



protodimension magazine

ISSUE 19
SPRING 2014

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DITHERING IN THE DARK

BEWARE THE IDEAS OF MAY...

(Or is it *The Doom that Came to Issue 19?*)

Greetings and Felicitations to one and all,

Here we are again at another issue of **Protodimension Magazine**, our 19th in fact.

Filled with the odd, the different, the unusual, the gaming related or inspired, and sometimes a little bit more.

From our last issue you might have gotten the impression that your Editor is on a Post Apocalypse Kick. Well it is true. For me 2014 is all about what comes after it all ends for whoever is left. From Nuclear War to Viral Outbreaks and into Environmental Collapse, I am all about the survivors vs. The World. This has led me so far this year to a couple of different purchases I have made gaming and fiction wise. The Novel "Three" by (review coming after I read it a second time), to *The Wreckage Miniatures and RPG Game*, from *Puppet Wars: Unstitched* by *Wyrd Games* (ok more my interest in Stitchpunk and Cross-Genre Horror but definitely not mainstream), to comics picked up at Megacon.

Then there is Kickstarter. I have been known to indulge in a KS or two (mostly just friends anymore). All of this showing there is a ton of stuff out there, as well as here in PDM. Recently we expanded our list of systems and settings we are covering to include **ACHTUNG! Cthulhu** from *Modiphius Games* (Shades of KS again). Delightfully it is another mashup of WW II and Cthulhu. So we can look forward to stuff in future issues relating to that system and setting (hint hint).

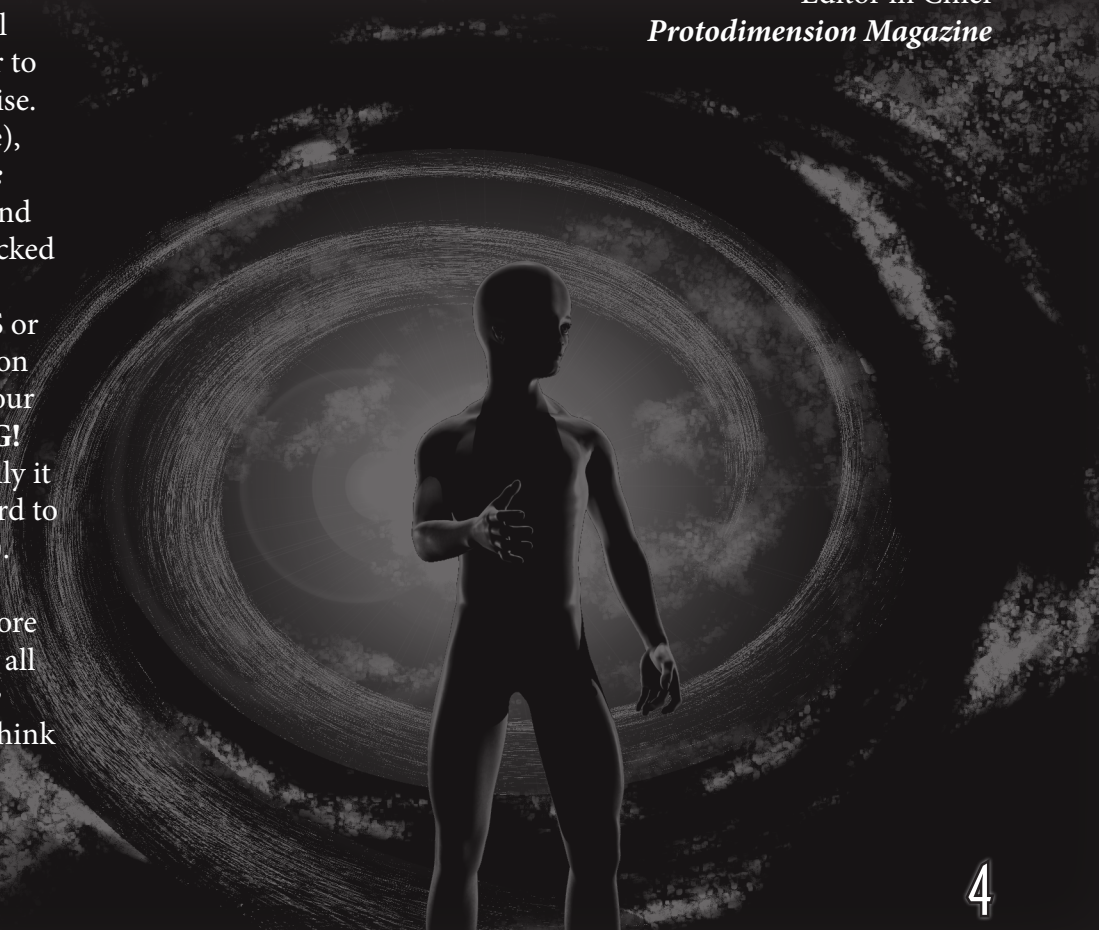
Issue 19 has a nice assortment of articles. A massive adventure for Mini Six, some movie reviews turned into adventure seeds, more weapon information, a different sort of P-Dim, and the end all be all article on mental illness for use in *Dark Conspiracy / Conspiracy Rules* as well as some other pieces and some fiction. Overall, we think there is something for all of our readers.

We here at **Protodimension Magazine** look forward to each and every issue we put out. We also appreciate the support we receive from all of our fans, contributors, and community members.

So on to the show

Good Gaming,
Tad Kelson
Editor in Chief

Protodimension Magazine



MORNING COFFEE

A brief pick-me-up

by Lee Williams

MOOD FICTION

HAMMETT WAS PRETTY certain he was going to get a disciplinary if they caught him, although it hadn't happened to him before. As he sneaked into the break room he cursed the day when the staff had all been forbidden to take coffee to their desks any more, and cursed himself double for missing out on his morning brew. While he was at it he also cursed the department for instituting a strict, rigid timetable for any form of break. This morning though, his superior was in a meeting with some military officers down on the bunker levels, and Hammett happened to know that the security cameras on his floor were scheduled for a full firmware upgrade today.

"The crap we have to wade through just to get hold of a mug of instant," he muttered under his breath.

A few moments of rummaging through the cupboards produced some coffee powder, two sugar packets labelled USMC, and some non-dairy cream substitute. Hammett's brother had worked in a food processing plant during his college years and had told him lurid tales about just exactly what was in that stuff. Right now Hammett chose not to remember.

Checking the machine revealed the water tank to be empty, so Hammett grabbed a jug and moved over to the sink. As the water filled the jug, he heard a sound

from behind the break room's other door, which led to his supervisor's office.

"Damn!" he muttered, quickly turning off the water. "Perry can't be out of the meetings already" he thought. "Maybe he forgot something; I'll keep quiet a minute and see what happens."

There was another scraping sound and a bump, like someone had opened a drawer and quickly slammed it shut again. This was followed a few seconds later by a swishing, almost as if a rug was being dragged across a floor. What Hammett hoped to hear was Perry's office door close again but he realised the sound was continuing.

"I'll have to slip back out the main door, still no coffee but at least I'll stay out of trouble" he thought. Carefully, Hammett grasped the handle and started to quietly ease the door ajar.

The other door slammed open, and Hammett looked round. He didn't see his supervisor wearing his ass-kicking expression, as he had expected.

In fact he spent the rest of his life, all 12 seconds of it, trying to work out just what the humanoid-shaped thing that looked to be made from random bits of octopus and cactus was.



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SUMMER 2014



OLIVER'S ARMY

A scenario for the "You're Nicked!" setting

by Linden Dunham

FOR MINI SIX

INTRODUCTION: THIS ADVENTURE is set in the UK during late January 1979, at the climax of the Winter of Discontent – a sustained period of strikes and industrial action, the effects of which are exacerbated by severe weather. The PCs are all officers in the Metropolitan Police, stationed in West London. In the aftermath of a shoot-out with a gang of armed robbers they are co-opted by Special Branch and find themselves investigating an eminent former soldier with designs on toppling the government. The scenario can be run straight in the style of a gritty 70s cop show a la *The Sweeney*, or it may include some of the more fantastical elements from the Mini Six "Bare Bones" edition for an atmosphere closer to shows like *The New Avengers* or post modern BBC crime drama *Gangsters*. The PCs' main adversary has unconventional spiritual beliefs and, if the GM wishes, both he and his daughter are able to utilise these in a practical fashion. Text relating to the supernatural and the use of magic is shown in italics to indicate that it is optional. There are also notes at the end of the scenario to assist in conversion for use with *Call of Cthulhu*, *Delta Green Countdown* and *Dark Conspiracy*.

The adventure is presented in a series of scenes, assembled roughly in

chronological order. However, once the PCs are assigned to Special Branch and commence their investigation in earnest there is no need to follow the scenes in sequence. Quick and/or clever PCs may be able to skip some scenes altogether.

It's likely that the PCs will want to do some research in order to get a better idea of what they're dealing with. Any relevant information is included at the beginning of the scene, under the sub-heading of **The Gen** along with an indication of likely sources e.g. an Investigation roll for research, or Snouts for street level information. Obtaining "The Gen" may require a scene in itself, often requiring travel to a location convenient for the source: Snouts will usually be met in a seedy venue like a back street pub, greasy spoon cafe or betting shop. A government contact may prefer to meet at his private members club. A criminal will favour somewhere out of the way where they're unlikely to be seen talking with the police.

At times the PCs will question suspects or people they believe have relevant information. Many, if not all of these people, will be unwilling to divulge this information. A successful Bad Cop or Good Cop roll against the interviewee's Bottle is required to make them tell what they know. Bad Cop rolls should involve a credible threat of

some kind while a Good Cop roll will involve some inducement or other. The extent of an interviewee's knowledge is detailed in the section sub-headed **The Squeeze**. In the event of only marginally successful rolls the GM may rule that the interviewee holds something back, which may require a second visit from the PCs (much to their irritation no doubt).

STATE OF EMERGENCY

"THE COUNTRY'S AT WAR...THE GOVERNMENT AND THE UNIONS, THE LEFT AND THE RIGHT...TIME TO TURN THE TIDE."

John Dawson from
"Red Riding: In the Year of Our Lord 1974"
 by Tony Grisoni adapted from the novel
"1974" by David Peace

GM's Information: Britain is finished; at least that's what everyone is saying. It feels like the whole country is on strike: The trains don't run, hospitals turn away patients, rubbish piles up in the streets and the dead are left unburied. If The Sun newspaper's January 11th headline of "Crisis? What Crisis?" is to be believed, Prime Minister James Callaghan and his government are so out of touch they don't even realise how dire the situation is. Plainly things can't go on like this, but if the government are unable or unwilling to act who else can bring an end to the mounting chaos?

Cometh the hour, cometh the man...

Brigadier Gerald Wyndham Oliver (Ret'd) spent almost all of his adult life in the British Army. He was commissioned as junior infantry officer during World War 2 and rose rapidly through the ranks, serving in Korea, Malaya, Indonesia and Cyprus Oliver was an admirer of armoured warfare proponent Major-General JFC Fuller (1878-1966). In addition to being notable as a military theorist Fuller was an associate of Aleister Crowley. Although the two men eventually fell

out Fuller remained interested in the occult and wrote extensively on the subject as well as producing more celebrated works on history and military doctrine. His "Nine Principles of War" were the culmination of both his military and occult interests with the principles being capable of organisation into various groupings of three in cabbalistic fashion e.g.:

- ☛ **Principles of Control:** Direction, Determination, & Mobility.
- ☛ **Principles of Pressure:** Concentration, Surprise, & Offensive Action.
- ☛ **Principles of Resistance:** Distribution, Endurance, & Security

Oliver was much taken with Nine Principles and employed them with some success in post war counter-insurgency campaigns. In 1965 he was appointed the first commander of the newly created CITAT, the British Army's Counter Insurgency Training and Advisory Team.

While studying Fuller's writings Oliver also became interested in the occult and was eventually drawn to a form of militant neo-paganism. The object of Oliver's worship was The Lord of the Seasons, a green man figure representing fertility and renewal, as well as embodying Oliver's personal view that the natural order favours survival of the fittest and the elimination of the weak and inferior.

Oliver was never particularly vocal about his beliefs but nonetheless he acquired the reputation as oddball and this may have limited his progress through the upper echelons of the Army. Despite his undoubted ability as a soldier he retired in 1973 as a Brigadier rather than with the General rank he might have expected.

Civvy Street proved to be a major culture shock for Oliver. He was dismayed by what he saw as the ravages of the permissive society, trade union militancy and an upsurge in terrorism and lawlessness. He wrote to national newspapers and appeared on

television decrying Britain's decline and urging a return to the nation's "old values" as being essential to stop the rot. Like several other former military men he flirted with the idea that an armed coup might be necessary to depose the Labour government and get the country back on track. Ultimately nothing came of these discontented rumblings, primarily due to the election of Margaret Thatcher as Conservative party leader in 1975 which provided a legitimate opposition figure for right wing support. The extremists became marginalised and with no realistic prospect of advancing their cause they mostly faded away into the background.

Oliver was not so easily placated. The Conservatives were still a long way from power, and with an untried leader at the helm there was no guarantee that they would win the next election. Even if they did Oliver was sceptical that they could stop the country's slide into anarchy. What Britain needed was a new type of organisation, one that had the will and the means to stop the rot. In 1975 Oliver began to sound out former colleagues, friends and acquaintances to see if they were of a similar view to himself. A sufficient number responded positively for him to set up an organisation he named "National Assistance" whose avowed goal was "the maintenance of an ordered society in the event of an emergency." National Assistance would provide a cadre of trained and motivated individuals who would take the necessary action to keep the country running in the event of a general strike, civil war or Soviet invasion.

By the late 1970s Oliver was no longer content to simply watch and wait. He had seen his once proud nation go begging bowl in hand to the IMF for a bail out, along with rampant inflation, mass strikes, and terrorist outrages on the streets of London and other British cities. Oliver became convinced that the government would have to be toppled by force. National Assistance would become an army, a military force that would strike against Britain's enemies with maximum surprise and force, decapitating the traitorous regime



THE BLAG

DAYLIGHT ROBBERY

The PCs get the call on the radio: “Armed robbery in progress. Wages van at the Premier Mouldings factory, North Acton. Army Gang suspected. All available units assist.”

Whatever the PCs are doing they will be expected to drop it and join the pursuit. The Army Gang have committed six robberies in the last nine months and are The Flying Squad’s top target. Plenty of other units would like to grab the glory of nicking them too. The robbers get their name from the fact that they are usually dressed in camouflage jackets and seem to have a ready supply of military surplus hardware such as automatic pistols, sten guns and grenade launchers. Their robberies also have the hallmarks of a military operation, being well planned and carried out by highly disciplined personnel. The Metropolitan Police’s Special Branch have speculated that the gang are politically motivated but have discounted the likes of the IRA or their Loyalist counterparts due to the robbers not having Irish accents. The Branch is of the view that this is a home grown team but enquiries targeting extremist groups have proved fruitless.

Suffice to say nicking the Army Gang is a top priority for the Met and the PCs will be expected to go after them. PCs starting off in a police station may be able to pick up something better than the standard issue .38 revolver such as a rifle or a shotgun. Those out on patrol, taking a break at the tea van or propping up the bar in a pub somewhere are stuck with what they have.

A few minutes after the PCs have scrambled into their car and joined the hunt they receive a message that the Army Gang are in their immediate vicinity driving a Ford Transit van. Turning a corner into South Acton High Street they see the Transit tearing down the road in front of them. Run the ensuing pursuit according to the Chase rules on page 8 of the

in Westminster and liquidating their allies in the trade union movement and other subversive groups.

Of course an army has to be trained, equipped and provisioned, all of which costs money. In the past Oliver had relied upon donations from sympathetic businessmen but with many of them now turning back to mainstream Conservatism it was plain that Oliver would need a new source of funds. Like many other paramilitary groups National Assistance turned to armed robbery. Sergeant Geoff Watts one of Oliver’s former NCOs from CITAT had family ties to professional London criminals the Young brothers. An approach was made and the Youngs were offered a deal: They would identify likely “tickles” and in return “the movement” would provide manpower, material and logistical support in carrying out the robberies. The proceeds would be split 50/50 between the Young Firm and their new allies. For the Youngs, depleted and demoralised after the Flying Squad foiled their

most recent heist, this was almost too good to be true. Although sympathetic to the movement’s politics they were mistrustful and largely uncomprehending of anyone engaging in crime other than for purely personal gain. For their part National Assistance members found it distasteful having to bargain with criminals, the very people whose activities were contributing to the nation’s decline.

Despite the initial misgivings on both sides the alliance between National Assistance and the Young Firm proved to be a success. Six robberies in 1978 netted over £450,000 with National Assistance’s share of the proceeds going to purchase a manor house in the West Country, the grounds of which were turned into a paramilitary training camp. The organisation still needs funds though, and on cold day in late January 1979 National Assistance and their criminal allies carry out a wages snatch from a factory in West London...



sharpshooters arrives on scene either of which should be sufficient to put paid to the Army Gang for good.

Once the smoke has cleared other police units arrive on scene: More Flying Squad detectives and firearms officers, local divisional CID and the Special Patrol Group. Nobody seems to know who's in charge and soon the streets around the railway station are full of bemused coppers marvelling at the havoc wrought by their colleagues. A few start taking statements from witness while the SPG forms a cordon around the station to keep rubberneckerers out. Eventually, a highly polished green Jaguar E-type pulls up and an urbane looking man in his 50s gets out. He announces himself as Detective Chief Superintendent Hawthorn of Special Branch and rapidly sets about getting things organised. He soon zeroes in the PCs and asks them for an account of what happens. A uniformed policewoman accompanying him records the exchange in her notebook. Afterwards Hawthorn tells the PCs to go home and report for duty at 09:00 the next morning when they will be questioned over the shoot out by CIB2, the section of the police that deals with complaints against officers. The PCs may wish to retire to a suitable venue to try and get their stories straight...

Mini Six book. The initial range is medium. Due to the amount of uncleared snow on the roads all vehicles lose 1D6 from their MNV stat. If the PCs car is a Morris Marina they could be in big trouble...

The Army Gang soon turn off the main road and head south through suburban streets. They are heading for South Acton railway station where they are hoping to shake off any pursuers. Their plan is pull up at the northbound platform, abandon the van, and cross the railway via footbridge to the southbound platform where they have parked a Jaguar XJ12 in which they intend make their escape. How far they get is up to the PCs. The gang are heavily armed and willing to shoot their way out of trouble but are also encumbered by large sacks of cash. If any of the gang are wounded and in danger of being caught their colleagues won't

hesitate to shoot them to prevent their capture and interrogation. They won't be over bothered about innocent bystanders getting in the line of fire either. Fortunately the trains are on strike so there aren't many people about. Ground conditions remain treacherous and any movement greater than that allowed by a free action should require an Agility check against TN: 5 to complete successfully. Failure sends the character sprawling in the snow and slush.

The purpose of this opening scene is to provide the PCs with the impetus to investigate Brigadier Oliver and National Assistance. The Army Gang should go down with all guns blazing. If the PCs are seriously outgunned then expenditure of a hero point allows them to make use of the Back Up Force on Standby option: A car full of flying squad detectives or a section of

THE RUBBER HEELERS

THE INTERROGATION

The next day the when the PCs arrive at work they are met by Detective Superintendent Chaplin and Detective Sergeant Maddox of CIB2. Chaplin tells the PCs that he will be interviewing them about their actions the previous day with a view to establishing whether disciplinary proceedings or criminal charges should be brought against them. The CIB2 officers intend to interview each PC individually. They will start with the PC who they judge to be the most gung-ho, perhaps because they killed the most blaggers at the station, have a history of excessive force or

maybe just because they mouthed off during Chaplin's introductory speech.

The interview is not a pleasant experience. Chaplin's questions seem designed to trap the PC into admitting they are an out of control loose cannon.

Typical questions are:

- When did you draw your weapon?
- Did you give a warning? Why not?
- Were you shooting to kill?
- Did you check the area was clear of civilians before opening fire?
- How many firearms incidents have you been involved in?
- How many people have you killed in the line of duty?

Just as it seems that Chaplin has painted the blackest possible portrait of the PC and seems about to announce their suspension from duty the door to the interview room enters to admit DCS Hawthorn. He asks Chaplin outside for "a quick word". The PC is left inside with Det. Sgt Maddox who lights up a cigarette, offers one to the PC before observing that "This could



be your lucky day" although he cautions against getting involved in one of Hawthorn's "funny little Special Branch ramps." He is reluctant to elaborate further but may be persuaded to say that Hawthorn runs "some very strange operations, not to mention dangerous."

A few minutes later Chaplin returns wearing a pained expression on his face and tells the PC that they can go. The PC is soon reunited with their colleagues. Commander Hawthorn tells the team to report to him at Scotland Yard for a briefing at 2pm sharp. He leaves the station followed a few minutes later by Chaplin and Maddox, with the former taking time to stare pointedly at the PCs as if committing their faces to memory.

THE YARD

THE GEN

Investigation, Contacts, Special Friend Perk: The PCs have a few hours to speculate on what Hawthorn wants with them. They may try to find some background information on the man who saved them from a grilling, or worse, by the rubber heelers. Successful use of Wit or Contacts vs. TN15, or the Special Friend perk confirm that Hawthorn is indeed a DCS in Special Branch and that he previously served in the British Army Intelligence Corps. He specialises in home grown threats to National Security with a particular emphasis on the occult: Aristocrats mixed up in black magic, heavy rock fans with a yen for the Satanic and Straw Dogs style inbreds dancing naked around stone circles have all merited his attention in the recent past. Hawthorn doesn't have a regular squad to assist in his investigations, his only permanent member of staff is a woman police sergeant Joan Greenwood who acts as his personal assistant, driver and, it is rumoured, bodyguard. Hawthorn's usual practice is to form specialist squads on an ad hoc basis and plainly

he has enough pull to arrange secondment to the Branch of whomever he wants. This time around it looks like he wants the PCs.

THE BRIEFING

On arriving at New Scotland Yard the PCs are met by Sergeant Greenwood. She escorts them to the lift then down in corridor to Special Branch's offices. PCs asking questions about why they're here or Commander Hawthorn are politely but firmly rebuffed. The PCs are shown into a briefing room and asked to take a seat. Pinned to a cork board one wall are four photographs. Two are mugshots complete with arrest numbers, while the two show men in British Army uniform, one a sergeant the other a captain.

Before the PCs can examine the photographs more closely Commander Hawthorn strides into the room carrying what looks like a school master's cane. He doesn't bother greeting the PCs but instead goes to the cork board, strikes the first mugshot with his cane and says "Mad Harry Jackson" followed by a second cane strike on the other mugshot, "Dennis McCarthy aka 'Wheels.' "Do either of these names mean anything to you ladies and gentlemen?"

PCs who succeed in a Wit roll vs. TN10 know that Jackson and McCarthy are associated with the Young brothers criminal firm. The Youngs are West London villains who operate out of a scrapyard. They are consummate opportunists and can turn their hands to most forms of crime if sufficiently profitable but lorry hijacks and wages van snatches form the bulk of their bread and butter work. PCs who volunteer this information are congratulated by Hawthorn: "Very good, Jackson and McCarthy are blaggers. So what were they doing with these two?" He raps the photographs of the two soldiers: "Captain James Mortimer and Sergeant Geoff Watts, both late of the Her Majesty's armed forces. Both men good soldiers with excellent records. What were they doing mixed up with a couple of tear-aways like Jackson and McCarthy eh?"



Although the question may appear rhetorical Hawthorn is happy for the PCs to advance any theories they may have. By now it should be abundantly clear that Jackson, McCarthy, Mortimer and Watts were the Army Gang which has been leading the Metropolitan Police a merry dance for the last nine months. PCs succeeding in a Wit roll vs. TN15 remember that McCarthy's sister Gillian married a soldier. A roll that exceeds the TN by 5 or more leads the PC to recall that the man's name was Geoff Watts, one of the now deceased members of the Army Gang.

If the PCs are unable to dredge anything out of their collective memory Hawthorn informs them of the connection between McCarthy and Watts. He then goes on to tell the PCs that both Captain Mortimer and Sergeant Watts served in the British Army's Counter Insurgency Training and Advisory Team (CITAT).

Their job was to instruct soldiers in dealing with low intensity conflicts and terrorism. Since leaving the army they seem to have made extensive use of their skills in the criminal field. Hawthorn is concerned that the men were politically motivated and that the Army Gang was just a part of a much larger organisation that may be a threat to national security. He wants the PCs to look into whether the Army Gang were working for someone, and if so, find out whom. If any PC queries whether the Army Gang's parent organisation may have an occult aspect Hawthorn admits that it's possible: Extensive enquiries have turned up absolutely nothing connecting the gang to the usual political suspects such as Irish paramilitaries, anarchists, neo-fascists or ultra leftist groups. The Special Branch man has a feeling in his water that "there's something about cultish about this one".

The PCs are free to conduct their investigation how they like, within reason, but Hawthorn suggests that they start with the families and friends of the Army Gang to see if they can shed any light on what the robbers were up to.

THE ARMY GANG

THE GEN

Investigation, Contacts, Snouts: The Army Gang seems to have been a highly effective alliance between career criminals and professional military men. Jackson and McCarthy had both amassed lengthy criminal records since their late teens, graduating from petty crime to armed robbery. Neither had been to prison in the last three years since joining the Young brothers' firm. McCarthy as his nickname suggests was a getaway driver while Jackson was a typical heavy, useful for his intimidating bulk and great physical strength.

The Young Firm lost two of its key members during a bungled lorry hijack on the A34 London-Brighton Road last year. They tried to grab an articulated lorry full of cigarettes from outside a greasy spoon cafe only to find the Flying Squad lying in wait. The Young brothers got away along with McCarthy and Jackson, but the firm's draughtsman Chris "the Brain" Bailey and "Big John" Harris, a generic heavy in the same mould as Jackson were both arrested. Both went down for seven years but neither of them talked. The word is that the Young's lost their bottle after that particular job and were seeking new recruits to accompany McCarthy and Jackson on the actual blags while the brothers concentrated on "management". There weren't any takers amongst the manor's serious villains but it looks as if the brothers found a couple of volunteers from the ranks of ex-forces personnel discontented with life on Civvy Street.

Investigation, Contacts: Captain Mortimer and Sergeant Watts were both exemplary soldiers with tours of several of the world's trouble spots behind them. They also both served with CITAT at the same time. Captain Mortimer was regarded as something of an organisational genius, adept at planning and logistics. Sergeant Jackson was a technical specialist trained in signalling and demolition. It's likely that the two ex-soldiers provided the gang's planning and technical knowhow with Captain Mortimer being the draughtsman – the person who plans the robberies. Since leaving the armed forces both men had been employed from time to time by Masters Security Services Ltd a company specialising in the provision of former military personnel as bodyguards, technicians, instructors and on occasion mercenaries. The company is owned by Major Dominic Masters, a former Royal Green Jackets Officer who also spent time assigned to CITAT.

THE FAMILIES

PCs visiting McCarthy and Jackson's families are greeted with a mixture of resignation and sullen hostility. Both men's wives knew what they did for a living and had few illusions about the prospect of their spouses going to jail, or worse.

The most that Jackson and McCarthy's families will admit to is that both men were still working for the Youngs. They genuinely didn't know about their involvement with the Army Gang.

Mortimer and Watts' families are genuinely astonished at their loved ones involvement in serious crime. Mrs Watts says that her husband sometimes worked "abroad" but in the last year or so had been employed locally by Masters Security Services Ltd. She is unable to be more specific as her husband rarely spoke about his work citing the need for confidentiality.

Mrs Mortimer is utterly distraught over her husband's death and finds it impossible to believe that he was mixed up in armed robbery. After leaving the army a couple of years ago James Mortimer was offered a job by Masters Security Services Ltd. Mortimer told his wife that it was "consultancy" work, mostly advising foreign governments but sometimes also working with large companies, showing them how they could apply military methods to their businesses.

THE YOUNG FIRM

THE GEN

Investigation, Contacts: The Youngs are brothers, Eric (34) and Tony (37). They are career criminals, both with a few jail terms behind them although neither has been in prison for the last five years. They've been arrested several times on suspicion of being involved in armed robberies, most notably the bungled lorry drag on the A34 that saw their associates The Brain and Big John nabbed by the Flying Squad. The Sweeney couldn't connect Eric and Tony to the job though and The Brain and Big John are staying shtum. Word on the street is that the Youngs have retired from blagging, but they still seem to be living pretty well. They're certainly not supporting themselves on the earnings from their scrapyard. Eric, the younger brother, is the smart one, Tony's just muscle.

Snouts: The Youngs are doing all right for themselves, surprising really given that they've lost two key members of their firm and are rumoured to have lost their bottle for blagging. Maybe they've taken a back seat and are now just bankrolling jobs – providing finance to likely looking teams in exchange for a cut of the take.

ERIC AND TONY

The Young brothers can be found at their scrapyard in Shepherd's Bush, located in the shadow of the Westway, the elevated dual carriageway that runs between Paddington and North Kensington. Eric does most of the talking and is mockingly polite: "Always happy to assist the police with their enquiries, aren't we Tony?"

Any requests to search the yard are declined and won't be permitted without a warrant. Unsurprisingly, the Youngs deny all knowledge of the Army Gang. They admit to knowing "Wheels" McCarthy and Jackson but claim not to have seen them for several months. PCs need to succeed in a Porkies roll vs. Eric's Undercover skill to be certain that Eric is lying.

The Squeeze: The Youngs aren't in the habit of giving statements to the police, especially ones in which they incriminate themselves. In the event that they are prevailed upon to talk then the PCs learn the following:

A month after the A34 job "Wheels" McCarthy was approached by his brother-in-law Geoff Watts. The ex-soldier had a proposition for the Young Firm. He represented a political organisation, which he referred to as "The Movement" that needed to raise large sums of cash and had decided on armed robbery as the means to do it. However, his organisation was short on criminal expertise so an alliance was proposed with the Young Firm: The Youngs would seek out likely jobs and furnish manpower and transport while The Movement would provide planning expertise and firearms plus other equipment not readily available to criminals. Both sides would split the proceeds 50/50. The brothers were suspicious at first but a meeting with Captain Mortimer convinced them that the offer was genuine. Eric Young reckoned that the alliance would keep

him and Tony in the style to which they were accustomed with reduced risk to themselves – they didn't have to go on jobs any more. The Movement's resources provided the means to hit better protected and more lucrative targets than in the past and Mortimer and Watts proved more than capable replacements for The Brain and Big John.

Eric and Tony don't know the actual name of the organisation but Eric believes it's a right wing outfit. "One of those private armies that wants to mount a coup and get Labour out. Personally I'm all in favour."

Note that unsuccessful use of strong arm tactics may be sufficient to provoke Tony into violence. He has a sawn off shotgun stashed in the boot of a wrecked car near the yard office and may be goaded sufficiently to reach for it and start a gun battle despite brother Eric's protests.

Optional Encounter: A car draws up outside the scarpard as the PCs are questioning Eric and Tony. It is driven by Diana Oliver who is visiting the brothers to ascertain whether they are a security risk following the demise of the Army Gang. She quickly realises that the authorities are on the premises and speeds off with a screech of tires. PCs need to successfully match their Investigation skill against a Diana's Motors skill to get a glimpse of Jensen Interceptor hauling rubber down the road driven by a young woman. Successful PCs also get a glimpse of the number plate. The car can readily be traced to Diana Oliver, a young woman with a criminal record although there is nothing to connect her to the Youngs. The car is registered to student halls of residence at the University of West London. See **A Soldier's Daughter** below for further details. In any event Diana will come to the conclusion that the Youngs, having spoken to

the authorities, know too much and will arrange for their removal courtesy of National Assistance's NCO Cadre.

THE ONES THAT DIDN'T GET AWAY

THE SCRUBS

If the PCs want to interview The Brain and Big John then arrangements can be made for them to visit Wormwood Scrubs prison were both men are currently serving their sentences for armed robbery. Normal procedure would be for the PCs to speak with each man separately in one of the prison's interview rooms. A prison officer will also be present but may be persuaded to leave the room.

The Squeeze: Both The Brain and Big John are old school villains and won't grass on their former associates but unless presented with a very good reason to do so. Even if persuaded to talk the two don't have much useful information anyway. One of them will admit to hearing a whisper that the Youngs are mixed up in something very heavy, very political. They go on to speculate over the nature of the brother's involvement but are hopelessly inaccurate, claiming that the brothers have joined up with the far right National Front or a protestant paramilitary group from Northern Ireland: "Very patriotic, the brothers."

MASTERS SECURITY SERVICES LTD

THE GEN

Investigation, Contacts: Masters Security Services Ltd is a private limited company with offices in the City of London. It is run by Dominic Masters, a former major in the Royal Green Jackets and

CITAT instructor. The company provides "specialist security services to governments and industry" i.e. close protection, military training and conflict resolution. The company has been subject to allegations from the media that it is involved in dubious, if not outright illegal, activities such as advising repressive regimes in South America and the Middle East, sanctions busting in Rhodesia and acting as an employment agency for mercenaries. Masters always refuses to rise to the bait, and each time his firm appears in the papers issues a bland denial to the effect that his is a "legitimate company which conducts its business in accordance with the law."

If the PCs do some background research on Dominic Masters they find that he has made several large donations to National Assistance, an organisation set up with the intention of countering "internal threats" to the United Kingdom. It is headed by Brigadier Gerald Oliver (ret'd), a distinguished soldier and former commander of CITAT.

MASTERS

PCs visiting the company's offices are shown in to see Masters in his office. He greets the PCs politely and offers them a drink from a well stocked cabinet that takes up one wall.

Masters admits that Mortimer and Watts have worked for the company in the past. Their last assignment was training the army of the emirate of Kutar in counter-insurgency strategy and tactics. The emirate has experienced unrest due to the activities of Eastern bloc backed guerrillas. The assignment finished twelve months ago and neither man has worked for the company since.

If any PC remarks on the fact that Masters, Mortimer and Watts all served with CITAT Masters answers that he prefers to employ people he knows

are reliable, ideally through personal acquaintance, although he will accept recommendation by someone he trusts. Although Mortimer and Watts had served in CITAT subsequent to Masters leaving the army both had excellent references from Brigadier Gerald Oliver, CITAT's former commander.

The Squeeze: Masters admits to funnelling money from his company through his own bank account to National Assistance. Ultimately the organisation needed more funds than he and his company could supply though. Sergeant Watts came up with the idea of a criminal partnership with his brother-in-law to raise large amounts of cash fairly quickly. His proposal was strongly supported by Mortimer and the Brigadier. Masters initially refused involvement as he regarded it as too risky. After pressure from Oliver he agreed to provide Watts, Mortimer and their criminal associates with support, mostly in the form of military hardware such as small arms, radios and flak jackets. Masters is still a member of National Assistance and periodically attends Appleby Magna at weekends to assist in running exercises and also to officiate at initiation ceremonies; torchlight parades in the grounds of the manor in which members are formally inducted into the organisation.

Optional Encounter: As the PCs are finishing up with their interview with Masters his office intercom buzzes and his secretary announces "Miss Oliver is here to see you." On leaving the office the PCs encounter an attractive, if severe looking, young woman waiting in the outer office. Diana Oliver has arrived at Masters' office to browbeat him into attending next weekend's National Assistance ceremonial meeting at Appleby Magna: There are a number of new recruits that require formal induction into the organisation plus a new financial strategy will have to be formulated to take account the loss of income provided by the Army Gang. Diana won't engage the PCs in conversation unless directly spoken to and even then it is plain

that she wishes to talk with Masters privately. He ushers her into his office saying, "Diana, how lovely to see you..."

PCs that make routine enquiries about Diana Oliver soon discover her criminal record, colourful family background, and probably enough circumstantial evidence to connect her to National Assistance (see **A Soldier's Daughter** below).

THE BRIGADIER

The PCs investigation should ultimately point towards Brigadier Gerald Oliver. After the Army Gang shoot out he has been expecting a visit from the police and is holed up in his country mansion. If the PCs decide to pay a visit to Appleby Magna then the GM should refer to "**National Assistance**" below. Sensible PCs will research their target first.

THE GEN

Investigation: The PCs can be given details of the Brigadier's military career as detailed in "State of Emergency" above and of his media activities since leaving the army (Hawthorn comments that, "he's been making quite a bore of himself on television and in the papers"). They also learn that Gerald Oliver's wife died in 1967 from a previously undiagnosed congenital heart defect and that he has a daughter, Diana, a university student. Diana has a criminal record. If the PCs decide to investigate Diana refer to "**A Soldier's Daughter**" below.

Seven months ago the Brigadier purchased a small manor house at Appleby Magna in Dorset. Unusually he paid cash.

Contacts: The PC is put in touch with Colonel Cecil Thomas (Ret'd), who agrees to meet at his rather



down at heel gentleman's club in Kensington. Over an indifferent lunch he tells the PCs that he served with Gerald Oliver in the Malaya emergency when they were both junior officers in the same regiment. Their paths crossed a few times subsequently, including Thomas being trained at CITAT. He describes Oliver as a brilliant soldier, a strategic genius but eccentric in his personal beliefs: "He's some sort of pagan, a tree hugger, like those hippy types. Not very big on peace and love though." Col. Thomas is of the view that Oliver is "brilliant but barmy. Probably always was a bit bonkers, that's why they wouldn't make him a

general. Between you and me I think he's probably a fascist. I don't approve. We fought a war to stop people like that."

A SOLDIER'S DAUGHTER

THE GEN

Investigation, Contacts: Diana is the only child of Brigadier Gerald Oliver and Mary Oliver. After her mother's death she was packed off to various boarding schools, most of which she was expelled from for bad behaviour, much to her father's annoyance. She seemed to put her wild child ways behind her in her late-teens and left her last school with good academic results. She was offered a place studying History at Oxford but turned it down in favour of the University of West London, angering her father yet again and causing a rift between the two of them. The Brigadier wasn't best pleased at his daughter electing to study at what he considered a hotbed of leftist radicalism. On arriving in the capital Diana became involved in the animal rights movement. In the autumn of last year she was arrested for breach of the peace along with several other members of a University based group called Animals First while protesting outside a laboratory where cigarettes were tested on beagles. The Brigadier paid her fine. Since then father and daughter have reconciled and Diana is a regular visitor to his Dorset home.

The University

The last known address for Diana Oliver (from her charge sheet) is student digs at the University of West London. If the PCs visit the address they find it occupied by a student named Sarah Young. She tells the PCs she was allocated the room when the previous occupant dropped

out of her degree course before Christmas. She doesn't know where she's gone but describes her as a weirdo – there was a pentagram painted on the wall and a pervasive smell of incense. Sarah insisted that the place was redecorated before she moved in.

Contacting the university authorities results in the PCs being put in touch with Diana Oliver's tutor, Andrew Clark. He describes Diana as formidably bright but more interested in occult esoterica and radical causes than studying. Her views became more extreme following her arrest, possibly due to the influence of her father following their reconciliation: On one occasion Diana said that eighty per cent of the world's population were surplus to requirements and should be culled, allowing only a small elite to co-exist harmoniously with the animal kingdom. Clark wasn't surprised that she dropped out of the course a few months into her second year. Diana didn't say where she was going but Clark knows that she has links with the Ladbroke Grove area.

Enquiries with Animals First lead the PCs to the organisation's HQ in a grotty terrace near the university campus. The ground floor bay window is festooned with posters and flyers decrying animal experimentation and the cruel practices of the meat trade. The occupants won't be pleased to see the PCs but if it's clear that their interest is in Diana Oliver rather than Animals First activities then some form of dialogue is possible: The activists confirm that Diana left their group at the same time she dropped out of University which spared them the inconvenience of expelling her. Since the court case she'd started to express views that the group considered fascist e.g. that Animals First should dispense with its anarchistic beliefs and instead be organised under a strong leadership figure (herself). The final straw came when

she started trying to recruit group members into her father's private army. One of the activists will admit to seeing Diana recently in Ladbroke Grove. He believes she is trying to recruit for National Assistance from the area's sizeable population of squatters and other transients.

THE GROVE

Looking for Diana: Ladbroke Grove is a main arterial road running north to south through west London. It is lined by substantial Victorian houses. Since the mid 1960s the area has been colonised by the counter-culture and although many of its leading lights have moved on there are still plenty of squats inhabited by ageing hippies, punk new arrivals, hells angels, anarchists and various other bohemian types. The police aren't particularly welcome around here and PCs need to make skill rolls against TN15 when conversing with local residents to get anything useful out of them. Failures by >5 above the target number result in abuse – "fascist pig!" and maybe even violence. Judicious use of the Undercover skill may be needed to hide the fact that the PCs represent despised officialdom.

Eventually the PCs cajole or con a friendly response from someone who knows Diana Oliver and can point them in the direction of her current abode. They describe her as a "part-time hippy": She lives in a squat in the Grove but often goes home to her family mansion in the country when she's short of money, or if her father's holding one of her soirées. The speaker doesn't really know what the latter involves but expresses the view that the upper classes are a pretty depraved bunch and the Olivers, plus friends, could well spend their Saturday nights dancing around a wicker man. Diana claims to be a witch, able to channel the Earth's natural power and perform "magick".

DIANA'S HOUSE

Diana Oliver's squat is a large, rambling house in the middle of the Grove lying just to the south of the Westway. In addition to Diana it is occupied by three putative recruits for National Assistance all bodyguards; a skinhead, a hell's angel, and a punk (stats for all as per Criminal (Thug) from p15 of Mini Six Bare Bones edition). These three disparate characters have fallen under Diana's sway and are fanatically devoted to her. If the PCs try to smash their way into the squat the trio will defend it with near-homicidal fury. They are armed with an assortment of knives and clubs. In the ensuing fracas Diana Oliver attempts to slip away and speed off in her Jensen Interceptor which is parked at the rear of the house. She aims to return to the family mansion in Dorset and lie low for a while.

If the PCs adopt a more low key approach then Diana receives them courteously in her library, a room on the ground floor done out in hippie fashion with colourful rugs and wall hangings. The bookshelves are full of works on esoteric and occult subjects: Aleister Crowley (magick), Anton LaVey (Church of Satan), Carlos Castaneda (South American mysticism), Helena Blavatsky (Theosophy) and Mathilde Ludendorff (God Knowledge – an invented religion rooted in German Volkisch ideas) are some of the authors featured.

Diana denies any allegations that her father is involved in serious crime. She also denies any involvement in his political activities. Her main interest is in spiritual matters. She has given up her university studies in favour of pursuing real knowledge that that enables the development of human potential and the expansion of consciousness.

The Squeeze: Diana admits to being involved in National Assistance, its true nature (including the activities of the Army Gang) and her specific role within it. If the PCs do obtain a confession from Diana they will need to take her into custody to prevent her warning her father that the authorities

are closing in. *If arrested she will try to use her magical abilities to escape from wherever she is being held and rejoin her father at Appleby Magna.*

NATIONAL ASSISTANCE

The organisation is on a state of high alert following the deaths of Mortimer and Watts. Brigadier Oliver is expecting the police to swoop at any moment and is ready to order his members to shoot it out with the police. The PCs may decide that a softly-softly approach is required, infiltrating the group's headquarters at night, or possibly even posing as new recruits. The organisation is quite thorough in its vetting procedures though so they will need good legends if they are to avoid being found out. The PCs may decide that time is a luxury they don't have. The information below on National Assistance and its base of operations should enable the GM to adjudicate the outcome of the PCs' attempt to arrest the Brigadier.

THE ORGANISATION

National Assistance is based at Appleby Magna, a Georgian manor house located in a remote chalk-stream valley lying to the north of the market town of Sherborne, Dorset. The house stands at the centre of a small estate which Oliver has turned into a headquarters/training centre for his organisation. The core grouping of National Assistance is made up of Brigadier Oliver, Diana, Dominic Masters, the house permanent staff and a cadre of ten other men, ex-NCOs who have all served with the Brigadier. This grouping (with the possible exception of Masters) is committed to the Brigadier's political vision. The wider organisation has around 300 associate members, men and women who have contacted Oliver in the wake of his media appearances or who have been recruited by Diana. They are pre-dominantly middle class, sometimes with prior military service, often

from a professional background. They are concerned by what they see as Britain's slide into anarchy and are disillusioned with mainstream political parties that, at best, seem only able to offer a slow managed decline. Around 10% of members are younger and from a more diverse set of backgrounds. These are the people recruited from the streets by Diana Oliver. They are angrier and more impatient than the older members: Having grown up in a world that offers them no future, but then found a cause to believe in, they are eager to destroy the existing order. They also see Diana as their leader rather than the Brigadier.

The associate members attend Appleby Magna on part time basis for instruction on weapons handling, field craft, counter insurgency tactics and other subjects relevant to a low intensity conflict of the type which Oliver believes will soon break out in the UK. At weekends there will be 5D6 associate members in attendance being put through their paces by the permanent staff. On weekdays there will only be 3D6 associate members attending the camp. These will be retired/unemployed people or others with time on their hands. They assist the permanent staff with jobs around the camp such as construction, vehicle and building maintenance or undergo further specialist instruction.

ENDING THE ADVENTURE

Neutralising Brigadier Oliver and his organisation is worth 6 character points to each PC. Hawthorn congratulates the team and arranges for them to be returned to normal duties but says he may call on them again in the future. PCs who engaged in flagrantly illegal behaviour may be subject to sanction, such as demotion, dismissal or even criminal charges: It may be acceptable to shoot armed National Assistance cadres in self defence during a gun battle but cold blooded executions of unarmed members will be treated as murder and punished accordingly.

Although National Assistance is finished as a movement, individual members might seek revenge on the PCs with the most likely candidates being Diana Oliver or one of the ex-military men forming the inner circle. The PCs may also have made enemies of one or both of the Young brothers.

THE WINTER OF DISCONTENT

“IT WAS A NIGHTMARE. NO ONE, IN THEIR WILDEST DREAMS, COULD HAVE PREDICTED SUCH COLLECTIVE BARBARITY.”

Peter Shore MP, *Secretary of State for the Environment*: April 1976 to May 1979

The origins of the Winter of Discontent can be traced back to the British government's white paper of July 1978 which recommended that pay rises for employees should not total more than 5%. This “5% limit”, as it became known, was something of an arbitrary figure and was not agreed by the trade unions with whom the Labour government were supposed to be working in partnership. It was also unlikely to find favour with workers who had seen the real value of their wages eroded by years of high inflation and several previous attempts at wage restraint.

In the autumn of 1978, after a nine week strike, Ford Motors' British division agreed a 17% pay raise for its workers. With Ford being something of an unofficial barometer for wage settlements it was plain that the 5% limit was a dead duck. Workers and unions in other industries began to agitate for their own above limit wage increases.

By late January 1979 mass industrial action had led to food and petrol shortages, school and railway closures, and patients were being turned away from hospitals and uncollected rubbish piling up in the streets. To compound the misery that January was the

coldest on record since 1963 with vicious frosts and heavy snow, sleet and hail.

In gaming terms the effect of The Winter of Discontent will be to perpetually inconvenience PCs and make their lives a misery as well as occasionally dangerous: The weather makes driving hazardous, assuming that the PCs have fuel for their vehicle in the first place, and are able to pick a route through the heaps of piled up garbage. Public transport will be unreliable, or out of commission altogether. If the PCs need any assistance from any organisation outside the police there is a good chance that their staffs are on strike and/or it is subject to picketing. Injured PCs can't rely on an ambulance coming to their assistance and will have to rely on their comrades' first aid skills. Walking wounded PCs are likely to be turned away from hospital.

The infamous gravediggers' strikes usually cited as the worst examples of the excesses of the time took place in Liverpool and Tameside, both in the North West of the UK, so dead PCs will at least be spared the indignity of going unburied.

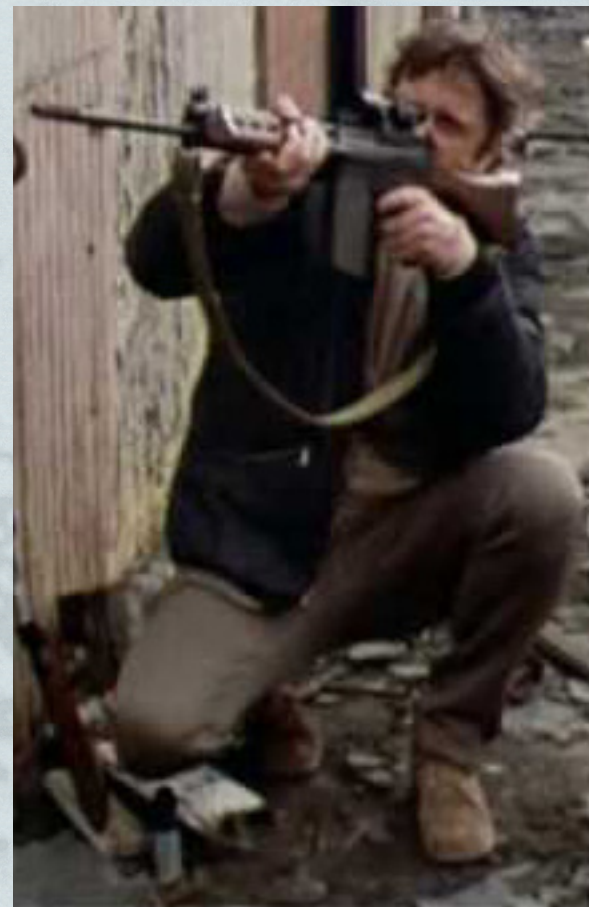
GEAR

Mini Six treats firearms in a generic fashion with no distinction being made between individual models of pistol or rifle or shotgun. The following statistics are suggested to provide some specific detail for weapons of the era, but without adding undue complexity.

.38 Police Revolver: As per light pistol. 6 rounds capacity. Snub nosed version also available with half the range.

Browning HP35 Pistol: As per light pistol. 13 rounds capacity.

L1A1 Self Loading Rifle (SLR): As per rifle. 20 rounds capacity.



Sten Gun: Mass produced World War 2 era sub-machinegun. Damage and range as per light pistol. 32 rounds capacity. Capable of automatic fire (suggest using the automatic fire options in the “OGL D6 Adventures” book, or own house rule based on reduction in the TN needed to hit, at short range only, and use of the bonus damage rule from page 18 of Mini Six Bare Bones edition).

Sawn Off Shotgun: As per shotgun but with all ranges halved.

CONVERSION TO OTHER GAMES

Call of Cthulhu: National Assistance is a cult dedicated to the worship of Nyarlathotep. Gerald Oliver's occult dabbling led to contact with the Crawling Chaos who has assumed the guise of The Lord of the Seasons in his dealings with the Brigadier and his organisation. Oliver and his daughter are both mythos sorcerers with Diana being the more accomplished of the two. The Brigadier can cast Dominate, Flesh Ward and Commune with Lord of the Seasons (Contact Nyarlathotep). Diana can cast the same spells as her father plus Voorish Sign, Nightmare and Shrivelling. The library at Appleby Magna House holds a copy of the Bridewell edition of "Nameless Cults" which is kept locked in its own drawer in one of the filing cabinets. Diana also owns a couple of minor mythos texts: "Azathoth and Others" by Edward Derby and "People of the Monolith" by Justin Geoffrey. Both volumes can be found in her library at the Ladbroke Grove squat.

If playing in the Delta Green milieu then Nyarlathotep intends to use National Assistance in a similar fashion to the newly resurgent Karotechia. Contact between the two organisations may even result in National Assistance becoming a *Bauern* group. Having served in World War II the Brigadier has no desire to play second fiddle to a bunch of Nazis. His daughter may have less qualms, particularly if such an alliance can provide a way for her to increase her own sorcerous power. Hawthorn is a PISCES officer. He has noticed that some of his colleagues have been behaving in a suspicious and/or irrational manner. A few have suffered complete breakdowns and been admitted to mental hospitals. Hawthorn fears that the Section has been penetrated and is under attack from a foreign intelligence agency, or worse still, some kind of occult threat. No longer able to trust his own colleagues he recruits the investigators to look into the Army Gang robberies which he suspects may be the work of a cult type group because of the lack of evidence pointing to the usual criminal or political suspects. If the investigators deal with the National Assistance case successfully they find that they are seconded to the intelligence services on a near permanent basis. Hawthorn uses them to investigate occult threats in accordance with PISCES' remit but the investigators also become embroiled in a dangerous and ultimately doomed campaign against the Shan as the insects gradually take control of the Section.

Dark Conspiracy: The Greater Depression is followed by a second Winter of Discontent in the United Kingdom. There are riots in all major cities with the national and corporate authorities struggling to prevent society from completely breaking down. Brigadier Oliver is a veteran of various "low intensity" conflicts fought by Britain in the late 20th and early 21st centuries. He has fallen under the influence of a Dark One which is encouraging his plans for a coup because it hopes to provoke a full blown civil war with all the attendant carnage and misery that entails. Diana Oliver is a high level empath from the mystic tradition with the skills Dimension Walk, Project Emotion, Project Thought and Hypnosis.

SOURCES/ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

"*Oliver's Army*" is a song by Elvis Costello and the Attractions from their Armed Forces album. Released as a single in early February 1979 it spent four weeks at number two in the UK top 40.

FILMS/TV

The Sweeney, in particular the episodes Big Spender, Faces, and The Bigger They Are, plus second movie spin off Sweeney 2.

The XYY Man, specifically the episodes *Friends and Enemies*, *The Missing Civil Servant*, *The Big Bang*, and *At The Bottom of the River*.

The Lost World of the Seventies: Documentary by television journalist Michael Cockerell focusing on four notable British personalities of the era: Sir James Goldsmith, Lord Longford, Sir Robert Mark and General Sir Walter Walker. The latter two are of particular interest in the context of this scenario but the whole programme does an excellent job of capturing the mood of the time.

The Fall and Rise of Reginald Perrin, **Fairly Secret Army** and **Minder: An Officer and a Car Salesman**. These all feature private armies headed by right wing ex-military men (or, in the case of *Minder*, a would-be military man). In each case the situation is played very much for laughs reflecting what appears to be the prevailing view that the 1970s coup plotters were fantasists with no real prospect of seizing power. It's worth noting though that they were taken seriously in some quarters, not least by their ideological opponents: A fortnight after his resignation as prime minister in 1976 an ailing Harold Wilson told two reporters from the Observer

newspaper that the security services had plotted to remove him from power. In 1977 trade union leader Jack Jones made the claim that “Two years ago we could easily have faced a coup in Britain. Hyperinflation was strong. There was talk of private armies being assembled. There was talk of the end of democracy.”

Elements within the security services have accused both Wilson and Jones of being Soviet agents. Paranoia seems to have run pretty deep on both sides.

BOOKS

State of Emergency and *Seasons in the Sun* by Dominic Sandbrook

Crisis? What Crisis? by Alwyn Turner

WEBSITES

<http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/7598647.stm>

(Extract from BBC Radio 4's Archive Hour programme devoted to the Winter of Discontent with a slide show featuring many excellent photographs from the time)

<http://libcom.org/history/1978-1979-winter-of-discontent>

(Usefully concise, if partisan, history of the 1978-79 industrial action)

http://www.nationalrail.co.uk/SME/html/NRE_SAT/plan.html

A modern interactive map of South Action Railway Station. The station and surrounding area has seen some development since 1979 but as far as I can ascertain the station layout and street plan remains unaltered. The flats in Palmerston Road appear to have been refurbished in recent years, and would have looked considerably more down at heel at the time of this scenario. The houses in Kingswood Terrace appear to be of Edwardian vintage and the street is likely to have been still suburban in character in 1979, minus the modern parking restrictions.

<http://www.timeout.com/london/music/counterculture-in-ladbroke-grove>

<http://www.terrascope.co.uk/Features/LadbrokeGrove.htm>

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/J._F._C._Fuller

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Winter_of_Discontent

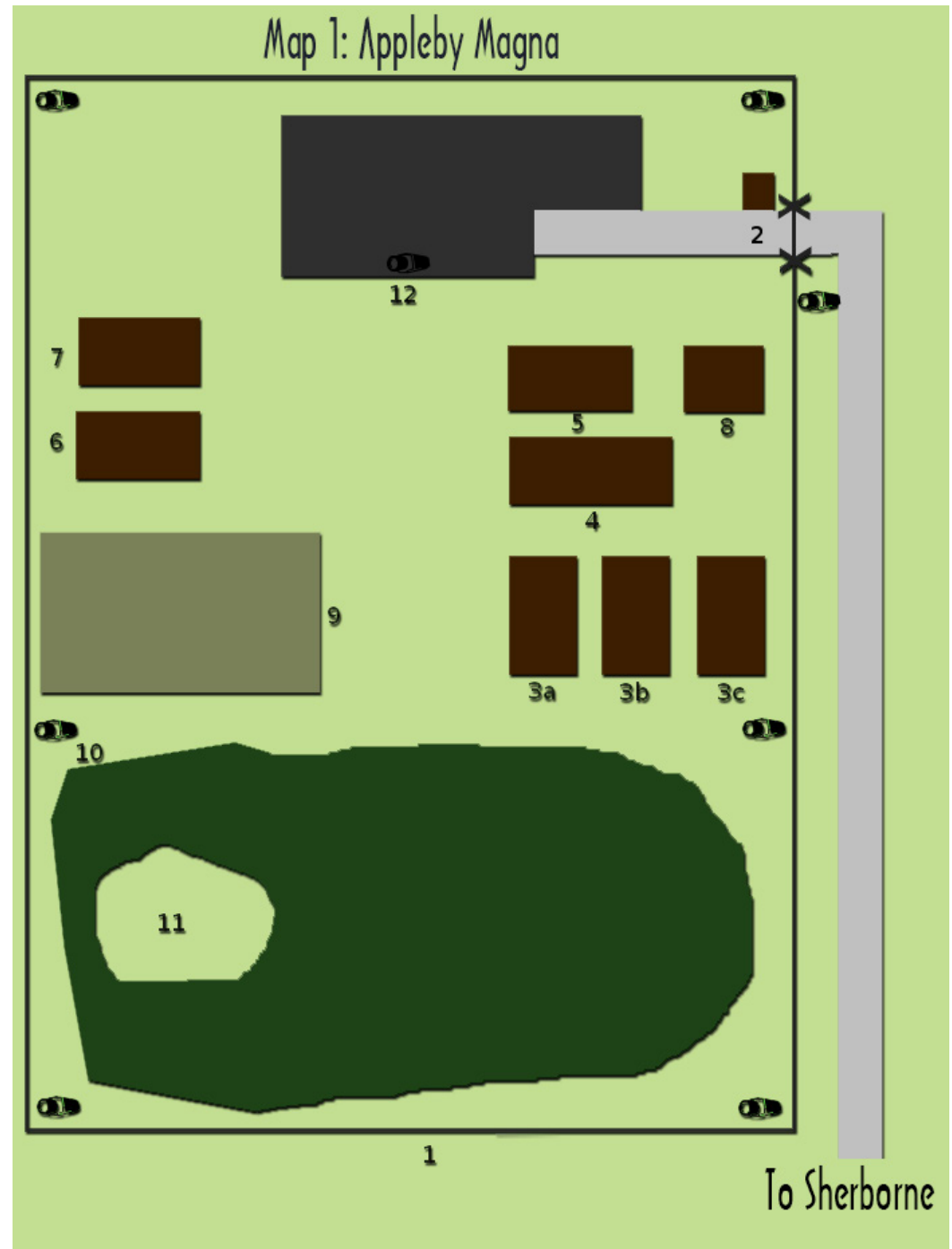
At the time this adventure is set the University of West London is entirely fictional. No connection or similarity is intended with the real world institution of that name created in April 2011.



THE CAMP

- Wall:** A nine foot tall brick wall topped with broken glass surrounds the estate. There are cameras mounted at various points along the wall. They are controlled from a room inside the house and can be rotated through 360 degrees. PCs trying to infiltrate the camp without being spotted need to successfully match their sneak skill against the operators Wit of 2D. Modifiers may be appropriate depending on the time of day/night or whether a PC has gone to the trouble of camouflaging him or herself effectively.
- Gate:** A wrought iron gate standing slightly higher than the wall. It is guarded around the clock by two sentries one of whom is always a member of National Assistance's NCO Cadre. The other is a regular member of the group. Both are armed with Browning HP35 pistols worn unobtrusively in shoulder holsters under their jackets. A strong box inside the small gatehouse contains two sten guns with six magazines. The senior sentry has the key to both the gatehouse and the strongbox. The camera mounted near the gate feeds to a monitor inside the gatehouse as well as the main control room.
- Barracks:** Military style huts with accommodation and sleeping quarters for up to twenty people. Huts 3a and 3b are for male personnel while hut 3c is allocated for the use of female personnel.
- Mess Hall/Cook House:** Kitchen, larder and a communal dining room. The larder holds an large supply of tinned and pre-packed food, with the bulk of it being army surplus rations.
- Instructors' Quarters:** Accommodation for National Assistance's permanent personnel/NCO cadre. This building has been partitioned into individual rooms to give the instructors a modicum of privacy. One of the instructors has the key to the armoury and also a key to the garage.
- Armoury:** A windowless hut which remains locked when not in use. Inside is an assortment of Browning pistols, sten guns and self-loading rifles in racks with plentiful ammunition, plus a couple of boxes of hand grenades.
- Lecture Room:** Laid out as a classroom with a lectern, large blackboard, flip chart stands and several rows of wooden desks with seating.
- Headquarters:** Administrative building for National Assistance instructors. It contains membership and training records, duty rosters and inventories of stores and equipment.
- Shooting Range:** National Assistance members receive fire arms training here. If the PCs visit the camp during the day there is a 1 in 6 chance that there will be half-a-dozen people being instructed in the use of pistols or rifles with live ammunition.
- Woodland:** A low wooded hill (treat as light cover for combat purposes). It is used as a training area for teaching field craft skills and undertaking mock battles.
- Sacred Grove:** A clearing with an altar at the centre. This is where National Assistance members who have completed their training are formally inducted in the organisation during a torchlight ceremony. Diana officiates while her father administers an oath that invokes Britain's old religion, its glorious past, and a dangerous future that the organisation must survive if the nation is to be reborn again.

Once a month the National Assistance's Inner Circle gathers in the grove to worship The Lord of the Seasons. The ceremony lasts an hour and involves ritualised chanting in which the participants call on the deity to imbue them with the strength they need to accomplish their goal of saving the nation. *Diana Oliver is trying to summon The Lord of the Seasons. She and her father believe that the Lord's arrival will be the sign for National Assistance to begin their takeover of the country.*
- House:** Brigadier Oliver's residence.



THE HOUSE

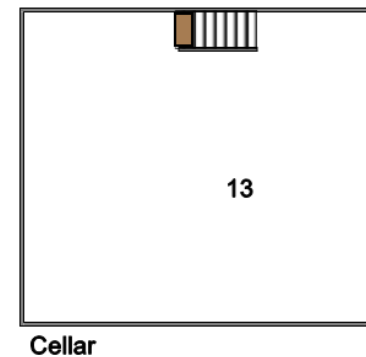
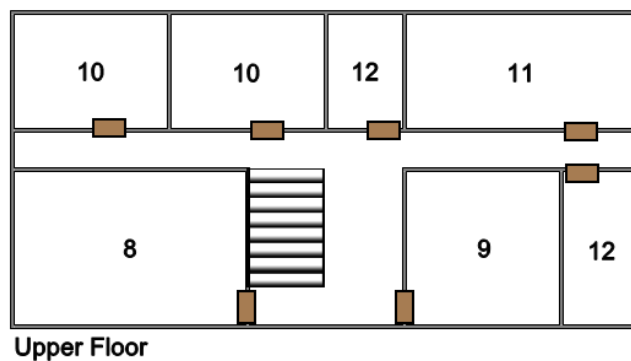
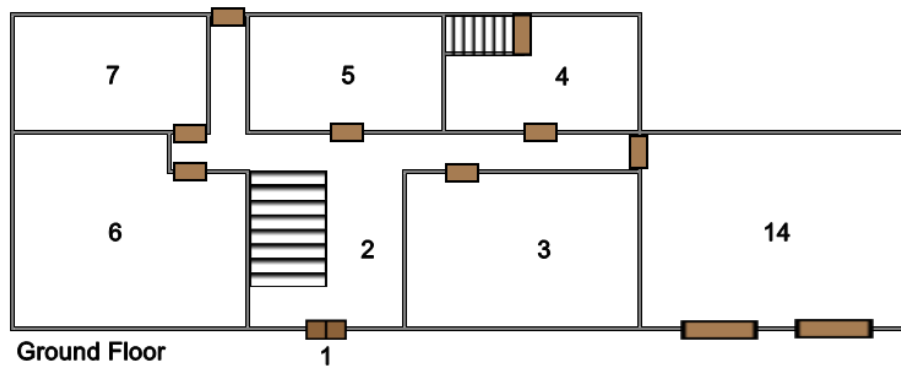
A relatively modest Georgian manor house, it is home to Brigadier Oliver and his daughter as well as two live-in servants, Mr and Mrs MacDonald. Mr MacDonald was formerly the Brigadier's batman and now fulfils the role of butler-cum-chauffeur-cum odd job man. His stats are per National Assistance Cadre (see NPC section below). He may be armed with a pistol taken from his quarters. Mrs MacDonald statistics are as per Average Human (see Mini Six Bare Bones edition page 14) with her professional skills in the fields of housekeeping and and. If sufficiently threatened she may defend herself with a frying pan or other kitchen utensil.

1. **Porch:** A short flight of steps lead up to the front door. A sentry armed with a Browning HP35 pistol is permanently stationed here.
2. **Hall/Foyer:** The entrance room to the house, with wood panelled walls and a highly polished wooden floor.
3. **Dining Room:** Dominated by a huge mahogany dining table, with a dozen matching chairs.
4. **Kitchen:** Fitted out in modern style with all the latest appliances.
5. **Drawing Room:** Converted into a security centre. Images from the security cameras around the estate are displayed on a bank of monitor screens. The room is permanently manned by a National Assistance member.
6. **Sitting Room:** Contains a three piece suite, television and well stocked drinks cabinet. Any visitors to the manor are received here.
7. **Library/Study:** The shelves hold an extensive collection of books devoted to history, politics, warfare and occultism. One wall is lined by a row of metal filing cabinets, the drawers of which are usually kept locked. Inside are dossiers on those the Brigadier considers to be subversive elements: Labour and Liberal party MPs (plus a few Conservatives considered to be suspect), Trade Union Officials, Academics, Journalists and other prominent persons thought to be unsound. Other files contain "intelligence reports" from National Assistance members and sympathisers. These are mostly accounts of local industrial action, alleged sabotage, and

denunciations of persons the writer regards as suspect. They are often highly irrational in tone. *One locked drawer holds the Brigadier's spell book.*

8. **Brigadier Oliver's Bedroom:** A large but sparsely furnished room. The Brigadier keeps a Browning HP35 pistol in a drawer in his bedside table.
9. **Diana's Bedroom:** Furnished in a similar style to her Ladbroke Grove Squat: Wall hangings, lava lamps and a bookcase containing a collection of esoteric volumes.
10. **Spare Bed Rooms:** These are for the use of visitors e.g. Masters
11. **Staff Bedroom:** Mr and Mrs McDonald's Room. Mr McDonald keeps a Browning HP35 in a locked cabinet.
12. **Bathrooms:** These contain the usual fixtures and have the benefit of modern plumbing.
13. **Cellar:** Contains more tinned food and army rations.
14. **Garage:** A former stable block converted into a garage. The Brigadier's Jaguar XJ12 is usually parked here, along with Diana's Interceptor if she is at home.

Map 2: Appleby Magna House



NPCS

THE ARMY GANG

CAPTAIN JAMES MORTIMER

Might: 2D+1

Wit: 4D

Agility: 2D+1

Charm: 3D

Skills: Command 4D, Bottle 4D, Dodge 3D+1, Shooters 3D+2

Static: **Dodge:** 9 **Block:** 8 **Parry:** 8 **Soak:** 8

Perks and Comps: None

Gear: Browning HP35 Pistol, Flak Jacket (8 points armour, +2TN penalty to all Agility based rolls)

Notes: Mortimer is a tall, athletic man with a lean build. He is a member of National Assistance's Inner Circle and devoted to the organisation and its leader. He sees the Army Gang robberies as high risk operations essential to the group's survival. All personnel involved, including himself, are expendable. Mortimer won't hesitate to execute gang members who are wounded and slowing the team down or who look like surrendering to the police. He is quite prepared to turn his pistol on himself rather than be captured and interrogated.

SERGEANT GEOFF WATTS

Might: 3D+1

Wit: 3D

Agility: 2D+1

Charm: 2D

Skills: Command 3D, Bottle 4D, Dodge 3D+1, Shooters 4D

Static: **Dodge:** 9 **Block:** 10 **Parry:** 10 **Soak:** 10

Perks and Comps: None

Gear: Browning HP35 Pistol, Sten Gun, Flak Jacket (8 points armour, +2TN penalty to all Agility based rolls)

Notes: Watts is of stocky build with dark hair which he still wears short, army style. Like Mortimer he is a member of National Assistance's Inner Circle and shares the captain's devotion to the cause. During the South Action Station shoot out he will try and cover the gang's retreat with automatic fire from his sten gun. He doesn't have any compunction about killing police officers, or anyone else who gets in the way.

MAD HARRY JACKSON

Statistics as per Blagger

Gear: Sawn off double barrelled shotgun, Flak Jacket (8 points armour, +2TN penalty to all Agility based rolls)

Notes: Like most heavies Jackson is big and bulky. He has a capacity for extreme violence (hence his nickname) and is ready to shoot his way out of trouble. No copper's going to take him alive.

DENNIS "WHEELS" MCCARTHY

Statistics as per Stoppo Driver plus complication: No Bottle.

Gear: Browning HP35 Pistol, Flak Jacket (8 points armour, +2TN penalty to all Agility based rolls), Ford Transit Van, Jaguar XJ12 5.3

Notes: A slightly built man in his early 30s with prematurely thinning hair, which makes him look older. McCarthy has a fidgety, nervous manner which has led to questions about his reliability. He is still the best getaway driver on the manor though, a fact which usually silences any doubters. Nonetheless, McCarthy is finding the Army Gang robberies a strain on his nerves and once the shooting starts may try and make a break for it by himself.

THE FUNNIES

DETECTIVE CHIEF SUPERINTENDENT HAWTHORN

Statistics as per Man From the Ministry, plus Perks: Sidekick (Sergeant Greenwood) and Perceptive

Gear: Official Car - Jaguar E-Type V12

Notes: Hawthorn's is dark haired with saturnine features and is always dressed immaculately in a bespoke three piece suit. He is determined to get to the bottom of the Army Gang robberies. His theory is that they are part of a radical, politically motivated group with occult beliefs. Hawthorn reasons that he needs an aggressive and intelligent team to find and destroy the Army Gang's parent organisation. After the South Action station shoot out the PCs aggression isn't in doubt but Hawthorn is taking a gamble that they've got the brains for the job. He will provide what help he can to the team from the limited resources he has available. This is mostly in the form of influence and contacts rather than hardware or additional manpower e.g. if the PCs want to know more about Brigadier Oliver's time at CITAT but don't have the necessary social skills to engineer a meeting with Colonel Thomas then Hawthorn will arrange it instead. Conversely if the PCs look like botching the investigation their new boss will drop them like a hot potato. Being returned to their regular duties may prove to be the least of their worries when Chaplin and Maddox arrive at the station looking to pick up where they left off.

SERGEANT JOAN GREENWOOD

Statistics as per Ambitious WPC plus Motors 3D, Punch Ups 3D, Shooters 3D+2

Gear: Police issue .38 revolver

Notes: Greenwood is raven haired and statuesque. She projects an aura of no-nonsense efficiency. If the PCs are short handed Hawthorn will assign her to assist the team and she will prove highly capable in that role. She also acts as the conscience of the group, attempting to dissuade the PCs from reckless action and insisting that things should be done in the spirit of the law, if not to the actual letter.

THE RUBBER HEELERS

DETECTIVE SUPERINTENDENT CHAPLIN

Statistics as per A10 detective

Gear: As per A10 detective

Notes: Chaplin is tall and lugubrious looking with a stoop and a prominent nose. The latter feature has led to him being nicknamed "Sniffer" by officers he has investigated. He carries out his work in a methodical way, seemingly taking satisfaction in doing his job well for its own sake rather than out of any crusading zeal for pursuing bent coppers. His mask of dry professionalism only slips on those occasions when his investigations are frustrated. The PCs being given what amounts to a get-out-of-jail-free by the Fifth Floor annoys him intensely.

DETECTIVE SERGEANT MADDOX

Statistics as per A10 detective sidekick

Gear: As per A10 detective

Notes: Maddox is red haired, overweight and unhealthy looking. He plainly enjoys eating, smoking and drinking. His usual role is to play worldly "good cop" to Chaplin' ascetic "bad cop". PCs may end up making damaging admissions to Maddox purely because he seems a real human being when compared to his boss. This would be a mistake. Like Chaplin, Maddox isn't on any great crusade against rogue cops, but he is eager for promotion and thus needs to claim a few scalps for CIB2 if he's to get on in the force.

THE YOUNG FIRM

ERIC YOUNG

Statistics as per Mr Big, plus complication: No Bottle

Gear: As per Mr Big

Notes: Eric doesn't really look like a professional criminal: He's of average height and build, handsome in a bland way and he dresses smartly, but not flash. Nonetheless he is the brains behind the Young Firm and is adept at seeking out new money making opportunities, usually armed robberies but also extortion and various types of fraud. Robberies are planned in conjunction with a draughtsman like Bailey or Captain Mortimer. Eric sees himself as executive material providing strategic input, with the details being delegated to someone else. The A34 fiasco left him with a serious loss of bottle and he's happy for others to do the heavy work, particularly when the Army Gang robberies are proving so lucrative.

TONY YOUNG

Statistics as per Blogger plus complication: Crazy

Gear: Sawn off shotgun (pump action)

Notes: Although still an intimidating figure Tony has gone to seed in the last few years. Too much good food and drink have piled on the pounds and what was once muscle is increasingly turning into flab. Tony sometimes appears out of breath, particularly when angry as he often is these days. Unlike his brother Tony was eager to get back to work after the A34 job but Captain Mortimer made it clear he was surplus to requirements and something of a liability. Since that slight Tony has been looking for an excuse to prove that he's still the hard man he used to be. Impertinent questioning from the PCs could be all the reason he needs.

BIG JOHN HARRIS

Statistics as per Blogger

Gear: None

Notes: Big John more than lives up to his name being tall and hefty. He looks like what he is, a heavy. He isn't the sharpest knife in the drawer but that doesn't mean he'll be a pushover when it comes to spilling the beans on the Young brothers.

CHRIS "THE BRAIN" BAILEY

Statistics as per Average Human (see Mini Six Bare Bones edition p14) but with Wit of 4D plus Contacts 3D, Investigation 4D+1, Legalese 4D+2

Gear: none

Notes: Bailey is a bookish looking man in his early 30s. His rimless glasses somehow make him look much older. He sees the PCs visit as a break from the tedium of prison life but won't be in the mood to do them any favours.

NATIONAL ASSISTANCE

BRIGADIER GERALD OLIVER

Might: 2D

Wit: 4D

Agility: 2D

Charm: 3D

Skills: Bottle 5D, Command 5D, Contacts 3D+2, Bad Cop 5D, Good Cop 4D, *Magic* 4D, Punch Ups 3D, Shooters 4D

Static: **Dodge:** 6 **Block:** 9 **Parry:** 6 **Soak:** 6

Perks and Comps: Destiny (To save Britain)

Gear: Browning HP35, Jaguar XJ12 5.3, *Spell Book*

Spells: *Charm, Divination, ESP*

Notes: The Brigadier is a wiry man with iron grey hair, penetrating blue eyes and aquiline features. He speaks in clipped, upper class tones that brook no argument. Plainly the Brigadier is man used to giving orders that are obeyed without question.

Brigadier Oliver considers himself a patriot, if an unconventional one. He blames Britain's current woes on the country having been gradually undermined by the adoption of belief systems that are alien not just to the national character but contrary to nature itself e.g. Christianity, socialism and humanism, all of which he considers as catering to the lowest common denominator at the expense of those whom nature has made superior. The only way to stop the rot is for the country to return to its pagan past with the martial vigour of its people untrammelled by Christian morality or equivalent secular creeds that deny the natural order with their tenets of equality for all and compassion for the weak and unworthy. This revived pagan society will need a strong ruler, like the warrior kings of old. Oliver sees himself as fulfilling that role and then being succeeded in turn by his daughter and Dominic Masters who will found a ruling dynasty together. The Brigadier has begun to have doubts about Masters' commitment to National Assistance but is confident that Diana has the steel to keep him loyal to the cause. He has been disappointed at the

slow pace of their relationship to date though, despite his encouragement of both parties. The Brigadier has reservations about the "long haired layabouts" Diana brings into the organisation but accepts her argument that National Assistance needs to look beyond the disgruntled middle aged, middle classes if it is to become a mass movement.

Oliver knows that his organisation still has some way to go before it can seize power. National Assistance needs to accumulate more resources and personnel. It also needs to co-opt allies in the institutions of state, especially the armed forces, police and security services. At present the Brigadier is regarded as the eccentric leader of a fringe group. Oliver is counting on the national situation continuing to deteriorate and is convinced that he will soon take the reins of power, restore order in the country and then return Britain to greatness. He sees the destruction of the Army Gang as a major setback but not a fatal one. The Brigadier is convinced that the tide of events is finally running his way.

The Lord of the Seasons is a combination of traditional Green Man figure and self-imagined deity embodying the Brigadier's ideas about the laws of nature and his interpretation of evolution i.e. that the strong should prevail. The Lord is worshipped only by the National Assistance Inner Circle which gathers in the sacred grove once a month to invoke his name and ask for his help in their work. The rites of worship are led by Diana using rituals concocted from volumes in her occult library. To date the Lord of the Seasons has yet to make an appearance.

The Brigadier's occult research has given him some facility with magic. He is adept at influencing and motivating others but lacks his daughter's natural ability with the magical arts.

DIANA OLIVER

Might: 2D

Wit: 4D

Agility: 3D

Charm: 4D

Skills: Command 4D+2, Contacts 3D+2, Bad Cop 4D+1, Good Cop 4D+2, Legalese 4D+1, *Magic 6D*, Motors 3D+2, Porkies 4D+1, Undercover 4D+2

Static: Dodge: 9 Block: 9 Parry: 6 Soak: 6

Perks and Comps: I Would

Gear: Jensen Interceptor, *Spell Book*

Spells: *Charm, Divination, ESP, Illusions, Summon Lord of the Seasons**, *Teleport*

**This spell functions in the same way as Conjure Elemental but does not require any material component.*

Notes: Diana is blonde haired and blue eyed. Although attractive she has inherited her father's aquiline features and is recognisably his daughter. She also possesses a similar commanding manner but can turn on the charm when she needs to e.g. when recruiting new members for National Assistance.

Diana's beliefs mirror her fathers although she has her own plans for his organisation. She has no desire to marry Dominic Masters and when her father dies she intends to run National Assistance by herself. To this end she has been recruiting young people from the ranks of the desperate and disaffected on the streets of London. Her aim is to mould this younger contingent into a group that will be loyal to her in the event of a succession struggle for the leadership of National Assistance. Diana hopes to win over the Inner Circle plus the rank and file by virtue of being the Brigadier's natural heir and through the force of her own personality. The younger recruits are her insurance policy though and she is steadily increasing their number. One way or another she intends to edge Masters out and dispose of him if necessary.

Although she can be ruthless in her dealings with people Diana has a great love of animals and is a strict vegan. She refuses to sacrifice animals in her ceremonies of worship despite her father's occasional prompting. It may occur to her to suggest a human substitute instead, ideally a weak link in the organisation such as Masters, or the Young brothers on the grounds that "they know too much".

Diana is an accomplished practitioner of magic, largely self taught from her extensive reading on the occult. She believes that she can tap into the Earth's natural energy in order to perform her various spells. Diana sees The Lord of the Seasons as a personification of this energy but to date her attempts to bring him to this plane have been unsuccessful, much to her frustration (in game terms Diana's Magic skill rolls have yet to equal the TN31 required).

DOMINIC MASTERS

Might: 3D

Wit: 3D

Agility: 3D

Charm: 3D

Skills: Bottle 3D+2, Command 4D, Contacts 4D, Shooters 4D

Static: Dodge: 9 Block: 9 Parry: 9 Soak: 9

Perks and Comps: I Would, Special Friend

Gear: Bespoke suit, Ford Capri 3000S, Browning HP35 (only when attending the National Assistance camp)

Notes: Masters is a tall, good looking man in his late 30s. He is fair haired and blue eyed. It has been remarked that he looks more like a prosperous gentleman farmer than a soldier, or red- in-tooth-and-claw-capitalist.

Masters served with the Brigadier in CITAT and became convinced of the older man's genius. For his part Oliver came to regard Masters as the son he never had: Bright, dashing and, when required, utterly ruthless. The two men remained close after Masters left the army to go into the private security business. The Brigadier pointed a lot of ex-CITAT personnel and other army acquaintances in Masters' direction when they hit civvy street looking for alternative employment.

Masters readily joined National Assistance when it was founded by Brigadier Oliver in 1975. He had little liking for Harold Wilson's Labour government, and he shared the Brigadier's conviction that the country was going to the dogs and only resolute action could save it. With the passage of time Masters' commitment has started to wane: He enjoys the lifestyle that his success in business has brought him. He doesn't want to spend his weekends playing soldiers in the frozen Dorset countryside when he could be in London dining in expensive restaurants or enjoying one of the capital's other myriad attractions. Nor does he want to be diverting large chunks of his personal wealth and company profits to the Brigadier's private army which is perpetually in training for a day that never seems to come. Masters was happy to go along with Mortimer and Watts's alliance with the Young Firm as it reduced National Assistance's demands on his own finances. With the demise of the Army Gang he is worried that their activities may be traced back to him, possibly through the equipment his company supplied.

Masters doesn't share the Brigadier and Diana's religious beliefs. He finds the worship and initiation rituals utterly risible and avoids attending when possible, usually by claiming that business has kept him in London. Despite the Brigadier's attempts at match-making Masters has a strong dislike of Diana Oliver. He sees her as a deluded fanatic, even more devoted to mystical mumbo-jumbo than her father. The two dated briefly when Diana first moved to London but never really hit it off. Their relationship has cooled even further since then. Masters is unaware of Diana's plans to take over National Assistance when her father dies. He would be content for her to inherit her father's mantle if he could be left alone to carry on his business career.

NATIONAL ASSISTANCE (CONT.)

NATIONAL ASSISTANCE CADRE

Might: 3D

Wit: 2D+2

Agility: 3D

Charm: 2D+2

Skills: **Groggy** 3D+2, Command 3D, Dodge 3D+2, Bottle 3D, Punch Ups 3D+2, Shooters 4D

Static: **Dodge:** 11 **Block:** 11 **Parry:** 11 **Soak:** 9

Perks and Comps: None

Gear: Firearm (usually Browning HP35, but sometimes Sten gun or SLR)

Notes: These men are all former army NCOs who have served with Brigadier Oliver at various points in his career. They range in age from early 30s to mid 50s. All are loyal to his political vision but are sceptical towards his pagan religious leanings. They generally regard the initiation and worship ceremonies with a certain amount of bemusement. Most of the cadre go along with the rituals to humour the Brigadier. A few of them regard the meetings as being akin to Masonic ritual, fundamentally harmless play acting but useful to reinforce esprit de corps.

NATIONAL ASSISTANCE MEMBER

Statistics as per Average Human plus Aggro 3D, Punch Ups 3D, Shooters 3D.

Gear: Some may be equipped with firearms.

Notes: Although not as capable as the National Assistance cadre the rank and file members shouldn't be underestimated. They are well motivated and with proper leadership can put up stiff resistance if the PCs go for an all out assault on the camp. The younger members in particular will fight extremely hard if led by Diana Oliver.

THE LORD OF THE SEASONS

Statistics as per Elder God (see Mini Six Bare Bones edition page 15).

Gear: none

Notes: The Lord of the Seasons is a gigantic figure of roughly humanoid outline: Its body and limbs resemble the trunk and branches of a tree and are covered in leaves. A huge misshapen head sits atop its gnarled shoulders. Green eyes glow malevolently in deep set sockets while long vines sprout from its gaping mouth, reaching out and grasping those too slow, or too stupefied, to flee its presence. Unless summoned for what it considers a good reason it will indulge its Cosmic Appetite perk and consume 1D6 persons present before returning to its home dimension. A summoner must make a Charm roll against TN15 to persuade The Lord of the Seasons to consider any request in a more or less favourable fashion.

The Brigadier and Diana see the Lord of the Seasons as a messiah figure whose arrival on Earth will be the catalyst for their movement to take control of the British Isles. They believe that The Lord of the Seasons will grant them and their followers powers that will make them superhuman, turning National Assistance into an invincible army. If their deity obliges then all group members receive the benefits of the spells Bless and Hasten as permanent perks. Other benefits are at the GM's discretion. Of course anyone having seen the Elder God close up will probably also be mad. Having rewarded his worshippers the Lord of the Season departs this plane.

MOON OF THE WOLF

A Movie to use as inspiration

by Eric Fabiashi

FOR SERIOUS GM PLOTTING

MOOON OF THE WOLF is another film that on the surface might not seem like it has anything to offer a Dark Conspiracy DM. This is actually a really tightly written movie with some really dark and Gothic themes that can easily be transferred into a challenging and exciting DC adventure.

The tag line according to **IMDB**:

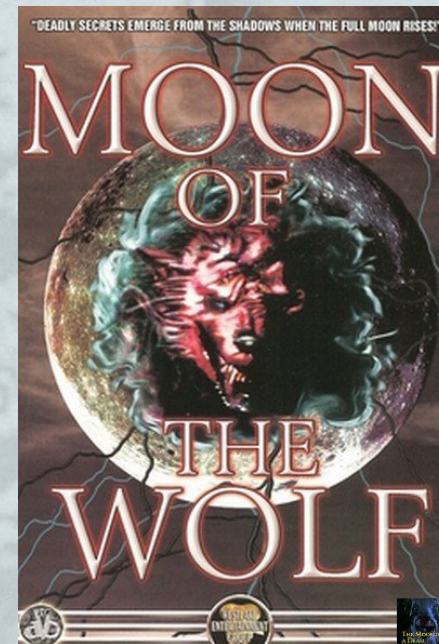
Deadly secrets emerge from the shadows when the full moon rises.

There is far more than the basic plot line let's on here: After several locals are viciously murdered, a Louisiana sheriff starts to suspect he may be dealing with a werewolf.

The real star here is David Janssen as Sheriff Aaron Whitaker, who has a very open mind about the events that are going on in the isolated small town of Marsh Island. After the body of a local girl is found with her throat slashed by what are at first assumed wild dogs. The secrets of the small town slowly begin to emerge and that's where a party of adventurers comes in. The legacy of the Loup Garou mythology runs through the film and adds to the Gothic atmosphere here.

After the body is found by two country bumpkins, the Gothic background

of this 1972 movie begins to emerge with the appearance of the victim's brother. The victim's temperamental brother Lawrence Burrifors (Geoffrey Lewis) goes into a bit of a state and reveals that she had a mysterious lover. Things get weirder as the town doctor reveals a major affair with the victim that rendered her pregnant. He is not the murderer because he is not right handed. The victim was hit from behind and then her neck savaged.





This strange film has deep South mysticism via Hollywood that has more in common with Gothic stories than actual mythology.

We are introduced to the dark plantation of Andrew Rodanthe (Bradford Dillman) and his sister Louise (Barbara Rush) whose family were the founders of Marsh Island. They have ties to Hugh Burrifors (Paul R. DeVille), interviewed by the sheriff, warns him of the *Loup Garou*. The two families' history echoes throughout the film and to the founding of the town of Marsh Island. The victim of course was part of the Burrifor clan. The look of the film here is pure Louisiana nineteen seventy two. The film paces itself quite well and its atmosphere lends itself to an adventure. Lawrence Burrifor attacks the town doctor and gets himself arrested. Seems it was the doctor who knocked up the victim.

Things get very interesting when on the night of the next full moon the sheriff's deputies are attacked and slaughtered right in the town jail. Lawrence is among the victims. Steel bars are torn from the wall and the corpse count is high. With this being a made for television movie all of the carnage is implied and not shown.

We even get an angry mob as the town turns to hysteria and pure paranoia. Andrew Rodanthe offers to become deputy to the sheriff and their investigation takes them over to the Burrifor residence. The elder Burrifor has an ancient voodoo formula burning on the front step and Andrew goes into a paralyzing seizure. He is taken to the hospital and events continue to spin out of control.

Louise Rodanthe (Barbara Rush) is the love interest of the sheriff and speaks fluent French. She offers to speak to the elder Burrifor. She's a pretty interesting character in her own right. She is a former New York socialite only recently returned to the peace and quiet of the town of Marsh Island.

Because of the Burrifor dialect of French a misunderstanding of the pronunciation of the term "Loug Garog" is actually Loup-Garou the

legendary Louisiana werewolf monster. It is revealed that Andrew Louise own brother is actually the werewolf! He transforms in the hospital and goes on a rampage. Louise is his next target and begins going through the family lore of this monster. It seems that her own grandfather suffered spells of sickness. The curse of the Loup - Garou runs through the family. Perhaps due to a curse of voodoo or witchcraft from the Burrifor family ancestors going back to the founding of Marsh Island. Louise Rodanthe shoots her brother with 'blessed' bullets and he assumes human form dying in a burning barn. Sherriff Whitaker holds Louise Rodanthe and we fade to black. This is where the adventurers can come in.

UNLEASHING THE WOLF IN DARK CONSPIRACY.

The events of *Moon of the Wolf* can easily be converted into a *Dark Conspiracy* adventure. Marsh Island may be cut off from the rest of the state of Louisiana in the world of the Greater Depression. The party could come into the world of *Moon of The Werewolf* after the events of the film. The audience is not really sure if those bullets were blessed or not. If we assume that they are not then the regenerative qualities of the werewolf might be enough to bring him back from beyond the grave.

Assuming that that Andrew Rodanthe is a 'Were' in *Dark Conspiracy* first edition terms, he might be a true were wolf as per page 229 of the first edition rules. His empathetic powers might be particularly strong and able to mask his aura from those around him including animals and the like. He would be semi-retired gnome as well with some vast resources behind him. His sister might not have inherited the family curse but Louise Rodanthe has more than a touch of emphatic abilities. Could Andrew have a son who also carries his curse of the were? Is there right now a man working in the corporate board rooms and slaying others on the weekends right now?

Burrifors clan has some very powerful empathic powers running through their gene pool as well. The

ending of the line however might spell disaster for the small town of Marsh Island. What other possible secrets might be hiding out at the Rodanthe plantation? Could there be some other weird curse affects hanging in the wings just waiting for adventurers?

What about Dr. Drutan (John Berardino), why was such a highly trained doctor in Marsh Island to begin with. He seemed to be a man trying to escape a very tainted past. His affair with the Burrifor girl might point to far darker things done in the name of money and corporate interests.

Here is a man and an opportunity to expand into the Marsh Island Gothic setting. But all of this will come back to the center of Marsh Island life Sheriff Aaron Whitaker might by now be married to Louise Rodanthe while the plantation has been abandoned for some months after the events of *Moon of the Werewolf*. Adventurers are going to have to deal with the sheriff and might be surprised at how open minded the easy going lawman is. He's a chip off the old occult detective block, a good solid investigator with a keen insight into the human condition. He is a person whose experiences have opened the door of powers beyond the human ken. He's the DM's *in* to the World of Marsh Island and the events of *Night of the Wolf*.

LEGENDS OF THE ROUGAROU IN MOON OF THE WOLF

Moon of the Werewolf takes aspects of legend of the *Rougarou* and plays very fast and loose with it. The werewolf in the folklore of the movie has ties to both movie voodoo and witchcraft. The curse affecting the head of the Rodanthe household. The creature could very easily be a werewolf from either *Conspiracy Rules* or *Dark Conspiracy* first edition.

The film's plantation has a long tradition in a American Gothic literature. A place of familial decay and depravity just waiting for someone to stumble upon its deadly legacy. Families here are not only closely tied with each other but the other worldly. The Werewolf of the Rodanthe line is not going to be the only creature of the Marsh Island location. There could be others that pop up throughout the history of the area from time to time. This gives a DM plenty of opportunity to use the history, folklore, and insights from *Moon of the Werewolf* in plenty of adventures. *Moon of the Werewolf* wasn't the only nineteen seventies supernatural detective and investigative movie on television.

OTHER SHOWS WITH SIMILAR THEMES INCLUDE:

The Norliss Tapes from 1972

Fear No Evil and its sequel **The Ritual of Evil** 1977 and 1978 respectively.

The World of Darkness 1977 and **The World Beyond** 1978

Baffled 1973

And of course **Kolchak The Night Stalker** 1972 as well as **The Night Strangler** 1973



TOWN AND COUNTRY DRIVING

A sample of rides

by Mitchell Schwartz

FOR DARK CONSPIRACY

The following vehicles exist in our world. The first two are for settled, controlled areas.

ELECTRIC VEHICLES

Peel P50: This one-seat, three-wheeler is a common vehicle in prole neighborhoods in urban areas. Originally devised in the early 1960s, the Peel P50 was for decades the smallest production vehicle ever created, with room for “one adult and a shopping bag.” While quietly subsumed by 1960s prosperity, in 2011, production was resumed, and the P50 was licensed in a number of countries with dense urban populations of proles. Its tiny size allows it to fit easily in crowded streets, where congestion would not allow more speed to be used anyway.

The P50 is built with either a petrol or electric motor. The petrol engine version is inexpensive to operate, the 6-liter tank allowing it to drive more than four hours. The electric version can be charged off normal wall current in about four hours (20 minutes at an electric car recharge station) and the charge provides an hour’s travel. The P50 can pull a blistering 50 km/h on a flat, straight road.

The P50 does not have a reverse gear, and its minimal suspension makes them useless off road. However, its light weight (59 kg) and convenient rear lifting handle makes it possible to park the P50 anywhere, including indoors to avoid theft. Some inner city apartment buildings have

outfitted their main lobby with parking stalls equipped with plugs.

P50s have been modded to suit owners’ needs. A popular mod is a cabinet built into the rear to make a fold-out street-seller’s booth, but due to the single rear wheel, this makes the vehicle even more unwieldy. At one point, a child seat was a popular mod until there was a series of child kidnappings in Paris from P50s stopped in traffic. Some have been used for light package delivery, but bike messengers are usually faster through traffic and can carry packages of nearly the same size.

About the only mod that cannot be made is for a larger engine – there is nowhere for it to go and anything much heavier will break the frame. Electric versions have a similar issue, in that the battery is integral to the frame; replacing it for something larger would require disassembling the vehicle.

They are useful for urban surveillance as they are ubiquitous, can travel into the smallest of alley ways, and the electric versions are rather quiet.

Nissan Leaf: The Leaf was one of the first all-electric (battery powered) vehicles introduced to the public as a general-use vehicle. Since it is not a hybrid, it gains performance by carrying no apparatus needed for internal

combustion—no gas tank, no cylinders, no fuel injection, no gearbox, no alternator, no catalytic converter, no emissions. Just a large battery bank built into the bottom of the vehicle and an electric motor. Going faster just drains the battery faster. For the driver, the Leaf is a quiet, small sedan. Similar models have been introduced by other manufacturers.

Electrics like the Leaf are more expensive to purchase than a similarly-sized gas-powered vehicle, the idea being that the extra cost is made up by the owner in fuel cost. Making up the cost difference takes just about the life of the battery – 7-9 years. The battery is generally not replaceable in electric cars, being built into the frame. When the battery fails, the car needs to be replaced. More expensive vehicles, like the twice-as-expensive Tesla model S are designed to be able to change batteries, to keep the vehicle viable for years.

Most electric cars can be recharged off normal house current, but usually use a high voltage recharging station to recharge faster. As the second and third decades of the 21st century progressed, more and more homeowners, urban garage owners and fuel station owners installed recharging stations. See the **Additional Fuel Types**, below, for more information about electric vehicles.

EXPEDITIONARY GEAR

The following items are beyond the price range of an average individual, but could be in the budget of a foundation that frequently sends expeditions, and can always be rented by expedition outfitters.

Pilatus PC-12: This is a light turbo-prop airliner that includes a variety of internal fittings, from luxury air to small air cargo transport. The PC-12 is built in several configurations, carrying a maximum of 9 passengers as a small airliner, 6-8 passengers in an executive transport, 4 passengers and 2,200 kg of cargo, or a pure cargo version with a load of 2,750 kg. Some versions

VEHICLE CARDS



PEEL P50

A one-seat three-wheeled vehicle designed for urban travel, the P50 was the smallest production automobile. About 50 were built 1962-64 in Britain. Production was revived in 2011 and was licensed in nations with high-density populations. The P50 has no reverse gear, but a convenient handle on the back allows the very lightweight car (59 kg) to be physically maneuvered when required. The interior includes space for "one adult and a shopping bag." The single door is on the left. Produced with 4 hp gasoline or electric motor (recharges off house current). Poor off-road capability. Peels are popular vehicles with proles as urban commuter vehicles. They are affordable, easy to park, easy to mod, and simple to repair.

Damage Record

- Crew: Driver
- Sight/Vision:
- Headlights
- Engine:
- Power (fuel/bat.):
- Suspension:

- Cruise Speed: 75/13
- Combat Move: 85/15
- Fuel Cap: 6 liters
- Fuel Cons: 1.3 liters

Battery drains in 1 hour (E)

- Price: \$1,500 (C/C)
- Fuel Type: G, E
- Load: 5 kg
- Veh. Wt: 59 kg
- Crew: Driver
- Night Vision: One headlight

Combat Statistics

Fiberglass body offers no protection from bullets

- Config: Std HF: 0
- Susp: W (1) HS: 0
- HR: 0

VEHICLE CARDS

are designed with a reconfigurable cabin, but the cabin is then less plush (admittedly not an issue for most combat teams).

It has a range of more than 2,800 km (1,740 miles) loaded and 4,000 km (2,500 miles) empty, and is capable of operating from small, rough airfields.

These same capabilities make it popular for quasi-legal and illegal operations.

The US military commissioned a version for use as a multi-mission support aircraft (PC-12M, USAF designation U-28) with a more robust electric system, using it for everything from airborne surveillance and electronic eavesdropping to parachute team insertion.

While the price tag of even this small aircraft is beyond the pocket of most adventuring teams, it could belong to an institution that sponsors expeditions or be chartered from a small airline.

Alenia C-27J Spartan: The Spartan is a modern air transport with about half the capacity of a C-130 Hercules. Having passed through several militaries, Spartans are becoming available through chartering companies. The C-27J can be used to field expeditions with one large or two small vehicles carried as cargo.

The C-27J has a range of more than 3,700 km (2,300 miles) loaded and 5,900 km (3,650 miles) empty, and is capable of operating from small to medium airfields. Its body is shaped to fit any vehicle that will fit in a Hercules—provided it makes the Spartan's lower weight limit.

Pinzgauer 718 6x6: The Pinzgauer was originally a vehicle developed for the Austrian military as a high-mobility squad carrier—like a HMMWV, but larger. It was popular with European armies being very strong and agile in rough terrain. However, it was not designed for defense against improvised explosive devices (IEDs), which suddenly became an issue for every major military in the mid-2000s.

Pinzgauers are available in a variety of body shapes, including open backed, canvas topped, enclosed cabin,



NISSAN LEAF

Nissan Leaf: One of the first all-electric vehicles introduced to the public, a nicely appointed compact. While showing some of the promise of avoiding the use of fossil fuels, the battery that powers the vehicle only offers limited range, and can only be recharged in locations linked to the power grid. The Leaf can be recharged in 2 hours at a recharge station, or in 8 hours on house current. As the battery ages, it cannot hold as much of a charge, shrinking the car's range. In small models like the Leaf, the batteries are built into the structure of the car and cannot be replaced.

Damage Record

Crew: Driver
 Passengers

Sight/Vision:
 Headlights

Engine:

Battery: Dmgd
 Destroyed

Suspension:
 Minor Dmg
 Immobilized

Cruise Speed: 75/13
 Combat Move: 85/15
 Battery Endurance: 2 hours

Combat Statistics

Config: Std HF: 1
 Susp: W (1) HS: 1
 HR: 1

If the Battery is damaged, mark off half of the remaining battery use boxes.
 New cruise speed = 40/7.

Price: \$28,880 (C/C)
 Fuel Type: E

Load: 200 kg
 Veh. Wt: 1,490 kg

Crew: 1+3
 Night Vision: Headlights

Battery use:

Every 10 minutes, mark off
 if ≤ cruise speed, 1 box
 if > cruise speed, 2 boxes

ambulances. They can be outfitted as field labs, mobile workshops, or rolling bunkhouses. They can carry up to 2,250 kg worth of cargo (minimum 750 kg, trade 100 kg/passenger for the space) and can tow trailers of up to 1,500 kg cross country (4,000 kg on the road).

This current version was redesigned in the early 2000s, and later became available in the civilian market. As a civilian vehicle, of course, it is unarmed and unarmored, but after market kits are available to provide a roof weapons mount if needed, and armor insert kits can provide all-around defense against small arms and fragments (armor level 2 or 3, weighing 100 or 200 kg respectively – only one kit can be outfitted at a time). It can be outfitted with a white or IR spotlight, or even IR headlights.

The Pinzgauer 716 4x4 is slightly smaller, carrying 4 fewer passengers, but is equally capable. Older Pinzgauer 710 & 712 models with petrol engines date back to the 1970s, but would be less expensive to acquire and are almost as capable (but cannot be equipped with internal armor).

Armor Insert Kit	Cost	Weight
Level 2	\$14,000	100 kg
Level 3	\$30,000	200 kg

LS3b: In the early 2000s, the US Army began to develop a robot capable of autonomously following troops across rough terrain on foot, carrying additional equipment for them, the Legged Squad Support System (LS3). The goal was to effectively provide an electronic mule that did not need to be on a lead, did not require fodder and did not panic when the troops were under fire.

The LS3b basically follows a person, carrying up to 450 kg of gear—backpacks, food, ammo, water, camp equipment, etc. One set of sensors views and analyzes the ground immediately ahead of the robot to moves its legs accordingly. Another optical sensor tracks a

VEHICLE CARDS



PILATUS PC-12/U-28A

Pilatus PC-12 is a single-engine light turbo-prop passenger and cargo aircraft. The main market for the aircraft is corporate transport and regional airline operators. It is available in several configurations: 9 passenger light airliner, 6-8 passenger executive transport, 4 passengers plus cargo, and a pure cargo version.

PC-12M is equipped with a more powerful electrical generation system that enables additional power-consuming equipment. The PC-12M can perform missions such as flight inspection, air ambulance, aerial photography, parachute drop, and surveillance. The USAF used it as paramilitary special missions' platform (U-28A).

Damage Record

Crew: Pilots	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	Cruise Speed:	500	Price:	\$4,450,000 (S/C)
Passengers	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	Combat Move:	58	Fuel Type:	AvG
Sight/Vision:		Range: (loaded)	2,800 km	Load:	1,500 kg
Radar	<input type="checkbox"/>	(unloaded)	4,000 km	Veh Wt:	2,760 kg
Radio	<input type="checkbox"/>	Fuel Cap:	667.5 liters/h	Crew:	2+4-9 passengers
Other	<input type="checkbox"/>	Fuel Cons:	120 liters/h	Night Vision:	Varies, radar
Engine:	<input type="checkbox"/>			Min Runway:	
Fuel: (ea. 10%)	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>			Takeoff	701 meters
Wings: Damgd	<input type="checkbox"/>			Landing	450 meters
Destroyed	<input type="checkbox"/>				

additives depending on use. This works best in vehicles that do not require high grades of gasoline.

Biodiesel: Usable in multi-fuel or diesel engines. Available all over the world as various vegetable oils. In most internal combustion engines, this should be preheated or mixed with petrol or diesel for the initial start of the engine, but otherwise is as usable a fuel as gasoline or diesel out of the pump. If not built for biodiesel, this requires the installation of reasonably inexpensive kits to handle the adjustments required for starting. And yes, the vehicles do smell a bit like French fries.

Biodiesel is available from a limited number of dealers in built-up areas who usually acquire it from food preparation sources (restaurants, fast food, food processing factories), strain it and clean it, and resell it. Vegetable oil can also be bought at the supermarket, but that is usually more expensive as it is unused, and is usually a higher quality product. Biodiesel can also be acquired directly from a supply point, but would need to be carefully strained and filtered before use (or it gums up the engine).

Electric: powered by a rechargeable battery. The vehicle sheet includes information explaining how to mark off charge boxes when using the vehicle, and how to recharge the battery (clear used boxes).

Kerosene and biodiesel have almost exactly the same energy available per gallon as petrol with 10% alcohol mixed in—available at every gas pump in the US. Biodiesel should be heated before its initial use, especially in cold climates.

Fully electric vehicles (not a hybrid with both gas and electric motors) run on electricity stored in batteries. Range is their largest problem—batteries only store as much as is used in a typical day's commute (120-150 miles), and lose the ability to store energy over time. With smaller electric cars, the battery is integral to the car's structure and cannot be replaced; when the battery dies, the whole car must be replaced.

VEHICLE CARDS



PINZGAUER 718 6X6

Pinzgauer 718 is an unarmored 6x6 military squad transport developed in the late 90s in Europe. Its exceptional cross-country mobility and strength makes it a prime choice for expeditions to rough zones. Available in multiple body styles: separated cab, soft back, soft cab. Some have been outfitted for homes to move them about in great comfort. They can also be outfitted with armor to protect against small arms fire and are available in a slightly smaller configuration, the 4x4 (716).

Damage Record

Crew: Driver
 Passengers

Sight/Vision:

Headlights

Radio

Engine:

Fuel (ea 10%):

Suspension:

Minor Dmg

Immobilized

Cruise Speed: 60/35

Combat Move: 90/45

Fuel Cap: 120 liters

Fuel Cons: 10 liters/h

Combat Statistics

Config: Std HF: 1

Susp: W (3) HS: 1

HR: 1

Armor inserts to level 2 or 3.

Price: \$850,000 (S/S)

Fuel Type: D, G

Load: 2,250 kg

Veh. Wt: 2,500 kg

Crew: 2+14

Night Vision: Headlights

Can be fitted with IR headlights or spot.

A QUICK BITE TO EAT

A short story

by Tim Bisaiillon

MORE MOOD FICTION

21 Minutes into Tomorrow... in 'burbs of the Torontario Metroplex.

MAX CUBE DROPPED down to the ground from the window ledge since it was only a ten foot drop; he hunched down and checked the tracks. There were three sets of them that went this way, and he was sure they would be back. He stood up and glanced around and up at the roof tops as well. He could see the airship hovering high in the sky. Little ports of lights rotating like some old disco ball in a night club.

Gabriel 7 dropped down from the ledge as well. He checked the soles of his shoes. He thought he landed in something squishy but he hadn't.

"What do you make of it Max?" Gabriel 7 asked him. "Are they the ones? Why are they wandering in packs? Are they coming back this way?"

"Too soon to tell," Max replied. He tapped out a cigarette from the 20 pack he carried. He glanced at the hand written words; "There is still hope" he had written a week ago, which was a good sign. "Is there anything that the SoMe (Sow-Mee) has to say?"

Gabriel 7 took a small slender device from his pocket and activated it; he scanned through his Digital Messaging Device his eyes looking for key words.

"Anything?" Max asked of him.

"Nothing yet," Gabriel 7 stated. Then the fingers of his left hand danced over the keyboards. "I had added an alert tab to it so that if there is anything it will blip."

"Atta boy," Max said. He stood up and stretched, he had been hunkered down for too long now and his aged body wasn't

as young as he thought it was. He could hear his arms crick, like snap, crackle but no pop.

"So what's the game plan?" Gabriel 7 wanted to know. He was just happy to be on the move once again and not holed up in an abandoned building.

"I rightly don't know at the moment," he replied honestly. "This is all new territory for me."

"Whoa," Gabriel 7 said.

"Thanks Keanu," Max retorted.

They both left the alleyway and onto the street. It was crowded with people going about their routines. The thunder rumbled in the distance as the sky began to cloud over. The good thing about clouds was that it would block the airship; it was an unsettling sight to begin with.

Max's nose picked up the scent of a familiar brand of food. He weighed his options and decided to go for it.

Lee's Noodles Odditorium was open for business as usual. It was a little stand with over a dozen stools around it. It had a bit of the retro-fifties look about it. Which, Max thought it was so cool. There were two stools that had just emptied right as they approached.

Max took that as another good sign; he sat down at a stool and put up two fingers. Old man Lee smiled at him and nodded.

"Do we have time to eat?" Gabriel 7 inquired.

"Heaven forbid we should go on an empty stomach," Max replied. He reached over the counter and got two chopsticks,

some soy sauce packets and a spice container.

"They are still looking for you," Lee told Max. "You better eat and run."

"I told you breaking into the Royal Art Museum was a bad mistake," Gabriel breathed low but audible.

Gabriel dug out the DMD again to check and shook his head no. There was no report of a strange artifact that was stolen from the RAM or anything remotely interested in that matter.

Lee dropped two bowls of curry in front of them and Max paid with a cred stick.

"The usual?" Lee asked.

Max just nodded and Lee smiled a wider smile.

He inserted the cred stick into the casher and took out \$22 Euros.

Gabriel took a bowl of curry and chowed down on it, it was delicious. He hadn't eaten this good in a few days so he was indeed hungry. Eating cockroaches and other creepy crawlies wasn't his cup of java but one must do what one must in desperate times.

His DMD chimed.

"Sorry to eat and run Lee," Max said as he shoveled the last bit into his mouth. "It's time we moved on. If we get caught here it's over and I can't let them close my favorite shop in town."



OLD RIFLE FOR A NEW CENTURY

Tools of the trade

by Kevin O'Neill

FOR DARK CONSPIRACY

FIREARMS HISTORIANS CONSIDER John Moses Browning to be one of the most successful firearms designers of the 20th century while some firearms enthusiast consider him to be one of the most important, due to his influence on nearly all categories of firearms design and particularly self-loading firearms. A number of his designs can still be found in military and civilian use around the world such as the Browning Hi-Power/GP35 pistol, the Browning M2 .50 calibre heavy machine-gun and the Browning Auto-5, a shotgun considered ground-breaking for its time as it was the first mass-produced, successful semi-automatic shotgun design in history.

Another of John Browning's successful designs had an apparently much shorter lifespan but made no less of an impact and has remained an iconic image of the US Marine and GI from WW2 to the Korean War, the M1918 Browning Automatic Rifle, also known as the M1918 BAR.

Not to be confused with the Browning semi-automatic hunting rifle also designated as BAR, the M1918 design shares nothing in common with that 1960s design other than being self-loading; sharing the same BAR name and being developed by the Browning family (the 1960s design team was led by John's grandson Bruce Browning).

The M1918 was designed to provide mobile firepower at a time when trench

warfare had degenerated into immobile stalemate. The concept being that the suppressive firepower of the BAR would force the defenders of enemy trenches to take cover and therefore allow friendly troops to assault the trench with fewer casualties.

While the M1918 went through a number of variants and was used by many nations (either in its US form or as a locally modified design), it was phased out of service in most nations once newer machinegun designs began to proliferate during the 1960s-80s period.

In the USA, the M1918 design was also manufactured in semi-auto only variants for civilian purchase by a few smaller firearms production companies although only one interests us in regards to this article.

Browning Automatic Rifle – Reprise
While many other US firearms manufacturers ceased supply of semi-auto M1918 models, one company not only continued to do so, they reprised the design for the 21st century in light of combat experience in Afghanistan. Ohio Ordnance Works (OOW) has modernized and improved aspects of the original design and added modern fittings to create the HCAR, the Heavy Counter-Assault Rifle. Its purpose is to suppress or eliminate enemy troops beyond the



H.C.A.R. (Heavy Counter Assault Rifle)



reach of the current in-service 5.56mm weapons and to supplement the 7.62x51mm weapons in use (or in some cases to replace them).

It's a new-build design rather than a rework of older M1918 models but please note that it is still in pre-production as of February 2014 and further changes may be made before series production begins. Even if series production does begin, there's only a modest chance that it would see service with the military of any nation and it may remain nothing but a curiosity for some and a "cool-looking shooter" to others.

Currently it features construction from modern materials, a pistol grip, a dimpled barrel to improve cooling, adjustable butt stock, modern style safety switch, Picatinny rails for mounting accessories and different sighting devices and by virtue of some of these updates, a significant weight reduction over the original design (5.4kg/12lbs unloaded for the HCAR compared to 8.8kg/19lbs unloaded for the widely used M1918A2 BAR).

Like many of the other semi-auto variants produced, it fires from a closed bolt rather than the open bolt of the parent design. In the original design, the open bolt was considered necessary to allow cooling of the chamber during automatic fire but as the HCAR fires only in semi-auto mode this is not needed and the closed bolt facilitates increased accuracy.

OOW has also designed a larger magazine based on the original M1918 magazine, the OOW version holds 30 rounds compared to

the original's 20-rd capacity although original 20-rd magazines are also able to be used (the only design change OOW made was to the capacity of the magazine and so the 30-rd magazines should also work in original M1918 BARs).

Additionally, OOW has fitted an adjustable trigger and incorporated a bolt hold-open device and an ambidextrous bolt close switch (to be found either side of the magazine well). The magazine release has been changed from the parent designs button-style release to a lever-style similar to that found on the AK and FN FAL series of rifles. Also to be included on production models is a folding charging handle similar to that found in the British L1A1 Self Loading Rifle (Britain's semi-auto version of the FN FAL). The barrel is also threaded to allow removal of the flash suppressor to fit a sound suppressor.

Like the original however, it retains the .30-06 Springfield cartridge allowing the HCAR to claim an effective engagement range of up to 900 metres. The pre-production models have been displayed with two barrel lengths, one almost as long as the parent design (which was 210mm/24 inch) and a shorter barrel of 410mm/16 inch length. The longer barrel is roughly estimated to be 510 mm/20in and would presumably increase the effective range to around 1100 metres.

Although still a pre-production rifle, compared to more modern designs such as the Lewis Machine and Tool Company's LM308MWS rifle (adopted by the British Army as the L129A1 DMR), the HCAR has similar effective range with a similar barrel length but for more weight. The LM308MWS weighs 4.4kg/9.8lbs unloaded with a 410mm/16in barrel for an effective range of 900 metres but it should be noted that the LM308MWS fires the 7.62x51mm NATO round and both rifles achieve their effective range by use of optical sights.

However the extra weight of the HCAR has one apparent benefit. The weight in conjunction with a modern muzzle brake/flash



suppressor and a modern buffer helps to control the recoil, apparently so much so, that some shooters have claimed the HCAR is as manageable as a 5.56mm rifle during firing.

GAME USE

The HCAR offers a few advantages to an anti-Minion cell. It has the range and hitting power of a high-powered hunting rifle with the magazine capacity of a military rifle and yet as a semi-auto, it's available to civilian buyers without the complications of been caught in possession of a military weapon. Although heavier, it has better recoil characteristics than some comparable rifles and if fitted with a good scope and a bipod it serves as a good substitute for a sniper rifle.

DARK CONSPIRACY STATS

Please note that some stats for the HCAR are provisional as many details of the rifle and the effects of the two barrel lengths have yet to be released. The earlier designs, in the form of automatic and semi-auto versions of the M1918A2, have been included for comparison purposes and also because they aren't found in the Dark Conspiracy weapons lists. The M1918A2 has a bipod as part of its normal equipment for use in controlling recoil; this information is included in the stats.

Note also that the Range listed is when using iron sights, telescopic sights when fitted add +15 to the listed Range. I would recommend using the expanded rules for vision devices found on Paul Mulcahy's Twilight: 2000 fan site. They list various devices with the modifier to Range and also the Maximum Effective Range for the device. Under Paul's expanded rules, the standard game telescopic sight is a 3.5x magnification (giving the +15 to Range) whereas lesser magnifications give a smaller modifier and greater magnifications consequently give a larger modifier. For example, a 6 power sight would give a modifier of +20 meters to the listed Range.

The Maximum Effective Range (MER) is the farthest distance the average person can clearly identify a target with that device and takes into account the limits of the device in conjunction with human eyesight.

Paul's expanded rules can be found at the following link
http://www.pmulcahy.com/equipment/vision_devices.html



HCAR – 16 inch barrel

Ammo	ROF	Damage	Pen	Bulk	Mag	Recoil		
						SS	Burst	Range
.30-06	SA	5	2-3-Nil	5	30	3	—	55

Price: \$480 (S/C)

Weight: 5.4 kg

HCAR – 20 inch barrel

Ammo	ROF	Damage	Pen	Bulk	Mag	Recoil		
						SS	Burst	Range
.30-06	SA	5	2-3-Nil	6	30	3	—	60

Price: \$510 (R/S)

Weight: 5.8 kg

M1918A2 BAR

Ammo	ROF	Damage	Pen	Bulk	Mag	Recoil		
						SS	Burst	Range
.30-06	5	5	2-3-Nil	6	20	3	5	65
.30-06 w/Bipod						1	2	90

Price: \$1100 (-/R)

Weight: 8.8 kg

M1918A2 Semi-Automatic Model

Ammo	ROF	Damage	Pen	Bulk	Mag	Recoil		
						SS	Burst	Range
.30-06	5	5	2-3-Nil	6	20	2	—	65
.30-06 w/Bipod						1	—	90

Price: \$430 (S/C)

Weight: 8.8 kg



THE TROLLENBERG TERROR

Another Movie inspiration

by Eric Fabiashi

FOR PLAYERS AND GMS

IN 1958 THE Trollenberg Terror was unleashed upon the world and countless kids ever since have been subject to the weirdness of the movie. Now mostly forgotten this public domain horror flick is regulated to the sub strait of DVD cheap movie collections. But the film has a lot going for it. For Dark Conspiracy this film is a perfect set up for the return of the invaders from beyond.

The plot goes something like this, according to IMDB: A series of decapitations on a Swiss mountainside appear to be connected to a mysterious radioactive cloud. Professor Crevett is studying cosmic rays in an observatory upon the side of the Trollenberg when the first decapitations happen. The Professor calls in his old friend, U.N. trouble-shooter Allen Brooks. The Professor and Allen have a past history dealing with unusual situations such as we see in Trollenberg.

Then we are introduced to Sarah and Anne Pilgrim at the beginning of the film when Anne has a strange spell and is compelled to stop at the Village Trollenberg. You see The Pilgrim Sisters are a psychic reader act with one little secret. Their powers are real. You see there are some very dark secrets in Trollenberg. At the lodge, they meet two geologists, Dewhurst and Brett, who are investigating the rocks on the Trollenberg to determine if the geology is responsible for the 'accidents'.

Over the last couple of years there have been many accidents on the Trollenberg and that damn cloud moves up and down the mountain. Terror seems to follow in its wake along with decapitated bodies. That brings us to Professor Crevett who works for both the Swiss government studying cosmic rays and for a particular branch of the

Prof. Crevett: "And then dere is da cloud."

Alan Brooks: "What cloud?"

Prof. Crevett: "Come on, Alan, you know what I'm talking about. Da cloud where there should be no cloud."

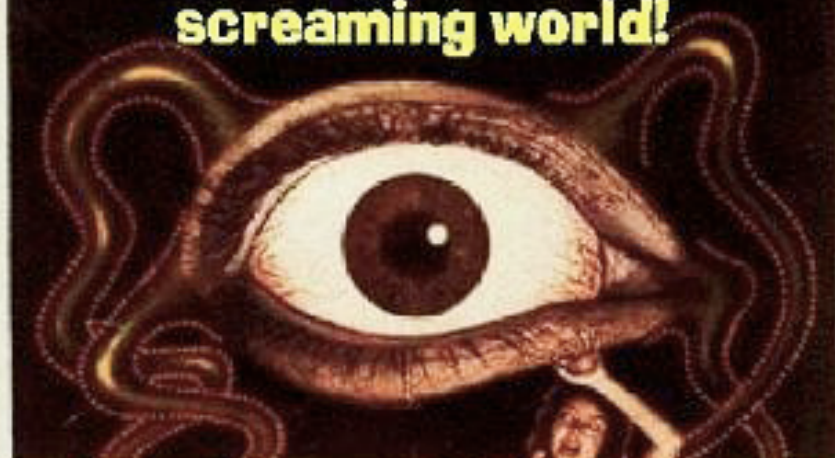
Alan Brooks: "Where there are mountains, there are always clouds."

Prof. Crevett: "But dis one remains static on da side of da Trollenberg, it never moves."

Alan Brooks: "A freak of nature."

Prof. Crevett: "A *radioactive* freak of nature?"

The nightmare terror of the slithering eye that unleashed agonizing horror on a screaming world!



It's looking for you!

THE TROLLENBERG TERROR



DELUXE WIDESCREEN EDITION

United Nations. Herr Professor Crevett is a bit of a Mr. Fantastic in the film. He's a mysterious individual with more degrees than a thermometer including a medical degree. He knows a bit about everything going on in Trollenberg and there's a bit of the quiet and sinister mad scientist about him. He works in the world's most heavily fortified observatory with a very heavy steel window. While Brett and Dewhurst have a bad time up on the Trollenberg, the Pilgrim sisters do their mind reading act for the guests of the hotel when Anne has a sudden vision of events unfolding about our geologists on the Trollenberg. Brett disappears into the cloud as it hypnotically controls him and compels him into the unseen alien's clutches. Dewhurst is on the phone that runs from the hut to the hotel in the village of Trollenberg with Allen when it's suddenly cut off.

The entire village goes searching for Brett and Dewhurst. With them are Allen, and Philip Truscott, a reporter who knows far more than he letting on. Throughout the film Philip has been snooping and learning about Allen, the Professor, and the general climate of Trollenberg itself. They find Dewhurst flash frozen under a blanket with his head missing and the phone wires crystallized. A short time later a plane flies over and spots Brett waving and two searchers find him. They are murdered by him and we are brought back to the hotel in Trollenberg.

A short time later and Brett stumbles through the door of the hotel. He engages in conversation with the other guests and Allen seems to test him. His reactions are strange almost drunken and off. Until he sees Anne Pilgrim and then he flies into a murderous rage. The guests tackle him and he knocks his head against a statue. We see that he has no blood! Allen and the Professor look knowingly at each other. They lock Brett in the basement of the hotel and we are let in to the real background of the Trollenberg incursions. It seems that Philip Truscott knows about certain events that have happened in the Andes in South America three years before. He's had access to the United Nations report but certain facts were left out.

An old wise woman was psychically compelled and contacted by a very powerful mind similar to the contact that Anne Pilgrim has had. She was later murdered by a villager who also disappeared just like Brett. Meanwhile, Brett escapes by murdering the hotel owner who is also the mayor of Trollenberg. He grabs a Swiss hand axe and climbs the stairs to murder Anne once again. This time Allen is there to save her by blowing away the possessed maniac with a gun. The professor is brought in after Brett falls dead and the body is examined. Brett has been dead for days and his corpse animated by the strange radioactive energies stored in the ice crystals that aliens have coated his body in. His arm evaporates after being brought too close to the flame of a candle.

Shortly after this the aliens make their move on Trollenberg and the citizens retreat to the heavily fortified observatory. The full scale invasion of Trollenberg has begun! Allen and the citizens head up to the observatory via cable car but not before a dramatic rescue. A mother realizes that her daughter is still in Trollenberg and Allen

dashes off to save the child. He manages it but is confronted by the eye ball like Lovecraftian aliens. Allen manages to save the little girl and the villagers make it to the observatory but the monsters almost manage to kill them by freezing the cable car mechanism.

At the observatory Hans, a villager who tried to get his family out via car through Trollenberg, turns up once again to murder Anne. Allen and Philip manage to stop Hans from murdering Anne. The villagers use Molotov Cocktails to stop some of the aliens and the timely arrival of UN air support who bomb the aliens who surround the observatory. An aerial firebomb raid has been ordered on the observatory, which it should survive, having three-foot-thick concrete walls.

Philip and Allen barely survive their encounters with the aliens. Even as the monsters burn and the village is saved there are hints that this isn't the last that we'll see of the Trollenberg aliens. Philip ends up with Anne Pilgrim and Allen wanders off into the sunset. So all ends well or does it?



elements of the Elder Things from HP Lovecraft's novella *At The Mountains of Madness*. They use humans easily and the animation of Brett and Hans's corpses are very similar to humans using drone technology. The poor bastards seemed aware of themselves but had no control over the functions or mission priorities of aliens. The technology of the aliens seems psychic, cold based and crystalline in nature with weird radiations as the power source that reacts with human life essences. Many of these are already in *Dark Conspiracy* or *Conspiracy Rules*. But we are left with other disturbing questions as well.

Is Trollenberg only the start of what might become a full blown covert war that takes place in the *Dark Conspiracy* universe spanning from the fifties right up through the Seventies. A dark foreshadowing of events to come? These might be 'The Terror Wars' or Eye affairs. And what of the dark and completely sinister nature of the department that Allen and Professor Crevett work for. They seem almost all too familiar with the pattern of Trollenberg. Could there be far more that happened in the Andes? Is there a need to know pattern to those events and what else was left out of that report that Mr. Philip Truscott sees?

Could the arm of the United Nations know the true nature of the empathic and psychic abilities triggered by these incursions? That

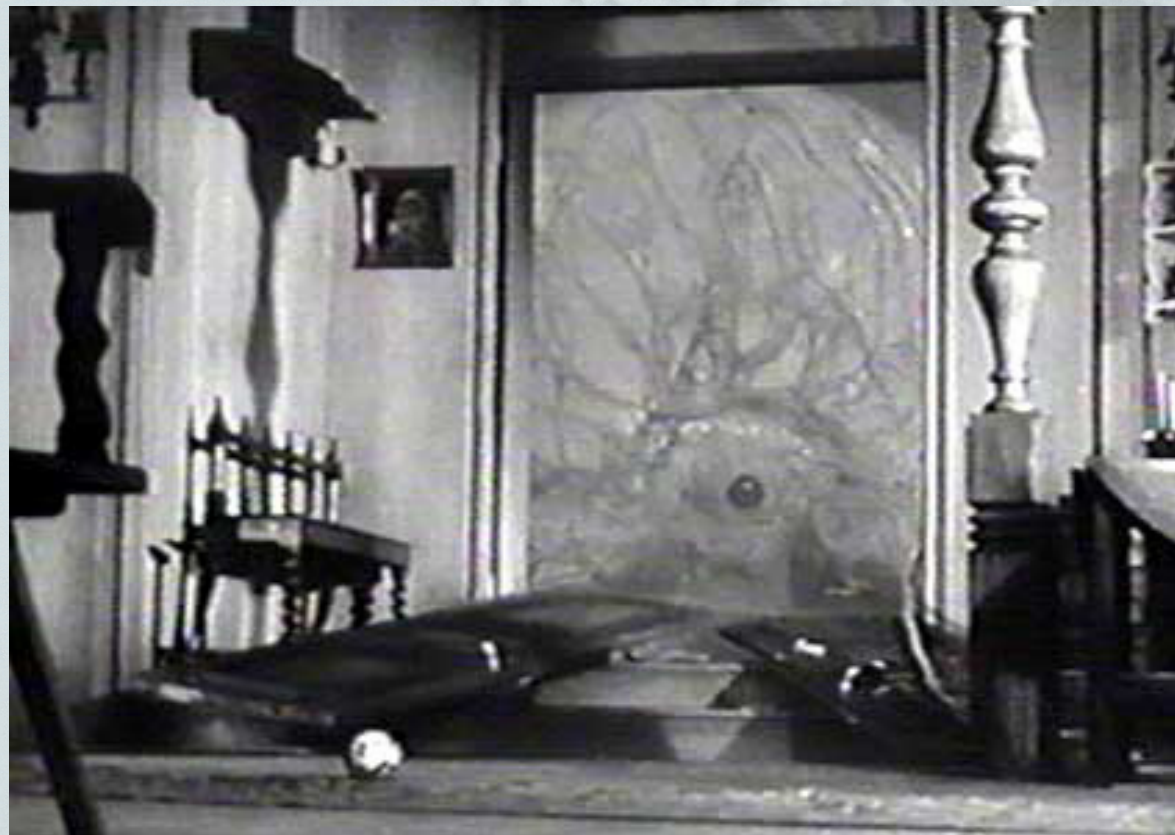
UNLEASHING THE HORROR OF TROLLENBERG

The Trollenberg Terror (also called The Crawling Eye) has a ton to offer a Call of Cthulhu campaign or a Dark Conspiracy game. We've got lots to plunder here. The first of which is Trollenberg itself. The mountain must have a very odd history indeed. Possibly dating all the way back to prehistoric times when the aliens first began to look into the primitive life form called man.

We are given certain facts about these horrors. Throughout the movie the audience is led to believe that these aliens are from another planet. Yet at no time do we have any such indication. I believe that Professor Crevett was trying to reassure the citizens and guests of Trollenberg that these monsters were interstellar in nature. The atmosphere of these mountains may be similar to the protodimensional realms of these creatures. A place of very thin and ragged air. These things while similar to the tentacled aliens of *Dark Conspiracy* have

somehow the very presence of these alien minds unleashes long dormant powers that in our own very primitive past have acted as a sort of psychic immune system. An early warning system that allows communities to know of the coming cold and darkness from the very tops of mountains? Could this organization know of what might be lurking out on Io in the DC universe? And they will do anything to keep it quiet lest mankind learn secrets that may threaten our very existence in the coming future?

If we travel down this pathway could this branch of the United Nations somehow be connected with another such organization say 'the shop'. That branch of the United States government that has ties to the events of such Stephen King movies and books such as *Firestarter*, *Tommyknockers*, and many other DC style titles. After all what branch of the United Nations can order an air strike on the Swiss resort. The Trolenberg Terror has always reminded me of the Stephen King novella and film *The Mist*. Many of the elements are similar. A remote location, the weird cloud, alien life forms, mind control and shared Lovecraftian themes along with unseen governmental organizations who know far more than they are letting on. The themes of Trolenberg make excellent fodder for a *Delta Green* campaign as well. Perhaps as bridge between *Call of Cthulhu*, *Delta Green*, and the *Dark Conspiracy* universe as well.



ACCORDING TO WIKI:

“Peter Key wrote the story for the serial, and Jimmy Sangster scripted the film version based on Keys’ story. It was the final film to be produced by Southall Studios, one of the earliest pioneer film studios in the UK. The film and serial might be seen as pioneering X files style stuff far ahead of its time. A glimpse into the adventurers Allen Brooks and Professor Crevett whose lives intersect the Pilgrim sisters and many others at Trolenberg.”

Are the incursions that happen in the Trolenberg Terror still happening in the *Dark Conspiracy* universe? Well my friends, they are in my own *Dark Conspiracy* universe but it’s really up to you and your players to unleash the Terrors of Trolenberg!



THE MYSTERIES OF VAAL-AL, PART 2

Dark history fleshed out

by Ron McClung

FOR DARK ROLE PLAYING

Authors Note: inspired by an article from Viralnova.com, *These 10 Unsolved Mysteries Will Give You Chills And Leave You Baffled*. (November 9, 2013) re-interpreted into **Dark Conspiracy**. This work is a work of fiction based on mysteries and tragedies that actually happened. No disrespect is meant to the victims or the investigators.

CENTURIES PASSED AND the pages that would eventually become the **Voynich Manuscript** remained hidden and fragmented. They were empathically written by the young **Brother Evaristo** who tapped the astral plane, contacting the projected minds of the Greek scholars of the **Order of Scarthios**. Upon his tragic death, **Brother Evaristo** was able to project fragments of his own mind and what he learned into the same astral plane. Like a metaphysical internet cloud server, this well of empathic knowledge lay silent waiting for someone else to access it.

Unfortunately, the **Brother Evaristo's** manuscript was broken up and scattered all over the world. Raw, disjointed empathic energies imprinted on these pages remain, seeking to rejoin the original whole. The longer they are separated, the more chaotic and corrupted they become, imprinted not only by its surroundings but also by beings from beyond sensing them and seeking to retool these energies and the knowledge it contains for their own purposes.

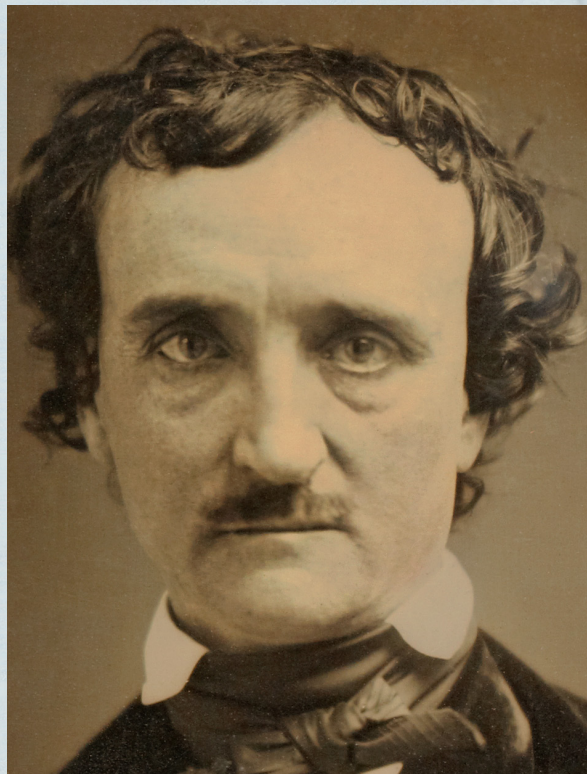
In the early 1800s, an enthusiastic and eccentric writer came across a few enigmatic lost pages of the **Voynich Manuscript**. This writer had a passion for cryptography, and the strange writings on these pages intrigued him greatly. Over his career, he spent many long hours contemplating these pages, trying to unlock some of their secrets. But what he did not know

was the empathic imprinting on the pages would eventually drive him mad. The writer's name was Edgar Allan Poe.

Poe lived a very tragic life – surrounded by death, disease, criticism, failure and economic struggles. He was torn between writing the poetry he preferred and the mystery and macabre the public expected from him. Little did anyone know that his secret obsession of these lost pages of **Brother Evaristo's** manuscript could be at the heart of all his troubles and at the heart of his eventual madness.

The kind of empathic imprinting these pages contained was meant to be connected as a whole and never separated from the full manuscript. When the book was broken apart, the imprinting was rendered into chaos, giving opportunity for beings from beyond to reach through ever so subtly. No empathic talent was meant to connect with the fractured pieces, let alone a non-talent like Poe. It was just enough to open up a world of hopelessness, disease and despair onto the poor writer.

Dark Lord Vaal-Al was able to sense the corruption of Poe through the dimensional cloak and subtly manipulate what he could. It was a very weak opportunity, but **Vaal-Al** thought it would open further with a little manipulation. Overestimating his own power



while underestimating the powers of the cosmos that fought him, **Vaal-Al** sought to influence Poe further into madness and eventually turn him into a killer. Unfortunately, it only inspired the writer to create the macabre stories he was well-known for.

Unfortunately for Poe, this attempt by **Vaal-Al** did not go unnoticed. Empaths from **The Hand of the King**, a radical off-shoot of the **King's Sword** based out of Shanghai, sensed their "master god" reaching through. Mixing a doctrine from the original **Jin Yong Kain** faction and some more radical doctrines from Islam, this fanatical group consisted of warrior monks of incredible skill. Assassins for hire on the outside, these monks are experts in covert death. They have served many past dynasties as secret bringers of death for the elite families. All this was simply a means to an end for the **Hand of the King**. In secrecy, they sought the **Brother Evaristo's** manuscript and its many last pages. They had in their possession a small handful of the pages, and they attempted to use those to find more. However, they were not always successful. Additionally because of Vaal-Al's attempt to reach back across, the pages Poe possessed showed up on their empathic radar.

Movement by the **Hand of the King** in America drew the attention of another faction – the **Sons of the White Mountain Hall**. A secret society rumored sub-faction of the Free Masons, this group can trace its roots back to the original **Order of Scarthios**. Seeing themselves as gatherers and guardians of lost knowledge, their focus has been the lost knowledge of **Scarthios**. Founded in Wales in the 12th Century, they learned of the **Brother Evaristo** and his manuscript long after the events occurred. The primary function of the cell in the US was to watch for any signs of artifacts or activity related to the **Order of Scarthios** coming over from the old countries. The New World opened many avenues for their enemies to smuggle lost items and further obfuscate the search for the lost knowledge the **Sons of the White Mountain Hall** sought.

It was between these two groups that poor Poe was caught, and in 1849 he was poisoned by a **Hand** assassin to prevent any knowledge of the pages or what they might contain from getting into the hands of the **Sons**. Poe was found delirious on the streets of Baltimore, Maryland, "in great distress, and in need of immediate assistance," according to the man who found him, Joseph W. Walker. He was taken to the Washington College Hospital, where he died at 5 a.m. on Sunday, October 7. Poe was never coherent enough to explain how he came to be in this condition.

However, the empathic connection between Poe's body and Vaal-Al remained as the Dark Lord held on to a small piece of his consciousness. His body dead, the part of Poe that Vaal-Al was able to render mad remained connected somehow, and the **Hand** knew it.

The **Hand** secretly was behind the calamity surrounding the burial of Poe. They worked hard to keep his location as secret as they could. The head stone was destroyed in a mysterious train derailment and for more than 20 years, it remained marked with only a number in Baltimore. But the **Hand** knew that Poe was too prominent of a man to be forgotten, as rumors of moving his grave began. The **Hand** secretly replaced Poe's body with another corpse of similar age, height, and decomposition, taking the writer's body to New York where they would board a ship headed to Europe – *The Mary Celeste*.

Of course the *Mary Celeste* is the famous ghost ship, but the reasons why the crew vanished without a trace are even darker than any of the modern theories. The British-American merchant brigantine was discovered on 4 December 1872 in the Atlantic Ocean, unmanned and apparently abandoned (one lifeboat was missing, along with its crew of seven), although the weather was fine and her crew had been experienced and capable seamen. However, the manifest did not show the existence of Poe's body or the stowaway agent of the **Sons of the White Mountain Hall**. Nor did it show the fact that one of the crew was secretly a member of the **Hand of the King**, escorting the prized cargo.



The fight over the mysterious cargo erupted in the middle of the journey across the ocean. Both agents were empathically talented and called upon the extremes of their power to accomplish their goal. The first victims of this battle were the passengers and crew, all teleported to some unknown proto-dimension, lost forever. The battle ended with the **Hand** agent dead and the **White Mountain Hall** agent mortally wounded. His last act before taking the lifeboat was to toss Poe's casket overboard. The agent later died on the lifeboat and never was found.

Vaal-Al had expended considerable power contacting and manipulating Poe. **Vaal-Al** was going to need a major convergence to reach the Earth dimension again. That major convergence finally occurred and it was one unlike any Dark Lord has seen before. **Vaal-Al** was not the only one who noticed it, however. Other Dark Lords in similar predicaments also cultivated this major convergence and reached out, influencing human history once again. A major convergence surged around the earth resulting in two major weak points or **locus** – one somewhere in Germany and the other somewhere in Japan.

German scientists first discovered their locus, studying it thoroughly. They very ingeniously devised a means to stabilize and transport the locus – they called it an Anchor. What they did not know was anchoring the locus allows far more Dark Lord influence into our world. What came about as a result was the calamity known as the Rise of the Third Reich and Second World War.

Ironically, it was human actions alone that set up the building blocks for this war (namely the Treaty of Versailles and the armistice that ended the first world war), making a sequel inevitable. However, the Nazi experimentation into Locus and creation of the Anchor created the expansive war that World War II turned out to be. It was under these Dark Lords influences that Hitler made some of his more bold decisions. It was under the same influence that his aids made many of their notorious decisions as well.

Similarly, the locus in Japan was discovered. With the help of Nazi scientists, the Japanese were able to anchor their locus. Already engrossed in pre-World War II actions throughout China, the power of the locus only grew the aggression of Japan. Not long after, the Axis Powers were formed.

But it was perhaps because of all the competing interests from the various Dark Lords reaching through the anchored loci that lead to the eventual destruction of their Axis puppets. These influences resulted in the Nazi exploration of various occult

artifacts and alien technologies. Some believe it lead to the creation of what the Allies labeled as "foo fighters." However, the truth behind them is much more complicated than a simply alien technology.

Vaal-Al was growing quite jealous of his other fellow Dark Lords' successes with their Nazi and Imperial Japanese puppets, while his were less effective in accomplishing his goals. He grew weary of the dimensional barriers that limited him and he longed to find a way to break through. He never forgot about the knowledge of the **Scarthios** scholars or the **Voynich Manuscript**, but since the late 1800s, the mysterious pages eluded him. It was this jealousy and frustration that lead Vaal-Al to reach out to an extra-terrestrial source – a faction of energy ETs that agreed to serve him. These ETs – calling themselves the **AsiPlliath** or roughly translated *Colors Beyond Darkness*- agreed to help Vaal-Al in his efforts to search for the **Voynich Manuscript**, influence the Earth humans in his favor, and when possible thwart the other efforts of the Dark Lord's competition. In return, the Earth-bound servants of Vaal-Al promised to supply the **AsiPlliath** live subjects for their experiments. Unfortunately, other similar factions of **AsiPlliath** ETs were supplying other Dark Lords with similar assistance.

The **AsiPlliath** supplied the Dark Lords with a series of Dark Tech drones, modeled after their own physiology, that serve as scouts empathically linked to their masters. Equipped with a dark tech cloaking device that allowed them to phase into the astral plane, these drones allowed Dark Lords to spy on other factions during the war. Many Dark Lords took advantage of this or similar dark tech supplied by the energy ETs. Spy drones evolved quickly to attack drones. During the raging war on earth, a secret war was being fought in the astral plane between these drones, driven by the feuding Dark Lords.

Occasionally, these drones were spotted, phasing out of the astral plane and scanning whatever targets they came across to make sure they were not a threat. This gave rise to the "foo fighter" myth. Although too

late, the Nazis did acquire a crashed **AsiPlliath** drone late in 1944. It was later captured by the Soviets after the invasion of Germany. Since then, it has remained in Russian possession.

As the war came to a close, empathic anti-Dark Lord agents within the Allies helped influence the direction of much of the late war strategic actions in hopes of finding and destroying an Anchored Loci. Originally thought to be in Dresden, Germany, it was later determined that the Nazi Locus was moved to Berlin. It was assumed that the Soviets destroyed it when they invaded. On the Pacific side, the Imperial Nexus was first thought to be in Hiroshima but later it was determined to be in Nagasaki. It is firmly believed that the Imperial Locus and Anchor were destroyed in the final atom bomb explosion.

As the war closed, so did the dimensional convergence. The Dark Lords' influence faded as their infighting allowed humanity to overcome much of their plans. Vaal-Al waited once again for a sign that he can reach beyond the veil.

While the **Voynich Manuscript** was one of the largest collections of **Scarthios** knowledge, it was not the only one. Around the mid-12th century, a Persian poet and mathematician stumbled across several old scrolls and manuscripts originating from the **Scarthios** library. Inherited from a distant relative, this poet – Omar Khayyam – was heavily influenced by what he found in the manuscripts. One of his greatest works was a rare series of poems called **Rubaiyat of Omar Khayyam**, a work that he wrote during a time of heightened awareness and empathy, which imprinted much of what he had learned from the **Scarthios** manuscripts into the prose. It was a copy of this tome that led a mysterious paranormal agent for Australia's intelligence agency to his unfortunate death.

The time period after the Second World War was known publically as the Cold War but few knew just how hot things had gotten. Much of the Nazi intelligence into the proto-dimensions, occult and alien

SUPREME HEADQUARTERS, Dec. 13 (Reuter)—The Germans have produced a "secret" weapon in keeping with the Christmas season.

The new device, apparently an air defense weapon, resembles the huge glass balls that adorn Christmas trees.

There was no information available as to what holds them up like stars in the sky, what is in them, or what their purpose is supposed to be.

Floating Mystery Ball Is New Nazi Air Weapon

SUPREME HEADQUARTERS, Allied Expeditionary Force, Dec. 13—A new German weapon has made its appearance on the western air front. It was disclosed today.

Airmen of the American Air Force report that they are encountering silver colored spheres in the air over German territory. The spheres are encountered either singly or in clusters. Sometimes they are semi-transparent.

technology was captured by one side or the other – mostly pieces of a much larger puzzle. Special divisions of national intelligence agencies across the world were formed to put together as much of these puzzles as possible. Empathically talented people were recruited by all agencies as special agents. An underground empathic war waged during these difficult years that few truly knew about.

In 1958, one particular Australian empathic agent – a man named **Charles Lee Hammerstead** – made the right connections with the wrong people, chasing down clues in the **Rubaiyat of Omar Khayyam** to track down the Soviet/**Asil'Illiath** drone technology. By then, the Soviets were testing technologies gleaned from it. Hammerstead, through empathically connecting to what he read in **Rubaiyat of Omar Khayyam**, was following a lead on a Soviet agent gone rogue.

The rogue agent, **Alexei Bogdan**, was actually a follower of a fragment cult that can trace its origins to the **Hand of the King**. This cult, **Kulak Korolya** or simply **Kulak**, infiltrated the Soviet intelligence agencies in charge of the captured **Asil'Illiath** drone. According to the intelligence Hammerstead had, they were able to acquire an experimental artifact of unknown purpose. Hammerstead was able to empathically connect to this item and hunt it down. This led him to a beach in South Australia.

Few witnessed the empathic struggle between the two agents. **Bogdan** turned out to be as empathically skilled as Hammerstead and the two fought ferociously over the artifact. The empathic energies triggered the artifact and created a massive breach in the dimensional fabric, not only through space but also through time. Hammerstead, already mortally wounded from the fight, ended up travelling 10 years in the past. Dying from a poison strike from one of **Bogdan's** darts, he died on the beach hours later in 1948.

Bogdan was also teleported through time, to the late 1960s. While in transit, **Bogdan** was able to empathically connect to his lord and master like no one else since Genghis Khan has. Unfortunately, his

mind was not able to withstand the connection and when he arrived in late 1966 California, he was a lunatic and a psychopath. **Bogdan**, desperate to contact some of his fellow cult members, gave birth to his first persona – the Zodiac Killer. His hopes were to contact members of his cult through these ritual killings and the pageantry the press created around his killings. Using secret codes created to communicate between **Kulak** members, his hopes were that some cult member would recognize them.

After the first, however, he enjoyed the killing and fame brought on by the modern press. He all but forgot about the **Kulak**. Unable to make contact with **Vaal-Al**, his insanity overruled his service to his master. His delusions grew as he saw himself as a dark lord, equal to **Vaal-Al**. Naming himself the Zodiac, his rampage raged on into 1969 and 1970. He found that tapping into their minds empathically right at the point of death was exhilarating and addictive like a drug. This went on until finally he was contacted by another cult member. His messages were finally received. His rampage stopped when the empathic cult member brought **Bogdan** back to some semblance of reality and gave him his next instructions.

A year later, **Bogdan** resurfaced under a new persona – the man later named **D.B. Cooper**. On a flight between Portland, Oregon and Seattle, Washington on November 24, 1971, **Bogdan** hijacked a Boeing 727 aircraft in flight, extorted \$200,000 in ransom, and eventually parachuted to an uncertain fate. Once again, using the press and pageantry of the modern age, he used the media to distract those interested from his true intentions. The ransom was a distraction from his true mission – stealing specific artifacts being secretly transported from Portland to Washington. Under instructions from the **Kulak**, **Bogdan** was able to acquire artifacts of great value to them on an otherwise mundane and routine flight – one of which was the very item lost in 1958.

Bogdan vanished into a dimensional doorway he opened upon jumping, after dropping the bundles

of money he was holding. Returning to his native Russia, **Bogdan** was given a hero's welcome by the **Kulak** – sacrificed to their lord and god, **Vaal-Al**.

The artifacts included remains of pages from the **Voynich Manuscript** as well as an original version of **Rubaiyat of**

Omar Khayyam. Deriving from these all that pertained to their Dark Lords' dimensional imprisonment, the **Kulak** set out and prepared for their greatest undertaking. It took them another six years to gather all that they needed, perform whatever preliminary rituals required, and establish the final location of the summoning – a location that to this day remains a mystery. Their intent was to finally call forth the great **Vaal-Al** to this world.

If they had succeeded, our world would have been very different. The new Dark Age would have fallen much earlier. A single Dark Lord would have claimed this world as his own rather than several fighting over it. Fortunately, the **Kulak** failed. Their spells were incomplete and rituals were missing components. Some believe that the summoning worked but only brought **Vaal-Al** somewhere else. Perhaps that is what Jerry R. Ehman heard while he was working on a SETI project at the Big Ear radio telescope of The Ohio State University on August 15, 1977 – the day of the summoning.



GHOULS AT MIDNIGHT

An adventure seed

by Dragdamar H'sard

FOR CALL OF CTHULHU



This can be the start of an adventure or a short hiccup in an ongoing one. I run games by presenting the characters with opportunities and the onus is on the characters to act on events, not be lead about like a Bull with a ring through his nose. Game Mechanic notes are given in [brackets] to set them apart.



THE SCENE OPENS with one or more characters driving late at night. It's best if only the driver is awake. The GM should talk about the dreariness of the drive, the uninteresting landscape, [a roll for...] and THE DOG JUST RAN IN FRONT OF THE VEHICLE! [driving skill checks as appropriate, with success meaning the vehicle comes to a stop safely and on the road. Failure means driving into a ditch and damaging the vehicle.] Either way the vehicle hits the dog.

The sudden stop should awaken any but the deepest sleepers. [Rolls as appropriate to wake, if needed] When the Characters get out to investigate they will find no dog, though there will be evidence of hitting a large animal; animal hairs, some blood, and possibly a dent.

An observant Character might see or hear [sense check, Hearing or Vision; modified by technology] something that will give a clue that the animal has left the road and entered a field or woods to the north of the road. The trail can be tracked [roll for Appropriate skill] to the creepy old church just over the hill.

Now it is on the Characters to investigate or go on their way. If the vehicle is damaged they will have to wait for help.

The Dog could be just an animal or it could be a Ghoul [as in my game], Werewolf, or other dangerous canine creature you desire.



THE SIEGE BEGINS

Semi-apocalyptic fiction

by Tad Kelson

FICTION



THE 31ST OF DECEMBER ON INTO THE 1ST OF JANUARY 19XX

IT WAS LESS than a minute past the stroke of midnight when all the clocks in the world, I hear tell, stopped all at once.

Then out of the shadows into the night stepped monsters, things from our dread fears and imaginations taken on life and form to bedevil and torment the likes of good folk such as you and me.

This is when the *Siege of the World* commenced and it all changed with the stroke of midnight.

We were up celebrating the start of a new year, the clapping and well-wishing still ringing in our ears when horrendous noises began. We thought it was the end of the world come, judgment made and the world about to be torn asunder into parts scattered across all of creation.

Instead it was almost as bad; invaders had struck our shores in the dead of night. At least the initial reports had it that way. Some new warfare device from over on the continent perhaps, developed in secret despite the best works of the British Mind.

Well you would have thought the Admiralty would have seen something, I told my fellow men in arms a few days later, if indeed these things had come across the Channel and landed on all our shores simultaneously. You would think, I kept asking trying to get an answer that made senses.

No answers, no sense, so we able bodied men went and mustered that next morning as the constables came around telling us the Queen needed all our help. The memories of the Great War still echo in our hearts and minds and knowing the horrors of war, we wished to keep it at bay from our loved ones. I kissed my darling wife and all the children, small and not so small anymore. I might not return, she knew that, but I had to go. Duty, and more importantly, keeping our home and children safe from harm, this is what a Husband and Father does, protects his family with each breath of his lungs and each beat of his heart.

We mustered, donning some musty uniforms turned out for us irregulars, then issued our Lee-Enfields, twenty rounds of ammunition, and a small kit. Fortunately in our neighbourhood we had better and had brought our own for the most part. Shared out where we could from the new platoon we organized ourselves into. So was born the 9th Worcestershire Irregulars out of Bromsgrove.

Without much ado we all boarded the trains that were passing though heading towards London, where the fighting, the Regular Army types said, was already thick and bloody. The enemy had made a surprise landing and struck out at the Queen first, seeking to take the wind from our sails, he said. But she had made it to safety, led out by the sacrifice of the Guard and had departed the city via rail while it was being razed, so he had heard.

LETTER DATED JANUARY 29TH, THE 30TH DAY OF THE INVASION

Cpl J. Bridgewater
9th Worcestershire Irregulars
London

Mrs. J. Bridgewater
Willow Lane
Bromsgrove
My dearest wife,

I write this holding you and our family in my heart. I know you are safe, no reports place incursions or damage close to our home. I listen and find all I can so I can know how it is going there. I trust that you are in fine spirits, my apologies for not writing sooner, there was training and regaining skill with our rifles, as well as being placed into fortifications and working to contain these infernal invaders.

I am allowed to say that yes, our nation has been invaded. Word has reached our government in-hiding in the countryside that all the major powers in the world were struck at the same time. The invaders have met with varying success, getting farther in some nations such as Italy and the United States, and no so far in the more spirited nations such as ourselves and France in example. No complete word has reached our ears, well at least mine. But I can reassure you that while fighting is fierce, the foe had not reckoned on English Resolve.

I have engaged the enemy, and escaped unscathed. Others have not been so lucky, but so far all of our kin and neighbours with me are hale and sound of limb as of the writing of this letter. You can pass that along.

Our foes are puissant, not as numerous as we are, but their arms are superior, as well as not being like anything we have encountered before in the art of warfare. They have strange guns that fire out small pellets that scatter and cause smoke and gas to erupt. Several times a day we must don our gas masks due to enemy incoming fire. They have bombard like weapons as well; which when fired make an odd shrieking sound and the detonations are like cries of the damned that rock and shake buildings so they collapse easily. There is so much rubble; it will take many years to rebuild the fair city once again. They have other weapons of destruction that I will not relate here in this letter, I dislike thinking about those other devices. There are some other disturbing facts I have heard tales about, how the enemy seem inhuman, which I lend no real credence to.

The strangest thing is the vehicles they have. They are not like our tanks and armoured cars in the least. Instead they are more like giants in suits of armour, striding from one battle site to another. Standing at least as tall as five men, they carry strange clubs that glow with electric torch light and ignite the very air at times when they are wielded. This in addition to their odd rifles, and tales of other weapons as well which I have not witnessed as of yet.

Really not a lot affects them that are less than a three pounder in size. A couple of Maxims going full at it will hand them pause, but not to stop them in their tracks. They are rousting up as many heavy rifles, like for large game or some such, to give to all that are good enough of a shot. I am learning to help with the Maxims myself, cannot hurt to know what the lad next to me needs to know.

Well I am posting this as soon as I am done writing, it should reach you in a week or so they tell us.

*With all my love,
Johnny.*

Seems a bit much to think they would raze London, but we kept our mouths shut till we got a bit more recent news. Even if it was only a few days since our clocks had stopped working, and no matter what winding we did, none would turn. The sun and moon never stopped moving so at least the passage of our world in the heavens has not ceased.

The rocking of the train heading eastward lulls me into sleep.

THE FIRST FORAY INTO LONDON, THE 10TH OF FEBRUARY

“Up and ready men, we are moving out with the rising of the sun. Come on out of your rolls your sluggards. Stow the gear, pack a short field kit and be ready to move out when you are done with biscuits and something warm to drink.”

The Sergeant passes through our bunk and mess area, pulling us all from our sodden dreams here on the outskirts of London. Today marks the first day we are pushing back at the ruddy buggers. Show them a taste of good English Steel as well as a few volleys from the large guns brought down to cover the advance.

Parliament wants us to reconnoitre, recover all the survivors possible as well as hopefully make a few kills and bring back some captives if at all possible. For this one they picked one in five units to move in, our luck the 9th Bromsgrove was one of those one in five. Still should be fine, moving in force, and the support from our side and if they fall back then an advance in full is planned just in case. I got one of the new sniper style rifles, big brute even with some extra padding it bruises the shoulder with every round sent down range. Still I have seen what it can do to the smaller enemy units, and with a few good hits the larger ones take pause and tend to back away, so that bolsters the squads courage knowing I am there to support them. I also snagged a Webley for a backup in case it gets down to the personal.

We all form up in the dank air; the weather has warmed unseasonably since the enemies landing on our shores. It seems even the land is a rebel against the invaders and when it is pointed out; the occurrence rouses some spirits that were flagging here and there.

We are formed up into our platoons, the entire unit ready to head out to the front line along with the other designated lads. I get to pull up the rear along with the two support machine gunners, with the riflemen taking up the main duty of the lead. Our

Sergeant leads, there being no officer in our small company, we all were enlisted and that is how we remain in this struggle.

The ground gets a bit rougher the closer to the line we get. It reminds us lot about how it was over on the continent in the big war. This time however there is no mud to live in and the destruction is all happening to places we revere and hold dear in our hearts. This bolsters us all into the drive to remove them from our shores.

We can hear the guns in the background with their ceaseless shelling of the enemy positions. The noise has not abated for days and it seems our time has come at last. There is a strange rumble to the ground; I believe it means the tanks will come in with us as support. I am not certain how well they will fare, there must be

large swaths of the city turned into nothing but rubble by this time and I am not sure how their treads will hold up. But they should be nice targets for the enemy.

"Look up, over there to the left!"

I hear it, a flight of reconnaissance planes, coming to make some fast passes over our entry point I imagine. They have not fared too well to date. Not near fast enough to avoid the enemy. The balloons far back from the front seem to do better. At least we have not lost too many of those, brave lads to pilot those things, even when they are tethered, still that high up in the air, like an angel flying.

Some of the planes look a bit larger than the others, some bombs I hope to shake them up, in

addition to the constant shelling. Anything can only help I figure, being one of those sent in on foot, so the more of them that are dead or missing the better for us all.

Well about here, I hear the tanks, should be there in a few minutes. Then hopefully the final word and we begin to retake our city and our land from these cowards.

Several Hours Later

"Lay down some fire over there to the left, hose it good, before we charge the house."

We are a good Imperial Mile to two Miles into the city ruins, well past the front lines. No armour is left with us, the tanks made it as far as they could without getting stuck in the damage. They did say if we get close enough to the Thames and the waterfronts that the Royal Navy might be able to lend a hand. Not sure how to tell them where to lend that hand at. All around there are lots of lines ripped up; we have seen where fire swept entire streets into inferno. The damage will take years to recover from.

There are curst few survivors so far, some half-starved wretches, a few children, not too many corpses though. That was pretty worrying at the start. Not a lot of incoming fire either, the bombardment must have driven them off well enough. Not too many casualties, which is even better.

The farther into the city the odder it all is becoming.

"Smith, take three with you. Scout that building to the right, part way down. The rest take sight, cover the street."

The Sergeant was one of the first casualties, by enemy fire even. Something all white like a mushroom suddenly found under a rotted log exposed to light for the first time, all pallid white and bloated in shape snaked out from around a corner. It moved too fast to be avoided, taking the poor man straight in the throat.



Not a sound came out of him and then it just pulled back sharply, like setting a hook in a fish's mouth, jerked him clean off his feet and kicking and scrabbling around the brick building corner. We that saw it happen dashed up to help him once our wits were regained, a few moments at the most.

We pelted around that corner and one of the enemy was there. That is the only thing you could call it, the enemy. It was all the same colour as the tentacle-like thing that came out of a long thick pipe, which was the colour of a piece of bronze left too long out in the rain, all a shade of festering green with black shot through it. The thing holding the pipe, reeling in the poor Sergeant, stood a good half again as the tallest man I had ever seen, the mushroom shade, thick slabs of arms and legs naked on this battlefield. The chest was hideous with scars and open running sores and wounds, while the head was the worst thing of all. My eyes took it all in, and I froze, as God and Queen as my witnesses, it was the most wretched thing I have seen. Not even the horrors of the last war matched this thing. My eyes were locked while the bile rose and forced its way out of my mouth and still my eyes were locked. I heard the others retching as well and the noise covered the death of the poor Sergeant.

We stood there for long moments until a shell fortuitously impacted on the building across the rubble strewn way, behind the monstrosity, and that shook us out of the Mesmer we had fallen into. Our weapons came up and we all opened fire almost simultaneously, every round impacting in the bulk of the thing that had killed our compatriot.

It was near to explode from the force of weapons fire poured into it, as several grenades were also launched with skill from several arms at the same time, as we stumbled back from the handiwork and barely made it the few feet around the corner into effective cover before the other detonations occurred.

When the dust settled we went back around, rifles and revolvers at the ready, to take stock. Both were dead over there, but the blood from the enemy was not the right shade. It was too pale, too close to infection leading to gangrene in consistency, too pale as if it was not really blood.

"Well the next one becomes the prisoner right lads?" I half joke, but only half.

"You are in charge, orders Sir?" Little Thomas pipes up.

"Reloads, top off, swig of water for me to rinse this taste out, then onward looking for survivors. Not that I hold much hope for any."

I muster as bravely as I can, with most of my courage since it lies at home with my wife and children, where it belongs. But now I must find more, to bring as many men back to our lines as possible as well.

"You take lead, keep your eyes peeled, might as well stay closer to the centre of the way, and avoid the corners. Form up, move out."

As we move out on the mission, I cannot recall exactly what the head looked like, save that it was horrid and the very sight of it stole away a part of my life and memory in a scalding and painful fashion. My head ached with a dull throbbing from the imprint of that thing we killed. I hope we do not meet many more, that it is a singular thing, and not the equivalent of an infantry man in their forcers. So help us, if that be the case we will need quite a few more men and a whole lot more grenades than we can carry.

So the further into the city, the odder it all is becoming.

We move up in formation, taking a few moments at each doorway to check inside quick-smart for survivors, and always alert for more attacks like the last one. The ground is getting worse; there are already vines and climbers starting to cover the buildings, much faster than I would have dreamt possible. Maybe some learned man can decipher it all later on. Right now we move onward. The sky is darkening as we move inward towards the government buildings and their like.

Not a lot of opposition so far. This is worrying, beside that thing we killed, not a lot to shoot at. I fear that something more will happen all too soon. Especially with the fall of night coming and I am not so sure we could regain the lines before it comes fully on. Looks like it will be a night spent in enemy territory once more. Never felt good about that, not then, not now, even if the signs are in the language of my countrymen.

Come to think of it, not a lot of shelling has been going on. I knew they would hold off, but nothing now at all. Did they have so few that we broke their back, are they cowards before a foe that fights back? Or is there nothing to be shot at, or worse, did they overrun our lines as happened to my company during the war, when all we could do was run and run towards where we thought our other lines were at. That was a nightmare of shells, mustard gas, flares, and bullets from both in front and behind us as we ran till our lungs burnt with the effort. But that was years ago, and this place is evoking the same terror in me as the sun slowly starts to sink there behind us, telling me we are still moving deeper into the city.



“Men, we are not going to wait, time to hole up for the night, let scout a good spot, defensible, and make our camp for the night.” They all look at me like I have lost my mind. I just point towards the west, “The sun is setting, even if there is nothing close right now, I don’t trust the dark in London tonight. Besides we cannot make it all the way back, and I for one do not want to stumble around in the dark.” It makes sense, they all nod and start fanning out on the street, cannot tell the name, that we are on.

I watch them fan out, keeping an eye out on what rooftops and open windows remain. Were this a more normal situation I would worry about snipers and their ilk. Here I am worried about ambushes, the lack of opposition, and the possibility that we have yet to see the worse. The city is too silent here, it seems our fair lady here has taken a grievous wound, one which we all shall need to strive together to staunch the bleeding and give succour till she recovers.

One of the newer lads from back home, forget his given name, just recall his surname right now, motions me over to a partially derelict building.

“Yes?”

“Looks like a spot to hold up the night in Sir?” His face is too young to be here, scant older than my own children, and here beside me with rifle in hand and blooded in the eyes of God this day.

“Good work, pull a few others over here, then we enter in force to survey the lay of the land and check the integrity of what remains.” I send him off while I peer inside the structure, and keep checking the street as well. Takes a few minutes, but he rounds up a couple of pairs of our lads and we all enter.

Inside it looks good, fairly clean, no stains, the dry good are hale so I instruct them to get the others; we all are holing up here. We will note the location, address, record what we eat of the owner’s goods to make fair recompense, and this will be the bivouac for the night.

The first night passes

“Lay down some fire over there to the left, hose it good, before we charge the house!”

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Over and over in my dream I hear myself screaming that out, and staring around at the men all about me standing dumbfounded in shock at the changes in the London landscape. Everywhere in my dream, a nightmare in particular, everywhere there are corpses of people, animals, as well as other things strange and not within my understanding of biology at all.

I wake with a start, sweat running off my body, a terrible thirst consuming my throat, thick and dry as the heart of summer can get across the channel over in Northern Africa.

This is not one of the best rests I have had in the course of my entire life. Even at the height of the shelling in the great conflict, I slept better; mud, pain, wounds, dying friends, and the horror of sleeping in my mask; with all that I slept better than I just was.

"Men we should be home with our families and loved ones."

The grunts and groans around me confirms what I suspected, no one was resting this night.

Time to walk about a little bit, check on the sentries, see what the night has held for the city, and if there is any news to be garnered in any fashion.

Rifle, revolver, helmet, mask with me, the rest of my kit can lie there for all the need I have for it with this task at hand. Outside the sky above was clouded, neither stars nor the moon is to be seen in the sky at all. I am not sure of what the phase of the moon should even be; it could be the dark period for all I know. Still there is a slight red glow, as from large fires, over towards the centre of the city. That is the direction we shall be heading in come the rise of the sun. So we should be able to get some information about what is causing it, likely to our detriment as well.

I walk around the short perimeter we have established. Ascertain that there were no breaches, no intrusions, nothing that would have warranted the sentries to disturb anyone's rest. I think I shall stay up for a while, to see how slow it truly is here outside on the street. I instruct the men that I shall be wandering around for a while, to make sure they are certain of their target before opening fire, I would truly not wish to be a casualty due to a comrade's skilful aim. They assure me that they will make sure of their target before firing and so I move out a ways from the building we are in.

I intend to survey a few streets, see if we did make the best choice, see if there is anything moving at night as I fear there is, or not

at all. I feel in my heart and my gut that it will be safe enough; we had only the single real encounter, all the rest were Londoners. I am amazed that there is such little opposition. Perhaps the others in our force have drawn all the attention away, leaving my small band of irregulars comparatively safe. This I both hope is true and I dread that it is; I would not wish a death to any of my fellow countrymen.

The stars just are not making it past the clouds, and there is an acrid taste to the air, like the burning of gasoline and rubber tyres in a pyre, about bringing up my reflex to empty my poor stomach. After I don my mask, with hearing and sight obscured, the odour abates a great deal; the filters are working at the least to aid in this. But a new undertone of freshly spaded dirt, mixed with the reek of the compost pile is drawing me to a side street that it is emanating from.

The closer I get to the entrance, the more there is the smell of the slaughter that begins to override the other smells. It is a smell I am acquainted with, indeed the entire company; it is like the insides of a man or a pig. Both of which are disturbingly similar after death has claimed them both, and leading me to wonder if this is an invasion or a harvesting. Either way, we will do as we always have done, stand fast, hold the line, and endure with our dying breath. This is the heritage our history has shown to be the proper way for gentlemen.

As I inch my way into the cross street I can feel the stones are disturbed, torn up from the street by some upheaval. Making for a most treacherous footing it is. The time is not now to fall flat on my face; I suspect it would make a widow of my distant wife. The rifle is ready, heavy and growing slick with moisture the farther towards the growing hideous stench ahead of me. With no light it is almost impossible to move much closer. I will not find out what lies at the heart of this mystery till morning breaks and I lead the men over here to scout this proper.

With regret I halt and move gently, slowly, backwards, never finding what I was searching for. An omen if I were a superstitious man, best not to tell some of the lads what I am feeling, they are a little queer about such thoughts and it could easily soften their resolve. But the farther back I move, the less the smell is there, decreasing faster than it had increased, and not a breeze to be felt on the small hairs of my neck in the slightest.

Back out of there I still keep an eye as I head down a few more streets before I will loop back about to the shelter, nothing to be heard, no signs of distant struggles and no distant echoes of the guns back at the line around the city. I just think we are too far in to hear



the reports, and being separated from any other unit we are alone in sight, hearing, and mind.

Daylight and with it some startling sights

The sounds of trumpets wake all of us that were still in the grips of sleep. Yawning mouths of abysses still scream inchoate monstrosities from within my mind and they play in a faint after image on my eyes lightly overlapping all my men as we roust and all, so proud of then, don our kit and move out to the street.

The sun has risen, barely touching the tops of the buildings to our east, I note the road we are on runs almost directly east to west at this point, which is a fine frame of reference here the start of our second day in the besieged city of London, once on the Thames and now under the grip of some invading source, we have yet to come to grips with, or to terms.

The sun is a dark red hue this morning, and seems to be passing behind clouds or fog up high or along the city course. I am not certain as to which it might be. Just that it is reddish. If it was any darker it would be the colour of a pool of drying blood spilt in the pursuit of mankind's wants and greed.

My men have spread out, some looking in all directions so we are covered. The trumpet sounds, a paean of some sort, have faded away in the few minutes it took for us all to exit the structure. I turn to the sentries and inquire; they said it was not any one particular direction. The more devout in my crew hearing that start to muttering their beliefs on what that foretells, and I cut that short right quick. Till we know what is out there, I remind them, then it is better not to guess and to wait instead.

The streets are in no shape for any vehicular traffic to navigate. Odds are that will be the first task of the Mayor of London once this is all sorted out. Most likely they will have to essentially recreate them as workers start at the edges and move inwards to set it all aright. With luck the maps and plans still exist to make it as it once was. Although I can see them just completing the job and starting all over with some systemic idea making it all straight and narrow, the better to keep track of things and where it all belongs to.

One of the men raises his hand up to signal a halt. The men move to the sides all taking sight down ahead of us and I move up next to him to see what has spooked the man. He points off ahead and to the right, a slug white tendril, thick as a python, lying across the road, along and

on top of the rubble. It seemed to come from just under some paving stones and wended over into a mostly intact multiple family residence. I made sure he knew I appreciated his keen sight without making a sound and looked around to see if there were any of the enemy in sight. With none visible, I look about and motion for two others to accompany me and we three creep up along the left side of the road, to where the tendril seems to enter into the building.

I have the heavy rifle as ready as I can; the other two have a couple of grenades in hand to lob at anything that comes out at us. We are all wary of the threat of ambush, it having only happened yesterday, none wishing the same fate to befall themselves.

We make it up there without a mishap and enter into the structure, about fifteen feet from where the foreign snake or tube had violated the building. We make our way from room to room, stepping over personal items strewn about, being careful to not knock over anything. We still have no idea how sharp the hearing is of the Enemy so best to be as quiet as possible.

Finally we find where it had come in through the wall. The white thing is about as large around as a strong man's calf, slightly throbbing like it was a tube moving fluids from one place to another. If we had a doctor with us he might have a better idea what it is doing. We follow it and it makes its way down into the basement of the house, penetrating the floor. We take the stairs and within a step or two down into the darkness a foul odour, reminding me of a latrine or like the smell of a rotting leg, mixed with the gases of a swamp or perhaps ammonia. I pull my mask on and I feel the other two do so also. Once that is done, I pull out my revolver and we take the rest of the stairs at a slow pace. Down in the basement the tendril is evident by means of a strange glow, like cave lichen that makes its own light, pallid and hard on the eyes, a sharp quality to it makes me squint as it is not totally right for my eyes to stand.

All over the basement the tendril is coiled about, slowly oozing into the wood and stone down there. Looking at it all I suspect the entire structure will come down on top of it. Perhaps it will be an inconvenience to the enemy if it happens prematurely. We will level it with some grenades once clear I decide. No telling what is really going on here.

I tap the shoulders of the other two and point back to the stairs. We make it up and out and once outside of the house I make motions to indicate we are going to blow the structure and they each pull out two grenades and give me two also. We put all six into the house and run as

fast as we can to get away. They all go off and one was incendiary and lights off the gas in the place and the entire house fairly explodes from the weight of the munitions. The tendrils writhes and shudders and a screech, like metal being tortured, erupts from the flames that are starting to spread to a neighbouring house.

None of the enemy seems to show up, but as soon as we are back then the flames and house erupts from inside, as something that was down under the house is reached with the flaming debris. Sounds like metal being bent and screeching, or a train running over metal and protesting comes up and one of my men suddenly screams and falls to the ground. By the time we got to him he was dead. His eyes had blown up and blood was coming from them, his nose, his ears, and bubbling up out of his mouth. Like all of the blood just overloaded in pressure and blew out his brain killing him instantly. We drag him out of sight, take his gear and note down best we can where he is at.

By this time it has gotten warmer. It is much warmer than England has any right to be. Even taking into account the flames of several houses now on fire, it is too warm for our season. I see the clouds are thickening and lowering and it feels like it will rain shortly. It must be well past noon and with no more signs of survivors, I think it is time to head back to our lines and make a report on what we have observed and the state of affairs here in the city.

Looking at the street corners we figure out where we are and looking at a map, determine the shortest route to get back to our side of the city. Should only be a few miles of travel, less than an hour of walking under normal circumstances, which these are not.

It does take us about four or five hours I estimate before we are clear of the city and back to our lines. The entire trip it was getting warmer and warmer in the city the entire time. By the time we made it out of there we all had to take off outer layers sweating the entire time we were trudging our way out of the city.

Back behind our fortifications it became apparent that the strange increase in heat had spread farther than just the interior of our main city. It was spreading across the land, more like a contagion than a part of the season or weather. Especially disturbing is that this is England in winter and we were all as hot as if we were in Africa or a similar place.

After relaying all we had seen, we are dismissed back to our quarters to recover and be back on the line in the morning. I asked if we were the last to return, and I am notified that as far as can be determined, we are the only ones to have returned and from what aerial reconnaissance can determine, we will be the only survivors of the first foray back into the City of London.

AUTHOR'S THANKS:

My thanks to Lee Williams for touches and suggestions to bring it Bromsgrove as well as to Scott McClenaghan for kind suggestions to make it a better read. My sincere thanks to both of you gentlemen for the time you have given in helping me improve this piece.



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8 SURFACES

A ghostly plot seed

by Eric Fabiaschi

FOR CALL OF CTHULHU



THIS IS A Nineteen Thirties Call of Cthulhu Encounter that takes place in the New York State Town of Battlebrim right along the Canadian border. Battlebrim is a small town of less than six hundred. The town does a brisk business in wood, some iron mining, and small manufacturing. The town is peaceful, quiet, and seems to have little in the way of occult or Mythos activity. One of the PC's has a friend there named Jacob Colbin.

A series of Indian artifacts have been uncovered by a local amateur archaeologist. Jacob Colbin has been writing back and forth with professors over at Arkham University detailing the find. Similar artifacts have been found near Arkham, along the Connecticut River, and elsewhere in New England. Colbin speculates that this may be an extinct tribe of natives. There are legends of outsider and renegade tribes that appeared during the French and Native American Wars at the base of the Adirondack Mountains. The artifacts from Arkham themselves have always been disputed in Archaeological circles. They all appear to be made out of a weird greenish soap stone material. The PC's are called in when Jacob Colbin and several of his neighbors disappeared over two weeks ago. The artifacts are

now safely under lock and key at the Battlebrim historical society.

Battlebrim itself seems now to be the object of a haunting. Ghostly Indian warriors have been seen roaming the streets at night and terrorizing several of the locals.

The following can be put together by investigating and talking with the locals.

Jacob Colbin is an electrical engineer and local amateur archaeologist. He studied at both Arkham and Mistaktonic University receiving a Masters in History. Jacob moved to Battlebrim over five years ago after accepting a job with the local power authority. He's noted as bright and outgoing individual. Jacob is a widower and in his late thirties. Romance has not been on his mind after the death of his wife. Only work and his hobbies are his only solstice.

He's well liked in the community and has been on several digs to White Face Mountain, a few sites in Connecticut, and one or two in Canada.

He's only recently received the artifacts that several local boys uncovered. Jacob paid the boys each a dollar and has been going over the strange soap stone objects. The objects seem to have an unusual character to them. He was beginning to investigate their further

THE EIGHT SURFACES

THESE EIGHT STRANGE green soap stone objects seem to have an aura about them. They are each covered with particular square and triangle carvings upon their surfaces. They seem to hold a spell over those that stare at them too long. There are eight of these objects and they are held in a small vault at the Battlebrim historical society. The head of the society is thinking of sending them off to Arkham before they can cause any more real problems for the small town.



properties. He disappeared before he could perform any further tests.

Mrs Eleanor Corkland - The landlady to Mr. Colbin, had looked after the young man and was on quite friendly terms. This sixty something year old spinster used to bring meals to the poor man. Neighbors haven't seen her in a week and are starting to worry. There has been no evidence of foul play or anything. The old land lady has simply vanished.

Mr. Macgrety and his family: This small family are a fine upstanding young couple who have only recently moved to Battlebrim. William Macgrety is employed at the Battlebrim public works, and he and his young wife have three little children, Emmy, Bill Junior and Sarah. The family lives next door to Mrs. Corkland. For three days now the family has not been seen by any of the other town inhabitants.

Police have only started to investigate. Battlebrim is a small community and hardly has any real crime to speak of. The occasional break in and there have been rumors of some boot legging but nothing concrete.

After three days in town a series of hauntings will be reported by the townsfolk. Strange ghostly warriors will be seen here and there around town. They peer into windows and encounter shop owners. The ghostly visitors seem to have an aura of sadness and desolation that hangs about them. They are dressed in Native American costumes. This will go on for another week until the stones are transferred to Arkham.

WHAT'S REALLY GOING IN BATTLEBRIM?

Jacob Colbin's eight strange soap stone carved stones were actually part of a Mi Go mind transfer device millions of years old. The stones still hold the last mental impressions of the souls of some Native American cultists. A group of Mohawk warriors destroyed the Mi Go, the cultists, and the machinery. The stone parts were washed downstream in the local

river by a recent storm. The stones still had fragments of the minds and souls of the cultists.

Jacob Colbin made the mistake of applying an electrical current to the stones and a wave of psychic energy obliterated him and his neighbor's bodies. They have been fused with the souls of those ancient cultists of the Mi Go. These poor, pathetic insane things are stuck between universes forever trapped beyond the pale. They haunt the former sites of their habitation. Should the stones come into a strong electrical current there is a 20% chance of these fused insane phantom souls being released. Use the stats for Ghosts from the CoC rulebook for these things. They will haunt anyone possessing the stones. Destroying the archaeological curios releases them back to the nether hells between the Darkness.



NETHORIA

The proto-dimension of accelerated entropy

by Thomas Euler and Lee Williams

FOR DARK CONSPIRACY

NETHORIA IS A recently discovered proto-dimension, uncovered by the Dark Lord known as Baron Samedi. He was searching for new life forms to use as soldiers for an attack on another Dark Lord when he happened across Nethoria and its strange inhabitants. Realising very quickly that the inherent qualities of the proto-dimension could be harnessed as a weapon, the Baron began conquering the Nethorians and pressing them into service. When the relatively short-lived natives realised that they could vastly increase their life span merely by travelling to other dimensions at the Baron's bidding, any resistance soon crumbled.

THE P-DIM

On first view, the most obvious physical aspect of Nethoria is the number of volcanic vents and craters scattered all about. The advanced rate of entropy affects the very ground itself, tearing great scars across the landscape. Minor tremors are commonplace here. A dimension walker who has previously visited the Gehenna proto-dimension could be forgiven for thinking they had strayed back there by accident. The sky is dark with clouds of ash, and the average temperature is somewhere around 90 degrees Fahrenheit (32 Celsius).

Name: Nethoria

Type: Halfland

Discontinuity: 2 (Hardened)

Assimilation: (Special)

Breathing can be a problem on a bad day, but usually a human will be able to breathe unaided. The general landscape has been described by one Minion Hunter as resembling the Midwest "after the Yellowstone super-crater finally goes up!"

Nethoria is a halfland with a discontinuity of 2. It is a hardened proto-dimension, due to its own properties of accelerated entropy. The qualities of Nethoria are indeed peculiar, and yet are not immediately obvious to the first-time visitor. Nethoria has a vastly accelerated entropy level when compared to our universe, meaning that living creatures age dramatically within quite a short time period. In fact, stay for longer than a few days and you might well die of old age when you return to your home dimension. This assimilation effect can be negated by a successful

Empathic Healing test at Formidable level, or by spending an amount of time in the Tartarus Proto-dimension at least equal to the time spent in Nethoria.

The rate of decay of inorganic objects is also increased, though of course to the Nethorians themselves all this is quite normal and it is our universe that seems to have a greatly reduced time flow.

These inherent characteristics are the basis for the weaponry used by the Nethorians when operating in other dimensions. There are two types of weapons, one affecting organic life and the other affecting only non-living objects. The weapons originally came about as a means of defeating the unusual plant-like growths that proliferate in certain areas of Nethoria.

NATIVE LIFE

NETHORIAN HUMANOIDS

Physically, the Nethorians are relatively humanoid in overall shape. The average height of an adult is approximately one and a half metres. They have two legs, which are articulated similar to humans' and they have two arms, but these are capable of bending in either direction at the 'elbow'. Their hands have five digits, but two of these are opposed giving them a thumb on each side of the three fingers. The head has a tall domed shape, with a recognisably humanoid face but no ears (Nethorians sense sound vibrations via a rill around the base of the skull). Skin colour is basically red, the shades differing with the age of an individual. Infants are a flat crimson, whilst the oldest members of the species are pale ochre. A good colour for a healthy adult is orange or salmon pink.

The Nethorians are quite intelligent and have embraced the new DarkTek given to them by Baron Samedi. They feel that by following him, they may soon be victorious in their millennia-old battle against the empathically aware plant-based forms that share the proto-dimension with them.

It is this DarkTek, coupled with an instinctive knowledge of the properties of Nethoria itself, which has enabled the Nethorians to develop their incredibly deadly entropy weapons. Although originally designed to help defeat the Chlorophids, these weapons work just

as well in other dimensions, a fact which has greatly pleased Baron Samedi.

CHLOROPHIDS

The strange plant-based life forms of Nethoria have been nicknamed Chlorophids by the few minion hunters who have visited this proto-dimension. Originating from the murky seas that once made up a large proportion of Nethoria, these creatures developed sentience over many generations. Somehow, they developed the ability to sense the empathic resonance of other living beings and eventually they sensed the Nethorians themselves.

Becoming inquisitive about the land areas, they eventually discovered that they could send part of themselves inland by burrowing along natural watercourses under the ground. These outgrowths soon made contact with the Nethorian humanoids, an encounter that shaped their history ever since. The Chlorophids caused an allergic reaction among the Nethorians, who at the time were in a primitive stage of evolution. They began hacking at the taproots with spears and stone axes in fear... a situation which has continued pretty much the same until now. Nethorians fear Chlorophids, and vice versa. Although the Chlorophids have no real understanding of why this should be, they will fight as well as they can to defend their own existence.

In physical appearance, the Chlorophids resemble the roots of Earthly trees, but with strange pods dotted here and there along their length. They are able to move with surprising speed for a plant form, and are strong enough to lift heavy items. The pods are the natural defence mechanisms of the Chlorophids, and they emit a sticky sap-like substance that causes itching and skin inflammations in much the same way as poison ivy. These pods can also be emptied at will onto targets that threaten the Chlorophid, with an area of effect that is intended to keep enemies at bay until the plant can withdraw beneath the ground to safety.

CALDERIAN

The most impressive thing about Nethoria must be the huge citadel that Baron Samedi had the Nethorians create for him. Given the name 'Calderian', the whole edifice towers above the crater of an active volcano. Suspended atop several massive arched legs, Calderian

Vehicle : Nethorian Flyer

Price : N/A

Fuel Type : Fusion

Load : 4 tons

Vehicle Weight : 100 tons

Crew : 30

Night Vision : searchlights

Cruise Speed : 400

Combat Move : 60

Fuel Capacity : N/A

Fuel Consumption : N/A

Combat Statistics

Configuration : Standard

Suspension : Grav

Armour Values

HF : 12

HS : 12

HR : 12

Armament : 1x Omega-14 cannon, 2x Omega-14 projectors, 4x flamethrowers

Projector (Omega-14 area effect weapon)					Recoil		
ROF	Damage	Pen	Bulk	Mag	SS	Burst	Range
SA	34	N/A	8	100	N/A	N/A	175

The maximum area covered by an Omega-14 Projector is up to 10x10 meter area (100 square meters)

Cannon (Omega-14 area effect weapon)					Recoil		
ROF	Damage	Pen	Bulk	Mag	SS	Burst	Range
SA	*	Nil	N/A	20	N/A	N/A	20

The maximum area covered by an Omega-14 cannon blast is up to 100x100-meter area. *Vehicle-mounted and powered directly from the Flyer's power plant.

Nethorian Flamethrower					Recoil		
ROF	Damage	Pen	Bulk	Mag	SS	Burst	Range
SA	*	Nil	N/A	20	N/A	N/A	20

*Damage is 2D6 per second to the affected location. Burns for 5 seconds.

draws the energy needed to drive the Baron's machines through geothermal exchangers. Manufactured of some DarkTek material unknown to Earthly science, the exchangers plunge directly into the seething molten lava.

The citadel resembles something straight out of a pulp science fiction story, with huge sweeping arches and almost organic shapes. From the outside it appears black and shining, and from certain angles it looks as though some giant hand has crafted a model of a Gothic cathedral out of black steel and the carapaces of some giant insects. This has then been placed atop the very heart of a volcano.

Surrounding the citadel proper is a ring of smaller settlements, where the Nethorians go about their master's business. As these are built around Calderian at ground level, massive transport tubes and maglev monorails connect them directly to the citadel. Outside the inhabited areas, anti-gravity flyers cruise the skies, constantly searching for any signs of Chlorophid activity and wiping out any taproots they might find. Thanks mainly to the Baron's takeover; Nethoria must be one of the busiest and most heavily populated proto-dimensions at the current time.

Given the relative difference in time flow between Nethoria and our universe, the citadel has grown very quickly in human terms. The whole thing has been constructed within the equivalent of ten Earth years. In Nethorian time it has taken at least three generations of builders, all working under the control of their new Lord. Now, they have a new city in which to live and no worries about the Chlorophids, and Baron Samedi has a secret factory and a ready supply of soldiers for use in attacks on the holdings of other Dark Lords.

CHLOROPHID COMBAT ABILITIES

The Chlorophids can attack with their pods once every 3 rounds. A single pod attack covers an area 3 by 3 metres, and any living being in this area must pass a Formidable:CON test or else be incapacitated for 5

minutes. Medical attention must be sought if the sap has been inhaled or swallowed by a human (1D6 damage to Chest/Abdomen), but if only the skin has been affected then regular ointments will stop the itching and flaking as soon as they are used.

These effects are much more severe to Nethorians though. A Nethorian who is hit by the sap will take 2D6 damage to the affected part, as his very flesh begins to dissolve. Anaphylactic shock will kill the unfortunate Nethorian within 1D10 minutes, unless the Baron decides to use his powers to save them (not very likely).

Chlorophids can also use their prehensile roots to grapple an opponent. Treat this as Unarmed Melee combat, with the Chlorophid having a skill level of 6 and 1D6 attacks. This represents the number of roots used.

NETHORIAN FLYER

The craft built on Baron Samedi's orders are known simply as Flyers. A typical Flyer will utilise anti-gravity propulsion, and can be thought of as the local equivalent of a helicopter gunship. Their prime purpose is to patrol the wild areas near Calderian to seek and destroy any new Chlorophid outgrowths. They are armed with large versions of the entropic weapons as well as flamethrowers.



MENTAL BREAKDOWN IN DARK CONSPIRACY

Unstable house rules

by Norm Fenlason

FOR DARK CONSPIRACY

Warning!

Mental illness is very serious and in no way is this information meant to downplay that seriousness. Depression is very prevalent in role playing and extremely visible. It is serious and seemingly contagious. In your role playing please take these house rules as guidelines and only guidelines. And please do not take them as indicators of actual mental disorders. If you question what is going on in your, a friend's, or loved one's life, please consult a mental health professional.

This warning is not intended to relieve me of indemnity, but rather because I care.

IN MOST SYSTEMS, playing mental illness acquired as a result of in-game circumstances is handled through role-playing. As no provision for mental illness was included in the original Dark Conspiracy (DC) rules, these house rules can be used as guidelines for acquiring, enduring, and curing mental illness resulting from breakdowns.

Even though characters in DC are heroes and at least a slight cut above the average, they will still have mental issues when confronted by the dark that stem from their own backgrounds – since those backgrounds are not sufficiently defined to govern mental illness, additional guidance can assist the GM and players in how to add mental instability to their games. In the course of game play a character may encounter something so horrific that it causes that character's mental state to break. Called a **Mental Breakdown**, the symptoms that a character exhibits vary depending on the event, the character's mental state, and mental stability. These factors should be used by the GM to determine if the character has had a mental breakdown.

How the GM determines that the character has been broken is not detailed here. Specific rules governing the effects of sanity and its relationship to horror are left to the GM and their players.

MENTAL BREAKDOWN

Mental Breakdowns consist of a set of symptoms broken into three major breaks: Resolve, Humanity, and Reasoning. The player rolls against the appropriate table to determine the symptoms that manifest. The player should do this in secret to enhance the role-playing involved where fellow characters try to understand the unstable behavior that follows.

The symptoms will accrue slowly, getting worse over time, until ending in a debilitating state if left untreated. The

DETERMINING EVENT

When the GM feels that a particular sequence of events that the character is put through should have an impact on continued mental stability, the GM can declare the character has suffered a mental breakdown. The GM then defines the category of breakdown (see below) and requests the player to check for a manifestation of symptoms. The character will exhibit the particular symptoms until she is cured, kills herself, or is herself killed.

player and GM should discuss how this will evolve. The character suffers the effects of their particular affliction until cured. Healing cannot take place during a firefight. See Curing Mental Illness, below.

The mental breakdown causes 2D6-2 (0-10) Levels of Mental Illness which the character must eliminate in order to be healed. Recovering from the mental breakdown consists of healing those levels, sometimes through psychological counseling, psychiatric pharmaceutical protocol or electroshock therapy, or by the patient via self-treatment. The cure can also come from the ministrations of an empathic agent, such as a mystic.

Generally, if left untreated, the character gets worse. For each week that the condition is left untreated, the character receives another level of mental illness. The disorders listed below have worsening symptoms as the levels go up. The GM can do this book-keeping or have the player do it – or in keeping with role-playing just inform the player they are getting worse, these are guidelines after all.

MENTAL BREAKDOWN: RESOLVE

A mental break that results in lessening the strength of the personality (and perturbations there to) is categorized as a Breakdown in Resolve. When the GM identifies the break as Resolve, the player rolls on the **Breakdown in Resolve** table, and then rolls for Levels of Mental Illness on (2D6-2). Affects as called for by the disorder are up to the player to role play.

Anxiety Disorder: Anxiety disorder is a family of maladies covering several different forms of abnormal and pathological fear and anxiety. Generalized anxiety disorder (GAD) is a common chronic disorder characterized by long-lasting anxiety that is not focused on

any one object or situation. Characters suffering GAD exhibit non-specific persistent fear and worry. In panic disorder, a person suffers from brief attacks of intense terror and apprehension, often marked by trembling, shaking, confusion, dizziness, nausea, difficulty breathing. These panic attacks manifest as fear or discomfort that abruptly rises and peaks in less

than ten minutes, can last for several hours and can be triggered by stress, or fear. The specific cause of a panic attack cannot always be isolated. General anxiety and panic disorders together can manifest in the character in hypochondria, where the character panics over every change of their health state, which is interpreted as life-threatening.

While phobias are covered elsewhere, agoraphobia is included here due to its linkage to panic attacks. Agoraphobia is an anxiety the character feels about being in a place or situation where escape is difficult or embarrassing or where help may be unavailable. Agoraphobia is strongly linked with panic disorder and is often precipitated by the fear of having a panic attack. A common manifestation involves needing to be in constant view of a door or other escape route.

Social anxiety disorder (SAD) manifests in the character as an intense fear of negative public scrutiny, embarrassment, or humiliation. This fear can be specific to particular social situations (such as public speaking) or, more typically, is experienced in most (or all) social interactions. Social anxiety often manifests specific physical symptoms, including blushing, sweating, and difficulty speaking. Characters exhibiting extreme social anxiety avoid the social interactions leading to complete social isolation.

Post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) results from a character's traumatic experience. PTSD can result from combat, natural disaster, rape, hostage situations, more serious kinds of child abuse, or even a serious accident. In game terms it combat and interactions with minions are the most likely causes, especially when life-threatening. Common symptoms include hyper-vigilance (looking for signs that the stressful event is reoccurring), flashbacks, avoidant behaviors, anxiety, anger and depression.

Claustrophobia exhibits as one or both of two key symptoms: fear of restriction and fear of suffocation. Characters will fear restriction in one or several, of the following areas: small rooms, locked rooms, cars, tunnels, cellars, elevators, subway trains, caves, and crowded areas. Higher levels can cause the character to fear relatively trivial matters such as sitting in a barber's chair or waiting in line at a grocery store simply out of a fear of confinement to a single space. At advanced stages, characters may remove clothing in the belief that it will relieve the symptoms of suffocation. Entrapment will trigger a panic attack. The GM should monitor the character and advise the player that a panic attack may be imminent.

Breakdown in Resolve

1D10 Result	Disorder
1-2	Anxiety Disorder (except phobias)
3-5	Phobia
6-8	Depression
9	Obsessive Compulsive Disorder
10	Catatonia (Resolve)

Game Effects: When this anxiety disorder is called for, the player and GM should discuss which form the character will exhibit. At all mental illness levels, the character can exhibit a panic attack. The trigger for the panic attack can be anything that GM and player have worked out, but the GM is the last call on in-game circumstances. Once the GM calls for a panic attack check, the player rolls a D20. On a result greater than the current level of mental illness, the character recovers and does not panic. On a result less than or equal to the current level, the character undergoes a panic attack for 2D6 minutes with all sixes added in and re-rolled (exploding dice).

Treatment:

- Counseling per normal rules, see below.
- Pharmaceuticals prevent the progression of the disorder and reduce its effects to 5 levels of mental illness. The character will exhibit symptoms at level 5 while the actual levels of mental illness are decreased through other means.
- Self Treatment per normal rules, see below.

Phobia: A phobia is an irrational, intense, and persistent fear of certain situations, activities, things, animals, or people. Characters with this disorder will exhibit an excessive and unreasonable desire to avoid the feared stimulus. Phobias vary in severity for characters. In early stages where the levels of mental illness are low, the character can simply avoid the subject of their fear and suffer relatively mild anxiety. In later stages (high levels of mental illness), characters can suffer full-fledged panic attacks with all the associated disabling symptoms. Characters will understand their phobias but cannot override their initial reactions.

According to the DSM, phobias are considered sub-types of anxiety disorder, and are called out separately here to enhance their role playing potential. There are three main categories of phobias:

The initiating event (the reason for the Mental Breakdown check), may not involve the specific entity or cause for the fear response. The player and the GM are encouraged to work up a background for the character where some dimly forgotten past is made the source of the phobia. The recent triggering event caused the character's phobia to intensify.

Social phobia: Fears involving other people or social situations, which is detailed under anxiety disorder (q.v.).

Agoraphobia: A generalized fear of leaving home or a small familiar 'safe' area, and of possible panic attacks that might follow. This phobia is also covered in the anxiety disorder (q.r.) entry since it involves panic attacks.

Claustrophobia: A generalized fear of having no escape and being closed in. This phobia is also covered in the anxiety disorder (q.r.) entry.

Specific phobias: This is the classic understanding of phobia, the fear of a single specific panic trigger entities or events such as spiders, snakes, dogs, water, heights, flying, catching a specific illness, small talk, etc. These are not unreasonable fears, but characters with a phobia suffer extreme and uncontrollable reactions when confronted. Characters with phobias will attempt to avoid the entity they fear.

Game Effects: The character exhibits increasing signs of dislike for the specific panic trigger when suffering up to 10 levels of mental illness. The character will actively avoid panic triggers by leaving the vicinity if possible. Upon reaching 10 levels of mental illness, whenever the character is in the presence of or anticipated presence of the specific panic trigger, the character exhibits unreasonable fear and loathing. The character undergoes a panic attack at that instant.

Upon reaching 20 levels of mental illness, whenever the character cannot avoid being in the presence of the specific panic trigger, the character suffers acute fear symptoms, including paralysis and indecision. At 25 levels of mental illness, if the character is placed in such a situation, the character must make a Difficult [CON] check or be struck down according to the Bad Fear Table.

<i>Bad Fear Table</i>	
<i>1D6 Roll Result</i>	<i>Effect</i>
1-3	Character falls unconscious 1D10-CON turns
4-5	Heart Attack. The character immediately takes a Critical Wound to the chest location.
6	Stroke. The character immediately takes a Critical Wound to the head location.

Treatment:

- ☠ Counseling per normal rules, see below.
- ☠ Pharmaceuticals can prevent extreme results in the case of panic attacks and Bad Fear. If the character is currently taking drugs temporarily reduce the effective level of mental illness to 5.
- ☠ Self Treatment per normal rules, see below.

Depression: This malady is called major depressive disorder in the DSM. It is also known as recurrent depressive disorder, clinical depression, major depression, *unipolar* depression, or *unipolar* disorder. A character with Depression exhibits a pervasive very low mood and finds no pleasure in activities that formerly were enjoyed. The character will be preoccupied with thoughts and feelings of worthlessness, inappropriate guilt or regret, helplessness, hopelessness, and self-hatred.

Game Effects: Upon reaching 5 levels of mental illness, the character will also suffer *insomnia*. Alternately, the character will exhibit *hypersomnia*, or oversleeping. Appetite loss can result in weight loss, although increased appetite and weight gain occasionally occur. The character will exhibit multiple other physical symptoms such as fatigue, headaches, or digestive problems. Family and friends may notice that the character's behavior is either agitated or lethargic.

Upon reaching 10 levels of mental illness the character will exhibit psychosis-like symptoms. These symptoms include delusions or hallucinations, usually of an unpleasant nature. Other symptoms of depression include poor concentration and memory (especially in those with melancholic or psychotic features), withdrawal from social situations and activities, reduced sex drive, and thoughts of death or suicide.

Upon reaching 20 levels of mental illness, self-loathing will induce self-destructive behavior (the nature of which the GM and player should negotiate) and the character is a risk to herself and others around her.

Treatment:

- ☠ Counseling per normal rules, see below.
- ☠ Pharmaceuticals prevent the progression of the disorder and reduce its effects to 5 levels of mental illness. The character

will exhibit symptoms at level 5 while the actual levels of mental illness are decreased through other means.

- ☠ Self Treatment per normal rules, see below.

Obsessive Compulsive Disorder: Properly known in this case as Obsessive-compulsive personality disorder (OCPD) involves an obsession with perfection, rules, and organization. Characters manifesting OCPD feel very anxious when they perceive that things are not right, leading to routines and self-made rules for ways of doing things, whether for themselves or their mates. OCPD characters manifest a preoccupation with details, rules, lists, order, organization, and schedules.

Game Effects: For up to 10 levels of mental illness, characters are very rigid and inflexible in their beliefs, and show perfectionism that interferes with completing tasks. Characters will excessively focus on being productive with their time, being very conscientious, and having inflexible morality, ethics, or values; and will maintain internal rules and lists to that end. A role-playing opportunity exists for the symptom characters will exhibit of hoarding items that may no longer have value. Another opportunity exists for the character that exhibits a miserly spending style toward both self and others with money being viewed as something more properly to be hoarded. Players can also choose for their characters to be obsessed with cleanliness as the classical symptom. OCPD characters will view actions and beliefs in black and white, as completely right or absolutely wrong, with the character always in the right.

At 15 levels of mental illness, the character will, when anxious or excited, take on a tic, grimace, or make nearly involuntary noises, or do impulsive and unpredictable things, including risk taking.

At 20 levels of mental illness, the character will begin to exhibit advanced stages of depression (q.v.) or antisocial personality disorder. The player and the GM should discuss how the illness will proceed, if the character will not be treated for their malady.

Treatment:

- ☠ Counseling per normal rules, see below.
- ☠ Pharmaceuticals prevent the progression of the disorder and reduce its effects to 5 levels of mental illness. The character



will exhibit symptoms at level 5 while the actual levels of mental illness are decreased through other means.

- Self Treatment per normal rules, see below.

Catatonia (Resolve): Catatonia in this instance represents a syndrome of psychologically induced motor logical disturbance. Catatonic characters will experience one of two symptoms: an extreme loss of motor skills or constant hyperactive motor activity. They may exhibit a waxy flexibility, in which the character maintains poses after being placed in them by someone else. Characters can hold those rigid poses for hours, ignoring all external stimuli. Alternately the character will resist movement in proportion to any applied force. In early stages, the character may repeat meaningless phrases or speak only to repeat what they hear.

Game Effects: For motor loss, when a character reached 20 levels of mental illness, the character slips into a coma that can last years. For hyperactive motor disorder, at 20 levels, the character takes 1D6 damage points per day to a random hit location. When any location reaches a Critical Wound, the character dies from exhaustion.

Once the character has cleared all levels of mental illness, they awake. The character will have just finished replaying in their minds the scene where they had their mental breakdown, often flailing in defense or fear.

Treatment:

- Counseling does not work.
- Pharmaceutical and electroshock therapy can rouse the character from catatonia, but selecting the right treatment requires a Difficult [Medicine] check. Failure causes an addition of 1D6 levels of mental illness. Critical Failure causes an increase of 2D6 levels. Normal success provides the character with a protocol that provides 1D6 levels of mental illness reduction per week. Outstanding Success provides the character with a one-time cure of 3D6 levels of mental illness and the same weekly benefit as a Normal success. Comatose characters do not respond to these treatments.
- Self Treatment does not work unless the character is in very safe and familiar environments. If in such an environment,

the character will recover 1 level of mental illness every two weeks instead of losing one per week.

MENTAL BREAKDOWN: HUMANITY

A break in the character's ability to exercise normal human behavior is called a Breakdown in Humanity. Humanity disorders generally deal with the character's ability to deal effectively with other human beings. Once the GM identifies a Breakdown in Humanity the player rolls on the **Breakdown in Humanity** table. The player then determines the levels of mental illness by rolling 2D6-2. These rolls can be performed by the player or the GM at the GM's discretion.

Paranoia: Paranoid personality disorder is characterized by paranoia and an all-pervasive, long-standing suspiciousness and generalized mistrust of others. Characters are hypersensitive, easily slighted, and continuously scan their environment for indications that validate biases (hypervigilance). Characters with paranoia tend to be guarded and suspicious with very narrow emotional lives. Paranoid characters (i.e. characters with the paranoia disorder and not just you normal flavor of character) is sensitive to rebuffs and setbacks, bear persistent grudges, and have an overwhelming preoccupation with unsubstantiated "conspiratorial" explanations of events both immediate to the patient and in the world at large. As the condition worsens, the character will slip into paranoid schizophrenia with strong feelings that personal harm is occurring, or is going to occur, and that there is a persecutor that has intention to cause them harm.

The perceived persecution includes feelings of being followed, harassed, cheated, poisoned or drugged, conspired against, spied on, attacked, or obstructed. These beliefs are so complex that everything to them can be explained conspiratorially.

Game Effects: The character will externalize their personal threat to persons or organizations beyond the party. Upon reaching 10 levels of

Breakdown in Humanity

1D10 Result	Disorder
1-2	Paranoia
3-4	Narcissism
5-6	Dependent Personality Disorder
7-8	Bipolar Personality Disorder
9	Multiple Personality Disorder
10	Antisocial Personality Disorder

mental illness, the character perceives, secretly at start, as part of the conspiracy. Upon reaching 20 levels of mental illness, the character suffers delusion or hallucination. At level 25 the character's paranoia can become so intense, that the character exhibits advanced stages of psychotic states of antisocial personality disorder (q.r.), and believe the entire party to be a part of the conspiracy. Violence against her mates is not out of the question.

Treatment:

- ☠ Counseling per normal rules, see below.
- ☠ Pharmaceuticals slow the progression of the disorder such that the character receives 1 level of mental illness per every 2 weeks.
- ☠ Self Treatment takes twice the normal time, see below.

Narcissism: Narcissistic personality disorder (NPD) is defined by the DSM as “a pervasive pattern of grandiosity, need for admiration, and a lack of empathy.” The narcissistic character is excessively preoccupied with personal adequacy, power, and prestige. The disorder features fraudulent, exploitative, deceptive and unscrupulous antisocial behavior – self-centeredness. The disorder also includes the narcissism-induced fanatic with paranoid tendencies and an illusion of omnipotence. Fanatic characters are fighting the reality of their insignificance and the re-establishment their personal image through grandiose fantasies and self-reinforcement. When unable to gain recognition or support from others, they take on the role of a heroic or worshipped person with a grandiose mission – megalomania.

Game Effects: Up to 10 levels of mental illness the character will increasingly display self-interest. Upon reaching 10 levels, the character will exhibit paranoid delusion behavior against her teammates in the belief

that they are in competition and sabotaging her. Upon 20 levels of mental illness the character will exhibit advanced stages of antisocial personality disorder behavior, with a cold withdrawal from the world and the capability to vast calculated physical harm on those around her.

Treatment:

- ☠ Counseling per normal rules, see below.
- ☠ Pharmaceuticals prevent the progression of the disorder and reduce its effects to 5 levels of mental illness. The character will exhibit symptoms at level 5 while the actual levels of mental illness are decreased through other means. At advanced stages electroshock therapy can reduce the character's levels of mental illness by 1D6 per week.
- ☠ Self Treatment per normal rules, see below.

Dependent Personality Disorder: Dependent personality disorder (DPD) is characterized by a pervasive psychological dependence on other people. Characters with DPD see themselves as inadequate and helpless. They are unable to cope on their own, turning their fate over to others. The character's solution is to find capable people to nurture and support them moving to make the beliefs and values of their target into their own. DPD provides a great deal of room for role play between characters as they attempt to deal with the conversion of the character into a human leech.

Game Effects: Upon developing DPD, characters will begin to be less ambitious, show a lack in confidence in their capabilities with the belief that they lack whatever it takes. At 5 levels of mental illness, the character will attach to what they perceive as the strongest (and most likely to accept them) in the party—their target. However, attaching to an NPC can make for interesting role play.

Upon reaching 10 levels of mental illness, the character will violently resist any concept of being abandoned or left behind. If forced to be alone the character will be paralyzed and unable to think or act for themselves, preferring to be told what to do by the person they have attached to (or anyone else for that matter). Attachment to their target worsens as the character affects their target's dress and mannerisms. For example, discarding their previous sidearm in favor of the one their target uses.

Upon reaching 20 levels of mental illness, the character will begin to exhibit full blown delusional attachments of a narcissistic nature. That is, the character will feel that they are the favorite of their target and all actions will be to curry their target's favor. At level 25, the character will withdraw into a dreamy catatonic state where their delusions are acted out covertly and completely within the character's mind. See Catatonia, below.

Treatment:

- ☠ Counseling per normal rules, see below.
- ☠ Pharmaceuticals prevent the progression of the disorder and reduce its effects to 5 levels of mental illness. The character will exhibit symptoms at level 5 while the actual levels of mental illness are decreased through other means.
- ☠ Self Treatment per normal rules, see below.

Bipolar Disorder: Bipolar disorder or manic-depressive disorder (also referred to as bipolar affective disorder or manic depression) manifests in characters through episodes of abnormally elevated energy levels, cognition, and mood (mania) and one or more depressive episodes (depression). The episodes separated by periods of “normal”, but in some individuals, depression and mania may rapidly alternate, known as rapid cycling. Extreme manic

Bi-Polar Episode Cycle

Mental Illness Levels	Cycle (Manic/Depressive/Normal)
0-4	3 days / 5 days / 14 days
5-9	3/ days / 5 days / 5 days
10-14	2 days / 4 days / No normal days
15-19	5 days / 10 days / No normal days
20+	Mania and depression occur at the same time with no normal days

episodes can sometimes lead to psychotic symptoms such as delusions and hallucinations.

The depressive episode exhibits as persistent feelings of sadness, anxiety, guilt, anger, isolation, or hopelessness; disturbances in sleep and appetite; fatigue and loss of interest in usually enjoyable activities; problems concentrating; loneliness, self-loathing, apathy or indifference; depersonalization; loss of interest in sexual activity; shyness or social anxiety; irritability, chronic pain (with or without a known cause); lack of motivation; and morbid suicidal ideation. In severe cases, the individual may become psychotic, a condition also known as severe bipolar depression with psychotic features.

The manic episode is the signature characteristic of bipolar disorder. Mania is a period of an elevated, expansive, or irritable mood state. The character will experience an increase in energy and a decreased need for sleep. A person's speech may be pressured, with thoughts experienced as "racing". Attention span is low and the character is easily distracted. Judgment is impaired and characters will engage in behavior that is quite abnormal for them. At more extreme phases the character may experience psychosis or sever anxiety disorder (q.r.) exhibiting severe irritability (to the point of rage).

Game Effects: Game effects below 20 levels of mental illness lie in frequency of episodes and distinct boundaries between them. See the Manic-Depression Cycle Table for guidance on episodic frequency.

Over 20 levels of mental illness the character can proceed into antisocial personality disorder (q.r.) or paranoia (q.r.). The player should talk to the GM about how the role playing will proceed.

Treatment:

- ☠ Counseling per normal rules, see below.
- ☠ Pharmaceuticals prevent the progression of the disorder and reduce its effects to 5 levels of mental illness. The character will exhibit symptoms at level 5 while the actual levels of mental illness are decreased through other means. Electroshock therapy will reduce the level of mental illness for bipolar disorder by 2D6 levels per treatment. The character can undergo only one treatment per week.
- ☠ Self Treatment is not possible.

Multiple Personality Disorder: Multiple personality disorder (MPD) manifests in characters as multiple distinct identities or personalities, each with its own pattern of perceiving and interacting with the environment. The character will exhibit at least two personalities that routinely take control of behavior with a memory loss beyond normal forgetfulness. Characters will exhibit multiple mannerisms, attitudes and beliefs that are not similar to each other distortion of or loss of subjective time.

Game Effects: The player and the GM should discuss the type and nature of the personalities that the character will exhibit. This includes a role for transition to be made when the GM calls for it, and another mechanism for randomly determining the personality to emerge. (See the Emerging Personalities table, below.) However, certain personalities may be desired to emerge after others based on the player's role play needs.

Up to 5 levels of mental illness, the character will exhibit a lack of connection to their party members, preferring to be distant and stand-offish. The character may assume a light phobia (see the Phobia List). The number of distinct personalities will be low, up to 3 personalities. Transition between the personalities should be random during play.

Upon 10 levels of mental illness, the character suffers flashbacks from other personalities (in the main personality). The character also exhibits early stages of anxiety disorder in one of the character's personalities.

At 20 levels of mental illness the character begins to hallucinate the other personalities while manifesting the main personality. At

Emerging Personalities

Mental Illness Levels	Number of Personalities	Switch Chance Roll on D20
1-5	2-3	≤ 2
6-10	3-6	≤ 4
11-15	3-6	≤ 8
15-20	5-10	≤ 10
20+	5-10*	≤ 10

* More can be used, but it complicates role play.

25 levels, the character suffers antisocial personality disorder on an antagonistic alternate personality that could lead to violence to the character or to those around her.

Treatment:

- ☠ Counseling per normal rules, see below.
- ☠ Pharmaceuticals prevent the progression of the disorder and reduce its effects to 5 levels of mental illness. The character will exhibit symptoms at level 5 while the actual levels of mental illness are decreased through other means. Electroshock therapy will reduce the level of mental illness for MPD by 1D6 levels per treatment. The character can undergo only one treatment per week.
- ☠ Self Treatment per normal rules, see below.

Antisocial Personality Disorder: ASPD is defined by the DSM as "...a pervasive pattern of disregard for and violation of the rights of others that begins in childhood or early adolescence and continues into adulthood." Here, it is mashed up with psychopathy which is characterized by a lack of empathy, strongly amoral conduct, and an ability to appear outwardly

normal. Psychopaths have been described as "intra-species predators" that use charisma, intimidation, and violence to control others and to satisfy their own needs.

Game Effects: Characters below 10 levels of mental illness will exhibit an increasing disregard for the existence and well-being of those around them, starting with adversaries. Small acts of sadistic malevolence will increase with increasing levels to the point of causing or allowing harm to come to teammates. This is especially the case when

the character is called upon to sacrifice themselves. Upon reaching 10 levels, the character will begin to exhibit symptoms of paranoia where their cruel acts are then hidden or covered up. Upon reaching 20 levels of mental illness the character will have no compunction in sacrificing her family, mates, and especially the overt enemy. This will usually be in a particularly heinous manner. At 25 levels of mental illness, the character is a full-fledged sociopathic serial killer with no compunction in killing all her mates for pleasure.

Treatment:

- ☠ Counseling per normal rules, see below.
- ☠ Pharmaceuticals prevent the progression of the disorder and reduce its effects to 5 levels of mental illness. The character will exhibit symptoms at level 5 while the actual levels of mental illness are decreased through other means. Electroshock therapy will reduce the level of mental illness for antisocial personality disorder by 2D6 levels per treatment. The character can undergo only one treatment per week.
- ☠ Self Treatment does not work.

MENTAL BREAKDOWN: REASONING

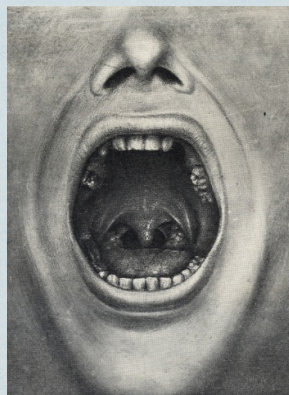
A break in the character's ability to process thoughts in a normal manner is called a Breakdown in Reasoning. Once the GM identifies a Breakdown in Reasoning the player rolls on the **Breakdown in Reasoning** table. The player then determines the levels of mental illness by rolling 2D6-2. These rolls can be performed by the player or the GM at the GM's discretion. Note in the following Disorders, that self-treatment does not generally work (amnesia aside) since the reasoning required to diagnose and develop a get-well strategy is missing.

Amnesia: Properly called psychogenic amnesia is also known as functional or dissociative amnesia. It is a disorder characterized by abnormal memory functioning where there is no corresponding structural damage to the brain. Psychogenic amnesia is characterized by the inability to retrieve stored memories and events leading up to the onset of amnesia. It also is characterized by an inability to form new long term memories. The character loses their personal identity while still able to learn new information and perform everyday functions. Other times, there may be a loss of procedural skills such as reading and writing.

Game Effects: The character will forget the events leading up to the event causing the breakdown as well as a period of time afterward. This includes the ability to perform skill tasks in use at the time of the breakdown or just before it. The scope of the amnesia should be determined by the player and GM.

Unlike other breakdowns, this condition gets better over time instead of worse. Reduce the

Breakdown in Reasoning	
1D10 Roll	Result
1-3	Amnesia
4-6	Hallucination
7-8	Delusion
9	Dementia
10	Catatonia



character's levels of mental illness by one for every two weeks in a safe, peaceful environment with others that have shared experiences.

Should a character with amnesia reach 20 levels of mental illness (which can only happen if the character suffers another mental breakdown), the character transitions to dissociative identity disorder where another personality takes residence in the absence of the original one. The character will behave by alternating between two or more distinct personality states with impaired recall between the personalities, such as Sybil and Vicky, who know nothing of each other. See multiple personality disorder above for more information.

Treatment:

- ☠ Counseling for 5 hours per week to maintain treatment with the Psychology task check after every 14 hours reduces the levels of mental illness by 1D6 per check.
- ☠ Pharmaceuticals can be used to shock the patient chemically, or the character can undergo electroshock therapy for the same reason. The attending physician must make a Difficult [Medical] test to determine the correct treatment. The character can undergo only one treatment per week.
- ☠ Self Treatment is available to the character normally. In addition, whenever the character undergoes a significant psychological stress or trauma, she immediately performs a "self-treatment" as described below, but the results are doubled.

Hallucinations: The character suffers from sensory perception in the absence of corresponding external stimuli. Hallucinations exist where no stimuli is present as opposed to illusions or perceptual distortions where a misperception of stimuli is the source. Any of the five senses can be affected by an hallucination.

Game Effects: The character typically begins with auditory hallucinations. The player and GM should work out if there are just voices or if the voices have personalities. Additional sensory components will be added as the disorder progresses. Upon reaching 10 levels of mental illness, the character will experience complete hallucinations related to the event that triggered the disorder. In this phase, the character will initially know the hallucination for what it is and will

be able to resist the impulse to respond to it. Upon reaching level 20, the hallucinations are so real that the character has no choice but to respond. Since the event that triggered the disorder was some unspeakable event, the hallucinations will appear very threatening. (Note that hallucinations called for by other disorders may not be as threatening.) At 25 levels, the character will attack their imaginary tormenters, making the character very dangerous to themselves and those around.

Treatment:

- ☠ Counseling per normal rules, see below.
- ☠ Pharmaceuticals prevent the progression of the disorder and reduce its effects to 5 levels of mental illness. The character will exhibit symptoms at level 5 while the actual levels of mental illness are decreased through other means. Electroshock therapy will reduce the level of mental illness by 2D6 levels per treatment. The character can undergo only one treatment per week.
- ☠ Self Treatment does not work after reaching 20 levels of mental illness.

Delusion: Delusional disorder is a psychotic mental disorder characterized non-bizarre delusions, meaning beliefs that are untrue, but plausible. Delusions can be paranoid in nature; however, characters in early stages will be high functioning in their daily life. At higher stages the character will exhibit odd or bizarre behavior as a result. The player and the GM should categorize the type of delusion based on the DSM definitions: erotomanic (someone is in love with the character), grandiose, jealous, persecutory, somatic, and mixed, i.e., more than one type.

Game Effects: With levels of mental illness below 10, the character will begin to feather the nest of their delusion, accumulating evidence (false or misinterpreted) that their delusion is in fact real. The character will dismiss observations to the contrary. Upon reaching 10 levels of mental illness, the character develops paranoia regarding their delusion where contrary evidence is a fabrication of the presenter, usually her mates and family. Upon reaching 20 levels of mental illness, the delusion becomes an obsession and anyone or thing that

does not corroborate the delusion becomes an enemy and is considered hostile. At level 25, the character will become violent if required to confront the falsehood of their delusion.

Treatment:

- ☛ Counseling per normal rules, see below.
- ☛ Pharmaceuticals prevent the progression of the disorder and reduce its effects to 5 levels of mental illness. The character will exhibit symptoms at level 5 while the actual levels of mental illness are decreased through other means. Electroshock therapy will reduce the level of mental illness by 2D6 levels per treatment. The character can undergo only one treatment per week.
- ☛ Self Treatment does not work.

Dementia: Dementia is a non-specific set of signs and symptoms affecting areas of cognition may be memory, attention, language, and problem solving. The loss of cognition is serious and debilitating. In the early stages, characters with dementia will be easily confused, disoriented, have trouble speaking and remembering. In intermediate stages, the character exhibits agitation (impatience with lost abilities and other people), *sun-downing* (an interruption of circadian rhythms causing out of phase or disrupted sleep cycles), and wandering (leaving familiar or protected areas often in a disoriented state). In late stages, the character exhibits a thought disorder and potentially violent agitation.

Characters with a thought disorder exhibit a disconnection and disorganization of the semantic content of speech and writing. In the severe form speech becomes incomprehensible and often called *word-salad*. Writing, while appearing intentional when written, is in fact incomprehensible.

Game Effects: Up to 10 levels of mental illness will have the character displaying more and more episodes of disorientation, memory loss, and an inability to communicate. Upon reaching 10 levels of mental illness, the GM (or the player) can call for an episode in which the character's symptoms are role played. Also at 10 levels, the character will have an atypical sleep pattern, often needing only 4 hours of sleep per day, but wandering off for a nap at strange times. Interesting role playing there.

Upon reaching 20 levels of mental illness, the character can exhibit though disorder. The character can become violently aggressive when trying to communicate, at being woken up from napping or forced to go to bed, or from being forced back after wandering off. At 25 levels the character has no memory or cognition of their surroundings, is confused in the identity if those around her, and will go on

walk-about without reason. Alternately the player can have their character exhibit the catatonia (reasoning) disorder.

Treatment:

- ☛ Counseling works normally for characters with less than 20 levels of mental illness.
- ☛ Pharmaceuticals prevent the progression of the disorder and reduce its effects to 5 levels of mental illness. The character will exhibit symptoms at level 5 while the actual levels of mental illness are decreased through other means. Electroshock therapy does not work. The attending physician can use a pharmaceutical protocol when passing a Formidable [Medical] test to diagnose the character. The character receives a reduction of 3D6 levels of mental illness. The protocol takes a week and can only be applied once per month.
- ☛ Self Treatment does not work.

Catatonia (Reasoning): Characters with this form of catatonia exhibit the same symptoms as the Resolve version, but have slightly different symptoms and treatments. Also, catatonia (reasoning) does not progress into coma, but persists until the character dies naturally. Advanced stages of catatonia (reasoning) require the character to receive sustenance through a feeding tube as the character has no volition at all. This is a form of a non-pathological vegetative state.

Game Effectd: Catatonia (reasoning) exhibits the same symptoms as the "resolve" form except that characters with the reasoning form do not for slip into a coma.

Treatment:

- ☛ Counseling does not work.
- ☛ Pharmaceutical and electroshock therapy can rouse the character from catatonia, but selecting the right treatment requires a Difficult [Medicine] check. Failure causes an addition of 1D6 levels of mental illness. Critical Failure causes an increase of 2D6 levels. Normal success provides the character with a protocol that provides 1D6 levels of mental illness reduction per week. Outstanding Success provides the character with a one-time cure of 3D6 levels of mental illness and the same weekly benefit as a Normal success. Comatose characters do not respond to these treatments. Electroshock therapy is successful when properly diagnosed: i.e. the attending physician passes a Formidable [Medical] test, in which case the character recovers

2D6 levels of mental illness. Only one electroshock is allowed per week.

- ☛ Self Treatment does not work.

CURING MENTAL ILLNESS

To simplify things, all mental illness gets worse if left untreated. For each week where no treatment is undertaken or sustained, the character will add on to their levels of mental illness at the rate of 1 level per week out of treatment. Some treatments provide a boost to recovery of mental illness levels in the form of a dice roll. Treatments that are *contraindicated* actually damage the character's mental state.

In general there are three treatment methods:

- ☛ *Psychological Counseling*: psychotherapy, psychiatry, etc.
- ☛ *Physiological Treatments*: pharmaceuticals and electroshock therapy
- ☛ *Self Treatment*: meditation, introspection, time off, etc.

These treatments can be applied concurrently. For example, pharmaceuticals can be used to halt degeneration while counseling or self-treatment is conducted.

PSYCHOLOGICAL COUNSELING

Psychological counseling involves a psychological professional guiding the restoration of the character's mental faculties. This consists of a series of counseling sessions between the disturbed character and a trained character or NPC using the Psychology skill.

Depending on the regularity of the sessions, recovering from the breakdown may stretch for weeks or months. As a minimum, the mentally disturbed character must spend one hour a week receiving treatment. Should this minimum not be met, the character is no longer considered "in treatment", and their mental state will degenerate, i.e. accrue levels of mental illness normally (+1/week). Sessions can only be done in a safe, protected environment. The character must be well rested and unstressed by external

influences (difficult for a raving maniac, but straightjacket and padded cell will suffice).

After each four hours of counseling, the counselor makes an Average [Psychology] check and uses the empathic Power Level Table to determine the Stages of Success. The Psychology skill (1st edition) or the Psychology asset (d20 editions) is used in place of the empathy skill or asset. The stages of success read from the Power Level Table are the number of levels of mental illness that are recovered. This value is subtracted from the character's total. Failure indicates a lack of progress (no increase in levels of mental illness), but halts the degeneration for that week. Outstanding Success doubles the stages of success, while a Critical Failure results in a major set-back and a 1D6 increase in the character's levels of mental illness.

PHYSIOLOGICAL TREATMENTS

PHARMACEUTICAL THERAPY

In game terms, pharmaceutical treatments fall into two broad categories: mental state sustainment and shock treatment. In sustainment, the use of prescription drugs prevents the disorder from increasing – the weekly increase to the character's levels of mental illness is halted while on the drugs. In shock treatment, the attending physician or psychiatrist must diagnose the character's disorder prior to the first treatment. The GM makes a diagnosis test as an Average [Medical] check. The result is located in the Treatment Effectiveness table. Each week another protocol can be tried by performing another Treatment Effectiveness check.

Therapy Effectiveness

Diagnosis Check	Treatment Indication	Benefit / Detriment
Success	Correctly indicated	nD6 reduction in mental illness levels
Outstanding Success	Correctly indicated, treatment is extremely beneficial	2 x nD6 reduction in mental illness levels
Failure	Not indicated, treatment ineffective	No change to mental illness levels
Critical Failure	Contraindicated, treatment is detrimental	1D6 increase in mental illness levels

ELECTROSHOCK THERAPY

Electroshock Therapy is properly called electroconvulsive therapy (ECT) is a psychiatric treatment in which seizures are electrically induced in the character for therapeutic effect. ECT has proven as a treatment for severe major depression, bipolar disorder, and catatonia. First introduced in the 1930s, ECT has gained widespread use as a form of treatment in the 1940s and 1950s; today, an estimated 1 million people worldwide receive ECT every year, [3] usually in a course of 6–12 treatments administered 2 or 3 times a week.

In game terms, the sequence of weekly treatments is rolled into one check per week. Whether the therapy is effective and its efficacy is given for the individual disorders. If successful, the benefit is immediate by rolling dice and lowering the character's levels of mental illness.

Like pharmaceutical therapy, electroshock therapy must be an appropriate therapy for the character. Prior to the first use of ECT, the GM performs an Average [Medical] check but, does not tell the result to the character that is rolling for success in the treatment. After the character has rolled for the result, use the Therapy Effectiveness table to apply the results to the character's mental illness levels.

SELF-TREATMENT

Some breakdown types allow the patient to recover on their own. To treat themselves, characters must remain in a safe environment, free from external influences for the week of the treatment. Once per week the character can attempt self-treatment by making a Difficult [Willpower] check for success. The Power Level Table is used to calculate Stages of Success using the character's Willpower skill or Willpower asset. The results are used in the same way as counseling results. Stages of Success reduce the character's levels of mental illness with an Outstanding Success doubling the result. Failure means that no treatment benefit was received, although the weekly degeneration was halted. Critical Failure indicates a set-back of 1D6 levels of mental illness.

LINKS:

DSM: APA, <http://www.psych.org/MainMenu/Research/DSMIV/DSMIVTR.aspx>

Disorders: Wikipedia, http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Main_Page.

"Well, all I know is what I read..."
Will Rogers (1879 – 1935)

A special thanks to Marcus Bone for the ideas behind these rules, namely the three mental faculties.



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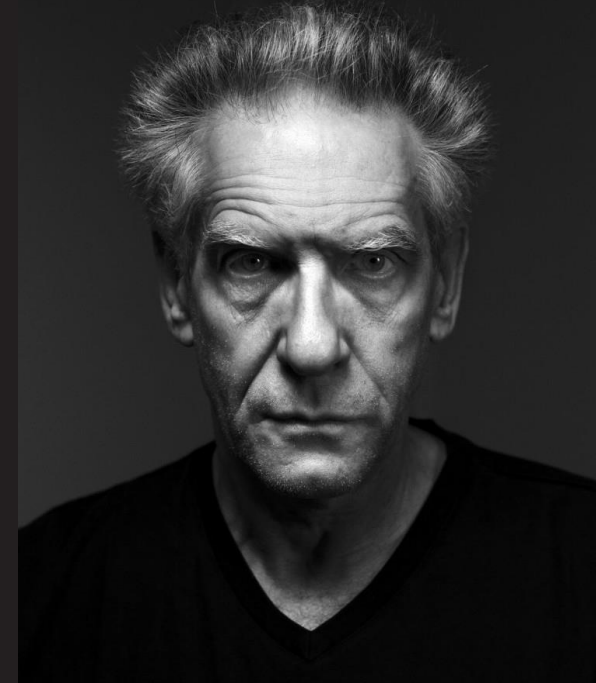
protodimension magazine

David Paul Cronenberg, OC OOnt FRSC (born March 15, 1943) is a Canadian filmmaker, screenwriter and actor. He is one of the principal originators of what is commonly known as the body horror or veneral horror genre. This style of filmmaking explores people's fears of bodily transformation and infection. In his films, the psychological is typically intertwined with the physical. In the first half of his career, he explored these themes mostly through horror and science fiction, although his work has since expanded beyond these genres. He has been called "the most audacious and challenging narrative director in the English-speaking world."

-Wikipedia



DAVID PAUL CRONENBERG



Born	David Paul Cronenberg March 15, 1943 (age 71) Toronto, Ontario, Canada
Alma Mater	University of Toronto
Occupation	Director, producer, screenwriter
Years Active	1966–present
Notable Works	Stereo (1969), Crimes of the Future (1970), Shivers (1975), Rabid (1977), Fast Company (1979), The Brood (1979), Scanners (1981), Videodrome (1983), The Dead Zone (1983), The Fly (1986), Dead Ringers (1988), Naked Lunch (1991), M. Butterfly (1993), Crash (1996), eXistenZ (1999), Spider (2002), A History of Violence (2005), Eastern Promises (2007), A Dangerous Method (2011), Cosmopolis (2012), Maps to the Stars (2014)