of the conspiracy.

**Burglary** could allow the Agents to steal Booth's Deringer moments before the assassination or use **Tinkering** to sabotage it (possibly causing it to explode in his hands). TimeWatch counters this by placing replacement weapons somewhere

where Booth can obtain them (such as in his theater box).

Agents may attempt to neutralize Booth further into the past. They could change his circumstances so that he is no longer a Confederate sympathizer or is booked by a theater in another part of the country when the assassination is due to take place. They should be aware that the further into the past they go the more time TimeWatch has to make adjustments.

## Sabotaging the Play

While TimeWatch is focusing on Booth and Lincoln they may not be concentrating on the play itself. Written in 1858 by Tom Taylor it is a farce with American Asa Trenchard visiting his aristocrat relatives in England, with much of the humor derived from the clash of culture and Trenchard's boorish behavior.

The performance was produced by English actor and producer Laura Keane, who would receive the house proceeds. Actors John Dyott and Harry Hawk, from Keane's New York theatre company, would take the lead roles.

Booth is relying on the big laughs of the play to cover his attack so a change to the performance might throw him off. Agents could find ways to become actors in the play, although this would mean troubleshooters present in the theater would be more likely to spot them. It would, however, mean the Agents would be in a prime position to watch the audience and perhaps warn Lincoln at a crucial moment.

They might find a way to have Booth become part of the play. If he has to be on stage then he has no time to attack the president. There is a slim chance that Booth might refuse to attend on principle, due to his anti-Lincoln stance. There is also a danger that Lincoln, who was a fan of Booth, might request a meeting with him backstage, which would give Booth an opportunity to assassinate him.

Going further back the Agents might influence Tom Taylor to make the play unsuitable for Booth's purposes. If they alter it too much there is a danger that it won't become popular and another play is performed on April 14th, 1865. As long as it is still a comedy Lincoln attends.

## Saving Lincoln's Life

The Agents may decide that rather than stopping the assassination they can just try to ensure that Lincoln doesn't die.

After Booth had made his getaway Lincoln was treated by Dr. Charles Leale and Dr. Charles Sabin Taft, who had been in the audience. Lincoln was paralyzed and his breathing faint. The bullet was lodged in his brain, unable to be moved although the doctors were able to improve his breathing by dislodging blood clots.

Lincoln was moved by the doctors and several soldiers across the road to Petersen House, a boarding house. Despite best efforts Lincoln would eventually pass away at 7:22 a.m. the following morning.

If an Agent poses as a doctor it is likely that they are allowed access to treat Lincoln. Using the **Medic** ability they may be able to treat him, although the other doctors present may protest at any medical treatments they are unfamiliar with.

Small changes the Agents make might also change the nature of his injuries. Sabotaging Booth's Deringer, throwing off his aim at a vital moment, or giving Lincoln enough time to try to dodge the attack could lead to less serious injuries from which he might recover.

Troubleshooters try to prevent Lincoln's recovery, but following the assassination security would be increased, making it more difficult to interfere.

## INTERFERING WITH THEMSELVES

Any attempt to save Lincoln's life is detected by TimeWatch, who dispatches a team of troubleshooters to make sure it doesn't happen. That means that there are TimeWatch troubleshooters in the theater actively working to thwart them, even as they work to engineer Lincoln's survival.

It's even more complicated than that. If you have already played *Time Will Tell*, you know that it turns out that Lincoln was supposed to have lived in real history and died due to meddling with the official record. In this case, the Agents are working to make sure that Lincoln does die and his death wasn't reversed. If you haven't yet played *Time Will Tell*, be aware that the Agents may need to return to this very night, in order to help ensure their own success.

In practice, that means that strange deus ex machinas might occur to aid the Agents — troubleshooters distracted or rendered unconscious, Abe Lincoln suddenly wearing body armor, Lincoln recognizing the Agents because he saw older versions of them just a short time prior, and the like. Make notes after the game of what happened; these will be fun to refer to during *Time Will Tell*, when the Agents need to not trip over themselves so as to not risk Paradox tests.

## THE TIMEWATCH FIELD OFFICE

Since the assassination of Abraham Lincoln is such an important event TimeWatch established a temporary field office, situated within Washington. This allows the coordination of multiple operatives thwarting several temporal events around this period.

The stolen communication equipment allows the Agents to decrypt and listen in on the activities of the field office. Throughout the day the operatives keep track of both Booth and Lincoln. Any TimeWatch members arriving at this location report in and can get an update on any disturbances.

This inside information allows the Agents to keep track of what troubleshooters are present during the actual assassination. There are troubleshooters in the audience, dressed in period costume. There are also troubleshooters using their impersonator mesh to patrol the theater, including backstage.

The Agents might be surprised to discover that Lincoln's footman is also an undercover TimeWatch troubleshooter. It is his job to lure Lincoln's only security, local police officer John Frederick Parker, away during the intermission to share a drink. This makes it considerably easier for Booth to carry out his attack.

If the Agents use too much of this inside knowledge the

troubleshooters may realize their communication systems have been compromised. From that point forward they scramble their systems differently, denying the Rebellion this advantage.

## OTHER ASSASSINATIONS

If the Agents are successful in saving Lincoln TimeWatch may have to take extreme measures to ensure that history follows the same path. This could mean engineering his assassination earlier. There are three incidences that they could alter to fulfill this goal.

The first is the previously mentioned attempted assassination in August 1864. The Agents could find that history now records the mysterious assassin was successful in killing the president. They need to make sure that the assassination fails.

The second incident occurs on March 4th, 1865. John Wilkes Booth was secretly engaged to Lucy Hale, daughter of Senator John Parker Hale. She invited Booth to Lincoln's second inauguration, which put him very close to the president (a photo from the time shows Booth in a balcony above Lincoln). Not only that but Powell, Atzerodt, and Herold were also in the crowd. Only afterwards did Booth realize what a great opportunity it would have been to assassinate Lincoln.

It would be a simple matter for troubleshooters to plant the idea in Booth's mind beforehand to carry out the assassination, possibly by posing as coconspirators. If Booth was able to successfully smuggle a weapon into the inauguration (which wouldn't be too hard) then history would still record that Lincoln was assassinated by Booth with only the circumstances changing. Agents would now have to prevent this new assassination attempt, this time at the White House.

Finally, on March 17th, 1865, Booth planned to kidnap Lincoln as he returned from seeing a play at the local military hospital, Campbell General. His coconspirators met him at a nearby restaurant only to discover Lincoln had changed his plan and instead attended a ceremony in which he received a captured Confederate flag from the 142nd Indiana infantry. The event was held in the very place Booth had been staying, the National Hotel.

Troubleshooters can either ensure that Lincoln does attend the play at the hospital (and engineer his death during the kidnapping attempt) or persuade Booth to stay at the hotel, putting him in the perfect position to assassinate the president.

Having TimeWatch attempt one or more of these alterations puts the Agents in more familiar territory. They need to find out where history has diverged and undo the alterations. Bear in mind the pacing of the adventure as investigating and correcting these changes can be a lengthy process.

## BUG HUNT

**Scene Type:** Alternate

**Lead-In:** The Assassination of Abraham Lincoln... Again

**Lead-Out:** Time to Defect

**Summary:** Ezeru queen is a known entity who was defeated decades ago



The Agents' goal is to convince Matthew Tanner to reveal where he is getting the ezeru weapons from. Only he knows the exact time and place, and he becomes suspicious if the Agents mention the weapons before he brings them up. Tanner supplies such weapons to the Agents as rewards for loyalty.

Ezeru tend to use their natural body weaponry in combat, but Tanner has a gift for adapting ezeru fluids, insects, and carapaces into significant weaponry. He doesn't realize that he has psychic abilities that he's subconsciously utilizing. It's possible that his mind has been altered by ezeru; it's possible that it's a particularly revolting gift. Either way, he can create bio-weapons as easily as a soldier might strip and clean a revolver. All Tanner needs is the raw ingredients and some time.

Potential ezeru-adapted weapons that Matthew Tanner might give to people he likes include:

- ▶ **Carapace Quills.** Blatant, Restricted. Cost: gift from Matthew Tanner. This chunk of chitin squirms beneath the flesh when attached, then sprouts razor-sharp spikes when the wearer is under attack. Any foe or ally within Point-Blank range automatically takes 2 Health damage every time the wearer makes a Scuffling attack. This damage is considered Scuffling damage and can be reduced by armor. The chitin can be removed only by someone with Medical Expertise; left in place it begins to rot, and reduces the wearer's maximum Health rating by 1 point per day in place. This Health rating returns to normal after the chitin is surgically removed.

- ▶ **Bile Spray.** Blatant, Restricted. Cost: gift from Matthew Tanner. Drinking this noxious fluid transforms the human digestive system and allows the user to spew corrosive bile on foes within Close range. A bile spray attack uses Shooting and, if successful, inflicts Damage Modifier +3 acid damage on a target and anyone else in Point-Blank range to that target. The effectiveness ends after 24 hours, at which point the user takes Damage Modifier +3 Health damage as the internal acid sacs collapse.

- ▶ **Wood Ghost.** Blatant, Restricted. Cost: gift from Matthew Tanner. This beetle forearm is placed over a human's real forearm. When activated, the psychic energy stored in the device allows the user to seamlessly pass through wood particles (such as walls or trees) at full speed and without leaving a sign.

- ▶ **The Click.** Blatant, Restricted. Cost: gift from Matthew Tanner. Attached to the user's spine (a procedure that happened automatically when put in place, a fact that sure isn't creepy at all), this exoskeletal arm can propel the Agent forwards at high speed. The user gains Lightning Speed and can close distances twice as quickly as normal, as the arm flings them forward. This is best detached by a surgeon after several days; after that, the arm begins acting under its own will, and can be controlled mentally by any ezeru in the vicinity.

- ▶ **Ezeru Infestator (Advanced).** Detailed in *TimeWatch* core rules, p. 131.

Tanner gives these as rewards to the people he likes and trusts. If asked whether they came from the lair of an ezeru queen, he smiles and winks knowingly; he doesn't want people to know the truth.

Tanner will typically equip the Agents once the plan to save Lincoln is already in motion. He mentions to the Agents that he has a gift for them. If the Agents question where he got the weapons from he indicates he'll tell them once they've changed history.

If the Agents ask and they've gained Tanner's trust, Tanner takes the Agents on a weapon-gathering mission to get replacements. He autochrons to the space-time coordinates and has the Agents follow. Alternatively, if he doesn't trust the Agents enough to take them with him, the Agents need to be ready to track him down after he has used his autochron.

If the Agents do a good job of saving Lincoln and convince Tanner they are ready to change allegiances proceed to *Time to Defect*. Tanner does not immediately travel to the ezeru queen lair, and they need to either go on their own or pass the information on to TimeWatch.

The Agents may decide to force Tanner to reveal the location. If they demonstrate that the Rebellion cell has no options available to it then Tanner reluctantly agrees to take them to the location.

## QUEEN, DEPARTED

Tanner's source of raw material for ezeru weapons is a cavern in Krubera Cave, the deepest cave known on Earth, located in the Western Caucasus of Georgia in the year 814. Tanner

has no desire to fight the queen, and so his window of arrival is very precise, a period of time when she is busy slaughtering other TimeWatch operatives sent to exterminate her in a different part of the cave (and she does, in fact, kill all members of the group distracting her). Those operatives attempt and fail to use advanced weaponry against her; Tanner doesn't know or care how that turns out, just so long as he isn't around when the bombs go off. The carnage sounds hideous. This assault, in fact, is the final straw that convinces this queen to move to New York City, where she will eventually be encountered in *The Hatching Time*.

From his perspective, Tanner clocks into the loathsome location, searches through the glistening egg sacs and sticky debris for any interesting artifacts or weapon material, and flees; he may catch a glimpse of himself flickering out from a different trip. If he brings the Agents with him, they are at risk of attracting the attention of an ezeru warrior.

### Matthew Tanner

**Defense:** Hit Threshold 4, Armor 3 (temporary ezeru bio-plating), Health 16

**Offense:** Scuffling +2, Shooting +2; Damage Modifier +2 (suddenly sprouting ezeru pincer), +2 (beam pistol), +3 (bile spray)

**Abilities:** Tempus 20; Authority 2, Falsehood Detection 1, Spying 1

**Special Abilities:** Clock Out (cost 2), Flashback (cost 5), Oracle (cost 1), Psychic (cost 2), Technology (cost 2), Teleport (cost 2)

**Misc:** Anyone within Point-Blank range automatically suffers 2 Health damage when Tanner makes a Scuffling attack.

### Ezeru Warrior

**Defense:** Hit Threshold 4, Armor 4, Health 25

**Offense:** Scuffling +3 (+2 when impersonating a large animal), Shooting +2; Damage Modifier +3 (razor-sharp chitin), +4 (jagged mandibles), +4 (acidic bile), Stun 7 (psi-active bile)

**Abilities:** Tempus 18

**Special Abilities:** Clock Out (cost 2), Extra Action (cost 2), Flight (cost 2), Impersonation (cost 2 — psychically links the ezeru drone to a single animal encased in the ezeru's paralytic bile), Lightning Speed (cost 2), Resist Stun; warriors can attack by spitting acidic or paralytic bile within Close range

**Misc:** Alertness Modifier +1

Agents with two or more rating points of **Timecraft** know that the Krubera Cave confrontation took place decades ago; this is a known ezeru queen, so it isn't the confrontation they're seeing notification of, the one they need to be worried about. (This confrontation will occur in *The Hatching Time*.)

**Research:** "Krubera Cave"

## TIME TO DEFECT

**Scene Type:** Conclusion

**Lead-Ins:** The Assassination of Abraham Lincoln... Again, Bug Hunt

**Summary:** Do the Agents report Restoration's new secret refuge?

Once history has been changed, Tanner gathers the Rebellion members and arranges for them to travel to Washington, 1980. They know that this divergent timeline only exists until TimeWatch undoes their alterations, but they have a plan.

The version of the 1980s the Agents find themselves in is not as bright as Tanner anticipated. The exact details depend on the Agents' actions and your own decisions.

## LINCOLN SHOT

If Lincoln suffered a brain injury but lived he suffered a debilitating disability for the rest of his life. This left the government in chaos as there was no provision for the vice president or anyone else to take over if the president was incapacitated.

Exploiting this confusion, several southern states eventually broke away from the Union. By the 1980s several different unions and alliances have formed, fighting over diminishing resources. Their lack of involvement in major conflicts has left the rest of the world worse off.

## AN EMPIRE OF FEAR

If the Agents used fear or intimidation to increase security, the consequences of the attempted assassination showed Lincoln that he couldn't take any chances with his own safety. For the sake of his country, the president's well-being must come above all else.

Lincoln spent his final days a recluse, afraid of further attempts on his life. His personal security agency ruthlessly searched for and eliminated any remaining Confederate sympathizers. There were numerous small rebellions which were quickly quashed.

Every subsequent president followed his lead, turning America into a police state. Their foreign policy is equally aggressive, ensuring that no other country dare strike against the US. By 1980 a secret alliance plots to make its move to free the world from the paranoia of America.

## A HOUSE DIVIDED

Lincoln is shaken by the attempt on his life and fanaticism of Confederate sympathizers like Booth. He becomes convinced that the wounds of the Civil War will never be healed. Without conviction in his own beliefs Lincoln's policies are variously opposed or flounder.

With his melancholy worsening Lincoln steps down from office just as North and South once again go to war. It is a terrible period in which both sides suffer terrible losses. When

the conflict is over it is left to a new, charismatic leader to unite the country.

Lincoln becomes a footnote in history, forever in the shadow of the man who would follow him.

## THE REBELLION MOVES IN

Regardless of which version of history you choose, or if you make up your own brighter version, the Rebellion begins the next stage of its plan. It has assembled technology that allows the timeline to survive even after TimeWatch has repaired the damage.

This will allow it to use the timeline as a safe haven and base of operations. It will be largely unreachable to TimeWatch but the Rebellion will be able to return to the prime timeline by returning to 1865 or earlier.

Setting up the equipment to make this possible takes time, allowing the Agents to attempt to stop the Rebellion if they wish. They may find support in those members of the Rebellion who are disappointed with the consequences of their actions.

If the Agents don't want to join the Rebellion permanently, Tanner still attempts to persuade them to let it try its plan. He argues that the Rebellion deserves a chance at freedom and building a better timeline. Tanner plans to demonstrate that by making further changes to this divergent timeline he can make it perfect.

To further persuade them Tanner offers them anything he can provide, including the location of the ezeru queen if they

don't already possess it. All he asks in return is that the Agents don't reveal the divergent timeline's existence to TimeWatch.

What the Agents decide has lasting consequences for their future relationship with both TimeWatch and the Rebellion.

## THE TRUTH ABOUT TANNER

If you have no desire to let the Agents join the Rebellion or for TimeWatch to be involved in anything underhanded there is a final revelation for the Agents to discover.

In the midst of setting up the equipment to preserve the diverged timeline the Agents can discover a concealed collection of devices, familiar from Nicol's description of events in Pompeii. **Science!** reveals they are interdiction devices designed to shutdown autochrons and tethers. A 1-point spend indicates they are triggered by TimeWatch autochrons arriving in their vicinity. A 2-point spend shows they are not based on TimeWatch technology.

If questioned about this Tanner explains that they are a safety device to neutralize any TimeWatch members that follow them. If this is brought up in front of Nicol he recalls that Tanner claimed they were created by TimeWatch.

It becomes clear that Tanner intended to strand TimeWatch operatives to die in Pompeii. He has become subverted by ezeru (or perhaps cares more for victory than for life). Either way, the revelation sends political shockwaves through Restoration, as rebel members learn that their leader would sacrifice his ideals to summarily kill their enemy.

# HATCHET AND AXE

## OVERVIEW

Ezeru are insectoid monstrosities whose entire existence depends on a radioactive, postapocalyptic Earth, and meat-soft humanity just isn't destroying itself at the speed needed in order to make that a certainty. The shape-shifting, giant radioactive cockroaches will need to take history into their own hands in order to make sure nuclear war becomes an inevitability.

This time? A brief angelic impersonation in 1900 can tip the US and USSR into nuclear Armageddon during the 1962 Cuban Missile Crisis, unless TimeWatch finds a way to stop it.

## BACKGROUND

### THE PLOT

The adventure has two main action sequences, at start and end, with roleplaying and plenty of investigation in between. The Agents are likely to spend time in 1962 (*Cuban Missile Crisis*), the 1950s (*Shave and a Haircut, Two Bits*), 1900 (*Message for You, Sir*), and possibly 1867 (*The Worst Wedding Toast Ever*).

The game starts in medias res underwater, in a Soviet submarine off the coast of 1962 Cuba, minutes before a Soviet commander has to make a decision that will save or doom hundreds of millions of Americans and Russians. This incident is merely the ezeru fail-safe plan, however (designed to teach the players the rules); even when the Agents save the day on the submarine, the main ezeru plan will have plunged the world into nuclear war.

This first scene is analogous to the pre-credits action of a Bond movie. It shouldn't take more than an hour to complete.

Once Agents learn that nuclear war occurs regardless of their heroic actions, they'll want to find out why. They learn that President Nixon flubbed the negotiations with Khrushchev — worrisome, because John F. Kennedy should have been president instead of Richard Nixon. Tracking down Kennedy reveals that he now runs a popular barber shop in South Boston, and never went into the military, college, law school, or politics. (He does, however, give a heck of a haircut.)

Clearly, in this version of history the Kennedy family isn't wealthy. Why? Investigation shows that historically, Joe

Kennedy (John F. Kennedy's father) was a successful money manager and bank president. In real history he got out of the stock market before the great crash of 1929, after a shoeshine boy gave him stock tips. Joe Kennedy reportedly invested his money in alcohol that he sold at great profit during Prohibition. He then turned this small fortune into a great fortune by canny investments in real estate and Hollywood.<sup>1</sup>

In this revised history, Prohibition never occurred, so Joe never had a chance to strike it big. Worse, he lost what money he did have when the stock crash occurred, having never gotten advice that convinced him the market was ready for a fall. With no fortune to buoy the family, the Kennedy boys never entered the world stage.



<sup>1</sup> This is somewhat open for debate, historically, but the great thing about alternate history is that if a historical fact is murky then we're delighted to choose whatever works best for our adventure. For the purposes of this adventure, bootlegging is how Joe Kennedy built the family fortune. If that isn't the actual historical truth, well then, it should be.

Why didn't Prohibition occur? Historically, a temperance activist named Carrie Nation made a very public impression on the nation with her highly violent, publicized activities of smashing up saloons. Her mission was reputedly given to her in an actual vision from God in 1900, and her actions drew attention and support to the temperance movement.

In the revised history, ezeru simulate this message but convince Nation that alcohol is *good*, not evil. Prohibition never occurs without the momentum Nation brings to the cause, ensuring that the Kennedys never gain their initial fortune and dooming the world to nuclear war in 1962.

Once the Agents identify the key linchpin — Carrie Nation's vision from God at the turn of the 20th century — they can make sure she receives the correct message to solve the time change. Of course, they also need to face down the hidden and disguised ezeru around her to set history back on its proper course.

## TONE

*Hatchet and Axe* is core *TimeWatch*, which means good ole two-fisted sci-fi time traveling. You'll probably see fewer dinosaurs and more clever time tricks. Ezeru are creepy foes, although their end goals of nuclear exchanges and increased background radiation make them moderately predictable. Agents are smart and competent, and generally have better equipment than the humans they face in any particular time period. Ezeru are dangerous and care little about human exposure once their plans are revealed; Agents will need to defeat their foes while still maintaining secrecy.

Expect heavy action and roleplaying near the beginning and end of the game, with roleplaying in the middle as they work their way back through the mystery. Particularly rich opportunities for roleplay involve negotiations (or cover-ups) on the 1962 submarine, talking to John or Joe Kennedy, and finding a way to manipulate Carrie Nation and her husband back in the 19th century.

## TIMELINE

The Agents begin at the Cuban Missile Crisis on October 27, 1962. Confirming that their actions here were successful (probably by jumping briefly into the future) shows that something else changed as well. Research shows that John Kennedy wasn't president in 1962. They may travel back to speak to Kennedy in his 1950s South Boston barber shop. This leads them to realizing that Prohibition never occurred; research into this shows that temperance activist Carrie Nation had the wrong holy vision in 1899, along with a few other changes. The Agents travel to 1899 or to Nation's wedding in 1867 to thwart the ezeru and set things right. They'll finish in New York City just before the great stock market crash.

## THE MISSION

The Cuban Missile Crisis of 1962 resulted in war, and *TimeWatch* doesn't yet know why. The most likely cause is a

submarine-based nuclear launch. The Agents are dispatched to investigate and stop it.

In truth, the submarine is a backup plan for a much more involved series of events that put Richard Nixon into office just in time to bungle Cuban missile negotiations with the Russians.

## BRIEFING

It's recommended that you skip the briefing if you prefer a fast and action-packed start. Beginning the game as late as possible in the mission helps keep pacing tight. If you prefer a briefing, use or adapt the following.

*The holographic display in the briefing room shows the island of Cuba in 1962, and its proximity to Florida. Activity of Russian troops on the island and the approximate of Russian missile batteries glow in red. A submarine is shown off the coast as the map zooms in, and American warships can be seen around the sub.*

*"This submarine is the B-59. In true history, its three exhausted senior officers argued as to whether they should use the sub's nuclear torpedo, and decided not to. In our current changed history, they did, and they started massive thermonuclear war. Find out what changed, and stop them. The officers are Captain Valentin Savitsky, political officer Ivan Maslennikov, and flotilla commander Vasili Arkehipov. You are to infiltrate the sub several minutes prior to nuclear launch, find the saboteur, and prevent the disaster. Then jump forward in time to ensure that the mission's aftereffects went as anticipated. You can always tweak any side effects that you need to adjust. Good luck."*

## LIKELY ADVENTURE PATH

**Cuban Missile Crisis.** The Agents move through a panicky, low-oxygen submarine to stop an ezeru and prevent a nuclear torpedo from being launched.

**Dammit, Nixon, You Had One Job.** Investigation in a post-nuclear wasteland (probably by traveling to less devastated areas of the irradiated United States) reveals that nuclear war happened regardless several days after the submarine event, when President Nixon faltered during negotiations. Research shows that Kennedy wasn't president because he was running a barber shop in South Boston.

**Shave and a Haircut, Two Bits.** Agents discover that the reason Kennedy is a barber is because his family had no money to send him to college or private school. His father did have savings, but they were lost during the stock market crash leading to the Depression, and his father never regained their fortunes.

**A Prohibition Against Prohibition.** It's known that Joe Kennedy got out of the market before the crash, and there is supposition that he made his initial stake by bootlegging during Prohibition. In fact, Prohibition never occurred. Additional research indicates that the great temperance agitator Carrie Nation instead campaigned *for* alcohol instead of against it. In this history, her husband was not an alcoholic and her 1899 divine vision showed her that alcohol was a heavenly gift.



**The Worst Wedding Toast Ever.** Disguised ezeru inject Nation's husband with a substance that makes him allergic to alcohol, preventing him from developing alcoholism. He becomes ill during the wedding toast unless the Agents prevent the injection just before his wedding.

**Message For You, Sir.** Ezeru are responsible for Nation's so-called vision from God about alcohol. Agents must stop them and substitute their own.

**Last Step.** Warning Joe Kennedy not to stay in the stock market requires a shoeshine boy disguise, but finishing this final step crushes the ezeru plan definitively.

## CUBAN MISSILE CRISIS

**Scene Type:** Intro

**Lead-Out:** Dammit, Nixon, You Had One Job

**Summary:** Uncover ezeru involvement to create nuclear war

### SYNOPSIS

The Agents start the game in October 27, 1962, on the Soviet submarine *B-59*, as Soviet flotilla commander Arkhipov (secretly an ezeru named Squa'Klkt) convinces Captain Savitsky to launch their nuclear-tipped torpedo; in real history, Arkhipov convinced the Captain *not* to fire. The Agents must convince the captain not to launch, must sabotage the sub's launch systems, or both. They likely fight and destroy the ezeru as well.

Don't worry too much about submarine realism; everything you know about subs from *The Hunt for Red October* should be sufficient to run this encounter.

### BACKGROUND

One of the most dangerous incidents during the Cuban Missile Crisis — and arguably in the history of mankind — was on October 27, 1962. The USS *Beale* was tracking and dropping hand grenade-sized signaling depth charges on the *B-59*, a Soviet submarine in Cuban waters. Unknown to the US, the *B-59* was armed with a 15-kiloton nuclear torpedo. The Soviet submarine was surrounded by the American fleet but was running out of air and needed to surface.

Three officers on the *B-59*, all exhausted and suffering from low oxygen, argued as to whether they should use the torpedo. These officers were:

- ▶ submarine captain Valentin Savitsky
- ▶ political officer Ivan Maslennikov
- ▶ flotilla commander Vasili Arkhipov

Captain Savitsky was at the end of his rope and ordered that the nuclear torpedo be readied. Commander Arkhipov convinced Savitsky not to make the attack. It's estimated that if the *B-59* had attacked, nuclear escalation would have been almost inevitable and some 200 million Americans and Soviets would have died in the ensuing war.

## GAMEPLAY

The Agents clock into a small, confined metal space lit only by emergency lights. The muffled explosions of depth charges are like sitting in a metal barrel which someone is constantly hitting with a sledgehammer. The air is heavy and hard to breathe, low on oxygen and foul with body odor. The attack lasts for four hours, during which time the temperature in the sub rises to 50°C; some sailors pass out.

**Due to the heat and low oxygen, any Athletics tests made while onboard have a Difficulty 2 higher than normal. A failed Athletics test may result in brief unconsciousness as from a failed Stun test, at the GM's discretion.**

The Agents appear in a small supply closet. Tell them the background:

- ▶ Near the end of the Cuban Missile Crisis, when the Soviets placed nuclear missiles on Cuba and the US came to the brink of war, an aircraft carrier and 11 US destroyers found and harassed a Soviet sub named the *B-59*.
- ▶ Unknown to the *Beale*, the *B-59* carried a nuclear-tipped torpedo. Running out of air and harassed by the USS *Beale*, the exhausted sub captain lost his temper and ordered the torpedo to be assembled. He almost launched the torpedo but was talked out of it by the flotilla commander. That happens five minutes from now.
- ▶ You've been sent back here because for some reason the torpedo *was* launched, resulting in nuclear war. You're to find out why and stop it.

Tethers can supply schematics of the sub to anyone with **Architecture** or **Military Tactics** who requests them. The bridge (where Captain Savitsky, political officer Maslennikov, and an ezeru disguised as flotilla commander Vasili Arkhipov are arguing, surrounded by choking and scared sailors and a whole lot of sonar going PING!) is to the left, in the middle of the sub. The weapons room (where the missile is) is to the right, at the front of the sub.

Agents may choose to immediately clock back out (making a Travel test to do so) in order to plan more carefully before returning. This is perfectly allowable, but don't let the game lag too much. Telling the players that this is the "pre-credits" scene is usually enough to get them moving again.

### B-59 Weapons Room

The door to this section is a locked and guarded bulkhead, a massive metal door with a big wheel in the middle. The outside of the door is guarded by two muscled sailors with truncheons. They don't let anyone through without direct authorization by the captain or the commander.

### Guard

**Defense:** Hit Threshold 4, Health 3

**Offense:** Scuffling +2; Damage Modifier +0 (baton)

**Abilities:** Athletics 8

**Misc:** As they're aboard a submarine, only senior officers are

issued a pistol

Inside the weapons room are five more sailors whose responsibility includes loading torpedoes and missiles. The nuclear-tipped torpedo is currently armed and loaded in the torpedo tube, but it cannot be fired unless two soldiers deliberately take action to do so. They only do this on a direct order from the captain.

Four of these soldiers are Mooks (use the above stats); the fifth man, Sgt. Eschenkov, is a more capable combatant. Unless tricked, they fight to the death against what they see as an armed mutiny.

## Eschenkov

**Defense:** Hit Threshold 4, Health 8

**Offense:** Scuffling +2; Damage Modifier +0 (baton)

**Abilities:** Athletics 8

**Misc:** As they're aboard a submarine, only senior officers are issued a pistol

## B-59 Bridge

The bridge of the submarine is full of sailors whose job seems to be repeating orders into a tannoy's microphone. The shudder of depth charges shakes the sub, and everyone is looking terrified.

The captain is arguing with his advisers a few feet away from the sailors. Agents can make a standard Difficulty 4 **Unobtrusiveness** test in order to get close enough to hear. Agents with the **Notice** ability can hear automatically.

*The captain is clearly exhausted and furious, rubbing his eyes. He is saying in Russian (which is automatically translated for the Agents), "We're going to blast them now. We will die, but we will sink them all. We will not disgrace our navy."*

*The political officer says, "Captain, I agree. You should launch the torpedo and demonstrate the might of Mother Russia."*

*The flotilla commander, who historically talks the captain out of this decision, instead says, "We are all agreed, Captain. If the Americans capture us, they will seize our torpedo. Better to prove our strength and launch it than face that shame."*

The Agents overhearing this have perhaps half a minute before the captain gives the order to launch the torpedo. They are likely to use Interpersonal abilities to change his mind, separate the commander from the others, or both. They may also destroy the communications equipment. Allow creative plans to work.

The ezeru imitating Arkhipov keeps its disguise until exposed by the Agents. You'll find the scene easier if it reveals itself in private, so that the Agents don't have to explain away the monstrosity to the other sailors, but follow their lead and go with whatever is most cinematic.

## Squa'Klkt, Ezeru Drone

**Defense:** Hit Threshold 4, Armor 3, Health 15

**Offense:** Scuffling +3 (+2 when impersonating a human), Shooting +1; Damage Modifier +2 (hideous clacking pincers), +3 (jagged mandibles), +1 (pistol), +4 (acidic bile), Stun 6 (psi-active bile)

**Abilities:** Tempus 12

**Special Abilities:** Clock Out (cost 2), Extra Action (cost 2), Impersonation (cost 2 — psychically links the ezeru drone to a single human or animal encased in the ezeru's paralytic bile), Lightning Speed (cost 2), Resist Stun; drones can attack by spitting acidic or paralytic bile within Close range

**Misc:** Alertness Modifier +1, Stealth Modifier +1

This encounter ends when the ezeru is captured or destroyed, the crew members have had their memories altered (whether through MEM-tags or convincing explanations), and the torpedo is assured to not be launched.

Note that Squa'Klkt is the same ezeru who interferes with Carrie Nation's life later in the adventure. This is a later version of him, so if (or when) he is killed here, he still exists earlier. This also means that he may recognize the Agents by sight and smell if they are not disguised.

## ENDING THE ENCOUNTER

Standard protocol has the Agents jumping a few decades into the future to make sure that they didn't miss anything, and that there weren't any unexpected consequences.

## DAMMIT, NIXON, YOU HAD ONE JOB

**Scene Type:** Core

**Lead-In:** Cuban Missile Crisis

**Lead-Out:** Shave and a Haircut, Two Bits

**Summary:** Nixon is president, not Kennedy

## SYNOPSIS

This is a fast encounter that provides clues.

The Agents emerge into a post-nuclear wasteland. The 1962 nuclear war with the Soviets killed over 200 million people; the USA is now colonized by Canada and Mexico, and lots of people still remain who the Agents can talk to. It takes the **Research** ability to learn (fairly easily) that President Nixon fumbled the negotiations with Nikita Khrushchev, leading to war.

## CORE CLUES

- ▶ Nixon, not Kennedy, was president in 1960.
- ▶ Nixon fumbled the negotiations with Soviet Nikita Khrushchev, called the USSR's bluff, and triggered nuclear war.

## BACKGROUND

The Agents quickly learn that in this timeline, Nixon and not Kennedy is president in 1962.

In real history, the 1960 election featured Republican Richard Nixon (with Henry Lodge as his running mate) running against John F. Kennedy (with Lyndon Johnson as his running mate). The election was the closest election since 1916, and Kennedy's effective use of television helped sway more voters to his cause.

In the alternate history 1960 election, it was Nixon vs. Johnson, and Nixon won. Kennedy was nowhere to be seen. Why? He has no historical presence at all when the Agents look for him postwar; they need to time jump to a time before 1962 in order to track Kennedy down.

## SHAVE AND A HAIRCUT, TWO BITS

**Scene Type:** Core

**Lead-In:** Dammit, Nixon, You Had One Job

**Lead-Out:** A Prohibition Against Prohibition

**Summary:** Prohibition never occurred

## SYNOPSIS

The Agents track down John F. Kennedy in 1950s Boston and possibly get a haircut from him. They learn his altered family background.

## CORE CLUES

- ▶ Nixon became president because Kennedy is a barber.
- ▶ Kennedy is a barber because his family wasn't wealthy.
- ▶ His father committed suicide after losing money in the great stock market crash.
- ▶ Prohibition never occurred (which is where Joe Kennedy made his initial stake); there was no 18th Amendment (and subsequent 21st Amendment) to the Constitution.

**Research:** "John F. Kennedy", "Joseph Kennedy", "Prohibition"

## BACKGROUND

In real history, John F. Kennedy was born in Brookline, Massachusetts, on May 29, 1917, to entrepreneur/politician Joseph Patrick "Joe" Kennedy and philanthropist/socialite Rose Elizabeth Fitzgerald. One of eight children, he attended private school and traveled internationally before attending Harvard. He was a war hero in WWII and ran for the House of Representatives in 1945.

In alternate history, despite being a successful money manager, Joe Kennedy never makes his fortune in liquor bootlegging during Prohibition (1920–1933). Worse, he loses what money he does have at the age of 41, in the stock market



crash of 1929, when his son John is 12. He never recovers, and commits suicide (or possibly is murdered by ezeru) in 1930.

Destitute, John F. Kennedy went to public school (not Choate) and could never afford college. He became a barber in Boston, where he was popular. No Harvard, no international travel, no military service. As a result, he isn't involved with politics, and Nixon becomes president in 1960.

## GAMEPLAY

The **Research** ability (combined with some good old-fashioned sleuthing in libraries and town halls) reveals that John F. Kennedy is alive, but his life has taken a very different path. Whether the Agents choose to go and talk to him at his barber shop, or they rely solely on research, they find that there are three main differences in his life:

- ▶ His father killed himself (or perhaps was killed?) after losing the family savings in the great stock market crash.
- ▶ The family had much less money to begin with, so never invested in real estate or Hollywood.
- ▶ Based on the quantity of bars around Boston, and some research, it's quickly clear that Prohibition never occurred.

Any Agent with **History (Contemporary)** knows that the Kennedys made their initial fortune in alcohol during Prohibition. No Prohibition means no fortune, which means no political career, which leads to Nixon being president in 1960.

## BACKGROUND

**History (Contemporary)** also reveals that in real history, Joe Kennedy knew to get out of the stock market after receiving a stock tip from a shoeshine boy; Kennedy deduced that when the boy shining your shoes was contributing to rampant stock market speculation, there was bound to be a crash coming. That encounter never occurred in alternate history. It's up to the GM whether this is because the ezeru killed the shoeshine boy, or because it was a TimeWatch agent as the shoeshine boy all along.

No action needs to be taken by the Agents during this time period, as the interference seems to happen with Prohibition.

You'll need to make sure during this encounter that the players learn the core clue about the lack of Prohibition; it crops up in any historical research as an odd aside, or is evident to anyone with **History (Contemporary)** or **Streetwise** who spends time in a civilized area like Boston. If you drop two or three mentions of the unusual quantity of bars, the players will pick up on your hint and ask for more information.

## A PROHIBITION AGAINST PROHIBITION

**Scene Type:** Core

**Lead-In:** Shave and a Haircut, Two Bits

**Lead-Outs:** The Worst Wedding Toast Ever; Message for You, Sir

**Summary:** Prohibition never occurred because Carrie Nation became anti-temperance

## SYNOPSIS

Researching the alternate history from wherever they choose, the Agents learn that Prohibition never occurred because of impassioned *anti*-temperance campaigning by a woman named Carrie Nation.

## CORE CLUES

- ▶ The temperance movement that resulted in Prohibition never gained momentum.
- ▶ A battleaxe of a woman named Carrie Nation, who in real history promoted temperance by destroying bars and taverns with a hatchet, campaigned *against* temperance in alternate history.
- ▶ Her pro-alcohol crusading resulted in greater acceptance of alcohol across the US, and resulted in the defeat of any 20th-century Prohibition movement.
- ▶ Carrie Nation's view on alcohol changes at two discrete points: at her first wedding in 1867, when her alcoholic husband developed an allergy to alcohol and swears off drinking, and June 5th, 1900, when God spoke to her and told her that alcohol was His gift to the faithful.

**Research:** "temperance movement", "Prohibition", "Carrie Nation"

## Real History: the Background of Carrie Nation

In real history, Prohibition in the US ran from 1920–1933, and was started by the 18th Amendment (also known as the Volstead Act). Passage of the 18th Amendment was mostly coordinated by the Anti-Saloon League, a lobbying organization that pushed aside its older competitors, the Woman's Christian Temperance Union and the Prohibition Party.

The Woman's Christian Temperance Union had its profile raised tremendously by a radical member named Carrie Nation (1846–1911). Carrie was a large woman, nearly 180 cm tall, with a stern countenance, who described herself as "a bulldog running along at the feet of Jesus, barking at what He doesn't like." She claimed a divine ordination to promote temperance by destroying bars.

Born in Kentucky to a poor family, she married her first husband, Dr. Charles Gloyd, in 1867 in Kansas City. Gloyd was a severe alcoholic who died of alcoholism in 1869 when Carrie was 23. Carrie met her second husband, attorney and minister David Nation, in 1874 when she was 28 and David was 47. They moved to Texas, bought a cotton plantation that failed, and finally moved into Brazoria, Texas. There David practiced law and Carrie ran a hotel along with their daughters (one of whom, Charlien, had mental health problems) and "Mother Gloyd," Carrie's mother-in-law from her first marriage. No, that isn't weird at all.

In 1889 they were forced to move to Medicine Lodge, Kansas, where David became a minister and Carrie ran a different hotel. She started a local chapter of the Woman's Christian Temperance Union and began agitating for the enforcement of Kansas' ban on liquor sales. She started with protests, including using a hand organ to serenade saloon patrons with hymns, and was known for her sharp remarks to bartenders. "Good morning, destroyer of men's souls" is a good example of Carrie's approach.

Regardless, Carrie was dissatisfied with her progress and beseeched God for help. On June 5, 1900, Carrie reported receiving a heavenly vision in response. As she described it:

*The next morning I was awakened by a voice which seemed to me speaking in my heart, these words, "GO TO KIOWA," and my hands were lifted and thrown down and the words, "I'LL STAND BY YOU." The words, "Go to Kiowa," were spoken in a murmuring, musical tone, low and soft, but "I'll stand by you," was very clear, positive and emphatic. I was impressed with a great inspiration, the interpretation was very plain, it was this: "Take something in your hands, and throw at these places in Kiowa and smash them."*

In response, Carrie gathered several rocks (or "smashers") and headed to Dobson's Saloon in Kiowa, Kansas, two days later on June 7. She proclaimed, "Men, I have come to save you from a drunkard's fate", and destroyed the saloon's stock of alcohol with her rocks. After she destroyed two more Kiowa saloons a tornado struck eastern Kansas, and Carrie took this

as divine approval for her mission.

Consistently arrested as she continued to destroy Kansas saloons, either by herself or with other hymn-singing women of the temperance movement, Carrie's fame began to spread. She began using a hatchet after her husband joked that it would cause more damage. Carrie reportedly replied, "That is the most sensible thing you have said since I married you." She was arrested some 30 times between 1900 and 1910 for "hatchetations," paying for her fines with lectures and sales of souvenir hatchets. Soon saloons across Kansas and Missouri sported *All Nations Welcome But Carrie* signs.

Carrie and David Nation divorced in 1901. Carrie was not the forgiving sort; believing that President William McKinley used alcohol, she approved of his 1901 assassination with the comment that drinkers "got what they deserved."

## Alternate History: the Changed Background of Carrie Nation

Ezeru interfere with Carrie Nation at several points in her life in order to convince her to oppose temperance. The first place is 1867, when they briefly kidnap Dr. Charles Gloyd on their wedding day and inject him with an ezeru serum that reacts violently with alcohol. This keeps Gloyd's drinking to a minimum, and while he still dies of natural causes two years later in 1869, Carrie Nation never develops her initial strong prejudice against alcohol. As a result, she never gains her strong interest in temperance or starts a local branch of the Temperance Union in 1889.

The second interference is in 1900, at age 53, when her vision from God is engineered by psychic manipulation from two ezeru, one named Sssk'Ptkt masquerading as Carrie's mentally ill daughter Charlien and Squa'Klkt masquerading as her henpecked husband David. In her new vision, she is awakened by a voice which speaks to her heart these words, "ALCOHOL IS MY GIFT TO ALL MY CHILDREN, AND IT IS A BLESSING TO SHARE. GO TO KIOWA; PLL STAND BY YOU?"

Her interpretation (aided by low-grade ezeru psychic manipulation) is that alcohol is both holy and good, and it is God's will that temperance be stamped out. She dedicates her life to the cause of alcohol, and she's remarkably good at it.

For instance, alternate history Kansas would have outlawed liquor if the newly inspired Carrie Nation hadn't made an impassioned speech about the importance of alcohol in American life. She then became an outspoken crusader for responsible drinking, encouraging action against anti-temperance spokespeople, discrediting and embarrassing them nationwide. She often revealed secrets about them, showing them to be hypocrites, and her trademark hatchet was the symbol of rebelling against outspoken and ridiculous fanatics. The temperance movement never takes hold, resulting in nuclear war in 1962.

## GAME PLAY

**Research** about Prohibition and Carrie Nation likely occurs

in the same time period when the Agents investigate Kennedy. That's not a problem, and encyclopedias, historians, or the odd biography (*The Axe of Alcohol: Carrie Nation and the Defeat of Temperance*) should be easily able to provide them with the information.

At the end of their research, the group likely has enough information to decide where to time travel next in order to stop the alternate history: Carrie's wedding in 1867, or her vision in 1900. They won't yet know exactly how the ezeru are involved, although they'll have suspicions.

## TROUBLESHOOTING

If you prefer to limit the number of encounters, whichever of these dates the players pick is the best possible choice because it's the one that Squa'Klkt engineers first. Defeat him there, and the second incident (either 1867 or 1900) never occurs. If you wish to play both encounters, the first place the Agents go is the second place that the ezeru have been.

Don't be shy about giving the players information about Prohibition and what has changed. Mention that Carrie Nation was a crusader against temperance, not for it, and they'll ask why. You can then give them her brief history and note the two major points of divergence, and they'll take it from there.

## THE WORST WEDDING TOAST EVER

**Scene Type:** Alternate

**Lead-In:** A Prohibition Against Prohibition

**Lead-Outs:** Message for You, Sir; Last Step

**Summary:** Ezeru prevent David Nation from becoming an alcoholic

## SYNOPSIS

Just before his wedding in Kansas City, 1867, two ezeru inject Dr. Charles Gloyd with a poison that reacts horribly with alcohol. Agents must stop the injection or counteract the poison after the fact.

## CLUES

- ▶ Gloyd is slightly (two minutes) late before walking out from the back room of the church to his own wedding. He claims to have been napping, but he looks Stunned (**Medical Expertise** or **Military Tactics**).
- ▶ Temporal signatures in the church indicate non-Time-Watch time traveling nearby (**Timecraft**).
- ▶ Gloyd appears slightly dazed and, upon examination, has a welt at the back of his neck (**Notice**).
- ▶ Gloyd has been injected with an anti-alcohol serum that will last for years (**Medical Expertise**).
- ▶ If Gloyd doesn't succumb to alcoholism, Carrie is unlikely to develop her hatred of alcohol.

- ▶ During the wedding toast, Gloyd takes a sip of wine and throws up on the table. Not the best wedding, really.

## BACKGROUND

The ezeru Squa'Klkt and Sssk'Ptkt make this a commando mission: they enter the back of the church in their natural forms, stun anyone in the room, inject Gloyd, and clock out. They try to avoid fighting TimeWatch agents there, as that could endanger their plan. If forced to, assuming Gloyd has been injected, they take the fight outside. If Gloyd has not yet been injected, one draws the fight outside while the other works to inject him.

## GAMEPLAY

It's likely that the Agents may choose to attend the wedding, note what's wrong, and then time travel back an hour in order to lay a trap. This is a great idea; just remember that creating paradox (by creating a result different from what they've already seen) triggers a Paradox test, probably Difficulty 4 / Loss 4.

Agents may choose to chase fleeing ezeru across time. If so, run it as a time chase (*TimeWatch*, p. 76).

For combat stats, use Squa'Klkt's stats from *Cuban Missile Crisis* for both Squa'Klkt and Sssk'Ptkt.

## MESSAGE FOR YOU, SIR

**Scene Type:** Core

**Lead-Ins:** A Prohibition Against Prohibition, The Worst Wedding Toast Ever

**Lead-Outs:** The Worst Wedding Toast Ever, Last Step

**Summary:** Ezeru fake Carrie Nation's vision from God

## SYNOPSIS

On June 5th, 1900, just before dawn in her room at the hotel she runs in Medicine Lodge, Kansas, Carrie Nation receives a vision from God — actually created by the two ezeru masquerading as her husband and daughter. The message sends her on a path of crusading against temperance.

## CORE CLUES

- ▶ **Falsehood Detection:** While henpecked, David is unusually attentive to his wife, never drinking to excess and carefully demonstrating that small amounts of alcohol make their lives together better.
- ▶ **Medical Expertise:** Charlien's mental illness seems easily managed by a small glass of wine a day, a fact that makes no medical sense.
- ▶ **Science!:** David and Carrie's daughter Charlien gives off abnormal levels of radiation, detectable by a tether.

## BACKGROUND

As noted above, if the Agents take no actions, on June 5th, 1900, Carrie Nation receives a vision: she is awakened by a voice which speaks to her heart these words, "ALCOHOL IS MY GIFT TO ALL MY CHILDREN, AND IT IS A BLESSING TO SHARE. GO TO KIOWA; I'LL STAND BY YOU." She goes to Kiowa and chases away temperance activists with a hatchet, and her new profession is born.

The vision, of course, comes from the two ezeru masquerading at the hotel as her family. The real husband and daughter are in psychic cocoons and stuffed in the hot and musty attic.

## GAMEPLAY

The players can either prevent the false vision as it happens on June 5th, 1900, or they can dispatch the fake ezeru in private before the vision occurs. Either change sets Carrie back on her correct path, especially if the Agents have stopped Squa'Klkt from curing Carrie's first husband's alcoholism.

Players have a huge number of options for addressing this, so the GM is encouraged to run with their preferred plan. Carrie must be left with no memory of the event in order for the solution to be effective. When in doubt, make the fight as cinematic as possible: giant cockroaches on the ceiling, acidic bile sprayed across the room, noncombat cockroach control, giant pincers clutching fragile throats, and so forth. You get bonus points if someone uses a bottle of whiskey or a hatchet as an improvised weapon during some point of the fight.

Once they succeed and Carrie is anti-alcohol once again, only one more step remains to restore history.

## LAST STEP

**Scene Type:** Epilogue

**Lead-Ins:** The Worst Wedding Toast Ever; Message for You, Sir

**Summary:** Joe Kennedy must get stock advice from a shoeshine boy in order to exit the stock market before the crash

## SYNOPSIS

Once Carrie Nation is dealt with, a shoeshine boy has to try and give Joe Kennedy stock tips. This makes him realize that the market is due to crash, and restores the Kennedy family fortune.

## CORE CLUES

Unless this is done, Kennedy won't have the money to invest in alcohol before Prohibition, thus building his fortune that is later invested in real estate and Hollywood.

## GAME PLAY

This is a three-minute scene that doesn't need a single die roll: as long as an Agent impersonates a shoeshine boy, history snaps back on track. It makes a fine way to end the adventure.

Once this happens, congratulate the players! They've

successfully thwarted the ezeru and saved hundreds of millions of lives... and hopefully gotten a good haircut from John F. Kennedy, and shared a drink with Carrie Nation, in the process.



# THE HATCHING TIME

## OVERVIEW

Throughout these adventures, the ezeru have consistently tried to raise the background level of radiation in order to ensure their own eventual survival. Chances are that they've had poor or mixed success. The ezeru queen, an egg-laying, insectoid monstrosity that causes nightmares even in bug-loving entomologists, has settled in to a can't-miss plan. It's going to take all of the Agents' cleverness and resources to thwart it.

*The Hatching Time* can be run as a one-shot adventure (especially with some judicious streamlining for rapid play), but should be run last if you wish to tie it in with the other missions in *Behind Enemy Times*. Schemes from other missions (such as the ezeru queen in *Time Will Tell*, the stolen nuclear weapons in *The Gadget*, the sophosaur tribe in *Thief in the Night*, and the ezeru activity throughout) come to a head in this mission. Alternatively, it's a time travel game, so you may have just as much fun running this mission out of order and having players piece together clues after the fact.

## BACKGROUND

### THE PLOT

In the chitinous corner, we've got the ezeru. Giant mutant cockroaches from a postapocalyptic Earth, hell-bent on nuking the planet again so they can bathe their eggs in radiation. They're natural time travelers, the ultimate survivors, and they can disguise themselves as humans by sticking a victim in a slimy cocoon and tuning themselves to the prisoner's bioelectric field. There's an ezeru queen hidden somewhere/somewhen in New York, and the Agents' mission is to find her and destroy her nest.

In the scaly-or-possibly-feathered corner, we've got the sophosaurs — psychic time traveling dinosaurs from a now-erased alternate history where the K/T meteorite never hit. A few sophosaurs fled throughout history, and aren't too happy about all these mammals running about like they own the place. They really, really hate the ezeru.

In the third corner, we've got the rebels — human time travelers who oppose TimeWatch, and want to make history

*better* (for certain values of better) instead of just preserving a timeline which they see as flawed, grubby, or oppressive.

Finally, we've got the player characters — elite Agents of TimeWatch.

## The Ezeru Base

The ezeru base is cleverly hidden in a time-distorted pocket universe. That pocket universe is maintained by ezeru-hybrid cockroaches riding the New York subway system. These specially bred cockroaches generate a time-distorting field. Each individual cockroach can't do much on its own, but put enough together, and you get a field that envelops and hides the base. Here's the clever bit — there's only one entrance to the base, and it keeps moving. Its location is determined by a complex function based on the relative location of the various trains. So, if a G train is *here* and an A train moves over *there*, the entrance blips to somewhere else in the city. The entrance usually corresponds with a doorway or some other aperture. Ezeru can communicate with the hybrid roaches and instantly know where the entrance to the base is, but mammals (and dinosaurs) can never know where the base is at any moment.

Sometimes, people wander through accidentally. They get unlucky, opening their apartment door at the one moment in all of history when it leads not to the corridor, but to a secret alien bug-base outside of time and space.

The base contains millions of ezeru eggs, waiting to be hatched once the internal radiation level rises high enough. As part of this scheme, they're siphoning radiation from the Indian Point power station, 10 kilometers north of New York, by modifying the subway in order to “project” the base entrance right into the reactor core. Plan A is to slowly drain radiation over sixty or seventy years (from the station's opening of its second reactor in 1974, to its projected end of life in the 2030s).

Plan B, if it comes to it, is to trigger a meltdown right on top of New York.

## The Sophosaur Scheme

The sophosaurs don't want the ezeru to breed. They discovered that the ezeru have a base in New York, but don't (yet)



know where it is. They've embarked on a long-term information-gathering scheme to locate the base, involving scanning the brains of theatergoers on Broadway. The sophosaurs engaged in this plan are part of the same clan that the Agents encountered in *Thief in the Night* (p. 22).

(The sophosaur plot is optional — if the Agents ignore it, they can still find the base, but don't have the option of bringing a clan of bug-hating dinosaurs into the final fight.)

## The Rebel Treachery

A band of rebels (associated with Restoration, rebels encountered in *Rebel Heart* (p. 53)) learned that there's a super-secure ezeru base in New York from the sophosaurs. This base is so secret and secure, in fact, that the rebels want to steal it for themselves. It could be a rival to TimeWatch's extra-universal Citadel, and give the rebels a fortress from which they can organize and start putting time to rights. However, the rebels don't have the resources to break into the base. Their plan, therefore, is to leak information to TimeWatch. If all goes according to their schemes, then TimeWatch will crack the secret of entering the base, and then the rebels can steal control of it while TimeWatch fights the ezeru queen.

## TIMELINE

- ▶ **New York, 1842:** TimeWatch sends the Agents to meet with a rebel leader called Flynt in **A Speck of Grit** (opposite). Flynt tells the Agents about ezeru agents working in the Coney Island rail yards in the 1970s.
- ▶ **Coney Island, New York, 1977:** Investigating the **Rail Yard Complex** (p. 82), the Agents discover the use of alien hybrid cockroaches to generate a citywide time distorting field.
- ▶ From the rail yard, they might try some **Pest Control** (p. 84), go to **Catch a Broadway Show** (p. 90) in the year 2019, try **Cracking the Code** (p. 86), **Ride the Rails** (p. 87), or investigate **TRX Services** (p. 88).
- ▶ If any of these go wrong, it leads to **Nuke York** (p. 85), a postapocalyptic disaster zone caused by the ezeru going for their plan B and melting down Indian Point, to an **Ezeru Attack** (p. 84) or to **Bugs in the Bugs** (p. 87).
- ▶ There's also the possibility of a **Sophosaur Rampage** (p. 92).
- ▶ The Agents may try to recruit allies in **Let's Make a Deal** (p. 93).
- ▶ Once they have the secret of **Entering the Ezeru Base** (p. 95), the Agents face multiple overlapping crises — they've got to **Battle the Bugs** (p. 87), **Destroy the Queen** (p. 99), and **Stop the Hatching** (p. 98) while dealing with the **Train to the End of the World** (p. 100) and **The Rebel Betrayal** (p. 100).

## THE MISSION

The mission begins not with a formal briefing, but with a meeting between the Agents and a renegade time agent named Flynt. Use the information in *A Speck of Grit* to trade information to the players and get them started on their mission to stomp the ezeru.

## LIKELY ADVENTURE PATH

**A Speck of Grit.** Agents meet with Flynt, who clues them into ezeru activity in the 1977 Coney Island rail yards. He has safeguards in place to make sure that the Agents are more interested in saving innocents than capturing him.

**Rail Yard Complex.** There are ezeru aplenty, and some very strange behavior by the local cockroaches. From here, the Agents have numerous choices; they may try to eradicate the space-time-warping insects across the entire subway line (**Pest Control**), crack the code to the base's secret and ever-changing location (**Cracking the Code**), experiment on the insects (**Bugs in the Bugs**), or investigate the subway tunnels (**Riding the Rails**). They may also wonder why the ezeru have tickets to a Broadway show that doesn't occur for 40 more years (**Catch a Broadway Show**). When the ezeru become annoyed, they will attack the Agents (**Ezeru Attack!**). Finally, investigating the equipment used to hide the bugs in subway cars leads to a company named TRX (**TRX Services**).

The Agents' goal is to find the hidden base, but it will require several angles of attack to unravel a method to reach it.

**Nuke York.** Use this scene if you wish to show the Agents the result of a failed investigation.

**Catch a Broadway Show.** This particularly fun scene introduces several sophosaurs working against the ezeru, several ezeru working undercover, and a truly dreadful musical that can provide some extremely useful clues.

**Let's Make a Deal.** In this scene the Agents have the opportunity to gather allies for their assault on the ezeru base. That's particularly useful because the base is extraordinarily dangerous without some assistance.

**Entering the Ezeru Base, Battle the Bugs, Stop the Hatching, and Destroy the Queen** concern the assault on the base. Getting in, fighting waves of bugs, destroying the eggs, and assaulting the queen lead to a climactic combat encounter.

**Train to the End of the World** involves the ezeru backup plan to channel energy from a nuclear reactor.

**The Rebel Betrayal.** You never can trust allies, can you? Flynt is playing his own game, and he's ready to show his cards.

**Aftermath** deals with the results of everything the Agents have fixed, altered, and repaired.

## A SPECK OF GRIT

**Scene Type:** Intro

**Lead-Outs:** Rail Yard Complex, Catch a Broadway Show

**Summary:** A rebel offers up secret information about ezeru activity at Coney Island

In 1842 New York, the most respectable and exclusive oyster cellar in the city, Downing's Oyster House, is run by the famous Thomas Downing, the free son of black slaves. Unlike other oyster cellars, many of which are associated with debauchery and low behavior, this place caters to the upper classes. Later this year, it hosts a banquet honoring the famous writer Charles Dickens when he visits the United States. It attracts the patronage of industrialists, scholars, politicians — and time travelers.

The Agents are here to meet **Flynt**, a renegade TimeWatch agent. He left a message for TimeWatch (encoded in the mythology of a Bronze Age culture, now lost, that thrived in Doggerland thousands of years ago) to meet him here in Downing's on the evening of October 30th, 1842. He wants to trade information.

Pick one of the Agents. That character worked with Flynt back when he was a TimeWatch agent. Ask that player to describe Flynt's personality, and what event convinced him to quit TimeWatch and throw his fortune in with the rebels. (Charge a point of **Charm** or some other Interpersonal ability if the player's angling for emotional leverage over Flynt by describing how she saved his life that one time...)

Flynt believes that TimeWatch cares too much about the big picture, and doesn't value individual lives. Ask a different player to describe a situation from their own character's past experiences where TimeWatch's focus on the ultimate result proved correct, even though it might have seemed cruel or callous to the people on the ground.

Ask the players what preparations, if any, they're making for the meeting, and how they're disguising themselves. If they try sneaking around or arriving early, **History (Contemporary), Research, or Spying** reminds them that Downing ran part of the Underground Railroad from his restaurant, and there are escaped slaves hiding in the basement.

As described below, Flynt takes precautions by having one of his rebel buddies blip back in time to conceal a bomb in the restaurant's cellars. If Flynt doesn't return from the meeting, or if he gets erased from existence, then the rebel won't disarm the bomb before it goes off. If the Agents find the bomb (with an **Architecture** or **Notice** spend), then they can disarm it themselves with **Tinkering** (Difficulty 4), although **Timecraft** lets them guess at what it's there for — Flynt *really* doesn't trust TimeWatch.

## MEETING FLYNT

Flynt saunters into the restaurant, deliberately showing up a few minutes' late — keeping to an appointment is something a TimeWatch puppet would do, not a freethinking iconoclast like him. He orders a big plate of raw oysters, and without prompting launches into a rant about how New York used to have the best and biggest oysters in the whole world — you could get foot-long oysters if you wanted them, like eating a really tasty baby. Pollution and sewage will ruin the once-fruitful beds; by the turn of the century, he warns, they'll be mostly gone. All the millions and millions of people who'll live in New York in the 20th and 21st century will have no idea how delicious things used to be. And the thing is, he could fix

it all — change a few sewage outlets, make John Rockefeller move his Newtown Creek oil refinery a little way south, and bingo, you've got a sanctuary of unpolluted water. It wouldn't change history much, wouldn't cause World War Three or anything; it'd just make things tastier. But that's still too much for TimeWatch to sanction.

Anyway — to business. He's got some *inside information* that he's willing to trade. A threat to the entire human species, right here in New York. It involves the ezeru, those horrible time traveling atomic cockroaches, and no one likes them. In exchange, he wants a get-out-of-jail-free card from TimeWatch — a promise they won't come after him if he does a little harmless temporal adjustment.

(core) **Bureaucracy:** TimeWatch has made such deals in the past. A threat to humanity takes precedence. If the Agents agree to Flynt's demands, he tells them there's an ezeru operation going on in the Coney Island rail yard in the 1970s (*Rail Yard Complex*, p. 82).

Instead of giving him a get-out-of-jail-free card, a suitable Interpersonal spend can force Flynt into giving up the information. If Flynt was described as having a particular character trait, and the players exploit that, don't charge them a point spend. For example:

- ▶ **Authority:** "You have a responsibility as a time traveler — and a human being — to preserve the timeline."
- ▶ **Charm:** "You roguish time traveler, let me bat my eyelids at you."
- ▶ **Reassurance:** "Please accept this nonspecific assurance that TimeWatch will do right by you."
- ▶ **Intimidation:** "Mr. Flynt, do you know the differences between God and TimeWatch? Here's a clue — they're both all knowing and all powerful, but only one of them is infinitely merciful."
- ▶ **Taunt:** "You don't know anything about an ezeru plot! This is a bluff!"
- ▶ **Timecraft:** "You know that if we fail because you hold out on us, and the ezeru wipe out our species, you'll be erased along with the rest of us, right? Or are you looking forward to being subsumed and coming back as a cockroach?"
- ▶ **Falsehood Detection:** Flynt's not being entirely honest — he's definitely got some ulterior motives in telling the Agents — but he believes his info is genuine.
- ▶ If asked why he's not acting on this information himself, he shrugs and points out that he's not a TimeWatch agent any more. He doesn't have access to a tether, or a giant extradimensional super-science citadel floating in un-time before the Big Bang. Existential threats to reality aren't his job anymore. If pressed (with **Taunt, Authority, or Intimidation**), he admits he's not going to tangle with the ezeru. Those bugs are nasty!
- ▶ He refuses to say where he got this information, but assures the Agents it's accurate. A suitable Interpersonal spend (as above) can persuade or trick him into admitting that he learned it from a sophosaur in the 20th century. He doesn't know what a time traveling psychic dinosaur was

doing at a Manhattan party in 1987, but it turns out that sophosaurs can get smashed on wine and cheese and talk too much just like a human. If the Agents follow this bonus lead, a little **High Society** digging points them at the right theater and time zone (*Catch a Broadway Show*, p. 90).

Once the Agents have the information about the rail yard, the meeting's over. Flynt calls Downing over and tells him that these fine ladies and gentlemen will be paying his tab. If the Agents need to contact him again, he's a regular here at the oyster house — leave a message with Downing.

He then walks out and clocks out on his old and battered autochron.

The characters have their mission — investigate, find the base, and wipe out the ezeru threat.

## THE OBSERVER

The Agent(s) with the highest **Notice** rating spot that they're being watched as they emerge from the oyster house. There's a woman spying on them from across the street. She's probably Flynt's accomplice, there to disarm the bomb after she's sure Flynt has escaped intact, but she might equally be an ezeru assassin, disguised sophosaur, TimeWatch spy, Agent Sparrow (see p. 8), or whatever else you might need later on. She might even turn out to be one of the player characters. In any case, she too clocks out unless the players make a heroic effort to get to her first. Unless you have a pressing reason otherwise, leave her as a cryptic harbinger for now.

## RAIL YARD COMPLEX

**Scene Type:** Core

**Lead-In:** A Speck of Grit

**Lead-Outs:** Pest Control, Catch a Broadway Show, Cracking the Code, Riding the Rails, TRX Services, Nuke York

**Summary:** The ezeru are using time-active cockroaches on the railway to manipulate time; the ezeru are interested in a show on Broadway 40 years from now

There's something resonant about railroads for a time traveler. All those parallel tracks and switches, all those hurtling trains full of people that could be diverted onto a different course to a wildly different fate with the smallest press of a button, all those timetables and schedules — it's the same feeling an artist gets when looking at a sunset.

Of course, this is the '70s, the absolute nadir of the New York subway. Underfunded and in steep decline, its stock of graffiti-covered railcars are in desperate need of replacement, and the tunnels are crumbling and equally in desperate need of repair and investment. No one who can avoid it takes the subway. For a time traveler, the site of those filthy, battered cars scraping along century-old rail tracks towards the repair sheds can only be a bad omen.

The Agents have clocked in to the Coney Island rail yard complex on a cold and rainy evening in 1977. (They're welcome to hop forward a few months to a nice dry summer's



evening if they want — no sense catching a sniffle when battling monster bugs.) Poking around with **Spying** (or asking around with **Streetwise**) points to one particular repair shed, off on its own at the end of a siding, as being the likeliest candidate for an ezeru nest. That shed looks like it's for cleaning and repainting the cars.

## THE HOLOSCRAMBLER

The ezeru have concealed a piece of stolen 24th-century technology on a lamppost near the shed. It's a holoscambler — a black box similar to a Chronomorphic Pulse Generator (p. 115 of the *TimeWatch* core rules) that disrupts holographic and chronomorphic disguises like the uniforms and impersonator meshes used by TimeWatch. Every few minutes, the scrambler sends out a pulse that causes any holographic disguises to judder, distort, and even flare up in bright primary colors, making them obvious to even a casual observer.

A careful search of the area around the shed (or a **Notice** or **Spying** spend) lets the Agents spot the holoscambler before it becomes an issue. Otherwise, the scrambler goes off at the worst possible moment, revealing the Agents to the guards (see below). If the Agents know it's there, then the scrambler can be disarmed with a **Burglary** or **Tinkering** test (Difficulty 4); failure to disarm it means it goes off while the Agents are fiddling with it.

Agents using a different form of disguise, like a psychic projection, or who aren't using chronomorphic gear, aren't affected by the scrambler.

## THE GUARDS

There's one security guard per Agent (which in itself is suspicious — why such heavy security?). They're all just human goons, and have no idea what's going on inside the shed. A few ordinary bruisers are no threat to a single TimeWatch Agent — the real test here is getting past without alerting the ezeru inside.

**Sneaking Past:** Normally, it would be a **Burglary** test (Difficulty 4) to sneak past the guards. However, if the Agents don't disable the holoscrambler first, then a badly timed scrambler burst boosts the Difficulty to 7 at just the wrong moment.

**Bluffing Past:** Again, it would normally be trivially easy to get in using a combination of impersonator mesh and an Interpersonal ability like **Charm** or **Authority**, but that troublesome scrambler disrupts disguises at just the wrong time. A good story, a **Disguise** test (Difficulty 6), and an Interpersonal spend can get the Agents in without alerting the ezeru.

**Punching Past:** The guards have a Hit Threshold of 3, Health 4, and Scuffling +1. They're armed with nightsticks (+0 damage). Their first action, though, is to raise the alarm — so it's in the players' best interests to take all the guards out before the bad guys get to act. A cruel Game Moderator might say that the ezeru have dosed the guards with a chemical that gives them a +2 bonus to resisting Stun attacks (it also heightens aggression, lowers cognitive response, and does horrible things to your digestion, making it unsuitable for use by player characters).

**Changing the Past:** Clocking back to befriend a guard is also an option, but the ezeru do run the occasional security sweep to ensure their staff isn't compromised. Optionally, run an *Ezeru Attack!* (p. 84) on the unlucky time traveler, as a two-meter-tall cockroach tackles him at a poker night in 1968.

### Guard

**Defense:** Hit Threshold 3, Health 4

**Offense:** Scuffling +1, Shooting +0; Damage Modifier +0 (nightsticks)

**Abilities:** Athletics 6, Vehicles 3

**Special Abilities:** Resist Stun

## THE EZERU

There are three ezeru in the building. One's in the main garage, disguised as an engineer, **Theo Fenner**, and he's busy loading swarms of time-active cockroaches onto the subway cars (see below). Number two, disguised as a secretary named **Susan Pollard**, is in the front office. She's getting ready to travel forward to the 2010s to *Catch a Broadway Show* (p. 90). The drugged victims of these two bugs were cocooned and stuffed in a storage shed nearby.

The third ezeru's scuttling around the rooftop and the rafters, in its natural form. This one's the sentry. If the Agents manage to sneak in undetected, they run into this guy first while the other two scuttle away. If the ezeru are prepared, then all three attack the Agents.

**Fighting the Ezeru:** The ezeru favor direct, brutal attacks — lots of Lightning Speed and Extra Actions. However, if it's clear that they're under attack by TimeWatch, these ezeru try to retreat. After all, they've got an effectively impenetrable base nearby — better to retreat there and return in numbers if the fight appears lost. Other possible tactics for the ezeru here:

- ▶ Pretend to be an innocent janitor or office worker in order to get close to a Agent, then attack with surprise (+1 damage).
- ▶ Attack with a high-pressure power washer (uses Shooting; -1 damage, but a character hit by it must pay 2 Athletics or lose his or her next turn).
- ▶ Spend 2 points of Tempus to command a swarm of hybrid cockroaches to attack. The swarm hits automatically and does +0 damage, but can easily be avoided by retreating, climbing, creative use of the cleaning equipment, and so forth. The swarm also makes it harder to time travel nearby, raising the Chronal Stability cost of travel by +1.
- ▶ Yank a stanchion out of a subway car and use it as a bat (+1 bonus and +1 damage on their next Scuffling attack).

**Ezeru Escape!** The ezeru can't just clock out and zoom straight to their base. Remember, the whole reason it's super-secure is that there's only one entrance, one point of congruence, and that point keeps moving based on the current configuration of the subway trains. The ezeru always know where that entrance is. So, when they escape, they scuttle across the rail yard (or clock out and head elsewhere in the city), heading to a seemingly random door. When the ezeru goes through the door, it leads to the base. When an Agent goes through the door, though, it leads to wherever it "should" lead.

- ▶ **Timecraft:** That's weird. Normally, an autochron can follow the wake of a recent time traveler. This time, though, the trace is much, much too faint. The ezeru must be using some unusual method of concealing its footsteps.
- ▶ If the Agents try to brute-force their way in — say, by having their future selves show up at the door just as the ezeru goes through it, or by using **Architecture** and time travel to replace that building with a trap-filled maze — then they're getting involved in a time war that can only end messily. **Military Tactics** tells them that the ezeru will either defend that entrance with terminal intensity or else kill itself and let the Agents deal with any paradoxical fallout. They need to find a more subtle way of finding a way in. Optionally, they might end up getting a warning from TimeWatch about *Nuke York* (pp. 85) if they keep hammering on the ezeru door. (Or, if you're feeling very cruel, the ezeru might just show up in force led by the queen.)
- ▶ Optionally, if the Agents are chasing the Ezeru-Susan from the office, the bug might decide to head to 2019 and *Catch a Broadway Show* (p. 90).

### Ezeru Drone

**Defense:** Hit Threshold 4, Armor 3, Health 15

**Offense:** Scuffling +3 (+2 when impersonating a human), Shooting +1; Damage Modifier +2 (hideous clacking pincers),

+3 (jagged mandibles), +1 (pistol), +4 (acidic bile), Stun 6 (psi-active bile)

**Abilities:** Tempus 12

**Special Abilities:** Clock Out (cost 2), Extra Action (cost 2), Impersonation (cost 2 — psychically links the ezeru drone to a single human or animal encased in the ezeru's paralytic bile), Lightning Speed (cost 2), Resist Stun; drones can attack by spitting acidic or paralytic bile within Close range

**Misc:** Alertness Modifier +1, Stealth Modifier +1

## SEARCHING THE SHED

Both the trains and the office have a number of core clues. Train first:

- ▶ (core) **Outdoor Survival:** These cockroaches are acting extremely strangely. These train cars are in the shed for cleaning and spraying, but it looks like all the bugs just *disembarked* before the cars got sprayed, and are milling around on the platform waiting to get back onboard. It looks like the ezeru were deliberately putting roaches on these trains.
- ▶ **Notice:** There are concealed compartments on this train car — and they're all crammed full of cockroaches! Every car's carrying tens of thousands of bugs! Ew!
- ▶ **History (Contemporary):** The ezeru appear to be well established here. They've been loading subway cars with their weird bugs for years, maybe decades. Chewing through the bedrock history of New York like termites eating through the walls... this is a long-term ezeru plan.
- ▶ (core) **Timecraft:** Huh, these bugs are faintly time-active. Not enough to travel, but enough to distort space-time a little. No wonder subways always feel sort of strange and disconnected from the surface world. But why create a massive citywide grid of time-shifting bugs?
- ▶ If bug-smashing wins out over science, run *Pest Control* (p. 84).
- ▶ (core) **Science!:** We should analyze those bugs. TimeWatch has the resources to do so in the Citadel, or we could take a few years somewhen and do it ourselves. See *Cracking the Code* (p. 86).
- ▶ (core) **Research:** Comparing maps of the subway from my tether with these work schedules, there are some subtle differences. That implies the ezeru meddling with the subway goes deeper than just adding weird bugs. (*Riding the Rails*, p. 87).

In the office:

- ▶ (core) **Trivia:** These tickets to a Broadway show — *MEAT!* — are from 2019. Why would the ezeru be planning to go to the theatre? And why in forty years time? Following this leads to *Catch a Broadway Show* (p. 90).
- ▶ (core) Looking through the mess of papers in the office with **Research** uncovers several anomalous deviations from history relating to the construction and maintenance of the subway network. If the Agents delve deeper into this, see *Riding the Rails* (p. 87).

- ▶ (core) **Bureaucracy:** There are several letters from a company called TRX Services, who apparently installed some of the equipment being used to stuff bugs into the frames of the subway cars. See *TRX Services* (p. 88)

## PEST CONTROL

**Scene Type:** Hazard

**Lead-In:** Rail Yard Complex

**Lead-Outs:** Nuke York, Cracking the Code, Riding the Rails

**Summary:** Bug spray the subway cars

Anytime the ezeru show up in a *TimeWatch* game, one of the players is going to make a Preparedness roll for a really big can of bug spray.

In this case, the players may try spraying the subway cars to get rid of the time-active cockroach infestation. Just spraying one car isn't enough — to make an impact, they need to do something much bigger, like using **Medical Expertise** to brew up a tailored virus or **Science!** for a sonic bug zapper, or **Anthropology** to engineer a citywide roach-busting campaign.

If you haven't had a fight scene in a while, run *Ezeru Attack!* (below) as the insects attempt to stop the Agents from interfering with their plans. If the Agents defeat the ezeru and keep spraying, or if you choose to skip over the fight scene and jump right to the apocalyptic future, run *Nuke York* (opposite).

Even though controlling the time-shifting bugs is at best a stopgap measure, there are some possible clues:

- ▶ **Timecraft or Paradox Prevention:** You detect minute distortions in space-time when you kill a bunch of bugs. These things definitely have enough ezeru DNA to share their time-warping powers. A full genetic workup might tell you more. See *Cracking the Code* (p. 86).
- ▶ Optionally, Agents with **Architecture** might stumble across the secret tunnel under the Hudson in *Riding the Rails* (p. 87).
- ▶ If the Agents know that the bugs are working in concert with the subway layout to generate the time-distorting field, then a 1-point **Paradox Prevention** spend lets them kill bugs on the right trains in order to lock down the possible range of entrances to the base, making *Entering the Ezeru Base* (p. 95) easier.

## EZERU ATTACK!

**Scene Type:** Antagonist Action

**Lead-Outs:** Cracking the Code, Nuke York

**Summary:** Ezeru come after the Agents

Humans. There you are, going about your daily business of laying eggs, draining radiation, and preparing to build your insectoid utopia, when suddenly you see a human scuttling around the floor. Horrible, disgusting things, with their slimy

pink shells like peeled carapaces, and their horrible wet flat eyes, and their face-holes flapping. And where there's one human, you know there'll be more. They breed so quickly, you know, squirting out live larvae that don't even need to be incubated in radiation. Fully half of them are breeders, I hear! Vile. You'll be overrun by billions of vermin, unless you call in an exterminator and stamp on the problem before it spreads.

If the Agents annoy the ezeru, the ezeru strike back. Pick one of the following attacks and hit the Agents with it:

- ▶ **Tunnel Rampage:** A simple and direct attack — one ezeru warrior and half as many ezeru drones as Agents, lurking in a tunnel like a bunch of orcs. When the Agents go poking around the subway or sewers, the ezeru attack. The warrior spends its first action collapsing the tunnel exit, trapping the Agents in a dead end with a bunch of hungry bugs.
- ▶ **Previous Selves:** Flynt (p. 80) or the mysterious woman from outside the 1842 Oyster House clocks in. The rebel tells the Agents that there's an ezeru hunting party in 1842, getting ready to attack the Agents when they met with Flynt. The ezeru will incur a bunch of paradox for killing the Agents *before* they meddled in the ezeru plans and prompted the ezeru to kill them, but hey, the Agents will be dead and what's a few paradox-burned drones compared to the future of the species? Again, you've got one ezeru warrior (disguised as a horse) and a gang of mean ezeru gunslingers. To avoid paradox, the Agents need to take out the ezeru before they get to the oyster house.
- ▶ **Clockswarm:** If an Agent takes a short jaunt across New York, the ezeru can manipulate the time-distortion field of their cockroach colony to make the Travel test more difficult. The Difficulty for the test rises to 6; if the Agent rolls a 1 or 2, the jaunt takes the time traveler to *Nuke York* (below) instead.
- ▶ **Time Mugging:** Any door in New York can be an entrance to the ezeru base. In fact, by manipulating the time-distortion field, the ezeru can control *which* door is the entrance to their base. A swarm of cockroaches spontaneously disembarks in Queens — and the base entrance jumps from one block of Manhattan to another, right next to one of the Agents. The door opens; pincers grab the unlucky target and then vanish again. The captured Agent might have to escape on her own, or play a time-shifted past or future incarnation of herself — or maybe she “escapes,” but it's actually a disguised ezeru assassin wearing her face.

**Paradox Prevention** or **Science!** suggests the ezeru must be generating a large and diffuse time-distortion field across the city, and that the weird bugs are the most likely source of this field (*Cracking the Code*, p. 86).

## Ezeru Drone

**Defense:** Hit Threshold 4, Armor 3, Health 15

**Offense:** Scuffling +3 (+2 when impersonating a human), Shooting +1; Damage Modifier +2 (hideous clacking pincers), +3 (jagged mandibles), +1 (pistol), +4 (acidic bile), Stun 6

(psi-active bile)

**Abilities:** Tempus 12

**Special Abilities:** Clock Out (cost 2), Extra Action (cost 2), Impersonation (cost 2 — psychically links the ezeru drone to a single human or animal encased in the ezeru's paralytic bile), Lightning Speed (cost 2), Resist Stun; drones can attack by spitting acidic or paralytic bile within Close range

**Misc:** Alertness Modifier +1, Stealth Modifier +1

## NUKE YORK

**Scene Type:** Hazard

**Lead-Ins:** Pest Control, Ezeru Attack!, Rail Yard Complex, Catch a Broadway Show

**Lead-Outs:** Cracking the Code, Riding the Rails

**Summary:** Visit scenic postapocalyptic NYC

In many possible futures, the ezeru succeed in draining enough radiation from the Indian Point nuclear plant to hatch all the millions of eggs hidden in the time-shifted base. Having millions of giant mutant cockroaches invading from every doorway has a deleterious effect on New York property values.

There are two possible variations of this apocalyptic scene. Version 1 is the “business as usual” scenario that results if the Agents don't change the timeline. In this version, the ezeru slowly but steadily siphon radiation via the secret 181st Street tunnel (p. 87) until the eggs are ready to hatch. They then take over the city. So, when the Agents clock in, they find themselves in a ruined, postapocalyptic New York inhabited by millions of ezeru drones, but there are still a few hardy human survivors clinging to life amid the wreckage. They're New Yorkers — they've seen worse.

Version 2 happens if the Agents push the ezeru into panicking. While the ezeru would prefer a steady radiation bath, allowing them to raise multiple clutches of eggs, their plan B is to explode the Indian Point reactor, covering the whole of New York State in fallout. If the Agents end up visiting this timeline, again they see a blasted urban wasteland ruled by giant mutant cockroaches, but this time the background radiation level is lethally high.

It's not a good idea to hang around a city full of ezeru — if the bugs spot the Agents, then they track the intruders back through time to secure this timeline, and that's something that TimeWatch really needs to avoid. Call for **Unobtrusiveness** tests (Difficulty 6) if the Agents hang around this timeline for long.

## POSSIBLE CLUES

- ▶ (alternate core) **Streetwise:** That sound — it's the rumble of the subways. Everyone's dead; there isn't a car moving in the whole city; the power's off — but the subways are still running? There has to be a connection to the subways — see *Riding the Rails* (p. 87).
- ▶ **Medical Expertise:** There are millions of ezeru here, but they're all juveniles, recently hatched. Most of them

probably can't even time travel yet. The hatching took place right here, and in the recent past.

- ▶ **Military Tactics:** No sign of a defensive perimeter. No battle lines. No fortifications. The city was taken from within — the ezeru must have clocked in and attacked lots of different places almost simultaneously.
- ▶ **Outdoor Survival:** Lethal radiation levels consistent with a nuclear meltdown from a nearby power plant. Messy. A quick scan with a tether and some guesswork points to the Indian Point power station as the likely culprit.
- ▶ **History (Contemporary):** I'm pretty sure New York wasn't wiped out in a nuclear meltdown.
- ▶ **Reassurance (or Anthropology if everyone's dead):** A survivor (or a salvaged diary) describes how the bugs came out of every door.

All that suggests the attack came from the hidden ezeru base, and that it's somehow coterminous with the city. The weird time-active cockroaches have to be involved (see *Cracking the Code*, below).

## Juvenile Ezeru

**Defense:** Hit Threshold 4, Armor 2, Health 1

**Offense:** Scuffling +2; Damage Modifier +0 (hideous clacking pincers), +2 (mandibles)

**Abilities:** Tempus 6

**Special Abilities:** Extra Action (cost 2), Resist Stun

**Misc:** Alertness Modifier +1, Stealth Modifier +1

## CRACKING THE CODE

**Scene Type:** Core

**Lead-Ins:** Rail Yard Complex, Pest Control, Ezeru Attack!, Nuke York, Catch a Broadway Show

**Lead-Outs:** Bugs in the Bugs, Let's Make a Deal, Entering the Ezeru Base

**Summary:** Discover the secret of entering the ezeru base

The ezeru base is made to be perfectly secure — its entrance is a function of the distortion of the cockroach-generated time field by the movement of subway trains through the city, and it turns out that's some pretty complicated n-dimensional mathematics. The ezeru understand it instinctively, but it's virtually incomprehensible to non-ezeru.

To find the entrance to the base, the Agents need to gather information and put some serious processing power into cracking that code. **Hacking** speeds the analysis up; it's up to the GM as to whether any one of the following sources of information is enough, or if the Agents have to get all of them. Let the pacing of the game dictate how much information the players need to gather. For an even longer game, the Agents must *also* get the sophosaur psychic research from *Catch a Broadway Show* (p. 90), instead of it being an alternate way to get the same information.

## GATHERING INFORMATION

- ▶ **Medical Expertise:** Sequencing the genetic code of one of the mutant cockroaches — of course, that means capturing a cockroach. Also, for comparison purposes, the Agents need to capture a live ezeru from the same egg-clutch.
- ▶ **Science!** Mapping the time-distortion field means setting up some super-science gizmos across the New York subway. How do the Agents intend to hide these from the ezeru?
- ▶ **Research:** Getting the inside scoop on the ezeru modifications to the subway is dealt with in *Riding the Rails* (opposite).
- ▶ **Bureaucracy:** In 2015, researchers at Weill Cornell University gathered biological samples from all over the New York subway. They detected traces of everything from bubonic plague to Himalayan yaks, but were unable to identify the origin of more than half the DNA collected. They assumed it was due to incomplete genetic databases or corrupt samples (and also assumed that there weren't any yaks on the subway), but the real answer is time traveling mutant cockroaches. Anyway, with **Bureaucracy** or **Hacking**, the Agents can get access to the researcher's database and use it to map the distribution of the cockroaches.

## Number Crunching

(core) **Science!** Once the Agents have all the requisite data, it's time to feed it all into a giant computer and crunch numbers for a few hundred years (n-dimensional temporal mapping is tricky). The obvious solution is to bring the data back to TimeWatch's Citadel, in the eternal no-time before the Big Bang, and let the techs there do the hard work.

Alternatively, the Agents could use:

- ▶ **Anthropology:** Lo! A hundred generations ago, the sky-gods gave unto the priests of old this riddle, and for those hundred generations, it has been the task of the monks of this monastery to ponder the eternal mystery. Behold the sacred timetables, inscribed on bronze tablets, and read the cryptic sigil of *M T A!* In time — perhaps in your lifetime, o initiate, or in another thousand generations — the great work will be complete, and the last priest will, with his dying breath, whisper the address of the Door to Hell.
- ▶ **Hacking:** A quick skip forward to a timeline where they've got serious computing power, and a quick bit of hacking to borrow of some of said computing power.
- ▶ **Science!** We can build it. We have the technology. It, by the way, is a giant multidimensional computing array. And by "we," I mean, "other people have it, and we can steal it with some thrilling temporal **Burglary** tests."
- ▶ **Paradox Prevention:** Guys! Seeing as we have all the necessary data, we know we can solve the problem. Which means we will solve it. Which means I can just have my future self pop back in time and hand me the answer. Oh, look, I just did. Will do. Whatever.

Optionally, run *Bugs in the Bugs* to sabotage the players' initial

## THE GORDIAN SUBWAY

**Player:** So, let me get this straight. We can't find the entrance because it keeps moving.

**GM:** Yeah.

**Player:** And it moves because its location is a function of the cockroach-infested subway trains moving through the time-distortion field covering the city?

**GM:** Yes. Well, that's one of the many variables that you need to —

**Player:** So, if the subway trains aren't moving, that makes the calculations much easier, right?

**GM:** Good point. So, do you want to pick an existing day when the subway wasn't running — say, the 2005 subway strike? — and risk the ezeru being prepared for an attack on that day when their defenses are down — or do you want to come up with your own way to simultaneously stop every subway train in the city?

solution, forcing them to come up with a second plan.

Getting the solution allows the Agents to sneak into the ezeru base (*Entering the Ezeru Base*, p. 95), but they may wish to gather allies first in *Let's Make a Deal*, p. 93.

## BUGS IN THE BUGS

**Scene Type:** Hazard

**Lead-In:** Cracking the Code

**Lead-Out:** Cracking the Code

**Summary:** Studying the cockroaches triggers a trap

Part of *Cracking the Code* involves examining the genetic code of the hybrid cockroaches. Optionally, if you want an added hazard for your game, the ezeru included a booby trap in their cockroaches. This might be:

- ▶ A temporal homing signal. When the Agents start meddling with the bugs, thousands of ezeru clock in from the *Nuke York* future (p. 85). This might result in the Citadel being overrun by the ezeru, following the homing signal to bypass the Citadel's usual defenses against invasion. As all these ezeru were hatched in the New York base, destroying the base erases this invasion from history.
- ▶ A combat form. Poke at the cockroaches too much, and they start hyper-evolving into unintelligent but highly

aggressive monsters (use the ezeru warrior stats, but these bugs don't have Clock Out, Shape-Shift, Impersonation, or blasters. They do, however, have the weight of numbers and big giant mandibles. Cue a combat scene).

- ▶ A concealed ezeru-designed artificial intelligence that attempts to sabotage the Agents' research by giving them the wrong answer and sending them into an ambush. A **Hacking** spend can stop it before it corrupts everything — otherwise, the ezeru know when and where the Agents plan on entering the base.
- ▶ The captured cockroaches use their innate time-distortion abilities to open time portals between various eras in New York's history. The existence of these portals throws off the Agents' calculations. To fix this, the Agents need to travel through the portals and seal them from the far side. Of course, there could be ezeru lurking there...

## RIDING THE RAILS

**Scene Type:** Alternate

**Lead-Ins:** Rail Yard Complex, Pest Control, Nuke York, TRX Services, Catch a Broadway Show

**Lead-Out:** TRX Services

**Summary:** The 181st Street tunnel, the connection to the Indian Point nuclear plant, was built by TRX Services; they also performed maintenance on the reactor

Evidence of the ezeru meddling with the subway may inspire the players to do a little digging of their own. This scene is mostly an information-dump montage unless the Agents try to interact with TRX Services, in which case throw in an *Ezeru Attack!* (p. 84) at them.

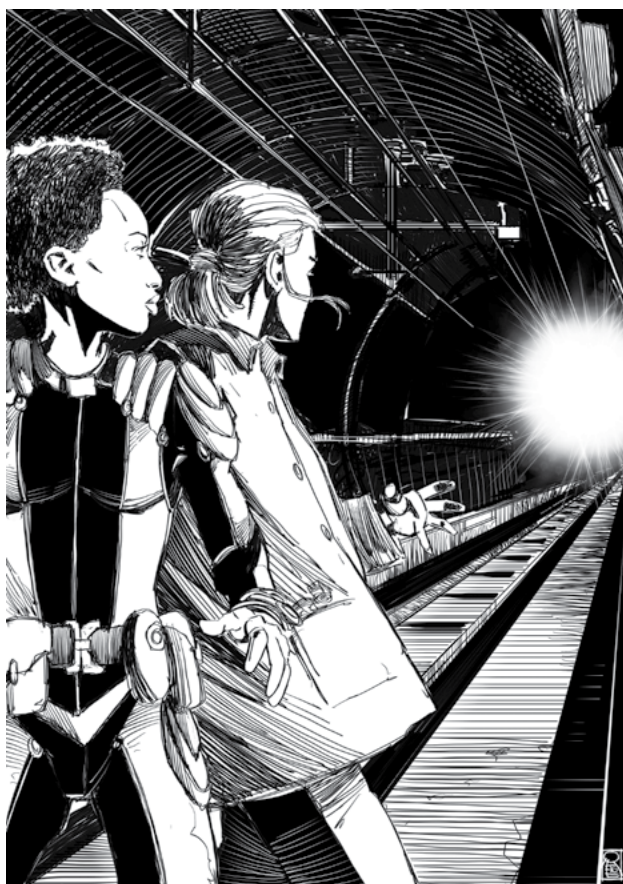
## THE TUNNEL

Examining the documents from the rail yard with **Architecture** / doing **Research** to compare the actual subway with tether data or just wandering around the subway brings the Agents to a tunnel that shouldn't exist. It's located at the end of a siding off the Eighth Avenue Line served by the A train, and runs a short distance northwest under the Hudson river before ending in a brick wall.

The tunnel crawls with thousands of cockroaches. When disturbed, the bugs scurry out of every crack and crevice, and seem to arrange themselves into lines and patterns, like iron filings around a magnet. Iron filings don't chatter in unison, though.

- ▶ **Science!:** Radiation levels in the tunnel are significantly elevated.
- ▶ **History (Contemporary):** This tunnel points straight at the Indian Point reactor. It points at a lot of other things too, of course, but it's a dead straight shot across 40 kilometers of city to the power plant.
- ▶ **Architecture:** The tunnel's weird. There are cold-riveted girders with cores of pure selenium embedded in the walls,





and you're pretty sure that something gnawed their way down here instead of excavating it. If you had to guess, this isn't a train tunnel at all — it just looks like one. It's actually some sort of... booster station or antenna for the time-distortion field. Maybe it's intended as a back door or escape hatch from the time-shifted ezeru base.

- ▶ (alternate core) **Notice:** According to that sign back in the main tunnel, this section was constructed by some company called TRX Services (below).

## INDIAN POINT ENERGY CENTER

Kicking out more than 2,000 megawatts of electricity — about 25% of New York's needs — from its two reactors, Indian Point is the biggest nuclear power station in the state. It was built in the 1960s, but the two main reactors, units #2 and #3, came online in 1974 and 1976 respectively. Originally, both reactors had 40-year licenses, but both have been granted extensions so they'll be running for decades to come.

Or, if the ezeru press the wrong button, they melt down and make most of the state uninhabitable for humans.

The ezeru base siphons radiation from the reactor cores via the 181st Street tunnel. The tunnel obviously doesn't go all the way to the reactor core, as people would probably notice a 40-kilometer-long subway tunnel sneaking into a high-security power plant. Instead, the tunnel "projects" the ever-moving

base entrance outside the normal range of the time-distortion field. Once or twice a day, the base entrance blips out of New York and manifests right in the reactor core.

- ▶ **Science!** or **Timecraft** can fill in the details of how the tunnel interacts with the cockroach-generated field and the reactor once the players find evidence of what's going on.
- ▶ Talking to power plant staff with **Authority** gets access to records of anomalous drops in radiation readings that correlate weirdly with the timetable of the A train. As there's no drop in power output to go along with the drop in radiation, the staff assumes that it's a faulty sensor and nothing more sinister.
- ▶ (alternate core) **Bureaucracy** turns up records showing that TRX Services did some maintenance contracting for the reactor. See *TRX Services*, below.
- ▶ **Reassurance** gets workers to talk about urban legends at the plant — stories of maintenance crews seeing giant cockroaches, weird episodes of ghosts and déjà vu, claims that one technician found himself walking down a subway tunnel 50 kilometers away from the plant when he was supposed to be checking one of the access shafts. Definite suggestions of temporal weirdness.

Theoretically, the Agents could use the ezeru radiation-draining as a back door into the base. The entrance to the base jumps around New York in a pattern so complex it appears utterly random, with the exception of its regular-as-clockwork manifestations in the reactor core. All the Agents need to do is clock into the core of a nuclear reactor and survive long enough to get sucked through a portal (that only opens for a few seconds once or twice a day) into a base full of murderous alien monsters. As far as really bad plans goes, that one's in the hall of fame.

The Agents end up here again in *Train to the End of the World* (p. 100).

## TRX SERVICES

**Scene Type:** Alternate

**Lead-Ins:** Rail Yard Complex, Riding the Rails

**Lead-Outs:** Catch a Broadway Show, Riding the Rails, Entering the Ezeru Base

**Summary:** Discover Dent's strange connection to Broadway and the schematics of the 181st Street Tunnel

This company started as an engineering consultancy firm in the 1970s, grew big in the '80s, got into property development in the '90s, and has been sniffing around the military-industrial complex in recent years. Its long-term director is **Gary Dent**, who ran the company from its foundation in 1972 until his mysterious death in 2019. Dent's renowned youthful vigor and financial acumen kept TRX Services afloat despite some very odd decisions by its shadowy board of management.

**Hacking** into TRX's computers, **Forging** passes, or just using **Burglary** gets the Agents into its offices in Manhattan (it's also got a machine shop down in Coney Island, and another office close to 181st Street). Finding evidence that TRX

is being run by the ezeru isn't difficult — just prize open a ceiling tile or pull up some carpet, and out comes a tidal wave of hybrid cockroaches.

- ▶ (alternate core) **Research:** Dent was notoriously secretive and private, and was rarely seen in public. He died in 2019 in a freak accident at a Broadway show called *MEAT!* For some reason, he wandered backstage and was crushed by a giant meteorite prop that fell on him. This leads to *Catch a Broadway Show* (p. 90).
- ▶ **Architecture:** Plans in the TRX offices (or on the TRX servers) point to the existence of the 181st Street tunnel (*Riding the Rails*, p. 87).
- ▶ **High Society:** Dent had a devoted following of stock-brokers — while he rarely invested himself, he had a keen insight into the way the market was going to move. They regularly met at a bar near the New York Stock Exchange on Broad Street, near where Downing's Oyster House once stood. (**Timecraft** notes that if Dent is an ezeru or an ezeru servant, then obviously he's got insider knowledge of the stock market.) If the Agents ask after Dent before 2019, then **High Society** gets them an introduction. If they ask later, they get an account of his death at the theater.
- ▶ **Medical Expertise or Anthropology:** Like every other New Yorker in the '80s, Dent had a regular appointment with a psychotherapist, Dr. Almwood. **Burglary** or a suitable Interpersonal spend gets access to Almwood's notes or impressions of Dent.
  - ▶ Notably, Dent claimed to suffer from the Kafkaesque belief that he was actually a cockroach trapped in a human body, and that he had to go through the motions of humanity in order to escape detection.
  - ▶ He was also terrified of subway trains, despite owning a company that made its fortune building and maintaining the New York subway. Apparently, every time he heard a train rattle by underground, he feared that it was the herald of a nuclear explosion that would wipe out the city.
  - ▶ He also claimed that he knew he was going to die on Broadway. (This may refer to Dent-the-bug, getting squished by a falling prop in *Catch a Broadway Show* (p. 90). Alternatively, it may refer to a planned elimination of Dent-the-human-cover-identity before the real Dent died of old age in his cocoon and exposed the bug infiltrator.)
  - ▶ A 1-point **Medical Expertise** spend suggests that Dent has at least partially "gone human" — a rare but not unheard-of condition among deep-cover ezeru operatives. It's psychic bleed-through from the captured human original. With *careful* psychological manipulation, the Agents might be able to play on Dent's human instincts and get him to give away more than he should. The trick is getting him to associate the Agents with extremely positive emotions, which may mean saving his life.

## EXPANDING TAX

Optionally, you can expand the role of TRX Services in your campaign. Maybe it's more important to the ezeru's activities in the 20th century — they could be using the company's financial muscle and connections to the American military-industrial complex for other sinister plans. Following up on clues uncovered in this investigation might lead on to future adventures involving the bugs' shell corporation.

## GARY DENT

Dent is another ezeru infiltrator — the real Gary Dent spends his life from 1970 until 2019 in a life-support cocoon in the ezeru base, which isn't the most rewarding existence. This bug's role is to oversee the ezeru modification of the subway system to keep the base entrance concealed. In person, the infiltrator plays up the rich eccentric act — keeping odd hours, absurd penny-pinching, occasional acts of flamboyant generosity or patronage, always eating alone, only using the bathroom in his Manhattan mansion — in order to distract from his genuine weirdness. Long-term ezeru infiltration leads to all sorts of weirdness, as the bugs don't have the psychological makeup to cope with masquerading as a human for decades. They prefer quick strikes.

**Falsehood Detection** immediately spots that Dent is an ezeru in disguise; his bug-ness is obvious once you know where to look. If challenged, Dent flees as described in *Ezeru Escape* on p. 83, scuttling across the city to the one door into the ezeru base. If the Agents stop him from reaching the door, he clocks out conventionally and heads to *Catch a Broadway Show* (p. 90).

The Agents may get more information by questioning Dent subtly first:

- ▶ **Authority + Disguise:** By posing as authority figures (police, IRS auditors, EPA inspectors), the Agents force Dent to show them plans of TRX's construction projects in New York. **Notice** or **Architecture** then spots the 181st Street tunnel (p. 87), as well as alarmingly detailed schematics of the Indian Point power plant.
- ▶ **Bureaucracy:** Stalling Dent with pointless bureaucracy annoys him to the point that he leaves, claiming that he's late for a theater show in 2019. Ordinary people would dismiss that as just another bit of eccentric weirdness, but time travelers aren't ordinary people...
- ▶ **Taunt:** If the Agents accuse Dent of being an ezeru without revealing that they're TimeWatch, then taunting him makes him accuse them of being "lizard lackeys" working with the sophosaurs, and that they will "all be washed away in atomic fire." He then attempts to escape as described above.

- ▶ Optionally, run an *Ezeru Attack!* (p. 84) when Dent's exposed.
- ▶ A 1-point **Medical Expertise** spend lets the player guess that the ezeru may be having psychological problems from being undercover for so long, and suggests that looking into Dent's psychotherapist might be a good avenue of investigation.

**Manipulating Dent:** If the Agents talked to Dent's shrink, then they know he's vulnerable to psychological manipulation. To get inside the bug's head, the Agents need to make him trust them or associate them with positive events. The easiest way to do this is to save Dent's life in *Catch a Broadway Show* (below), but they could also clock back to the '70s and befriend Dent when he's getting established as a human, or just be the bartender who serves him all that delicious sugar-water down on Broad street. Once the Agents have leverage, **Reassurance** spends get answers from Dent, 1 point per honest answer. He can even lead the Agents into the ezeru base if they ask (*Entering the Ezeru Base*, p. 95).

**Dent's Office:** A quick search (either through **Burglary**, or after he's departed for his date with destiny) finds another flyer for *MEAT!* (*Catch a Broadway Show*), schematics of the 181st Street tunnel (*Riding the Rails*), or a drawer full of carnivorous beetles from the atomic future (spend **Paradox Prevention** to warn yourself before opening it, or you're hit for +4 damage).

## CATCH A BROADWAY SHOW

**Scene Type:** Alternate

**Lead-Ins:** A Speck of Grit, Rail Yard Complex, TRX Services

**Lead-Outs:** Let's Make a Deal, Riding the Rails, Cracking the Code, TRX Services, Entering the Ezeru Base, Nuke York

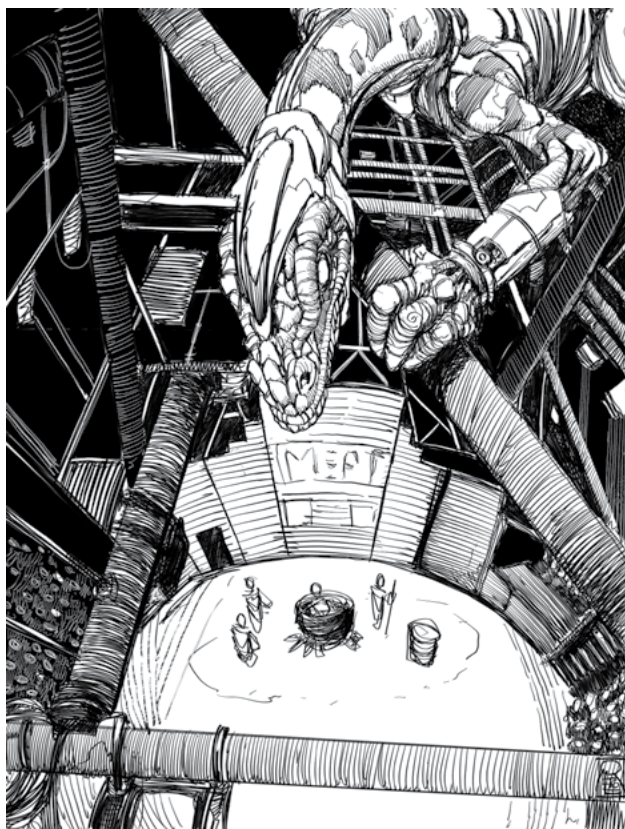
**Summary:** The sophosaur have a scheme to find the ezeru base

If you're involved in the theatre scene in New York in the early 21st century, you know the Eierdieb clan. There's Oscar, the infamously persuasive yet unreliable producer, with a string of high-profile and grotesquely unsuccessful flops in his wake. There's Judith, the creative one, full of grand visions and artistic sentiment, convinced of her own brilliance but utterly tone deaf. And there's Harold, the harried director/manager/factotum who keeps the show on the road. Currently, they've got a show on called *MEAT!*, which is supposed to do for cannibals what *Cats* did for, well, cats.

It's awful, but that doesn't matter. It gets the crowds in.

At the climax of *MEAT!*, during the big dance number, a huge glowing meteorite crashes onto the stage, annihilating the chorus and leaving the dying cannibals to sing the last song before they too go extinct. Several reviews point to this as the highlight of the show ("Extinction of all life on the planet was a small price to pay for this artistic abomination to be over" — *NYT*). It's a very impressive and memorable special effect, especially when the giant psychic crystal concealed within the meteorite scans the brains of everyone in the audience.

You see, the Eierdieb clan are time traveling sophosaurs,



dinosaurs from an alternate history where that fateful meteor didn't hit. They too know about the ezeru base in New York, and they're looking for it too, just like the player characters. They quickly worked out that the base entrance was cleverly hidden, and that they'd need to come up with a clever plan to locate the way in.

Being psychic dinosaurs, their instinctive response was to get the stupid monkeys to do the work for them. There are lots of people in New York. People have eyes. Eyes see things — maybe even ezeru nests. All they had to do was zap enough people with a telepathic scanner. The scanner, though, had a limited range, so they needed a way to corral large numbers of humans together and keep them immobile long enough to scan their brains with a two-meter-wide chunk of glowing green psi-crystal.

That's showbiz!

## INVESTIGATING THE EIERDIEBS

*MEAT!* runs for a few months in the spring and summer of 2019, but it's not the only show the Eierdiebs worked on. If the Agents take the time to dig:

▶ **History (Contemporary)** or **Streetwise:** Weird rumors about the Eierdiebs include:

- ▶ Their shows always include a giant glowing prop. Most people assume that Oscar paid a fortune for the special effect and is determined to get his money's worth by jamming it into every show.

- ▶ (post-2019): Elderly New York industrialist Gary Dent dies backstage when the prop meteor falls on him (*TRX Services*, p. 88).
- ▶ **High Society** gets an invite to a cocktail party where a drunk theatre critic gives caustically brilliant descriptions of all three, and tips on how to manipulate them (as per *Meeting the Eierdiebs*).
- ▶ **Streetwise**: The Eierdiebs have lost a staggering amount of money, but keep putting on shows. Either they're superhumanly persuasive, independently wealthy, or impossibly lucky.

## MEETING THE EIERDIEBS

The sophosaurs' mission is to locate the ezeru base. Therefore, their operating assumption is that anyone poking around their theater, especially any time travelers, are ezeru agents who must be destroyed as quickly as possible. The player characters can either make a 2-point **Reassurance** spend to convince the sophosaurs they're not ezeru (more **Reassurance** needed if the Agents are caught in a compromising situation), or else get close to the sophosaurs first and then reveal that they're TimeWatch.

Getting a meeting with Oscar is easy if you've got money. His normal tactic is to get potential investors alone in a room (a private room at a steak house restaurant is an option) and then use his psychic abilities to get them to invest in his next production. It'll be great, a surefire hit; just sign here. **Intimidation** knocks him off his prepared spiel and makes him actually acknowledge your existence as something other than a wallet with legs. Unfortunately for TimeWatch agents, next up is "enemies coated in delicious meat" — he attacks unless the Agents have a good offer for him.

You can get a meeting with Judith if you've got talent. She's convinced that the reason that they haven't got the psychic readings they need yet is because the audience hasn't been transported by the show — if only the performers produced real art, the audience would open their minds fully. She blames Oscar's commercially minded interference with her artistic visions for the delay. An Agent who puts on a good performance (**Trivia**, perhaps) can then use **Charm** to get on her good side. She attacks only if the Agents insult her genius.

Harold's usually too busy to meet anyone for more than fifteen seconds. Between Oscar's combination of predatory laziness and extravagant promises, Judith's grand but impractical visions, and the fact that he eats when he's stressed and you can't get good diplomodocus in this time period, Harold's got a lot of problems — making some of them go away with **Bureaucracy** wins him over.

If you can swing it, have the sophosaurs insist that the Agents attend the show tonight ("We'll meet at the after-party, darling") and then run *Unwanted Guests* when the ezeru show up too. Otherwise, go to *Let's Make a Deal* (p. 93).

If the Agents ran into sophosaurs in *Thief in the Night*, you can make the Eierdiebs be from the same clan two hundred years later. This might make the Agents into folk heroes or giant meaty targets, depending on how the Agents treated the sophosaurs when they last met. Clans have a *very* long memory.

If the Agents go in Pacifists blazing, or otherwise startle the sophosaurs, run a *Sophosaur Rampage*.

## Oscar and Harold, Sophosaur Hunter

**Defense:** Hit Threshold 4, Armor 2, Health 18

**Offense:** Scuffling +3, Shooting +2; Damage Modifier +2 (claws and teeth), +2 (crystalline beam weapon)

**Abilities:** Tempus 15

**Special Abilities:** Disguise (cost 1), Extra Action (cost 2), Lightning Speed (cost 2); if two Scuffling attacks (using Extra Action) hit the same target in the same round, the second attack does an additional +2 damage

**Misc:** Alertness Modifier +2

## Judith, Sophosaur Mindwhip

**Defense:** Hit Threshold 4, Armor 1, Health 12

**Offense:** Scuffling +1, Shooting +2; Damage Modifier +2 (claws), +2 plus Stun 5 (psychic mindwhip)

**Abilities:** Tempus 20

**Special Abilities:** Disguise (cost 1), Mental Attack (Mental Damage — cost 0, Domination — cost 3/round)

**Misc:** Alertness Modifier +2

**Description:** Sophosaur mindwhips are typically female and are chosen from the wittiest conversationalists in the clan. Mindwhips consider ripping a foe apart with claws or teeth to be a sign of weakness, and prefer not to use physical violence against prey unless absolutely necessary.

Mindwhips specialize in stunning and mind controlling their enemies. They can use Mental Attack to dominate their prey or directly attack Chronal Stability. Their psychic mindwhip Shooting attack does physical damage to the target while triggering a Stun 5 test. Interestingly, this psychic mindwhip stuns a victim into insensibility by projecting extreme pleasure, happiness, and peace. Sophosaurs consider this a good death, and edible prey killed by mindwhips is believed to taste particularly delicious.

## CATCHING THE SHOW

*MEAT!* is awful and boring, like watching blood from a car crash congeal onstage. The plot, such as it is, involves a group of young New Yorkers who discover that humans are delicious after an unfortunate fondue accident, and struggle with the desire not to solve all their problems by killing and eating other people (spoiler: they fail). A meteorite comes out of nowhere and destroys New York in the final scene.

If the Agents follow the ezeru from *Rail Yard Complex* here, or if they came here to investigate the death of Gary Dent, run *Unwanted Guests*.

If they deliberately pick a night where nothing happens, they'll be begging for an ezeru attack to relieve their suffering. We encourage you to sing at them. ("MEAT! It's the answer for you, the answer you chew! When life feels pointless and blue, it's time for a human barbecue!")

Near the end of the show, the giant meteor prop telepathically scans the audience. TimeWatch agents are trained to notice this sort of psychic tampering; the Agents may make Difficulty 4 **Disguise** tests to hide their ahistorical brain-wave patterns from the scan and thus avoid detection by the sophosaurs.

**Spying:** They're scanning the whole audience. It felt like some sort of psychic interrogation. This is sophosaur technology, not ezeru.

**Notice:** That prop must conceal a psychic crystal. Maybe a closer look backstage is in order.

**Science!:** If they're scanning every audience, then they've got a brain-wave pattern database containing millions of New Yorkers. That could be useful to your mission — maybe there's a clue to the location of the ezeru base in there.

As already noted, the psi-crystal is a roughly circular chunk of glowing green rock two meters in diameter — stealing it is doable, but tricky.

## UNWANTED GUESTS

The ezeru suspect that there's something weird going on at the theater, but don't yet know that sophosaurs are involved. They dispatch two scouts to investigate the show in 2019. The Agents may have already run into one or both of these scouts.

- ▶ The first scout was disguised as a secretary from 1974, Susan Pollard (p. 83). As the disguise is linked to the human victim, the ezeru arrives in bug form in 2019, and heads to the TRX offices to grab a replacement flesh-mask. This time, it takes the form of a PR manager from TRX, **Ji Hyun Moon**.
- ▶ The second scout is Gary Dent (p. 89), a long-term ezeru duplicate. The Dent identity is more established and secure. The plan, therefore, is for Dent to take the lead when dealing with humans, but for the other scout to take over if Dent uncovers evidence of time travel.
 

If the Agents don't get involved, here's what happens:

  - ▶ The two ezeru arrive at the theater. They don't spot any of the three psychically disguised Eierdiebs.
  - ▶ During the interval, Moon sneaks backstage and discovers the psychic crystal. She signals for Dent to come and join her, but Dent stays in the bar and then watches the second half of the show. (His delay may be due to a reticence to give up his human life, as the Dent identity is aging beyond the point of usefulness, or he may be temporarily confused by psychic leakage, or maybe the player characters delayed him.)
  - ▶ When the psychic crystal is lowered into position and scans the audience, it alerts the sophosaurs to the presence of ezeru. It also catches a psychic impression of the ezeru plan to nuke the city. Realizing that he can't put acting off any longer, Dent heads backstage just as the show finishes.
  - ▶ Hastily, before the sophosaurs can find them, Moon tries to steal the crystal. In her haste, she accidentally cuts the metal cables supporting it and drops it right on top of Dent.
  - ▶ Moon then flees back to the ezeru base and warns them that the sophosaurs are hunting for them. The ezeru then

begin to accelerate their plans (possibly leading to a *Nuke York* scenario, p. 85).

If the Agents are trying to flip Gary Dent to their side, then saving him from his destiny is enough to confuse the ezeru and make the Dent personality temporarily dominant. Dent then assists the Agents in *Entering the Ezeru Base* (p. 95) — assuming the Agents can get him out of the theater before he's murdered by rampaging sophosaurs.

## SOPHOSAUR RAMPAGE

Hostile time travelers have to be subtle to sneak past TimeWatch's vigilant sentries. The sophosaurs use their psychic gifts to blend into and manipulate human society. The ezeru scuttle and infest the wainscoting of our reality, working their sinister plans behind stolen faces and in the secret folds of time. The insect masquerading as Gary Dent, for example, lived a whole human lifetime behind a face that was not its own.

Subtlety has its place. So does rampaging through the crowds, snapping and slaving. Not so much throwing caution to the wind, as setting caution on fire and flinging it in front of an oncoming train.

In this case, if the Agents startle the sophosaurs, or if the sophosaurs have a chance of catching the ezeru (they don't in the "default" sequence of events, as Moon clocks out and Dent gets squished before they can act), then it's time for a rampage!

Yelling "fire" in a theater is one thing. Yelling "dinosaur attack" in a theater is something else entirely, especially if said dinosaurs are a) broadcasting psychic predator-response triggers and b) the ones doing the yelling. The sophosaurs' tactics in a fight in the theater are as follows:

- ▶ If it's during or just after a show, then terrify the crowd with roars and psychic blasts. The panicked rush of the fleeing crowd buffets and batters the Agents, distracting them; this increases all Difficulties for physical actions by +1 until the crowd clears (it takes 1d6+1 rounds for the crowd to clear, although an **Authority** spend can organize a proper evacuation in just two rounds). The press of the crowd also means that the Agents don't automatically get a free shot when an enemy closes to Point-Blank range — they still get a shot, but it hits one or more innocents as well as the attacking dinosaur.
- ▶ The sophosaurs know every inch of the theater. Out front, they know how to use the terrain for cover, ducking behind rows of seats or scrambling from balcony to balcony to increase their Hit Thresholds by +1 (an **Architecture** or **Military Tactics** spend counters this advantage).
- ▶ Backstage, their advantage is even bigger — they're so used to scurrying through the sets and wardrobes that they not only get that +1 bonus to Hit Threshold, they can also hide there, allowing them to burst out of a pile of costumes into Point-Blank range unless a Agent spends **Notice** to avoid the danger.
- ▶ That giant psychic crystal can be turned to other purposes, but Judith needs to climb up and attune to the crystal's control surfaces in order to manipulate it. It can become:

- ▶ a psychic distortion ray that tries to subsume its victims by overwriting them with stored psychic impressions (+2 damage, but hits both Chronal Stability *and* Health with the same attack; Agents killed by this are replaced by New York theatergoers previously scanned by the crystal)
- ▶ a giant sensor to locate the Agents anywhere within eight hundred kilometers and fifty years of the theater
- ▶ a chronal interdictor, preventing anyone from clocking out within the theater
- ▶ Harold can control the building's security systems. He can seal all the doors with the press of a button, trapping everyone inside.
- ▶ If opportunity presents itself, and if he believes that it's warranted, Oscar clocks out and heads back to the rest of the clan. He returns the following round at the head of a much bigger pack of dinosaurs.

## THE PSI-CRYSTAL

If the Agents make a deal with the sophosaurs (see *Let's Make a Deal*, below), then Judith translates the stored data from the psi-crystal into a form the Agents can use.

However, if the Agents steal the crystal, or kill the sophosaurs and loot the crystal like time traveling murder hoboes (chrono-boes), they need to work out how to access the data themselves. A **Tinkering** test (Difficulty 6) can set up an apparatus to read the psychic impressions, but if the test fails, the crystal blasts the Agents with the overwriting beam described above.

Depending on your needs, analyzing the crystal's data with **Science!** (alternate core clue) might:

- ▶ tell the Agents exactly where the door is (*Entering the Ezeru Base*, p. 95)
- ▶ give the Agents extra information needed in *Cracking the Code* (p. 86)
- ▶ hint at the connection to the railway (*Riding the Rails*, p. 87)

## LET'S MAKE A DEAL

**Scene Type:** Alternate

**Lead-Ins:** Cracking the Code, Catch a Broadway Show

**Lead-Out:** Entering the Ezeru Base

**Summary:** Gather allies for the assault on the ezeru base

The rebels originally gave TimeWatch information about the ezeru base, and the sophosaurs are also searching for the lair of their eternal foes. Either faction might be open to an alliance against the ezeru. **Military Tactics** suggests to the Agents that attacking the base is likely to be a major undertaking, but they can't safely call in reinforcements from TimeWatch as the ezeru are doubtless monitoring New York for any large-scale temporal incursions. They need to work with those groups that are already operating in the city. (If the Agents do try

## QUANTUM FIELD HAMMER

Developed by Einstein and a cabal of American resistance scientists during the Occupation in the 1950s — what, the Nazis didn't invade the United States in your history? — the quantum field hammer consists of four metal poles topped with crackling electrostatic receivers, and a bulky backpack-sized generator. Switch it on, and it collapses the false vacuum within a sphere equidistant from the four poles. Anything in there ceases to exist. Theoretically, there's no upper limit to the size of the sphere, but the device tends to burn out if you try to collapse anything bigger than a city block.

Still, that's enough to destroy an ezeru queen.

To use the field hammer, the Agents must first deploy the four poles. Then, someone needs to make a **Tinkering** test, at a Difficulty that varies depending on how long it takes for the sphere of annihilation to form.

Instantaneous	Difficulty 8
One round	Difficulty 7
Two rounds	Difficulty 6
Three rounds	Difficulty 5

The operator may spend **Science!** to gain a pool of 3 **Tinkering** points that can be used on the test.

If the ezeru queen smashes any of the poles, or the generator itself, the field hammer is useless.

calling in an army from the Citadel, warn them that they're altering history towards a *Nuke York* future (p. 85).)

Optionally, if you're going to with the A Cast of Thousands! suggestion below, then spending **Paradox Prevention** lets the Agents bring in a small number of extra TimeWatch agents or future versions of themselves to help out with the assault on the base.

## ALLYING WITH THE REBELS

Flynt suggested that the Agents can meet him back in the 1840s, in the oyster house. He reveals that he's got a dozen rebels operating out of 19th-century New York; they're

piggybacking on the Underground Railroad used by escaped slaves to smuggle refugees out of dying parallel timelines erased by TimeWatch. The ezeru, he says, are a threat to both rebels and TimeWatch, and he's willing to help — assuming, of course, that the Agents know how to find the base.

A 1-point **Falsehood Detection** spend picks up that Flynt is suspiciously eager to help, and probably has an ulterior motive for entering the base.

- ▶ A 1-point **Military Tactics** or **Timecraft** spend suggests that this ulterior motive might be control of the ezeru base itself — cleared of its eggs, it would be an ideal operating base for the rebels themselves.

Alternatively, Flynt suggests that the Agents will need a weapon capable of destroying an ezeru queen. It so happens that one of the temporal refugees that his faction rescued can provide exactly such a thing — a quantum field hammer. It's a delicate and temperamental piece of equipment, though, so he suggests that the player characters tell him where the entrance to the ezeru base is so he can have his team bring the subtractor through. Flynt grumbles that the weapon comes from an alternate timeline that was erased by TimeWatch — the timeline itself was a horrible dystopia, but there were still people living there, people who deserved a chance instead of just ceasing to exist because some TimeWatch agent “fixed” things.

## ALLYING WITH THE SOPHOSAURS

The Agents' chances of allying with the sophosaurs depend on:

- ▶ the outcome of *Thief in the Night* — if the Agents ended up in the clan's bad books (or bad pooled-psychic-knowledge-stores), then the best they can hope for is grudging and hard-won assistance in tracking down a mutual enemy. If they ended up allied to the sophosaurs, it's much easier to get help from the Eierdiebs.
- ▶ how the Agents approached *Catch a Broadway Show*. If they went in guns blazing, then it takes **Reassurance** and **Charm** spends to salvage the situation. If they were conciliatory, then the sophosaurs are willing to cut a deal.
- ▶ what the Agents offer: the sophosaurs want the ezeru nest destroyed, but also want the base destroyed. They instinctively loathe the ezeru and all their works.

If the Agents convince the sophosaurs to help, then Oscar promises to bring along his siblings and some of his clan.

## A CAST OF THOUSANDS!

There are four challenges inside the base (five, if you count the possibility of the rebels backstabbing TimeWatch). The Agents almost certainly need extra help in battling all those bugs. You can have any sophosaur/rebel/TimeWatch allies as background color, describing how, say, the Eierdieb clan holds back the ezeru hordes while the Agents stop the train. More ambitiously, you can have the Agents split up, with one or two Agents tackling each challenge. The other player characters can then play “disposable” one-shot supporting characters like the Eierdiebs, rebels, or low-ranking TimeWatch reinforcements (or even Gary Dent). A pack of one-shot supporting characters can be downloaded from the Pelgrane site.

If you do go with this option, then intercut between the scenes. Have one group of characters *Battle the Bugs* in the ezeru's first wave, then switch to a different group attempting to *Stop the Hatching*.

## THE REBELS

If the Agents haven't allied with the rebels, then you need to foreshadow the rebel presence to set up *The Rebel Betrayal* (p. 100) — although without an alliance, it's less betrayal and more opportunism. Possible options:

- ▶ The Agents see the same mysterious observer (see p. 83) perched on a rooftop, watching them. She hasn't changed — it's as though the whole city has moved around her while she remained constant.
- ▶ One of the Agents spots a discarded oyster shell in the gutter near the door entrance.
- ▶ One of the Agents gets sick soon after entering the ezeru base. Bad oysters — or an oyster with a tracking device built into it?
- ▶ The rebels kidnap Gary Dent or another ezeru agent and force the bug to reveal the base entrance.
- ▶ Desperate, dying future versions of the rebels clock back from the *Nuke York* future to guide their previous incarnations to the base entrance.
- ▶ Rebels encountered during *Rebel Heart* are spotted in crowds.

## ENTERING THE EZERU BASE

**Scene Type:** Core

**Lead-Ins:** Cracking the Code, Let's Make a Deal, TRX Services, Catch a Broadway Show

**Lead-Outs:** Battle the Bugs, Destroy the Queen, Stop the Hatching, Train to the End of the World, The Rebel Betrayal

**Summary:** Uncover the giant army of killer bugs. Sort of a giveaway, really.

The ezeru base hangs just offshore of reality, a wasp's-nest starship tethered lightly to the bundle of chronal possibilities called New York City. The movement of the time-active cockroaches clinging to the moving subway trains is the key to the lock on the bridge that connects the city and the base — changing every second, jumping from one quantum state to the next.

That means the door itself is something of an anticlimax when the Agents find it. One moment it's the entrance to a service elevator on 60th Street; next second it's a closet door in an apartment in Midtown; a few seconds after that it's an office door in Queens. It always looks mundane and forgettable — and 99.9999% of the time, that's exactly what it is. Any other moment, it opens onto a grimy elevator car or a closet crammed with junk or a boring office. It's only now, at this precise moment, that it opens into that nightmarish realm.

The complication is that there's only time for one or two people to step through before the door moves on. It's impossible to invade the base en masse — the only solution is to know where the door will appear next, and station more troops at each future location.

That does mean, of course, that the first teams through the door have to hold out against the ezeru on their own until help arrives.

### THROUGH THE DOOR

There's no light on the far side, except the occasional cascade of sparks from far above. The ezeru can see a wider range of frequencies than humans can. Flashlights illuminate a confusing collage of disparate images — rusty metal girders, nacreous shell-like walls, slithering liquid-metal cables and webs, and everywhere, everywhere, insects crawling over huge egg clutches that are stuck to every surface. The space is vast — this one chamber is big enough to swallow Central Park, and there are more tunnels leading elsewhere in the base.

Bizarrely, there are New York subway trains on elevated rails running through the complex. The ezeru don't use these for transport; they're for manipulation of the time-distortion field from the other side if necessary. There's no furniture, no displays, no functional control mechanisms or machinery that the Agents can recognize other than the trains.

**Trivia:** Some of those subway train cars are ones that were supposedly destroyed in accidents over the years. There's a car from the 1918 Malbone Street Wreck, and several more from the 1991 derailment in Union Square.

## PREPARE THE NUKE!

Hey, rather than enter the alien base that's crawling with billions of killer bugs, how about I spend Preparedness and get, say, an antimatter grenade or a really, really big bug bomb and throw it through the door? Base go boom, we go home.

Let us count the ways that this is a bad idea:

- ▶ The ezeru are time travelers. Unless you're there to defend the bomb, they are able to change history to avoid destruction. If you want to make history stick, you need to do it yourself.
- ▶ The ezeru base is right on top of New York, temporally speaking. There's every chance that the blast could wash back into the city, or mess up the base's time-shifting and cause it to rematerialize right on top of Manhattan. Unless you're angling for Michael Bay to make the movie of your mission, that's a bad thing. If you're going to blow up the base, make sure you've got control of its time travel first.
- ▶ If the ezeru escaped with Hitesh Chen's weapons in *The Gadget*, those nuclear weapons are visibly stowed within the base. They amplify any significant nuclear explosion so much that blowback into New York City is assured.
- ▶ The rebels want to capture the base intact. They're going to monitor future timelines and clock back to stop you blowing up that desirable piece of almost-New York (quasi-)real estate.
- ▶ If the ezeru feel threatened, they go into the past and go for their plan B, blowing up the Indian Point power plant. That's the problem with introducing nukes to a time war — you do a first strike, they respond with a zeroth strike. And yes, you could go back and nuke them before they nuke you, but that just leads to them going even further back, and the final result is that New York gets blown up in the '70s and all the Agents get erased by massive chronal instability.

If the Agents do try a tactic involving mass destruction or chronal weirdness that threatens to destroy the base, then run *Train to the End of the World* (p. 100).



## MASS BATTLES

Rather than rolling endless buckets of dice, here's how we're going to handle big combats in this adventure: by alternating between Tactics Phases, Execution Phases, and Resolution Phases.

### TACTICS

In the Tactics Phase, each player describes what their character is going to try accomplishing in the next bit of the fight, guided by their Investigative abilities. Some suggestions:

- ▶ Can I use my *Military Tactics* to, er, flank them or something?
- ▶ I use *Science!* to overcharge this chronal disruptor – ezeru are vulnerable to instability!
- ▶ With *Architecture*, I'm going to collapse the ceiling supports and block their tunnels.
- ▶ I'll *Intimidate* them into retreating.

Remember, in all three waves, the opposition has a massive advantage in numbers and fighting ability. TimeWatch isn't going to win a straight fight here. The Agents need to be creative and sneaky to triumph.

Players may also pick non-Investigative options that won't win the battle, but help their comrades, like:

- ▶ I draw enemy fire away from the rest of the team.
- ▶ I'll run around using *Medic* on our wounded.
- ▶ I'll stick with a particular ally and help them execute their tactic.

### EXECUTION

Next, in the Execution Phase, the player actually attempts to carry out their plan. This might involve:

- ▶ just getting into the right place to use an Investigative ability (to *Intimidate* them, you need to be right in the middle of the fray)
- ▶ spending a point from an Investigative ability (OK, spend *Military Tactics* to give orders over your tether link)
- ▶ making a General ability test (roll *Tinkering* to attune the disruptor to the time-distortion field)

During the Execution Phase, each player character attempting a tactic faces opposition from one or more ezeru each (each wave lists the suggested Opposition). The player characters face this opposition alone, unless someone else is explicitly accompanying them or drawing enemy forces away from them – we assume that the other player characters are off fighting for their lives against overwhelming odds. Think of the execution phase as a few snapshots of key moments in the battle – there's lots of fighting and dying in the gaps between those key moments where tactics get executed.

The player characters may not need to defeat their opposition to execute their tactic, but it's hard to, say, successfully *Tinker* a gadget together while having your intestines liquefied by a hungry drone.

Players may abandon their planned tactic and withdraw to safer ground.

### RESOLUTION

First, reduce the Difficulty of the wave by 1 for each successful tactic.

Next, roll a die. If the result exceeds the listed Difficulty, then the wave is defeated. If the players fail by 1–2 points, they can keep fighting – go back to the Tactics Phase and start again. If they lose by 3 or more points, then they must retreat.

*Example: Mace Hunter, Altani, and two of the sophosaur clan are battling Wave Two in this scene. Tactics first — Mace declares that this is just like that time in South Africa (specifically, that time in 2730, with the robot invaders), and that what they need is a Maxim gun emplacement (Military Tactics). Altani's more worried about the ezeru diverting forces from the battle here to protect their queen, so she's determined to attract as much attention as possible (Taunt). One of the sophosaurs, Harold Eierdieb, plans to use his expertise in the theatre (Trivia) to convince the ezeru that there are far more defenders present than there actually are; it's all done with mirrors and psychic powers, of course. The other sophosaur doesn't employ a tactic, and declares that she's sticking with Altani.*

*Next comes execution. The GM checks the Opposition entry for Wave Two, and sees that it's one ezeru per attempted tactic. So, Mace gets to fight one ezeru, Altani and her sophosaur winger get to fight one ezeru between the two of them, and Harold gets one ezeru.*

*Altani has it easy — she and the sophosaur make mincemeat of the ezeru champion who steps forward to meet her challenge. To be doubly sure that the ezeru remain focused on her, she spends a point of Taunt. She succeeds at her tactic.*

*The dice are against Mace tonight, and he's already at low Health. After spending several rounds trading blows with an ezeru, and coming off the worse each time, he abandons his tactic — and his Maxim gun emplacement.*

*Harold doesn't even try to fight — he makes an Unobtrusiveness test to hide, then spends Tempus and Trivia to fool the ezeru into thinking there are sophosaur reinforcements coming down the corridor. He succeeds at his tactic.*

*Finally, resolution. Two successful tactics reduce the Difficulty from 7 to 5. Next, the GM rolls 1d6 for the players against the reduced Difficulty of 5. Unfortunately, she rolls a 3. The players must fight another round of battle against this wave...*

**Timecraft:** The base is its own pocket timeline. There's no way to clock out safely, other than going back through that door. The Agents can time travel within the base, but they can't leave easily. Retreat isn't an option.

**History (Future):** The ezeru didn't build this base — you know a 43rd-century transgalactic colony ship when you see one. They must have carried it here, somehow.

**Notice:** The scuttling bugs look like the same weird mutant cockroaches seen in the rail yard. If they're generating the same sort of time-warping distortion field, that may be how the base is being kept out of phase with reality.

**Science!:** Radiation levels here are unpleasantly high, on the order of a thousand millisieverts — definitely unhealthy.

Call for **Unobtrusiveness** tests (Difficulty 6) on entering the base. Agents who succeed go unnoticed by the ezeru; those who fail are spotted by ezeru sentries. These are newly hatched drones, still attuning to the ezeru hivemind and therefore not that bright. Any distraction or clever trickery gets the Agents out of trouble, but fighting back just attracts more and more guards.

## EXPLORING THE BASE

(core) **Military Tactics:** As soon as we start exploring, we're going to get swarmed by ezeru. We need to establish a kill zone here to keep the enemy bottled up and distracted so the rest of the team can accomplish their goals. Someone has to dig in and *Battle the Bugs* (p. 98)

(core) **Medical Expertise:** These radiation levels are high enough to hatch some of these ezeru eggs. There must a full-scale hatchery containing millions of eggs somewhere in this base, probably where the radiation is highest. Smashing a few eggs isn't enough — to stop this infestation, we need to *Stop the Hatching* (p. 98).

(core) **Anthropology:** The ezeru are ruled by a queen. The more mature eggs are down in that direction — so if we head in the other direction, we'll find and *Destroy the Queen*, p. 99.

**Timecraft:** The bugs are generating the time distortion field, and they're manipulating the field with the trains to create gaps in it — but all that would just keep the base hidden next to New York where it can feed on the radiation like a giant time traveling tick. To actually *move* the base would require big honking time engines — where are they?

At a suitably inconvenient juncture, the rebels attempt to seize control of the time engines (*The Rebel Betrayal*, p. 100).

## BATTLE THE BUGS

**Scene Type:** Antagonist Reaction

**Lead-In:** Entering the Ezeru Base

**Lead-Outs:** Train to the End of the World, The Rebel Betrayal

**Summary:** Fend off waves of ezeru

Ezeru reproduce in a pyramid scheme. There are millions of eggs in the base, thousands of immature drones, hundreds of mature time traveling drones, tens of warriors — and a single queen. That queen, though, was once just another drone, newly hatched from an irradiated egg in some distant future when the sun was swollen and sick. Every drone can ascend to the most exalted rank in ezeru society; every drone can hope to become a queen that will spawn millions, even billions of eggs, and propagate the species throughout every possible eternity.

And every drone unhesitatingly sacrifices all that potential and sacrifices its life to protect the current queen.

In game terms, this is represented by three waves of hostile attackers swarming over the Agents. **Military Tactics** tells the players that they need to hold the enemy here to keep the other parts of the base from being overrun — and if the Agents don't stop the attacking ezeru here, add bugs from any unbroken waves to the *Stop the Hatching*, *Destroy the Queen*, or *Train to the End of the World*. So, if the Agents deal with waves one and two, but don't stop the third wave, then add in the extra ezeru warriors to the fight with the queen.

**Note:** in the interest of time, you may wish to reduce the amount of opposition in the ezeru base. Feel free to scale back the extent of the mass battle, or to lower some immature ezeru Health to Mook levels, to provide the feeling of highly trained Agents mowing down a vast quantity of loathsome aliens. By this point in the game, the Agents have earned it.

### WAVE ONE: EZERU SWARM

These are immature drones, still wet from the hatching-cocons. They're not yet able to time travel, and aren't capable of doing much more than charging forward in a chattering wave. Still, those claws can rip TimeWatch armor like tissue paper, and they're *hungry*...

**Opposition:** Three immature ezeru per attempted Tactic

**Difficulty:** 5

### WAVE TWO: TIME BUGS

Alerted to the presence of intruders, the ezeru summon forces from the past and future. Dozens of drones appear, teleporting from elsewhere in the base's past and future. These bugs make full use of their Extra Action and Lightning Speed abilities.

**Opposition:** One ezeru per attempted Tactic

**Difficulty:** 7

## WAVE THREE: WARRIOR ONSLAUGHT

The whole hive resounds with the thunder of their wings as the Hungry Ones descend. These monsters just clocked back from the *Nuke York* future, so they're extremely radioactive — anyone in combat with them loses 1 Health per round automatically unless protected against radiation.

**Opposition:** One warrior per attempted Tactic

**Difficulty:** 4

## STOP THE HATCHING

**Scene Type:** Hazard

**Lead-In:** Entering the Ezeru Base

**Lead-Out:** Train to the End of the World

**Summary:** Figure out a way to eliminate the eggs

Freshly laid ezeru eggs are the size of a fat toddler; a butter-soft exterior, sickeningly warm, with the shape of the growing insect faintly visible through the translucent shell. The drones carry them down to the incubation lakes, where they float in a hot bath of radioactive gunk until the larva inside hatches. The banks of the lakes are piled high with a meaty nutrient paste vomited up by the tender-drones, and the larvae feast on this bounty until they grow into immature drones. The maturation phase is terrifyingly fast — one moment, the larva's tottering around on thin, unsteady legs and cleaning gunk out of its orifices, then it flickers in time, cramming months of growth into an instant.

The ezeru prefer to let their eggs incubate at a steady pace; if they grow too fast, it can induce mutation or aberrant behavior among the resulting drones. However, if the ezeru believe their base is under attack and they need to speed things up, there are steps they can take to achieve this goal. If the player characters fail to stop this hatching, New York is rapidly overrun by ezeru.

There are dozens of drones in this chamber, but they're occupied in tending to the eggs; only a handful move to attack the player characters.

## RADIATION BATHS

The lower decks of the ezeru base are huge holding tanks filled with radioactive slime. The ezeru intend for their queen to fill all those decks with eggs, but if pressed, they can pump up fresher, hotter slime from below to flood the active hatching chambers. The player characters hear a gurgle, then a hiss, then radioactive acid starts to spray from pipes running along the ceilings of the hatching chambers.

Exposure to the radioactive slime costs 1 Health point per round.

- ▶ **Medical Expertise** spots what's going on — the more radiation, the faster the eggs mature.
- ▶ **Architecture** or **Notice** let the Agents spot the pipes immediately, and track them back to the tanks below.

- ▶ A **Tinkering** test could let the Agents shut down the pumps, but the drones protect them.
- ▶ Another option would be to blow up the pipes, but that floods some other section of the base with a tidal wave of slime (complicating *Battle the Bugs*, *Destroy the Queen*, or *The Rebel Betrayal*).

## LAUNCH THE TRAIN

The ezeru's second response to an attack on the hatchery is to destroy the Indian Point reactor, which has the triple benefit of flooding the base with radiation, cutting off the attacker's line of retreat, and causing choral havoc. See *Train to the End of the World* (p. 100).

## EXPONENTIAL GROWTH

The third option for the ezeru is to take matters into their own claws. The time-distortion field that keeps the base out of phase with New York can be manipulated on a local scale — the use of cockroach-infested subway trains to open doors in the field is proof of that. There are billions of hybrid cockroaches scuttling around the base, so the third option is for the ezeru tenders to direct these swarms like a conductor leading an orchestra, commanding the cockroaches to surround the most mature eggs and create pockets of fast time, making the eggs mature in seconds instead of months. Unless the Agents can find a way to stop the swarming cockroaches, they are overrun with bugs — use the rules for Wave One of *Battle the Bugs* (p. 98).

## DESTROY THE QUEEN

**Scene Type:** Hazard

**Lead-In:** Entering the Ezeru Base

**Lead-Outs:** *Train to the End of the World*, *The Rebel Betrayal*

**Summary:** Come up with a strategy to depose the queen

The ezeru base was once a colony ship, made to carry millions of humans between the stars. Horrifically, the queen has set up her lair in what were once the cryo-storage banks where those passengers slumbered in suspended animation. The decks have been torn open, the bulkheads ripped away to create a huge pit for the queen's monstrous bulk. The passenger tubes themselves are all shattered and empty — a million discarded snack wrappers testament to the hungers of the insect queen.

The queen is guarded by elite ezeru warriors; you know they're elite because they have stylish yellow crests and do this ceremonial dance-of-the-time traveling-cockroaches before eating you.

If the Agents get past the warriors, run *Train to the End of the World* (p. 100).



## REGICIDE/INSECTICIDE

Taking the queen on in a straight fight is absolute suicide — the player characters really need some sort of weapon that can take her down. If they haven't acquired one with Preparedness or through their contacts, then they might try:

- ▶ **History (Future):** If the time engines on this ship are still functional, then they could be set to self-destruct. Ezeru queens can time travel, but they're very ungainly and slow, chronally speaking. With luck, she'd be caught in the explosion. (Run *The Rebel Betrayal* as the Agents get to the base's time engines.)
- ▶ **Timecraft:** It should be possible to turn the time-distortion field on her, and age her to death by luring her to the hatching chambers.
- ▶ **Anthropology:** That sophosaur crystal contains memories siphoned from millions of New Yorkers. Ezeru have a natural psychic ability to mimic people; the queen's Shape-Shifting ability, though, is atrophied and weak. If the player characters could force the queen to attune to the crystal — say, by tricking her into eating it — she'd instinctively try to mimic thousands of people simultaneously. The strain would rip her apart.
- ▶ **Architecture:** The lower decks of this base are flooded with radioactive slime under high pressure. Blow up the right section, and the blast might take the queen out too.

## Ezeru Queen

**Defense:** Hit Threshold 4 or 6, Armor 6, Health 100

**Offense:** Scuffling 30 (3-3-3, rising as needed), Shooting 20 (2-2-2, rising as needed); Damage Modifier +6 (razor-sharp chitin), +4 (radioactive acid spittle — Close range)

**Abilities:** Tempus 50

**Special Abilities:** Clock Out (cost 2), Destabilize (cost 4 — all targets in Close range), Distortion (Temporal) (cost 3), Flashback (cost 5), Lightning Speed (cost 2), Mastermind, Oracle (cost 1), Resist Stun, Seize Initiative (cost 2), Strength (cost 0), Summoning (cost 3 — drones), Universal Attack (cost 1 per target).

**Misc:** Alertness Modifier +3, Stealth Modifier -3

**Description:** Ezeru queens are legendarily rare, and no known TimeWatch agents have encountered one and escaped to report on it. Their existence is known from biological evidence and egg repositories occasionally found throughout history; the fact that queens are no longer there when agents arrive at newly discovered hive locations suggests that they may possess some sort of predictive senses. Ezeru brood queens are huge and terrifying, the size of buildings, ten meters of barbed chitin and acid-spewing lethality. Their brains are the repository for their species' entire history and memory. Queens spend most of their time laying toddler-sized eggs in quantities that could fill sports stadiums. Submerged in effluvia and carefully tended by drones, it's no surprise that they are unable to shape-shift. What is surprising is how quickly they can move when roused to battle.

## TRAIN TO THE END OF THE WORLD

**Scene Type:** Antagonist Reaction

**Lead-Ins:** Entering the Ezeru Base, Battle the Bugs, Stop the Hatching, Destroy the Queen

**Summary:** Counteract the ezeru's kamikaze attempt

Run this scene if the ezeru are losing — it's the bug's emergency response.

The 181st Street tunnel forms a spur in the cockroach-generated time distortion field, letting the ezeru base reach into the Indian Point power plant and drain radioactivity like a giant tick. The ezeru plan was to slowly drain this radioactivity, letting the eggs mature at a measured rate.

In an emergency, though, the ezeru can send a train loaded with cockroaches down the tracks. When that overloaded train rattles down the 181st Street tunnel, it distorts the time field to such a degree that the whole train leaps across the fifty-kilometer gap between the city and the power plant.

Nuclear power stations are designed to cope with all sorts of disasters — earthquakes, floods, lightning strikes, even terrorist bombings. But no architect ever envisioned a subway train full of mutant cockroaches appearing *inside* the reactor core. If that train reaches the hidden 181st Street tunnel, the whole of New York is doomed.

So, just as the player characters are kicking ass in the ezeru base, they **Notice** lights come on in one of the darkened

subway trains. The train grinds forward, slowly at first, then picking up speed. Sparks cascade from the elevated rails as it runs towards a hatch. It moves through the hatch — and vanishes. Through the hatch, the characters glimpse a New York subway tunnel.

Five minutes later, the Indian Point power station explodes. Part of the blast washes back through the ezeru door to the base, flooding the entire extradimensional base with a lethal dose of radiation (all unshielded player characters lose 3 Health per round as long as they remain in the base). The rest of the blast — the heat, the kinetic force, the sheer destruction — also gets channeled through the time-distortion field, so that every single door in the city explodes outwards with a searing hot atomic wind. Every building becomes a small nuclear explosion.

## STOP THAT TRAIN!

To stop the ezeru train, the Agents need to:

- ▶ get out of the ezeru base, which means fighting their way back to the exit
- ▶ clock back in time to give themselves a chance to act
- ▶ get to the A train and find a way to stop the train

The train's guarded by one ezeru per player character; there may be other ezeru infiltrators in the crowds, waiting to ambush any interfering TimeWatch operatives. To stop the train, the Agents might:

- ▶ physically stop the train by getting onboard, punching out the ezeru, and pulling the brakes
- ▶ cut the power to the line (look out for ezeru workers)
- ▶ collapse the 181st Street tunnel, or travel back in time and cause it to be built elsewhere. Or, for that matter, travel back in time and give the designer of the nuclear power station some helpful safety tips about hardening the reactor against spontaneous trains.
- ▶ manipulate the time-distortion field (either with their auto-chrons and a **Paradox Prevention** spend, or by gathering time-active cockroaches from elsewhere in the city to distort the field and make the train emerge somewhere other than the reactor core)
- ▶ disable the time-distortion field at the right moment so the whole blast hits the ezeru base, instead of them siphoning off the radiation

## THE REBEL BETRAYAL

**Scene Type:** Antagonist Reaction

**Lead-Ins:** Entering the Ezeru Base, Battle the Bugs, Destroy the Queen

**Lead-Out:** Aftermath

**Summary:** Stop Flynt's own kamikaze attempt

The TimeWatch Citadel floats in nonexistence in the time before time, detached from the universe. Infinitely remote,

almost completely impregnable.

The ezeru base exists beyond conventional space-time — hovering just offshore, but inaccessible to most time travelers. Not as remote, not as secure, not as powerful as the Citadel, but it's similar. That security is why the ezeru used the base as a breeding ground, and it's why the rebels covet it. If the rebels had a base like that, they'd be able to make a stand against TimeWatch, maybe take the offensive and build — as they see it — a better history for the universe.

Flynt couldn't get into the base without TimeWatch's help. Now that the door's open, though, he's determined to seize control of the base and turn it into an anti-Citadel to oppose TimeWatch.

## THE TIME ENGINES

Down in the bowels of the base, in a swamp of toxic waste encrusted with ezeru cocoons and weird resinous canker-shapes, are the still-functional engines of the colony ship. They're still humming with power, running in a low time-gear to keep the base traveling through time (to be precise, it's traveling in a pocket dimension generated by all those cockroaches — without the engines, the cockroaches wouldn't be able to bear the “weight” of the base; without the roach's time-distortion field, the base would be traveling like a conventional time traveler and be detectable by the Citadel).

With a **Vehicles** test, the Agents could:

- ▶ steer the base away from New York and the time-distortion field, making it vulnerable; the Agents could just clock in and out, instead of having to go in through that single ever-moving door
- ▶ destroy the base by crashing it into, say, a star
- ▶ go joyriding in a giant wrecked colony ship from the far future that's been overrun by alien bugs, because that sounds fun
- ▶ Destroy the base and New York, by turning off the engines

Coupled with a **Science!** spend, the Agents could also:

- ▶ overload the engines and create a chrontal disruption pulse that would erase any time travelers onboard the base. Someone would have to stay behind to keep overriding the engines' safety mechanisms, so this is very much heroic sacrifice territory

## FLYNT'S PLAN

When the opportunity arises — in other words, when the TimeWatch characters are in the worst possible situation — Flynt and his rebels head for the controls here. Their plan is to wait until TimeWatch has dealt with the ezeru queen, then seize control of the base and take it for their own.

If TimeWatch tries to stop them, they threaten to crash the base into New York. Want to preserve the timeline? Want to keep history intact? Then *back off*.

- ▶ **Military Tactics:** Even with Pacifists, a shootout here could be extremely hazardous. The ezeru didn't keep those

time engines in good repair. Miss, and you might drop a spaceship the size of a city on top of New York.

- ▶ **Timecraft:** If you retreat now, Flynt can change the codes and make the base secure once again — no doubt one of his scientists can work out a way to duplicate the time-active cockroaches. If he's not stopped here and now, he'll become a major problem for TimeWatch.
- ▶ **Falsehood Detection:** Flynt's not lying when he threatens to crash the base into New York. He's clearly psyched himself up into a state where he's capable of committing such an atrocity. Still, he'd never have made it through TimeWatch training if that was his intrinsic nature — he's got to be fighting against his own better impulses. Maybe you can exploit his internal conflict?
- ▶ **Streetwise:** The other rebels don't look too sure about this. Maybe Flynt's supporters aren't as loyal as he thinks they are.

## STOPPING FLYNT

**The Violent Option:** Flynt's backed up by two rebels (plus, if you're using the optional A Cast of Thousands! rules, any rebel temporary player characters who survived the earlier scenes). The rebels are packing blasters instead of Pacifists, but other than that, they're the equal of any TimeWatch agent.

- ▶ Any Shooting attacks that roll a natural 1 hit some vital and sensitive part of the time engines. Unless fixed with **Tinkering** (Difficulty 4), the time engines shut down two rounds later. Agents may pay an extra point of **Shooting** with each attack to avoid collateral damage of this sort.
- ▶ If Flynt has time, he sets up a dead man's switch so that the engines shut down if he's killed or knocked out. In that case, the Agents must take him down with stealth and Scuffling.
- ▶ There's a brief window after the engines shut down, but before the base precipitates back into reality and crashes — just long enough for the Agents to clock out or go back in time to try again.

**The Nonviolent Option:** Flynt can be talked down with the right Interpersonal abilities.

- ▶ **Taunting** Flynt makes him angry; he rants about how TimeWatch are as bad as the ezeru or the sophosaurs. “You all treat ordinary people as tools! Steal their faces; steal their thoughts; steal their lives away when you change time! You're all monsters!”
- ▶ Speaking with **Authority** or **Reassurance** can convince the two rebels that Flynt's lost perspective and that right now he's more of a danger to ordinary people than TimeWatch is.
- ▶ If the Agents were able to save Gary Dent (either the human, or the confused ezeru duplicate), then that proves that Flynt's wrong about TimeWatch — the little victories all count.
- ▶ Using **Intimidation** calls his bluff — he'll only crash the base if he's convinced that there's no other option, if the

Agents back him into a corner. Give him the choice, and he backs down.

- ▶ If the ezeru are still a threat — i.e., the Agents haven't completed *Battle the Bugs*, *Destroy the Queen*, and *Stop The Hatching* — then **Military Tactics** can point out that the bugs are a much worse threat than TimeWatch could ever be, and that Flynt's actions are endangering the operation.
- ▶ Coupling **Authority** with **Falsehood Detection** lets the Agents remind Flynt of his service to TimeWatch, of the good he's done in the universe — thus inspired, he might even sacrifice himself to destroy the base and save the player characters.
- ▶ **History (Contemporary)** points out that Flynt helped smuggle people out of dying timelines into New York. If he crashes the base, he'll erase all that he's accomplished.

**The Unexpected Option:** Players always think of something — maybe a sophosaur can psychically stun Flynt, maybe they change time so Flynt can't bring himself to kill the Agents, or maybe they just feed him some bad oysters back at Downing's.

## AFTERMATH

**Scene Type:** Epilogue

**Lead-Ins:** The Rebel Betrayal

**Summary:** A triumphant homecoming

By the time that both the ezeru base, the rebels, the sophosaurs, the incipient nuclear holocaust, and the stolen base are resolved, the Agents are going to be in need of a very stiff drink indeed.

This is a scenario designed to shed loose ends like a sophosaur sheds scales (or feathers, depending on your preference). The allies and enemies made here will have a ripple effect on the world. It's unlikely that the Agents will have a certain and untarnished win, especially when it comes to rebel involvement; but they will have succeeded, and that's enough to win the day.

Returning to the Citadel is something of a surreal experience. Normally you clock into the entrance bay, nod to the duty officer, and make your way to your briefing room. This time? When the Agents return, there are hundreds of non-combat TimeWatch personnel lined up in the bay, applauding them with thunderous approval as they clock in. The personnel disperse back to their stations before long, but the point has been made. The Agents made an impact, and that's the sort of thing that gets noticed and talked about in TimeWatch for millennia to come.

# TIMEWATCH

## Behind Enemy Times

**What do giant radioactive beetles want? Nuclear war!**

**When do they want it? Everywhen!**

Imagine an 8-foot tall psychic beetle with a bad temper, and you have the ezeru. Evolving to rule the Earth in the aftermath of nuclear war, they expanded their dominion by infesting and colonizing parallel realities—until TimeWatch engineered history so the apocalypse never happened.

But a few ezeru remained caught in the time stream, determined to restore their alternative reality; and only you, the agents of TimeWatch, can stop them.

Take on these fearsome insectoid foes in *Behind Enemy Times*, a series of missions for the *TimeWatch Role Playing Game*.

### **The Gadget**

A 24th-century disembodied brain draws the ezeru's attention when it steals nuclear warheads from the past for its own personal museum.

### **Thief in the Night**

A plague is destroying humanity's greatest thinkers and creators. Who's behind it, and what are they trying to achieve?

### **Time Will Tell**

A rogue memory technician teams up with William Tell to fight oppression throughout history.

### **Rebel Heart**

The agents go deep under cover to infiltrate a rebellion against TimeWatch itself.

### **Hatchet and Axe**

The Cuban Missile Crisis leads to nuclear war, and following the historical mystery introduces the agents to would-be Presidents, Prohibition-era activists and the most awkward wedding ever.

### **The Hatching Time**

In the explosive finale, the ezeru plan to hatch millions of eggs in the heart of New York City by flooding the city with radiation.

Run *Behind Enemy Times* missions as one shots, or as a campaign run in any order, ending with *The Hatching Time*.

**Brave Agents are needed to stand against the ezeru!**

**Join TimeWatch today!**

PELGTW02

