

protodimension magazine



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Managing Editor: Norm Fenlason
Chief Editor: Tad Kelson
Contributing Editor: Lee Williams
Art Direction: Norm Fenlason
Cover: Alejandro Mirabal

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As a fan-based publication, **Protodimension Magazine** is always looking for contributions by the fan community. Please see the **Protodimension Magazine** website at <http://www.protodimension.org/zine>. Submissions can be sent via email to submissions@protodimension.com

protodimension magazine



creepy fish-men by Alejandro Mirabal

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CONTENTS

- 4 **Dithering in the Dark**
Words from the chief
by Tad Kelson
- 5 **Marburg Z**
Contagion-the sincerest form of flattery
by Jason D. McEwan
For T2K & Dark Conspiracy
- 8 **Prancing Ponies II, Black Rifle Variations**
Covering the ubiquitous AR15/CAR15
by Jason D. McEwan
For Dark Conspiracy
- 10 **Random P-Dim Determination**
Quick generation of alternate worlds
by CW Kelson III (Tad)
For Dark Conspiracy
- 15 **The Istrian Affair**
A Dark Conspiracy scenario
by John H Godsland (1994 original)
and Lee Williams (2014 revision)
For Dark Conspiracy
- 22 **Out Law or Outlaw**
Life going downhill
by Norm Fenlason
Fiction
- 24 **The Yakobi Island Artifact**
An accounting...
by Jason Huls
Plot Hook
- 25 **Ken and Protodimension Talk About Stuff**
An interview with Ken Hite
by Lee Williams
Interview
- 27 **The Goblin Market**
A Proto-dimension
by CW Kelson III (Tad)
For Dark Conspiracy/Conspiracy Rules
- 30 **Hole In The Dark**
Dark history fleshed out
by Eric Fabiashi
For Dark Conspiracy
- 32 **Small Arms Instructor**
A targetted career
by Jason D. McEwan
For Dark Conspiracy
- 34 **Gulf Airstream Vardo**
Semi-apocalyptic lifestyle
by Jason D McEwen
For Dark Conspiracy
- 35 **Thunder Five**
A firearm
by Lee Williams
For Dark Conspiracy and Call of Cthulhu
- 36 **Call Of the Were Boar**
A Study of the Methods and Operations of This Invasive Dark Minion Species
by Eric Fabiashi
For Dark Conspiracy
- 39 **What's Your Emergency?**
High Tek and Folk Tek - medical gear for Minion Hunters
by Kevin O'Neill
For Dark Conspiracy
- 44 **No Longer Your Friend**
Hand grenades
by Jason D McEwen
For Dark Conspiracy
- 45 **From Under the Floorboards**
Pod-people news
by Lee Williams



IN THE DARK

THE TWENTY SIDED dice is one of the two most iconic dice in the roleplaying game hobby. From the first games to the most recent incarnations of old classics, the d20 is what seems to symbolize the RPG world the most.

So 4 quarters to a year and 5 years since it all began equals 20, which is the issue of Protodimension Magazine we are on. Which is longer than many conventional magazines might last with still great page counts issue after issue. So here we are and things are looking good for us here. So that is something for us over here to be proud of.

You know it is the little things in life. Things like new games and settings, new companies to patronize and support. These are the good things about our hobby. New endeavors to support by way of Kickstarter, IndieGoGo, and Patreon. From RPGs to Boardgames this is a great time for the overall gaming hobby and to be a gamer.

Every issue we get articles that come in, supporting our core systems and new ones. Articles that amaze me with the generosity involved with their writing and submitting them to be shared with the world. With that said we have lots of articles this time around. Support for Dark Conspiracy dominates this issue from weapons and creatures and adventure support as well. Add in an interview with gaming legend Ken Hite and we have some great stuff to share with everyone.

We Three Hombres do enjoy bringing **Protodimension Magazine** to our loyal readers and contributors each and every quarter. So here is to the next 20 issues being spent with the gaming community.

Good Gaming.
Tad Kelson
Editor in Chief
Protodimension Magazine

MARBURG Z

Contagion-the sincerest form of flattery

by Jason D. McEwan

FOR T2K & DARK CONSPIRACY

MARBURG-Z IS A possible contagion for the Twilight Biohazard entry in the survey on p. 280 of **Twilight 2000 V2.2**. The disease is a filovirus that has combined with a prion to form a hideous pandemic. Originally bio-engineered bacteria was posited, but this is based on a disease being researched in at least three labs in Russia, left over from Soviet weapons projects. This virus is initially airborne, but mutates to contact with fluids, usually bites. 90% of the area's population will contract the pandemic, 90% of these will die, 10% become "Weepers", the remaining 10% are uninfected, 1-2% are immune.

Twilight 2000 has rules for scavenging, other aspects for survival horror. If used with *Dark Conspiracy*, I'd suggest an isolated locale. The authorities will respond with a large FAE or metal slurry bomb. But Gremlins make a good reason the plague got out.

MARBURG Z

Transmission: Initially airborne, later contact with infected blood or saliva, typically through bites or wounds. Infection Number 7.

Symptoms: Sudden severe headaches, fever, nausea, vomiting, fatigue, diarrhea, fatigue

Diagnosis: Difficult
Misdiagnosed as: Ebola, Hemorrhagic Fever, Typhoid Fever, Typhus.
Treatment: Relieve pain, fever +1, intravenous fluids +1

COURSE OF THE DISEASE

Incubation: 2D6 days

Phase I: 1D6 days, patients begin hemorrhaging from eyes and ears at the end of the phase.

Phase II: 1D6 days, prion lesions start in this phase.

Base Recovery Number: 25

Failed Recovery Death Probability: 10

Postrecovery Debility: none, ocular bleeding stops in 1D6 days.

Survivors have reduced vision, and half INT, CHA and EDU reduced to 0. They have melee at Novice skill regardless of previous NPC level before infection. The ocular hemorrhaging has given them a name among the uninfected: *The Weepers*.

JFK is the initial point of infection in North America, ironically among the first to be infected are numerous high level officials from FEMA, Department of Homeland Security attending a conference. These in turn infect most of the eastern seaboard's state and local crisis personnel. By the time the first vectors reach Asia, Europe is in chaos and the

PROTODIMENSION MAGAZINE

United States, Canada, Mexico are having outbreaks in most large cities.

Tom and Maryam crept up to the convenience store window while I kept a look out. The Glock Tom thrust in my hand was heavy. Maryam had been in the Israeli military, she got his AR15, Tom had his dad's old army .45 pistol. Tom says the Glock is a good beginner's pistol, so I'm using it. Maryam was a college student staying with family, she was with a cousin going to a movie. Tom was a local blue collar type who liked guns and trucks, I went to college as well, but my paper isn't likely to be turned in.....

This campaign won't have the clash of opposing armies as per the standard T2K world. But other items

remain: salvage, communities, brigands, etc. And of course the infected are a constant threat, even immune doesn't mean inedible.

We met at campus, Tom worked for maintenance, Maryam and I were students. Eventually no one came to check, no all clear was given. Tom had retrieved the Glock left in the campus police office and the keys to a king cab pickup. It was decided that we'd go to Tom's place since it was closest, then try and find others. Our first encounter with a weeper was on the commons, she was one of the politically active "99" types. I thought she'd been mauled by dogs, then I noticed what she held. The thought of that chewed on forearm still makes me queasy.

PC's probably were obeying quarantine, and either ran out of supplies or need to find loved ones. If from separate areas, perhaps a fire drove them from their shelters. Of course, infected will be displaced as well. I hope that this helps expand possibilities for the wealth of Twilight/Dark Conspiracy fans.

EEWWW! The clerk was eaten! Tom covered the remains with a tarp from a vehicle in the lot. Maryam grabbed a carton of cigarettes, I stuffed canned food into pillow case. Tom was trying to activate the pumps. A banging started on the men's bathroom door, everyone pointed their weapons that way.....





5-Minute Character Creation
Endless Possible Worlds



We do not take paid advertising. However, there are some efforts that we feel deserve fanfare and sharing. This is one of them. *d6xd6 CORE RPG* is a lightweight, but effective play system that allows any (and I mean any) setting to be ported to it. Led by Lester Smith, the Kickstarter has been funded and based on shop sales, the ultimate size of the book may increase. As Les gets paid writers to port settings into *d6xd6 CORE*, pages for the setting are added. The basic rules are available on the website and I have play-tested them. Simple yet subtle!

d6xd6 CORE RPG! A new game from the creator of *Dark Conspiracy!* Visit www.d6xd6.com.

Lester also asked us to let you know that the custom *CORE RPG* dice are available as Add-Ons to the Kickstarter. A \$1 pledge opens the door (yielding basic e-book and a PDF of business card character sheets), and a \$3 Add-On gets a die mailed to you worldwide. A real bargain!

PRANCING PONIES II, BLACK RIFLE VARIATIONS

Covering the ubiquitous AR15/CAR15

by Jason D. McEwan

FOR DARK CONSPIRACY

Paul Mulcahy's site at <http://www.pmulcahy.com/> has "Post Ban" AR's that are still made for those states with their own restrictions on rifle features. The M177E2 is available with a 3cm longer flash suppressor bringing the barrel to the legal 40cm. Stats are the same except there's no burst feature. Colt doesn't sell the semi M177.

Ann hefted one of Creighton's rifles, an old SP1 with a new barrel to use both USGI 5.56 ball rounds and retro night sights. The only reason she knew that was from his training course. Ann appreciated the lighter weight as she covered the lair's back door.

The longest issued U.S. service rifle has a lot of variants; however the number of civilian models is staggering. Here is a selection covering the 1960's to 2014. These semi autos will be more common and easily available than their military counterparts in most of the United States. Again Paul Mulcahy's website gets a plug for inspiration. This article will go into details on some specific models and a little more (trivial) detail.

AR15's are easily customized in the search for the desired configuration, and subject to trends and whims. Several companies make retro barrels that can use both M193 and M855 ball. Swapping barrels out is an Easy: Gunsmith task (replacement barrels cost \$75 game dollars). Most CAR-15's with bayonet lugs leave the bayonet loose on the barrel and aren't effective due to the shortened hand guards and front sight position. After-market barrels are as above; an entire upper is about 50% the cost. Barrel contours are "pencil" (thin), "government" (thick from the front sight to the barrel crown), "heavy" (thick from the chamber to the barrel crown). The take down pins are offset between AR-15's and M16 receiver halves. Adaption requires offset hinge pins (weight negligible, price \$15). All these rifles and carbines count as ConTek in DCIII, though some might be rare due to Nome collectors.



SP-1 Rifle

Ammo	ROF/Rld	Dam	Pen	Bulk	Mag	Recoil		
						SS	Brst	Rng
5.56N	SA	2	1-nil	5	20/30	2	—	55

Made from 1964-1984, these rifles have a bayonet lug, and a standard 50cm "pencil" or thin barrel. The rifle doesn't have forward assist or case deflector on the upper receiver. It is otherwise similar to the early M-16/M-16A1.

Weight: 3.48 kg
Price: \$850 (V/V)

SP-1 Carbine

Ammo	ROF/Rld	Dam	Pen	Bulk	Mag	Recoil		
						SS	Brst	Rng
5.56N	SA	2	1-nil	3/4	20/30	2	—	40

Made from 1978-1985 companion carbine has a collapsible stock, 40cm barrel, bayonet lug, and is otherwise similar to the AR-15 rifle. The R6420 CAR-15 is similar and made from 1985-1987.

Weight: 2.63 kg
Price: \$850 (C/C)

AR-15A2 Sporter II (R6500)

Ammo	ROF/Rld	Dam	Pen	Bulk	Mag	Recoil		
						SS	Brst	Rng
5.56N	SA	3	1-nil	5	20/30	3	—	55

This and similar rifles are made continually up to today. The R6500 was similar to the M-16A2 without burst or automatic fire, but had the earlier rear sight. The Sporter II has a "Government" profile barrel, forward assist, bayonet lug.

Weight: 3.45 kg
Price: \$750 (V/V)

AR-15A2 Govt Carbine (R6520)

Ammo	ROF/Rld	Dam	Pen	Bulk	Mag	Recoil		
						SS	Brst	Rng
5.56N	SA	3	1-nil	3/4	20/30	2	—	40

First made in 1988, this is the first collapsible stock carbine with factory case deflector, improved rear sight, it still has the 40cm barrel and bayonet lug.

Weight: 2.63 kg
Price: \$750 (C/C)

AR-15A2 H-Bar & Delta H-Bar

Ammo	ROF/Rld	Dam	Pen	Bulk	Mag	Recoil		
						SS	Brst	Rng
5.56N	SA	3	1-nil	5	20/30	2	—	55

These are heavy barreled match grade rifles: the H-Bar (R6600) has the bayonet lug, forward assist and the Delta variant (R6600DH) adds a factory scope and mount and optional raised cheek piece for the stock.

Weight: 3.63 kg (H-Bar), 4.54 kg (Delta H-Bar)
Price: \$1,100 (C/C) (H-Bar), \$1,250 (R/R) (Delta H-Bar)

AR-15A2 Govt Rifle (R6550)

Ammo	ROF/Rld	Dam	Pen	Bulk	Mag	Recoil		
						SS	Brst	Rng
5.56N	SA	3	1-nil	5	20/30	2	—	55

Made in 1988-1990, this is similar to the Sporter II, but has the A2 improved rear sight, forward assist, bayonet lug, 50cm government profile barrel.

Weight: 3.54 kg
Price: \$800 (C/C)



AR-15A2 Govt Rifle

AR-15A3 Tactical Carbine (R6721)

Ammo	ROF/Rld	Dam	Pen	Bulk	Mag	Recoil		
						SS	Brst	Rng
5.56N	SA	3	1-nil	3/4	20/30	2	—	40

A heavy barreled carbine with bayonet lug, forward assist, case deflector and adjustable butt stock, rail mount for a detachable handle or BUIS. Originally a law enforcement-only item.

Weight: 3.3 kg
Price: \$700 (S/C)



AR-15A3 Tactical

Colt LE6920 Carbine

Ammo	ROF/Rld	Dam	Pen	Bulk	Mag	Recoil		
						SS	Brst	Rng
5.56N	SA	3	1-nil	3/4	20/30	2	—	40

This is a civilian semi auto M4A1 with a 40CM barrel, as reflected in the range stat. The 6920 is big with private citizens as well as civilian law enforcement. The carbine has the flattop receiver with a mounting rail, bayonet lug and forward assist. The barrel has the GL mounting groove.

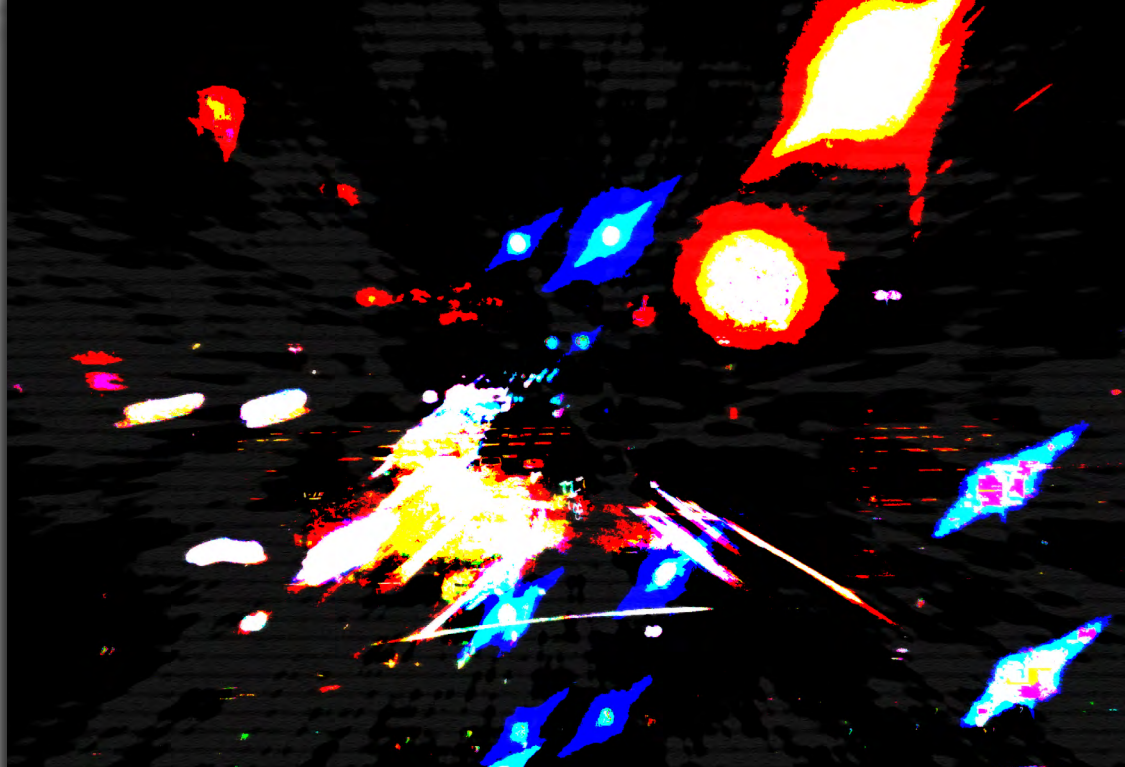
Weight: 2.63 kg
Price: \$900 (C/C)

RANDOM P-DIM DETERMINATION

*Quick generation of alternate
worlds*

by CW Kelson III (Tad)

FOR DARK CONSPIRACY



ONE OF THE core concepts in the Dark Conspiracy setting is that of other dimensions that Empathic Characters can travel to, and from where many of the dangers in the setting come to Earth from.

In the 2nd Edition Core Books there are 12 different proto-dimensions listed and detailed out, along with directions to create new ones and the specific instructions on how to travel to them and return, safely.

This article is more intended for those GMs that have difficulty coming up with ideas for other Proto-dimensions, or for those times when suddenly a game session takes a turn in an unexpected direction and something needs to be generated on the spur of a moment. In the P-Dims in the Referee Book there are other aspects to the entire Dimensional Travel portion of the game such as the Fragmentary proto-dimension, Quantum proto-dimensions, and interstices. Those are not

considered in this article. Additionally ideas such as Sticky Proto-dimensions and other overall modifies are left out of this short article deliberately. If a GM desires to add in such elements to the P-Dims they generate from this then that will only add on depth and variety.

So on to some core concepts and constraints before getting to the tables.

Halflands are more like concepts or archetypes of places, or ideals. Essentially a single concept taken form in a single dimension.

Splinterlands are more like realized worlds, or variations on worlds, or perhaps the inspirations for dreams and myths or mythologies. These are more of an expansion on an idea, or a spinoff of something present already in the world or history.

GENERATION TABLES

Use the following tables to assist in creating a new Proto-dimension

1. DETERMINE THE PROTO-DIMENSION TYPE

Proto-Dimension Type	
1D10	Type
1-5	Halfland
6-10	Splinterland

2. DISCONTINUITY

Pick one of the two sub tables on which to roll. If the second table is chosen it could make it very difficult to enter, and then exit, a particular P-Dim.

2.a Lesser Differences

1D10	Discontinuity
1-4	-1
5-8	0
9-10	1

2.b Greater Differences

1D10	Discontinuity
1	-4
2	-3
3	-2
4	-1
5-6	0
7	+1
8	+2
9	+3
10	+4

3. DETERMINE ASSIMILATION VALUE

Pick one of the two sub tables on which to roll.

3.a Lesser Assimilation

1D10	Discontinuity
1-6	Nil
7-8	1
9-10	2

3.b Dangerous Assimilation

1D10	Discontinuity
1-2	-4
3-4	-3
5-6	-2
7	-1
8	0
9	+1
10	+2

4. ELEMENTS AND INFLUENCES

Some suggestions for using the following tables in your **Dark Conspiracy** (or similar game)

Use the tables for either Halflands or Splinterlands. Some of the entries are more suitable for a one or the other. Just use it how you really see fit, in how it inspires the action in the game and how it will fit in.

Of course if a single die roll does not spark enough ideas, go ahead and take another roll or two and see what comes out of it.

INSPIRATION

Roll on the following table to determine the secondary table for inspiration.

1D6	Inspiration
1	Flora and Fauna
2	Geographical or Environmental
3	Mythological and Genre
4	Specific Ideas
5	Technology Levels <i>(Must roll a second time to get the modifier of the core tech idea)</i>
6	Roll twice and consult both tables

SECONDARY TABLES

4.a Flora and Fauna

1D10	Result
1	Amphibian
2	Avian
3	Gigantic
4	Insects / Arachnids
5-6	Mammalian
	Prehistoric Ice Age
7	Reptilian
8	Plant Life
9	Trees
10	Warped <i>(Roll twice in here, ignore this result, and merge the two)</i>

PROTODIMENSION MAGAZINE

4.b Geographical or Environmental

Roll 2D10 and 1d6 add the total on the dice.

2D10 + 1D6	Result
3	Blizzards
4	Brushfires
5	Caverns
6	Deserts
7	Earthquakes
8	Environmental Disasters <i>(Oil Spills, Fracking Spills, Water that Burns, etc)</i>
9	Fog
10	Hills
11	Hurricanes
12	Ice Fields (Arctic / Antarctic)
13	Lunar Eclipse
14	Mist
15	Plains
16	Sandstorms
17	Sinkholes
18	Solar Eclipse
19	Sunrise/Sunset
20	Swamps / Bayous / River Deltas
21	Thunderstorms
22	Tornadoes
23	Tundra
24	Twilight
25	Waterspouts

4.c Mythological and Genre

1D20	Result
1	African Continent
2	American Folklore
3	Amerindian
4	Contemporary Religious Iconography
5	Cosmic Horrors From Space
6	Dieselpunk
7	Eastern European
8	Far Eastern / Oriental
9	Grecian
10	Major Sporting or Similar Event <i>(World Cup, Tour De France, Iditarod, Olympics, Superbowl, Fireworks Display, Celebrity Wedding, etc.)</i>
11	Mesoamerican
12	Metal
13	Middle Eastern
14	Nordic
15	Punk Rock
16	Steampunk
17	Sumerian
18	Urban Legends
19	Vedic
20	Wiccan/Pagan

4.d Specific Ideas

1D20	Result
1	Agricultural Only
2	Aliens
3	Castles and Manor Homes
4	Cemetery / Mausoleum / Graveyard
5	Church
6	Clowns /Mimes
7	Conspiracies
8	Factory / Foundry / Manufacturing Location
9	Fall
10	<i>Ghost Towns</i>
11	Highways and Byways
12	Hospitals
13	Hunter Gatherers
14	Not Fully Human
15	Political Ideology (GM Choice)
16	Prisons
17	Shopping Centers
18	Spring
19	Summer
20	<i>Winter</i>

4.e Technology Levels

(Roll a second time to get the modifier of the core tech idea)

1D6	Result
1	Ancient / Primitive
2	Medieval / Renaissance
3	Early Industrial
4	40s – 60s
6	70s-80s

EXISTING P-DIMS IN THE CORE RULE BOOK

These do not include any other P-Dims created in like other issues of **Protodimension Magazine**

This gives a GM looking for a quick reference or inspiration another place to locate some data.

Additionally if a GM wanted to do so, they could reverse some of the existing P-Dims and create what would be mirror images of those. Gothic is a prime example. Instead of it being a single giant castle make it a small ghost town and adjust the flavor text to match. Instead of the suits of armor, perhaps they are store mannequins and the like as the animated defenders. Change the halls and corridors to storefronts and alleys and there is a new P-Dim with essentially Zero Effort. Or even convert it into a multilevel shopping center and the clothing racks can be animated by Gremlins or Animators, escalators that run when they want to and in the directions they desire to, etc. The possibilities are so varied to just expand or modify the 12 existing ones if a GM chooses to go that route.

Good Gaming



DARK CONSPIRACY, 2ND EDITION PROTO-DIMENSIONS

Name:	Airborne	Name:	Hades
Type:	Halfland	Type:	Halfland
Discontinuity:	2	Discontinuity:	1
Assimilation:	0	Assimilation:	0
Name:	Croatan	Name:	Mechaniaca
Type:	Halfland	Type:	Splinterland
Discontinuity:	1	Discontinuity:	1
Assimilation:	0	Assimilation:	0
Name:	Delta Seven	Name:	Plaguelands
Type:	Splinterland	Type:	Splinterland
Discontinuity:	1	Discontinuity:	2
Assimilation:	0	Assimilation:	0
Name:	Gehenna	Name:	Pyre
Type:	Halfland	Type:	Splinterland
Discontinuity:	2	Discontinuity:	2
Assimilation:	0	Assimilation:	30
Name:	Gothic	Name:	Slide
Type:	Halfland	Type:	Splinterland
Discontinuity:	2	Discontinuity:	2
Assimilation:	0	Assimilation:	20
Name:	Gray	Name:	Tartarus
Type:	Splinterland	Type:	Halfland
Discontinuity:	1	Discontinuity:	3
Assimilation:	0	Assimilation:	Special



Image by Tad Kelsen
Used with permission

THE ISTRIAN AFFAIR

A Dark Conspiracy scenario

by John H Godsland (1994 original) and
Lee Williams (2014 revision)

FOR DARK CONSPIRACY

Editor's Note: this adventure in its original form was published in issue 15 of the long-defunct UK magazine Roleplayer Independent. John kindly gave us permission to re-use it and update it if necessary, or as we said "add some polish". Thanks John!

INTRODUCTION

G-Tek Global Mining is the first company to successfully exploit off-world resources on a commercial scale. They have built the first mine on the lunar surface, mining iron ore. However, normal communications between the mining base and Earth have recently been cut. The following message is being transmitted continuously from the Moon: "The wind of Change is blowing."

This rather cryptic communique means nothing to the corporate chiefs. They believe that there has been a touch of 'cabin fever' in the base and that some of the miners mutinied after finding out that their long-awaited pay rises were not as large as they had at first hoped.

The truth, as always is far different.

THE DISCOVERY

Deep in the bowels of the Istrian mine (named after G-Tek's founder, Robert Istrian) a group of ten geologists were digging a side tunnel towards what they hoped would be a very rich ore seam. However, their drills actually penetrated through into a sealed chamber that contained huge machines of utterly alien design. In this area a Dark Lord of tremendous power has been imprisoned for millennia. The activity in the chamber caused the Dark Lord, known as the Lord of Change, to stir in its eternal sleep.

Somewhere, deep in the foul creature's brain, a spark of life was fanned into flame. The Lord of

Changes mind reached out and touched the souls of those that had dared to interrupt its' slumber. They were made slaves to the Dark (see 'The Changed Ones' below) and were sent out to do their master's bidding. Within hours they had seized control of the mining station, murdered all other personnel there, turned off the power and caused a ceiling collapse in the main shaft, thus condemning all of those working below to a slow death by suffocation. (The mine workings are sealed from the Moon's surface and pressurised). The Changed Ones are now working on a ritual to release their master.

THE MISSION

The PCs are contacted by Rick Lameda of G-Tek Global Mining to investigate proceedings on the Moon. G - Tek will pay \$1000 per day to each member of the team for information regarding the mine's status and re-establishment of communications with the complex. They will also award each player-character with a \$2500 dollar bonus if the mine is put back into production by the time the PCs leave the

Moon. Lameda also wishes the party to take along one of their corporate risk assessors, Chip Wilson, who will make insurance estimates if any damage has been done to the facility. Before confirming the job Lameda forces the PCs to sign a standard temporary employment contract with G-Tek. This will only be needed if the PCs foul up later.

Lameda will also offer to equip the PCs. This includes providing low velocity projectile and/or stun weapons. If anyone questions this, point out to the players that the Moon has no atmosphere and the mining station itself, though pressurised, has some walls that are very thin. Note also that Lameda will want the weapons back when the PCs return, unless they wish to purchase the weapons from G-Tek (at the current full market prices of course; G-Tek are not a charity after all).

(Referee: Lameda is an Experienced NPC with good communication and interpersonal skills. Wilson is a Novice NPC with reasonable computer and book-keeping skills but no combat knowledge at all.)

GETTING TO THE MOON

Transport to the Moon is in two stages. From ground to orbit is via one of G-Tek's own Delta Clipper orbiters and once in orbit the PCs are transferred to a fast recovery tug, also owned by G - Tek. The tug is used for servicing the ore freighters that ply between the Moon and Earth and has low-G training facilities on board. The normal journey time is just over two days with apparently not much to do (however, stress to the players that they are being paid for this).

Whilst on board the PCs will be given training in low-G environments (the tug has a large centrifuge for this purpose). This will stop the PCs from suffering penalties to their abilities in the 1/6th G environment of the moon. For more information on the effects of Low-G on game mechanics see the section 'Effects of Low-G' below.

ISTRIAN STATION

Upon insertion into lunar orbit, the PCs are set down on the bases landing pad by a remotely piloted drone that then withdraws to the tug. The tug remains in orbit awaiting a response from the surface.

It is only a short walk across the pad to the crew airlock. At this point all of the PCs and Chip Wilson will be wearing Vac -Suits. Remember to keep track of when they take their suits off, as some parts of the mining complex are without atmosphere. Note that Changed Ones (see below) are not able to function in the airless parts of the station.

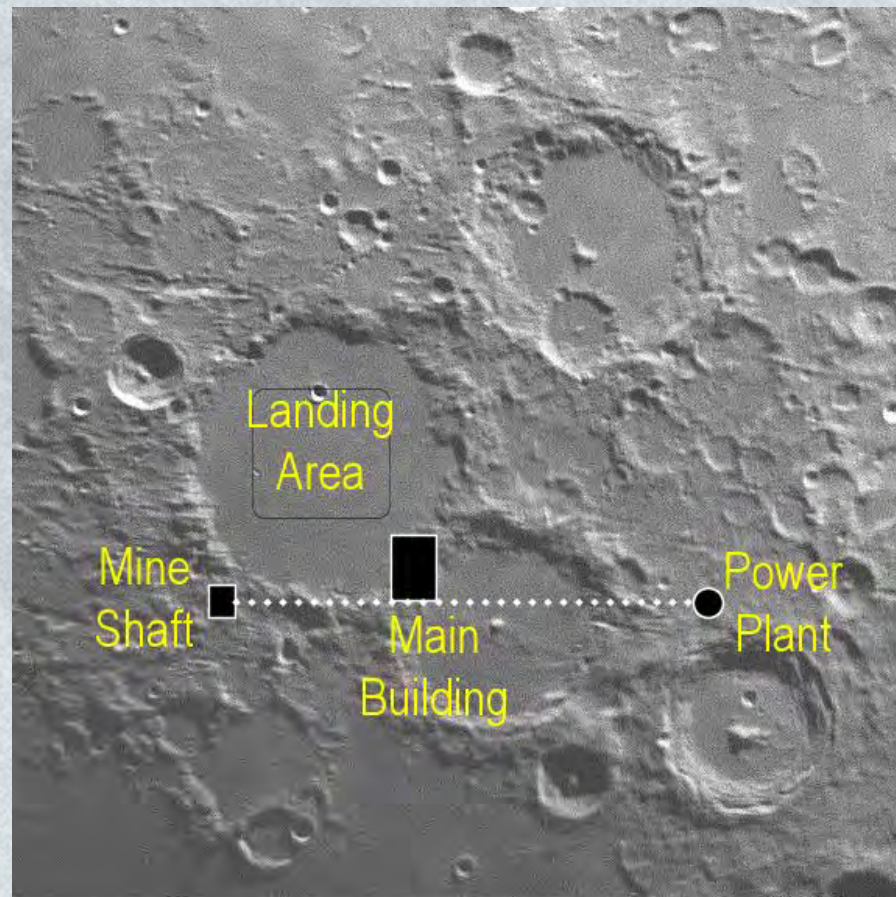
The PCs have two courses of action at this point: they can head straight inside or take a look around the outside of the complex. It is not possible to see inside the station without the use of empathic skills (Clairvoyance) as there are no windows in the complex. Any further examination will involve entering the station complex itself.

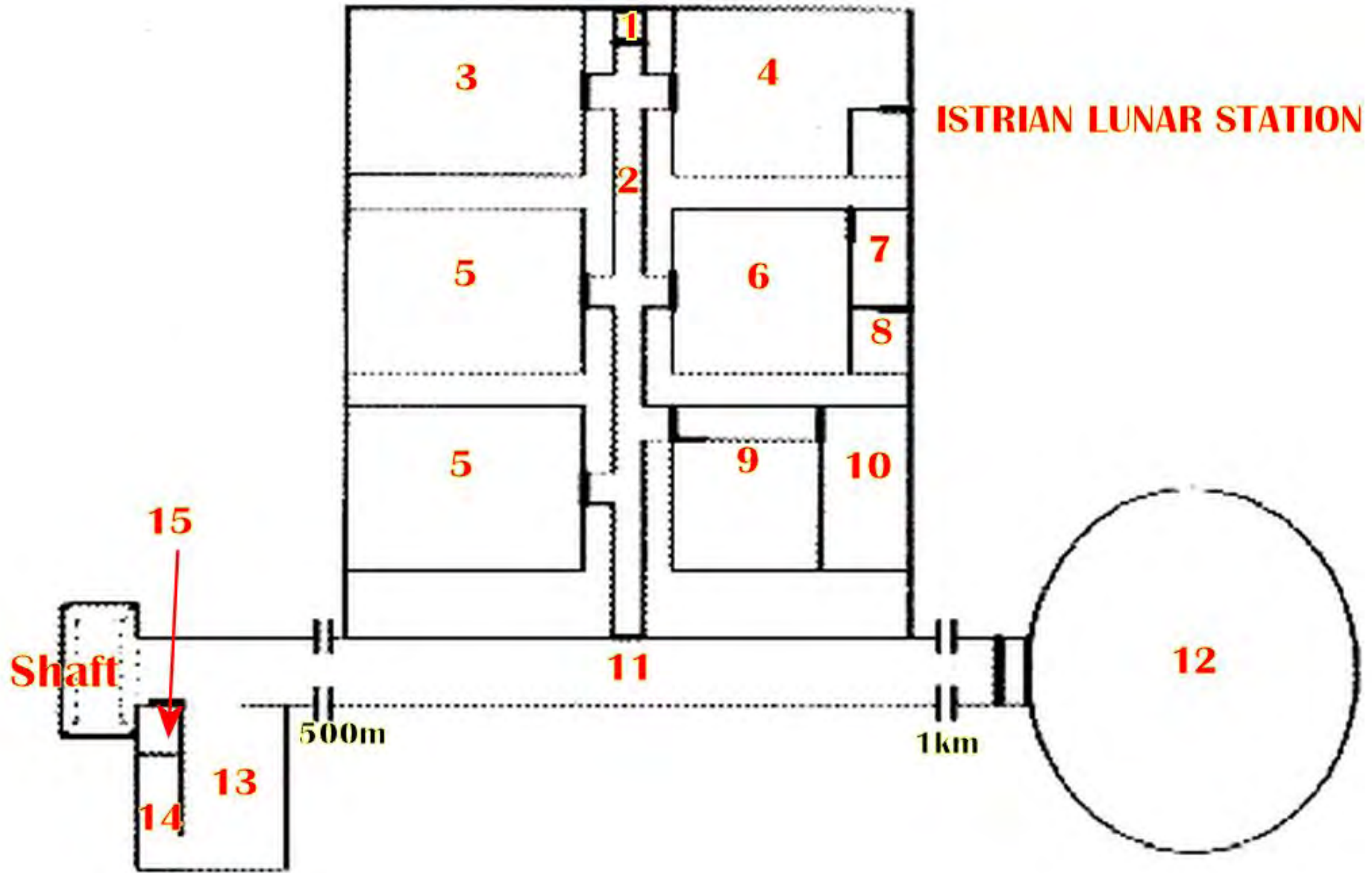
Upon entry, a scene of carnage greets the party. Mangled bodies lie scattered throughout the blood-stained corridors of the complex. All of the bodies in the complex look as if they have been killed by some form of large animal, possibly a big cat. However, a successful Difficult Observation roll will reveal that some of the

bodies look as if they have been bitten by suspiciously human looking teeth

Amongst his paperwork Wilson has a crew rota. The personnel in the complex are in three groups: miners (75), geologists (12) and support staff (20). The miners work in three eight-hour shifts. If anyone cares to count the bodies they will discover seventy-three bodies in the complex itself.

(Referee: Twenty-five miners are slowly suffocating in the depths of the mine because the power is off, and the remaining nine individuals have become Changed Ones.)





ISTRIAN LUNAR STATION

LOCATIONS

The following are the location descriptions relating to the map. Unless otherwise noted all locations described in this section have atmosphere. The air is stale because the life support systems have been switched off but it is still breathable.

- 1 - *Airlock and Vac-Suit Storage*: This area is deserted and no damage has been sustained to any part of it. Stress at this point the eerie silence of the complex and the atmosphere created by the dim emergency lighting.
- 2 - *Access corridor*: This corridor has also escaped damage. There are a few items of shredded clothing on the floor but no bodies. The clothing is what remains of some that was being worn by one of the Changed Ones prior to their change.
- 3 - *Operations*: This area has been well barricaded from the inside. It will take at least three of the PCs working in concert to break the door down. Once inside, the PCs come upon fifteen bodies that have been hideously disfigured. There is minor damage to the control panels and equipment within the room. The reactor was shut down from within this room when the Changed Ones first took control of the complex. It takes an Average test of Computer Operation to get the reactor back on-line. The fusion process will take approximately half an hour to restart properly at which time all the lights, heating, life support and other powered functions will restart. The Changed Ones will be aware of this and will come to investigate, arriving at operations within an hour.
- 4 - *Infirmary*: The infirmary has been devastated. Cabinets have been opened and their contents strewn across the floor, furniture has been overturned and bedding slashed. There appear to be three bodies in this area. However, a fourth is actually hidden under an overturned

trolley. It is the body of a male in his late twenties, relatively undamaged, although his neck is broken, his back is hunched and his fingernails appear quite long for a male. This is one of the possessed mining team who was killed by the medical staff before they were overcome.

- 5 - *Personnel Quarters*: This large dormitory style accommodation seems to have escaped most of the devastation found elsewhere. All of the bodies in here are those of personnel killed whilst asleep. The assassins appear to have moved swiftly but silently around all thirty-five individuals and slashed their throats.
- 6 - *Refectory*: There is only one thing of note in this area. At one of the tables a plate with a half-eaten slice of bread, a block of cheese and a knife has been left. The food is now going mouldy. Of the diner, there is no sign.
- 7 - *Kitchen*: The kitchen, although containing no bodies, has been completely trashed. Food litters the floor and is smeared across the walls and the ceiling. Most of the food is mouldy and the smell of rotten meat hangs in the air.
- 8 - *Meat Locker*: The only way to access the meat locker is by breaking down the door. It has been locked from the inside by a miner who was eating the sandwich found in the refectory. He hid in the meat locker when the Changed Ones first started on their killing spree and has now frozen to death because he was too afraid to come out and see what was happening.
- 9 - *Entertainment Lounge*: The lounge was used for leisure purposes by off-duty staff. This was obviously the scene of some resistance because most of the furniture has been destroyed. The remaining furniture forms a makeshift barricade, behind which lie sixteen bodies.
- 10 - *Gym*: The Gym has been untouched by events elsewhere in the complex. The only remaining (edible) food in the complex is in a vending

machine here. It consists of snack bars and high-protein drinks.

- 11 - *Service Tunnel*: This service tunnel connects the living quarters, mine and power plant together. It also has a small monorail built into it to speed passage between the mine and the living area. If the power plant has not been reactivated this tunnel will be in near darkness as emergency lights are spaced at fifty metre intervals. The monorail will not operate without electricity.
 - 12 - *Power Plant*: This is a small fusion reactor that is used to provide all power in the complex. The area is in vacuum and its only method of control is from Operations (see above). This area has been left deliberately vague as it is unlikely that the players will want or need to visit this section.
 - 13 - *Workshop*: This area is used for the maintenance of mining machinery. All of the equipment here is undamaged. There are many power tools, such as saw lathes, milling machines and drills in full working order (if the power is back on).
 - 14 - *Equipment Store*: This locker is used to store spares for use in the workshop.
 - 15 - *Disaster Room*: In an emergency this room can be used for first aid and as a backup control room if Operations is unable to communicate with the mine. There are two bodies in here, apparently of the safety team who normally man this station around the clock.
- Mine Shaft*: This is a large square hole going straight down for six hundred metres (2000') and up for sixty metres (200'). Steel lift cables can be seen descending into the darkness below. (Note that even if the power is on the shaft is still unlit). There is a ladder set into the wall of the shaft that leads up and down. If the PCs attempt to call the lift they will be unsuccessful. The Changed Ones have control of the lift.

ENCOUNTERS

The PCs will come to the attention of the Changed Ones in one of three ways:

1. One of the PCs uses the empathic discipline Dimension Walk.
2. The power in the complex is restarted.
3. The PCs attempt to call the lift.

It takes the Changed Ones approximately twenty minutes to reach the complex once alerted to the presence of the PCs. If the power is back on the Changed Ones will take the monorail and will arrive within about ten minutes. Initially, two Changed Ones will be sent to investigate. They move around in the suspended ceiling of the complex, waiting for a member of the party to be alone. They will then pull up a ceiling tile directly above the unsuspecting victim who is then hoisted up into the ceiling void, knocked unconscious and taken down to the Lord of Changes lair. The Changed Ones will only try this once as they don't want to push their luck. The most likely candidate for abduction is Chip Wilson as he tends to wander out of sight for minutes at a time, the last the PCs see of him (until they enter the mine) is his legs disappearing into the ceiling void.

IN THE MINE

The mine is a long dark tunnel running for approximately three kilometres from the bottom of the vertical shaft, and has many smaller tunnels branching off it. Approximately two and a half kilometres there has been a major ceiling collapse, which is beyond the capabilities of the PCs to rectify. Thirty-five miners are trapped behind the collapse, and if the power has been restored then they have air: they do not, however, have sufficient food or water to last much longer. The Lord of Change must be defeated quickly and a rescue team sent into the mine or they will all die, and their deaths will mean the freeing of the Lord of Change. Any

empathic characters in the mine will feel the strength of the Dark Lord's mind but will be unable to focus on its exact position until they pass the entrance to the tunnel leading to its chamber.

CONFRONTING THE DARK

The chamber in which the Lord of change is imprisoned is in a side tunnel approximately two kilometres from the mine shaft. The Changed Ones will not reveal the position of the chamber to the PCs and will hold off from attacking the PCs in the mine until they attempt to go down this tunnel. The tunnel is unlit. Three changed Ones will attack the PCs at this point and try to knock out any light sources they may be carrying. They will continue to harass the PCs until one is killed at which point the remaining two will withdraw to the Dark Lord's chamber.

On entering the chamber the PCs are greeted by a strange sight. They are standing at the base of a chamber that is fifty metres in diameter and approximately one hundred metres high. Around the walls are many glowing crystalline devices of unknown design or function. In the centre of the room stands a forty metre high pillar of green crystal in which the rough outline of a tall humanoid can be seen. If the PCs lost Chip Wilson then they find him here, lying naked and unconscious in front of the green pillar. A pentacle has been inscribed on the floor around his body, apparently with his blood. The PCs will now be attacked by all remaining Changed Ones and will come under mental attack from the Dark Lord as well. They have gained access to the Lord of Change's chamber and now they must find a way to defeat it.

They have two main choices: a) destroy the chamber, thus burying but not destroying the Dark Lord, or b) attempting to destroy the Dark Lord itself.

To perform the first task is a Difficult test of Demolitions. Also the PCs must have explosives and the ability to detonate them from a distance (or else get caught in the blast). If a Catastrophic Failure is rolled

Effects of Low Gravity

The Moon's gravity is 1/6th that of the Earth's. This means that all movement on the moon must be slowed down if the person is to retain control of their body. It is not possible to move around any faster than half walking pace without making an Agility roll. When the PC begins to move quickly they must make a Difficult Agility roll each phase to remain on their feet. The lower gravity of the Moon also increases the load that an individual can carry effectively, by six times. However, the greater the load the lesser the ability to control it. For items weighing more than the characters Load score a Strength check must be made to see if the item is controlled correctly. A character that falls on the moon will accelerate more slowly and will not be able to reach the same terminal velocity as on earth (if in atmosphere). On the moon, divide all falling damage by six, also bear in mind that the maximum speed that a falling body can manage is approximately twenty miles per hour. It is left to the referee to decide how to apply the above rules and what, if any, other effects low-G has on game mechanics.

Editor's note: This adventure was originally developed for 1st Edition Dark Conspiracy. Since then Conspiracy Rules has added a Zero-G skill that can be used to offset the negative effects of low gravity. Even with a specialized skill the material included here can guide GMs and players in working out mechanics and descriptions of low-G environments.

on the Demolitions check then the explosives have been laid incorrectly and cause the whole of the mine to collapse, killing all of the trapped miners. This in turn frees the Dark Lord who instantly disappears into its native proto-dimension. It will return when it has rested and recovered from its long isolation.

The second task is vastly more difficult than the first. An empathic character must fight a mental combat with the Dark Lord, which if successful will crush its mind. The empath must have the Psionic skill Mental Attack. The Dark Lord can take thirty points of damage to its head hit location before it is destroyed. However, the Dark Lord will fight back using its own Mental Attack skill.

CONCLUSION

If the PCs destroy the chamber, but not the mine then they will receive full payment plus the bonus that Lameda promised. G-Tek will avoid mining in this area. If they manage to destroy the Lord of change without destroying the Chamber then G-Tek will be very pleased and will award the PCs an extra \$500 each. Within six months a new subsidiary of G-Tek will open, making crystalline computers, and will be very successful. The PCs will receive nothing more.

If any PC attempts to open their mouth about the discovery on the moon then they will be silenced, permanently, by G-Tek. If the PCs screw up and destroy the mine then Lameda will be displeased. The PCs will receive payment minus costs to G-Tek (as it says in the contracts they signed). This means they will get nothing!

THE CHANGED ONES

<i>Strength:</i>	9	<i>Education:</i>	0*	<i>Move:</i>	3/9/18
<i>Constitution:</i>	7	<i>Charisma:</i>	2	<i>Skill/Dam.:</i>	6/2D10
<i>Agility:</i>	8	<i>Empathy:</i>	0*	<i>Hits:</i>	40 / 80
<i>Intelligence:</i>	0*	<i>Initiative:</i>	0*	<i># Appearing:</i>	See text

*The *Changed One* has no mind of its own. Use the *Lord of Changes* statistics.

The effect of the Dark Lord's possession on a human is, to say the least, dramatic. The host loses all free will and if the Dark Lord's psychic link is broken the host will die within minutes. If the host is immediately placed on life support then they will survive but only in a persistent vegetative (i.e. brain dead) state. The host's body is also altered. This starts with an elongation of the limbs and a curving of the back. The host's finger and toe nails grow and become more claw-like, and body hair starts to fall out. The eyes also change, showing a far wider pupil which gives the host the ability to see further into the infra-red spectrum, and better suits it to low light environments.

After approximately one day, the transformation is complete and irreversible. By this time, any clothing remaining on the host will be in rags and footwear destroyed (due to the lengthening of the feet). The 'Changed One' is a terrifying sight to behold because they appear as a human being, but warped and twisted by the powers of the dark.

THE LORD OF CHANGE

<i>Strength:</i>	0*	<i>Education:</i>	4**	<i>Move:</i>	N/A
<i>Constitution:</i>	0*	<i>Charisma:</i>	0	<i>Skill/Dam.:</i>	N/A
<i>Agility:</i>	0*	<i>Empathy:</i>	14	<i>Hits:</i>	See text
<i>Intelligence:</i>	6	<i>Initiative:</i>	6	<i># Appearing:</i>	Unique

*Skills****:* Darkling Empathy 6, Mental attack 8, Project Thought 6, Telepathy 7, Willpower 6.

*This represents random knowledge collected from the minds of the geologists when they were first possessed.

**These are a limited subset of the Dark Lords true powers that it is able to use whilst in its incapacitated state.

The Lord of Change is sealed in a large vat of amniotic fluid. Therefore it is unable to physically affect events, so it uses the Changed Ones for this. However, it is able to use a portion of its very powerful mind to affect other minds that it encounters. Its current position means that unless it has established a telepathic link to its victim it is unable to touch minds outside its own chamber. This is an added level of protection introduced by those that imprisoned the Dark Lord.



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Image by Vilkk Stolem
vilkk42.deviantart.com/
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OUT LAW OR OUTLAW

Life going downhill

by Norm Fenslon

FICTION

“No money, no friends, and now no family.”

“Well screw them all,” mumbled Emmet as he gave the old pickup more gas. The severity of the potholes forced him to reconsider his speed. “Crap roads, it’s all gone to...what the?”

As his truck rounded a slight bend, Emmet had to slow down to a stop. A squat machine the size of a golf cart and made entirely from stainless steel sat whirring and clicking in the middle of the rural two-lane road. A pale bluish smoke was drifting from a box sitting on a telescoping pedestal in the center of a large rectangular collection of moving parts.

Emmet turned off his car and got out to take a look at the machine. As he approached the collection of whirring gears, at least five sensor poles extended with their sensor payloads rotating to track his movement.

“Wow,” thought Emmet. “I’ll be damned...” His voice trailed off as another appendage extended with a sharp blade on the end of a complex series of ball joints. The blade whistled as the humming actuators flicked the blade to the left and right.

“Okay, I get it,” Emmet stopped his approach and just studied the thing from about 15 meters away. The blade extension retracted a bit and stopped its sweeping. Three of the sensor masts stayed focused on Emmet, but two of them retracted and tracked to look at the side of the machine.

Emmet followed their pointers and noticed what looked like track laying on the ground in a bunch. One end had

several ragged pieces of metal indicating that the track had been ripped apart probably as a result of the rough potholes. Emmet watched as telescoping arms reached down to the tracks and pulled at them while another heavier arm poked through the box-like cover. The heavier arm had huge jaws into which the smaller arm stuffed the broken track. Emmet was surprised when two other arms emerged with a cutter and grips. These new arms proceeded to grasp the first smaller arm and began cutting it.

“My, gawd, this thing is cannibalizing itself to make the repair,” mused Emmet, one of the sensor pods pointed at him twitching at the sound of his voice.

Emmet went back to the truck and rummaged in the rear cargo area, emerging with a blue metal toolbox. This he carried back to the machine, a fourth sensor pod was now watching him with stone-like interest. Emmet approached the machine until the knife appendage started sweeping the blade back and forth again. At that point, Emmet placed the tool box on the ground and opened the lid. He shook the box to rattle the tools a bit, then backed away to his original position.

The sensor pods just tracked Emmet and remained staring at him for a few minutes. After a while, one of the sensor appendages turned to the tool box, now heating up in the morning sun. The sound of the cutting and hammering was like a large metallic bug droning in the distance.

Then another sensor pod turned toward the tools and after a while, a third. Then to Emmet’s astonishment, a

panel on the machine near the ground popped open and a small wheeled vehicle, looking much like a remote controlled toy darted out of the machine’s bowels. The little machine moved very quickly towards the tool box erupting small appendages in the process. Emmet watched, amused, vaguely noticing that the noises of the cutting and repairs to the tracks was slowing down.

The small wheeled machine peered at the tools with its own sensor stalk and then darted forward with its other appendages moving in a blur, grabbing tools, shifting them around, and occasionally one of the grasping appendages would seize a tool and with the tool in its clamp, shift out of the way for the other appendages. When all the appendages had a handful the wheeled machine backed up, wheels spinning, reversed itself and sped back into the robot.

At this point Emmet noticed that the diminishing noise of the cutters hacking on the track had stopped altogether. Several muted noises in the guts of the machine told Emmet that the tools were well received, but the internal noises were not very rapid. With a sudden insight, Emmet took five steps to his left. The sensor pods sluggishly tracked to his new position, but slowly. One did not even budge. So Emmet started walking around the mysterious robot carefully keeping his distance so as not to trigger that knife-wielding arm. The sensor pods attempted to keep up with his movements, the buzzing of their actuators a constant hum.

Emmet kept this up until the sensors stopped tracking him. It was at this

point that Emmet noticed that the working noises in and outside of the robot had stopped. He approached the machine warily expecting at any moment for the knife to start towards him. The machine did not move at all.

Moving quickly Emmet grabbed a couple of tools from his box, noticing that a couple of his favorite ones were missing. He proceeded to cut the knife from the arm that had threatened him earlier. He also duct taped the sensor pods. There was still no response from the machine, so Emmet fetched his pickup and started rigging the machine to get it onto the truck. Was it luck or something else that prompted Emmet to “borrow” a truck with a winch?

With a tarp covering his new robotic possession, Emmet took roads angling west to the foothills of the Ozarks. It was near dusk that he pulled into a ghost town, long deserted. One or two street lights flickered but overall the place was very forbidding.

“Gotta get indoors pretty soon,” Emmet mumbled to himself. “Never know who or what might be around out here.”

Turning a corner, Emmet spotted a vehicle maintenance shop with what appeared to be a junkyard in the rear, its pale corpses of automobile greatness rusting in the twilight. “Perfect,” he whispered.

Emmet kept the machine under a tarp while he prepared the shop for his use. Incredibly, there was still power to the shop floor and one of the lifts still worked. Emmet worked through the night listening for the occasional clicking ominously emanating from under the tarp.

Emmet worked for the next three days, eating only from the groceries he had brought with him. Poking, prodding and studying the gleaming machine, alone with his thoughts.

The argument with his wife replayed in his mind. She wanted desperately to move into the Chicago megaplex, had a sister in the Avondale Arcology and the two of them had cooked up the move. But Emmet did not want to leave the home he built with his own

two hands. The argument had not ended well. Emmet had slammed the door hard enough to break the jam and did not even look back. Things had been good until they shut down the Robot One production plant. The company he had given 22 years to just melted away leaving everyone with a “what just happened?” expression on their clueless faces. Emmet was no different, but he was not going to roll over, and certainly was not going to sell himself away to the ballouthouses.

After finding what appeared to be a data port under a panel near the robot’s rear—he thought it was the rear, anyway—Emmet pulled an old car computer diagnostic-machine over to the stand where the robot was set-up. The diagnostic-machine had a terminal interface that Emmet hoped he could use to get into its virtual head, i.e., its software.

Emmet was surprised that as soon as the data port was plugged in, the diagnostic machine’s terminal screen erupted into page after page of characters scrolling as fast as they could be drawn. Emmet was about to pull the cord, when the screen cleared and several lines were written in the center with a blinking question mark at the bottom of the screen.

“What the...” Emmet started, then studied the lines. They appeared to be different languages. He recognized German and French, and one that might be Chinese. But some of the lines had characters way too different, it looked like some kind of make-believe language like that Klingon script he played with as a kid.

Scanning down the list, he spotted one in English: “If you can read this, enter ENG.”

Emmet pressed the keys and hit the enter key. The page cleared and the diagnostic machine spat out English words saying, “Identify yourself.”

A conversation followed between Emmet and the robot. Emmet pulled up a stool from the offices and sat chatting with the machine for hours.

“What happened to you?” Emmet posed this question in a gap in the chat.

“Completely exhausted primary power.”

“Do you use batteries?” Emmet followed.

“Yes. Also can generate power to charge batteries.”

“Can you generate power right now?” Emmet asked tentatively. Emmet really wanted to know about the power system. It was a surprisingly small part of the overall system. This was way beyond anything he had worked on. Must be some kind of HiTek military stuff.

“No.”

“Why can you not generate power?” Emmet typed. He really expected the robot to tell him how to fix the power system and in so doing teach Emmet how it works.

“No fuel. Power generator requires biologic fuel. Current reserves are gone.”

“Specify biologic fuel,” responded Emmet. He was getting a feeling. A feeling that this was way too weird.

“High energy-density organic material. Plants can work, but the density is not sufficiently high. Preference is organic tissues.”

Hence the knife arm, thought Emmet. Crap, if that thing were mobile, it probably would have taken him when they first met. So he just plain asked.

“Would you eat me for power?” Emmet held his breath.

“Negative. You are a sentient entity with a machine interface. If organic tissue has no machine interface, it can be used as fuel.”

Emmet blew out his saved breath puffing his cheeks. “Whew. That’s good.”

A rustle in the back of the shop shook Emmet back to reality. When did the sun set? He thought. Another rustle and a metallic clanging of something hitting the concrete flooring.

“Damn rats!” swore Emmet, then a new thought struck him and he smiled a grim smile.

“Rats...good.”

To the robot, he typed, keys clicking in the near darkness, “Do you have technical plans showing how to build another unit like yourself?”

“Yes, functions include replication,” simply put.

“Good, we have work to do.”



THE YAKOBI ISLAND ARTIFACT

An accounting...

by Jason Huls

PLOT HOOK

YOU ARE READING this because I may not return and someone trustworthy needs to know how the strange mutations began. I destroyed all my files at the university so no one can follow me. This is the only written account and we must take care to minimize the chance of public exposure to a sickness I don't yet understand.

A month ago an artifact was discovered in the wilderness of Yakobi Island in the southeast Alaska Bay. Two hunters from the nearby town, Sitka, found it buried at the entrance of an old mineshaft. They fled when a low, unearthly growl gurgled up from the depths. Thankfully, they brought the artifact to the authorities.

Dr. Alan Holman, a colleague of mine at the University of Chicago, was called in to investigate. Alan met the hunters and said they seemed despondent. They refused to pinpoint the mineshaft on a map. They claimed they had been drinking that day and couldn't recall if it was a mineshaft at all. Both, however, were

certain the awful snarl they heard wasn't a bear. Dr. Holman pressed for more details but gleaned nothing useful. The hunters were released and have not been heard from since.

I entered the picture a few days later. Alan contacted me from Sitka due to my proclivity for unusual archaeological cases. Upon hearing the description of the artifact, I instructed him and his three graduate students to stop handling it immediately and place it somewhere out of sight until it was safely at the university.

Alan delivered the artifact to me two weeks ago. It's crafted from some kind of black stone. The bumps and ridges on one side remind me of a seven-armed starfish. Dozens of unsettling runes cover the underbelly. I exhausted my professional network attempting to find anything with similar markings but nothing matches. It's almost as if they change under scrutiny.

Last night Alan called in a panic. I had already seen the news coverage

regarding the strange deaths of his grad students. The police showed him autopsy photos and all three bodies had different degrees of mutation. Fingers on both hands were fused together, facial features distorted. Alan grew quiet when I told him the latest reports said the bodies were missing from the morgue. We made plans to meet this morning but he never showed.

As I write this, the pinky and ring fingers on my left hand are fused. Several more cases of people with merged appendages and sudden erratic behavior have cropped up in local news across the Alaska Panhandle. The artifact's poison is spreading and I must find out how. I'm leaving with it tonight. I plan to scour Yakobi Island with whatever time I have left. Answers, gruesome as they might be, start at the bottom of that mineshaft.

Please be very careful with my research and hopefully this is not goodbye.



KEN AND PROTODIMENSION TALK ABOUT STUFF

An interview with Ken Hite

by Lee Williams

INTERVIEW



THERE IS ONE name that seems to span the majority of game systems that we cover in Protodimension, so naturally we thought we should get them to talk to us. Noted game designer, writer, history buff and all-round good egg Kenneth Hite was kind enough to grant us an interview.

PDM: *How did you first get into gaming? Where and when did you start out?*

Ken: Depending on how you define it, I got into hobby gaming when my history buff father bought a copy of GETTYSBURG and taught me to play it. I was about ten, and this was before GETTYSBURG had hexes on the map, just to set the scene here. So I grew up along with Avalon Hill, and then in 1979 or so I started playing D&D with some fellow nerds in 8th grade. Of course, in 1979 pretty much every 8th grade nerd was playing D&D, so it's not like that was anything special. I just kept at it, is all.

PDM: *How did you get into designing your own games? Was it just an extension of your existing gamer creativity or is there more to it?*

Ken: I became "DM for life" in high school, and the border between DM and designer is intentionally porous. I think

the first game I actually designed was a wargame about a 1938 invasion of Czechoslovakia, but pretty soon I was writing full-fledged campaigns for my CALL OF CTHULHU group. Again, the difference between me and every other DM, GM, and Keeper out there is that I just kept at it. I went to grad school at the University of Chicago, which suddenly meant that GenCon -- and meeting game publishers -- was just a \$20 train ticket away. Again, the border between Keeper and published writer is porous, especially at Chaosium in 1994. If it had been 2004 instead of 1994 when I started submitting stuff to companies for publication, I might have become an indie designer like all the cool kids today, but back then work-for-hire freelancing was where it was at.

PDM: *What games other than your own creations do you most enjoy playing, and which do you most enjoy refereeing?*

Ken: I enjoy playing almost any good board game, with a strong preference for richly thematic American designs over sparse German ones. I still love playing wargames, and think the GMT card-driven games are by and

large brilliant. I enjoy playing almost any well-run RPG. If I'm running it myself, my favorite has been CALL OF CTHULHU since 1981, although my current players balk at a steady diet of Lovecraftian horror. So we change it up.

PDM: *Do you have a preferred style of gameplay?*

Ken: Hard to say. In Forge terms, I suppose I'm a simulationist with a strong narrativist streak, but I really enjoy games where I as the GM get to present a complex world for the players to interact with. I bring setting and plot by the handful, and when that meets good players with strong characters, it always works well. We switch pretty regularly between mission-driven and pure sandbox gaming in my group, and even the missions often resemble "Go to this sandbox and look around for trouble."

PDM: *As fans of "Ken and Robin Talk About Stuff" we are interested to find out where the idea came from?*

Ken: That was all Robin's idea. He and I have so much fun talking at conventions that he looked around for a way to do it every week, and lo and behold when Robin looks for something he generally finds it.

PDM: *You have been giving sage advice on gaming for some time now, such as the superb "Nightmares OF Mine" as well as many system-specific products. Do you have a preference for one over the other, or is it all on the same level from your perspective?*



Ken: The advice is pretty much the same, whether there are mechanics in it or not. You could certainly take my NARRATOR'S TOOLKIT advice from the STAR

TREK; TNG RPG and use it in any GUMSHOE game; GURPS HORROR (which is where virtually all the text from NIGHTMARES OF MINE wound up after Iron Crown went bankrupt without paying me) like most GURPS genre books intentionally translates across systems. Strong indie gameplay advice is often more focused, but that's more due to the needs of single-session or short-term play being different from campaign-length play. But in general, good gaming is good gaming, as distinct from properly optimizing your individual game's mechanics.

PDM: *Which product of your own are you most pleased with, thus far?*

Ken: It's hard to pick just one. In general, I hope my later stuff is better than my older stuff, as that's kind of the point -- NIGHT'S BLACK AGENTS still pleases me a great deal, as does BOOKHOUNDS OF LONDON. In my ongoing KEN WRITES ABOUT STUFF series from Pelgrane, I think the MOON DUST MEN campaign frame and the two-issue VOODOO series are pretty great. But DAY AFTER RAGNAROK and the 4th edition of GURPS HORROR are pretty great, too. And finally, the Original Series STAR TREK RPG from Last Unicorn remains my perfect nine-toed baby.

PDM: *Apart from "Nightmares of Mine" another personal favourite are the GURPS "Suppressed Transmissions" collections. Almost anyone who knows your name is aware of your fascination for and ability to create a good conspiracy. Where does this come from?*

Ken: Being a history buff often turns one into being a secret-history buff, but in this case, I think I can fob it off on Steve Jackson for putting a Bibliography into the back of ILLUMINATI. I read Shea and Wilson's trilogy around the time I bought the game -- one likely led to the other -- and I followed up

on Steve's recommended reading list. Reading (and running games in) Lovecraft's mythos had already prepared me for much of it, of course, but I'm fairly sure that Steve Jackson can take the blame (or credit) for tilting me into full-scale trainspotting conspiratology.

PDM: *How did you become the Mythos expert that you are? Was it just a fascination with Lovecraft's work or does it stir something deeper within?*

Ken: I've loved and been fascinated with Lovecraft's work ever since "The Colour Out of Space" scared the bejesus out of my 11-year-old self. A couple of years later I found my dad's old Lancer Books paperback copy of THE DUNWICH HORROR AND OTHERS and I was hooked for life. I spent the next decade or so scouring every used bookstore in Oklahoma City for more of the stuff. Playing CALL OF CTHULHU for pretty much the same decade made sure I knew every monster and story and god and titan deeply and well. I'd love to believe that I've become a deep-dyed Lovecraftian since because of his deeper philosophical or literary qualities, but I suspect that a lot of it is still pure fascination with the sheer possibilities and richness of the Mythos universe. As for something deeper within me, triggered or awakened if you will by Lovecraft -- well, that would be telling, wouldn't it?

PDM: *We thank you very much for taking the time to answer our questions!*

You can find some of Ken's excellent work here:

www.pelgranepress.com/

The "Ken and Robin Talk About Stuff" podcast (aka KARTAS) can be found here:

www.kenandrobinaboutstuff.com/



THE GOBLIN MARKET

A Proto-dimension

by CW Kelson III (Tad)

FOR DARK CONSPIRACY/CONSPIRACY RULES

“What Kind of Magic Spell to use? Slime and Snails, or Puppy Dog Tails. Thunder or Lightning”

Labyrinth (1986)
[the movie](#)

WELCOME TO THE Goblin Market. Hope you find what you came to get. There is one Proto-dimension that is open to every being regardless. It is a place where trade and barter is the reason for existence, The Goblin Market. All manner of goods and services are available here for the asking. All someone needs to do is find a merchant and then be willing to pay what is asked in price. From gems and precious metals, to dreams and memories, or even more dire prices, can be used to barter in exchange for what is wanted. Rumors have it that nothing is off limits, with the correct connections. Rumors have it that all is possible, in the right time and at the right place.

The Goblin Market, premier vending spot for potential realities, if rumors can be trusted.

DESCRIPTION:

The Goblin Market is a splinterland with a mutable landscape. The size varies from visit to visit; normally comprising about 15 square city blocks worth of stalls, shops, stores, markets, alleys, main walking areas, and occasionally fish and open air style market areas.

There is no real difficulty reaching this P-Dim and assimilation entails no differences, no damage, no changes are made once assimilated into the dimension.

Name:	The Goblin Market
Type:	Halfland
Discontinuity:	0
Assimilation:	0

While admittedly there is no one standard look to The Goblin Market, there is one appearance more common than any other. It is an arrangement in a rough rectangle about 3 city blocks wide by 5 city blocks long. For navigation purposes it runs the long way what would be north to South. Making it run 3 Blocks wide by 5 Blocks tall. Generally speaking along the southern edge are more textiles, soft goods, woven items, clothing and things of that nature. Along the western edge would be more trinkets, tourist gifts, and small household items. What you would find in the dollar store section of a flea market. The eastern edge is the actual flea market portion where almost anything that has ever existed could, potentially, be found in a stall or store, if you looked hard and long enough with some lucky. The northern edge has a variety, weapons, knives and swords, exotic animals, strange darktek items, and any food stalls that have a more permanent basis. Around the perimeter are some shanty housing, a few warehouse affairs for the

larger merchants, and a couple of permanent looking structures that are used by the alleged management of the Goblin Market.

The most common inhabitants of the market are the fey folk called Dwarf Gremlins. They are the main merchants for the more permanent structures. Other common dark folk are Dread Sidhe and Dark Elves along with the occasional Charon running an operation of some sort. Almost all Fey Folk and Darklings can be encountered in The Goblin Market, due to the enforced truce and safety of the location.

The Goblin Market can easily have ties into different proto-dimensions such as The Gin Mill. Anyplace where commerce or trafficking in different substances is going on could have a tie or lead back to The Goblin Market. Such ties could lead to only one version of the market, making it very difficult to track down a specific lead, as that lead may not be present in all facets of the market.

"I Saw My Baby Crying Hard as Babe Could Cry, What Could I Do"
Jareth, The Goblin King

SPECIAL ATTRIBUTES:

Violence towards other patrons of The Goblin Market is expressly forbidden, made impossible by the constraints of this Proto-dimension. While someone is in the Market, they cannot be hurt, attacked, poisoned, or even die. Violence of any sort is strictly excluded from the possibilities of the place.

Yes as soon as someone steps outside of the Goblin Market, voluntarily or accidentally, then that stricture no longer applies. Many an unwary Dimensional Traveler thinking they were safe walked with someone or something they should not have, passed over a threshold, left The Market and became fair prey for their alleged friends.

It is rumored that there is a Dark Lord of sorts that oversees the P-Dim and that is what truly prevents the violence or even death.

Additionally if someone arrives in the P-Dim and they are close to death the process stops. Wounds stop bleeding, diseases cease causing damage, poisons become inert, etc. This attribute of the P-Dim does not repair any damage that has already been caused or is pre-existing. Just that an open artery will stop bleeding as soon as someone arrives here; remaining an open wound that would need tending as it will start up immediately upon exiting the place.

Lastly a side effect of the P-Dim is that any entity can communicate with any other entity. The speech from one person or creature is automatically translated into something the other person or creature can understand. This does not guarantee that one or the other will necessarily understand the ideas or concepts. Less intelligent creatures might not understand what is being asked or being said to them. A Morlock would not understand Empathic or Dimensional concepts, nor would it understand physics or quantum mechanics. This can be a barrier to complete understanding at the best of times.

Turn back, Sarah. Turn back before it's too late. Jareth The Goblin King

VARIATIONS:

For those that want a series of pre-described arrangements of The Goblin Market, here are some of the more common manifestations seen since The Goblin Market first was discovered.

Roll 1d6 and consult below Chart

- 1 A single stall, manned by three old sisters, all blind, with a single eye they share between themselves. They specialize in potions, unguents, medicinal poultices, and the like. Think of them like the Norns or the Graeae.
- 2 A series of five or so rows of wooden stalls with cloth overhangs held up by what could be described as tent poles. The Dark Folk running this version all have featureless faces, making it a series of pantomime and charades to communicate. This version specializes in textiles and living things. The sky overhead in this version is like a baking desert sun, exceptionally hot and dry.
- 3 A single building made of sheet metal and plywood scraps, standing three stories in height. The interior is a mishmash of flea market lean to and portable tables and thrown together makeshift stands. The dominant species is a variant on humans with lizard like scales and leathery textures.
- 4 A grouping of large rocks that surround an underground series of holes and tunnels that link all of the different mercantile areas. This version is run by what could be described as rodent based weres or Moreaus.



- 5 What appears to be a wreckage of a merchant ship, or a liner, is lying just off the shore of a dead sea. The odor of salt permeates the entire place. There are salt deposits building up on all exposed surfaces and the sale of fresh water is a premium product. This version seems to be mostly populated with half cyborg, half animal beings.
- 6 A biotech organism with the appearance of a five story snail seeming to be made of some sort of coral is the only feature visible here. Entrance is from the opening on the ground. Inside the interior of the structure, it spirals upwards and towards the far end of the shell. Inside a form of mollusk people are in charge and most wares have a similar motif.

INSPIRATIONS FOR THIS PROTO-DIMENSION:

Hellboy 2 The Golden Army (Movie) The entire Goblin Market Sequence in the movie
Don't Rest Your Head (RPG) Especially how some things can be traded in The Mad City
Dark City (Movie) How things will change and not be what they appear to be
Labyrinth (Movie) Vibe
The Goblin Queen (Marvel Comics Villainess)
Goblin Market (Poem) What can happen when trafficking with Goblins
 Link to the Project Gutenberg version of the Goblin Market poem by Christina Rossetti
<http://www.gutenberg.org/cache/epub/16950/pg16950.txt>

Another lovely source of ideas resides in this video about a play titled Goblin Market.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=07qhg1i7yqs>



Editor's note: My favorite Goblin Market reference was also derived from Christina Rossetti and painted by the extremely talented Abigail Larson. Her DeviantArt page is here:

abigaillarson.deviantart.com/



The Goblin Market, (C) 2013 Abigail Larson. Used without permission. Buy the print [here](#)

Yep. Abigail is another one of those whose work I willingly announce and share. Her art is beautiful and she is very sweet! Besides, she is almost a neighbor.

HOLE IN THE DARK

Dark history fleshed out

by Eric Fabiashi

FOR DARK CONSPIRACY

No one would have believed in the last years of the nineteenth century that this world was being watched keenly and closely by intelligences greater than man's and yet as mortal as his own...

—H.G. Wells
The War Of The Worlds

This encounter should take place in a small town or nearby villages in rural America such as New England or the Midwestern United States. The encounter could have even more power if it takes place in the players' home town or city.

For the last two days there have been people going missing from one of the local shanty towns that have become all too common during the Greater Depression. Over the last couple of weeks several disappearances have occurred of some of the local homeless. Some of these have been well liked handymen, maids, etc. who help some of the locals with various chores and odds and ends, and their presence has been missed. There have been strange lights in the sky and tremors as well in the area which is not normal at all. There are no nearby faults or geological anomalies.

Events will begin to pick up as the tremors become worse and a nearby house sinks into the ground as a large sink hole swallows up the entire building. The PCs will have 72 hours before the United States Police Force and Homeland Security teams are dispatched. There will be eye witnesses who swear that they see 'Deep Dwellers' in the area. There have been sightings of these things in tabloids over the last couple of months, with blurry photos and strange handmade artifacts, but nothing proven.

A search of the house will reveal not a single corpse at all. Everything will be

intact and wreckage will be present but the bodies will not be found. If the PC's are fast enough or have someone with empathic abilities among their team they may catch a glimpse of a Morlock (*Conspiracy Rules*, page 221) scout watching the place. A careful search will reveal a tunnel of earth but it will become evident that it has been collapsed after fifteen feet.

The United States Police Force will arrive with a commandant and a team of twenty troops. They come in armed with four assault vehicles and swat riot armor as well as machine guns. They also have seismic devices and several deep radar scanning devices. They will question several witnesses around town about the disappearances. After two days or so the forces of darkness grow bold indeed. On a lonely road just outside of the town or village where the Force has made camp the entire road will collapse under several of their mobile assault vehicles and the Morlocks will close in armed with hand portable death rays (DC1 page 243). Armor will be sliced and the men will be taken away into the darkness with the earth seeming to swallow them up.

Federal forces at the moment are stretched thin and it will take a week to get a new team (government, private, or otherwise) into the area. Things begin to



BKM 2011

MORLOCKS

<i>Strength:</i>	5	<i>Education:</i>	3	<i>Move:</i>	3/8/12/20
<i>Constitution:</i>	3	<i>Charisma:</i>	4	<i>Skill/Dam.:</i>	5/1D6
<i>Agility:</i>	5	<i>Empathy:</i>	6	<i>Hits:</i>	12/25
<i>Intelligence:</i>	7	<i>Initiative:</i>	3	<i># Appearing:</i>	4D6

Special: Blind, but excellent senses of smell and hearing. Morlocks receive no penalty for low- or no-light conditions.

Death Ray – Hand Portable

Ammo	ROF	Dam	Pen	Bulk	Mag	Recoil		Rng
						SS	Brst	
Charges	1	20	1	4	7	—	—	200

Just as ETs need UFOs, they also need advanced weapons with which to slay. We call these weapons, generically, death rays, because virtually any hit by one causes death to any living target. There are two basic sizes for these weapons: hand-portable (pistol-sized to shouldermounted), and vehicular (generally mounted on a UFO, and powered by its engines).

Most death rays just bum gaping holes through whatever they hit. Optionally, you can have them electrocute their targets or have the hit location just burst into flames. You might even have it disintegrate entirely or explode. The visual effect is up to you as referee, but the end result is the same in any case.

Weight: 2.4 kg.

go from bad to worse in town. A neighboring house of the PC's will collapse into the ground the next evening. If the PC's react in time they will discover a Morlock kill team moving in.

MORLOCKS'

Some Morlocks are armed with Death rays. These death rays are DarkTek and attach directly into the neural pathways and bodies of their hosts causing a soul crushing sense of violation and assault on the very essence of those who use such things. The Morlocks are past caring about such trivialities. The weird thing is those cut and bleeding will be alive after being damaged and injured. They may beg to be killed to end their suffering but they will go on living.

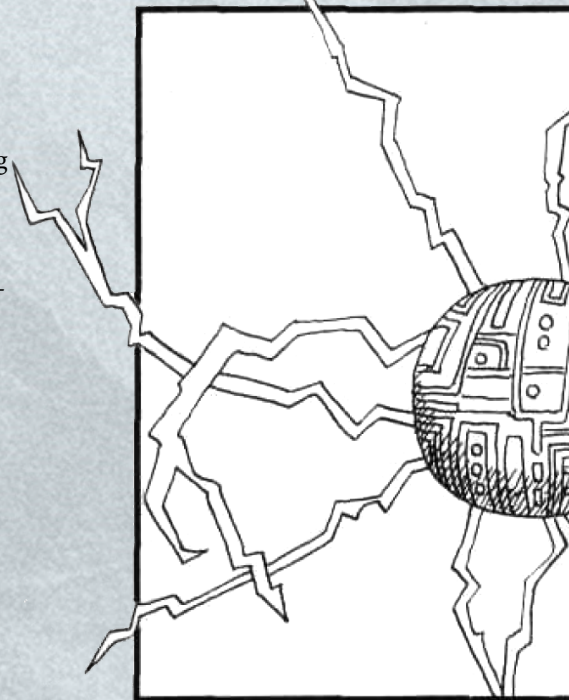
Should the team act fast they will find a two hundred foot tunnel dug beneath the house. This will lead to a dimensional gateway device that leads to a chamber of horrors. The device is tuned to a nearby proto-dimension/alternative Earth, lair of a host of energy extraterrestrials who have been capturing townspeople and rendering the kidnap victims (including the police team) into various pieces of Dark Tek. There will be over forty Morlocks in this area who do the bidding of their alien 'masters'.

ENERGY ET'S

There will be 1d100 victims in various states of injury and horror waiting to be taken to the processing areas for the rendering facilities. If the

DM is feeling especially mean he might switch a PC with a cyborg double and pull the player aside to allow the **double to try to massacre the rest** of the party a day or so later.

Should the PCs succeed in destroying this nightmare there should be a real sense of accomplishment and the max experience points.



ENERGY ET

<i>Strength:</i>	1	<i>Education:</i>	20	<i>Move:</i>	40
<i>Constitution:</i>	1	<i>Charisma:</i>	1	<i>Skill/Dam.:</i>	6*/4D10**
<i>Agility:</i>	9	<i>Empathy:</i>	1	<i>Hits:</i>	5/8
<i>Intelligence:</i>	18	<i>Initiative:</i>	4	<i># Appearing:</i>	1D10+2

* Possesses the following special skills: *Darkling Empathy:* 6 *Human Empathy:* 4 *Thought Projection:* 10 *Telekinesis* 4 *Willpower Drain* 8

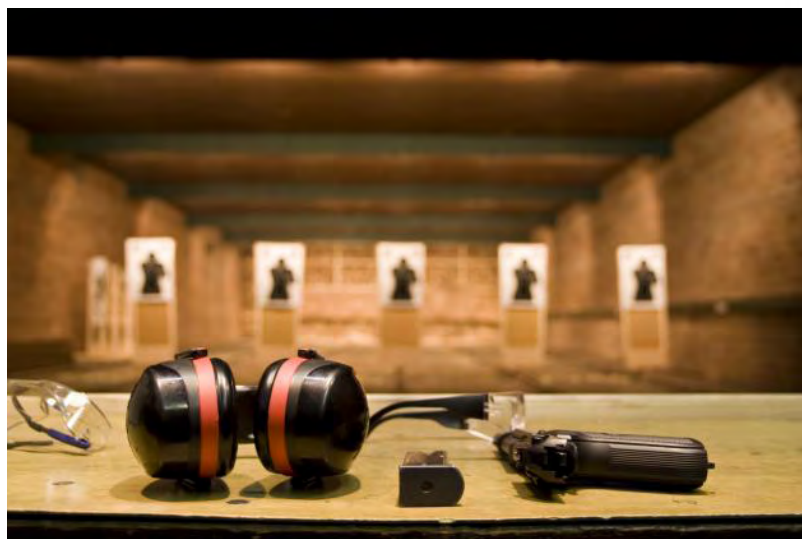
** This is an electrical attack with a range of 8 meters.

SMALL ARMS INSTRUCTOR

A targeted career

by Jason D. McEwan

FOR DARK CONSPIRACY



Look, I teach people to use a pistol, to qualify for a permit and on occasion I shoot matches for prize money. Certain neighbor hoods give OJT in urban survival as well as combat shooting, which I pass on to paying customers. I make an honest living with my firearms. I'm a certified instructor with reasonable rates.

These people are the firearms version of the martial artist. They teach weapons handling, tactics and concealed carry. On occasion they compete in shooting matches and take courses themselves.

NEW SKILL

Hand loader: This is like the armory skill for firearms. Hand loader allows one to make ammunition or disassemble ammunition. It also allows the PC to inspect components and to formulate the correct components for the desired effect on a target.

NEW GEAR

Range Bag: This is a 1.5-2 kg, \$25 bag that may contain accessories for firearms shooting. It will have the following:

Ballistic Glasses with a variety of optional tinted lenses, -kg, \$50.

Ear Plugs with a case, -kg, \$15.

Ear Defenders reduce noise and can be worn with ear plugs. Some versions have filters to allow hearing in the normal range, .24kg, \$35/ .35kg, \$100 for filter variants.

Cleaning Kit is in the basic rules, but compact versions are available.

Optional: Nomex gloves, basic emergency tools (2kg, treat repairs as one level harder), blow through first aid kit, etc.

DC 1st EDITION CAREER:

SMALL ARMS INSTRUCTOR

Prerequisites: No criminal record, Small Arms skill of 4 or greater.

First Term Skills:

AGL+1
Gunsmithing 2
Instruction 2
Observation 1
Small Arms 3
Streetwise 1

Subsequent Term Skills: The character receives 6 levels from the above skills or any of the following:

Bargain
Business
Chemistry
Machinist
Melee
Metallurgy

Contacts: One contact per term: Law Enforcement, military, athlete or specialist.

Special: +1 to Initiative if more than one term served. Use INT to calculate income as per Martial Artist. This career may be combined with any law enforcement or military career for an instructor, or shooting team member.

DCIII/CONSPIRACY RULES!



Small Arms Instructor

PREREQUISITES: No criminal record, Slug Weapon skill at 3 (usually pistol), LEO requires one term in law enforcement. For military, basic training in one service branch turns this into an instructor/ armorer MOS.

FIRST TERMS

Skills: Admin/Legal 0, AGL +1 (not to exceed human limits), Instruction 3, Medical 1, Other slug weapon skill (rifle or pistol) 3, Streetwise 1, Tactics 1

SUBSEQUENT TERMS

Skills: Act/Bluff, Admin/Legal, AGL +1 (Not to exceed human limits), Machinist, **Melee**, Metallurgy, *Slug Weapon*, Stealth, Tactics, Throwing

ALL TERMS

Promotion: 7+, DM +1 if AGL 7+, DM+1 if Slug Weapon skill is at 8+.

Special Assignment: 6+ Any of the above skills plus **Squad Weapons**, Demolition, Language.

Contacts: Two per term. Any career except prisoners or former prisoners as students per term.

Special: Use an average of AGL and EDU in each term for both instruction and competition. Use the military initiative roll. For Secondary skills choose from Armory, Hand Loading, Shooting.



GULF AIRSTREAM VARD0

Semi-apocalyptic lifestyle

by Jason D McEwen

FOR DARK CONSPIRACY



Gulf Airstream Vardo (Unarmored Towed Vehicle)

<i>Price:</i>	\$360,000 (C/C)
<i>Fuel Type:</i>	N/A
<i>Load:</i>	0.7 ton
<i>Weight:</i>	3.2 tons
<i>Crew:</i>	Up to 5
<i>Night Vision:</i>	None
<i>Cruise Speed:</i>	*
<i>Combat Move:</i>	*
<i>Fuel Capacity:</i>	N/A
<i>Fuel Consumption:</i>	N/A
<i>Configuration:</i>	Standard
<i>Suspension:</i>	Wheeled (2)
<i>Armor:</i>	HF: 1 HS: 1 HR: 1

* as per the towing vehicle

This design hasn't changed much since the 1940's. This travel trailer (caravan for UK and European readers) can accommodate up to 5 people and be towed by a vehicle of $\frac{3}{4}$ ton or larger. The Vardo has AC/ heating, folding bed and bunks, bathroom and kitchen facilities, and a kitchen comparable to the Winnebago Nomad. External hookups for power, phone, water and waste are fitted. Power is provided by an optional integral 5KW generator, two deep cycle batteries with an inverter, and two 40lb LPG tanks (counts as external stores from hits on the HF location). Luxury fittings are available, including a large screen TV capable of being used with a computer. Fluid capacities are 24L hot water tank, 216L fresh water, 148L gray water, 156L black water tanks. A rough rule of thumb is the waste tanks need to be emptied when the fresh water needs filling. Cost should be about half what the charge per liter is for potable water at referee's discretion.

THUNDER FIVE

A firearm

by Lee Williams

FOR DARK CONSPIRACY
AND CALL OF CTHULHU

PRODUCED DURING THE 1990s by MIL Inc., the *Thunder Five* is a revolver that can use different types of ammunition with no modifications. It is heavy for a weapon of its size, and though the ammunition is reasonably powerful the barrel length (shorter than the cartridges it fires) considerably lessens the effective range. Unusually for a revolver it has a manual safety catch.

FOR DARK CONSPIRACY

<i>MIL Thunder Five</i>	Ammo	ROF	Dam	Pen	Bulk	Mag	Recoil		Rng
							SS	Brst	
.45 Long Colt	DAR	2	3-4-Nil	1	5R	4	—	5	
.410 Shot	DAR	4	Nil	1	5R	4	—	Close	
.410 Shot	DAR	*	Nil	1	5R	4	—	Medium	

* 1D6-1 for number of hit factors. Each hit factor does 1D6 damage.

Weight: 1.4 kg.
Price: \$400 (R/S)

FOR CALL OF CTHULHU

Base chance to hit: 20%

Damage: 45 Colt - 1d10,
.410 shot - 2d6

Range: 10 yards

Attacks per round: 1

Capacity: 5 bullets

**Hit points
resisting attack:** 12

Malfunction: 99

Weight: 1.4 kg.

Price: \$400



CALL OF THE WERE BOAR

A Study of the Methods and Operations of This Invasive Dark Minion Species

by Eric Fabiashi

FOR DARK CONSPIRACY

“Now I gazed upon him, no longer in a passionate frenzy, but in a cold contempt. I visualized long days and nights of vengeance, of fiendish ingenuity and complete consummation. My enemy was at my mercy; he lived; all the plans of hate and torture I had conceived through the long years of wrong and insult I would wreak upon him. My plans were carefully laid; I knew exactly what tortures I would use, how long I could inflict them without causing death, until my enemy at last went forth, a man ruined of soul and body. I was at peace, and content.”

From “*Revenge*” in a letter to Tevis Clyde Smith (c. late Aug/early September 1927)

Robert Howard

THE ABOVE QUOTE sums up the Were Boar of *Dark Conspiracy* first edition for me. The Lycanthropes of the DC game are really the misanthropes of their world. Animaloids that live on the fringes of the Earth’s society more than any other monsters. Creatures whose past and futures have been awakened by the coming the Dark Lords as they have in the cycles of Earth’s past. Details of these creatures can be found on page 228 of the first edition

Dark Conspiracy rule book, or P.234 of the DCIII *Conspiracy Rules* corebook.

These are not the creatures that we know of legend and they are one of the most brutal of the game’s monster but the least understood. The Were Boar is at once an intelligent monster capable of walking among its prey and a ravaging beast. Theirs is a record of legend and gore scattered across the world of the Dark Conspiracy game.

The Were Boar of DC is the ultimate invasive species of supernatural monsters. They move among the wilds of the Greater Depression era with impunity and while the werewolves of legend get all of the press; the boars are content to allow the legends of werewolves to grow. Misdirection and subterfuge are their allies. The Were boars insulate in communities themselves across the world from the USA to the areas of Asia and their numbers as well as cults are growing. There have always been legends of monstrous wild boar creatures from the myths and legends across the world. These have merely been the quick shadow games that the Wereboars play with their prey. Namely us.

Wereboar are master manipulators, and use the surface dressing of society to move from place to place drifting as the winds of the Great Depression take them from place to place. They are

grifters, hustlers, con men, and worse that have been spawned by the events of Dark Conspiracy. They are able to take on new disguises as the old ones that they wear grow thin because of the killings that take place around them. Were boar family units do not have the same characteristics of pigs at all. They have many seemingly porcine characteristics but because of the history of Lycanthropes in the DC universe these beings have developed totally different evolutionary strategies for coping with the fact that mankind hunts and kills their kind with impunity should they be discovered.

Wereboars are constantly on the move in the DC universe; they do their killing, planning, and move on quickly. Often these monsters disguise their insatiable appetites for human prey by making the kill look as if its work of a lone serial killer operating in the area. They often cultivate legends of mysterious supernatural menaces themselves to throw the scent off from the horrors that they create themselves. Wereboars can also disguise themselves among invasive wild pigs that have escaped from farms in the past of DC. Legends of wild boar and pigs of incredible size are actually these creatures moving quickly from place to place along old game trails and abandoned roadways of the DC universe.

Urban and contemporary legends of skinwalkers told among the poor and migrant field hands of the Dark Conspiracy universe are actually bits and pieces of the Wereboar tradition that have been handed down by the survivors of the trepidations of these monsters. There are very few such individuals because the Were boar itself has an abiding trait of seeking revenge against any who witness its activities. Were boars never leave any witnesses to spread tales of themselves. They often operate far away from their home towns, cities, etc. to hunt and kill just before the lunar cycle of the so called 'Super Moons' which have become increasingly blood red in the DC universe because of the presence of iron oxide in the air. This has allowed the Lycanthrope species to boom, if such a thing is even possible.

The Were boar family units are closely linked by bounds of blood ties, murder, revenge, and worse. The species has increased its numbers by crimes of a most indelicate nature that will not be described in this article. Most Wereboars appear as nondescript drifters at the time of the 'hunt' and operate as purely predatory beasts during the full moon cycles. This combination of rite and sacred act is dropped immediately after such events and the monster quickly moves on to its next disguise and target. Money, jewellery, and more are often the targets for the long games of the Wereboars. These times are the

exception and never the rule of these monsters. The Wereboar are highly intelligent but very paranoid creatures whose life consists of hunt, fight, or flight behaviours wedged in between several schemes and plans that they often have operating at once.

The monsters act within both urban and rural areas with impunity, having evolved beyond mere basic instinct and having evolved fine senses of judgement and stylized violent tenancies. Wereboars may be thought of as long range planners and schemers who have evolved into very specialized predators of the world of Dark Conspiracy.

Because of the true empathic nature of the Weres of the Dark Conspiracy universe, Wereboars avoid Dark Tek and the other minions of the Dark Lords. They very rarely if ever work for these forces who seem quite content to allow the monsters to spread their special brand of mayhem, violence, and revenge across the lands of the Dark Conspiracy's Earth.





Image by Tad Kelson
Used with permission

WHAT'S YOUR EMERGENCY?

High Tek and Folk Tek - medical gear for Minion Hunters

by Kevin O'Neill

FOR DARK CONSPIRACY



WITH THE SETTING of Dark Conspiracy featuring both a trend for retro styling and an apparent lack of technology development, a Player could be forgiven for thinking that “high tech” items are rarely to be found in the world particularly when compared to the real world technology that many Players can easily bring to the gaming table in the form of smartphones and tablets.

The lack of technological items is a feature of Prole and even Mike life so many businesses would make the bulk of their income not from selling to the general public - who can't afford it anyway - but from selling to other businesses (as many do in the real world). That is to say, these businesses might be selling various items to the general public but their real profit making would be found in providing desirable items and needed resources to various companies and corporations.

It's entirely possible that many corporations would be selling the vast majority of their products to other corporations and to this end, it's entirely reasonable to suppose that they would continue to develop technology so that they can keep their hold on the market.

Medical devices and medicines would probably constitute a significant part of this business-to-business trade,

after all, a corporation promising a great health plan for executives will want to buy the best medical technology they can afford.

At the other end of the street, the lower income companies and the general Prole and Mike population probably wouldn't be able to access the latest in med-tech and would likely fall back on “home remedies” and “folk/traditional medicine”. While there's ample opportunity for snake-oil salesmen peddling fake cures, there also plenty of room for older, low-tech medicines and techniques that Minion Hunters might find useful when they're far from home. This article mentions six such items but Referees can find many references to traditional and folk medicines on the net should they wish to create more for their campaigns.

Along with the extra medical gear, this article also includes some additional rules for the use of various items.

HITEK

Adrenalin (100 Units): Trade name for epinephrine. Available only in liquid (injection) form. Typically used to stimulate involuntary nerve action and/or to relieve severe stress e.g. to restart the heart after a heart

attack, it is also used as a bronchodilator for asthma treatment. It is added to local anaesthetics to prolong the effect due to its properties as a vasoconstrictor. This effect also makes it useful in local anaesthetics for the reduction of blood flow at a wound site. Requires at least Medical skill 3 to use effectively.

Wt: 0.7kg

Price: \$1000 (R/C)

Adrenalin Auto-injector: A single-use, disposable delivery system to administer a pre-measured dose of adrenalin. Simple to operate to allow those with low medical skills to make use of it (but some level of medical skill is still required as adrenalin needs to be injected in a specific location to be successful).

Wt: 0.1kg per set of three

Price: \$375 per set of three (C/V)

Antibiotic (100 Units) +, - and +/- Varieties: Found in two forms: liquid (which requires refrigeration) or oral (capsule/tablet form). Oral varieties cost \$250 less per 100 units. Used to treat infections caused by various microorganisms.

Wt: 0.2kg

Price: \$500 (R/V)

Antifever (100 Units): Used to reduce the symptoms of fever, a person may not have more units of antifever administered than their Constitution score in a 24 hour period.

Wt: 0.5kg

Price: \$470 (S/V)

Antivenin, Polyvalent (100 Units): A wide spectrum antitoxin that counteracts the effects of venom from the bite of a snake, insect or other animal and is essential to enable treatment of animal poisons to proceed. Available only in variants for Africa, North America and Europe. Due to the range and toxicity of poisons found in the listed regions, the African version is only 50% effective against all known African venomous animals while the North American version is 70% effective against all known North-American venomous animals and the European version is 85% effective against all known European venomous animals (due to their weaker poisons). Injection form only.

Wt: 0.5kg

Price: \$510 (R/C)

Antivenin Auto-injector: Available only in variants for Africa, North America and Europe. A pre-measured, one-use automatic injector of polyvalent antivenin. The African version is 50% effective against all known African venomous animals, the North American version is 70% effective against all known North-American venomous animals and the European version is 85% effective against all known European venomous animals. Auto-injectors are able to be used by non-medical personnel.

Wt: 0.2kg per kit of 3

Price: \$45 (C/V)

AutoMed, Stretcher, 1st Generation: Designed originally for the military to allow a single medic to more easily manage multiple casualties, this is an integration of trauma aid equipment, bio-monitors and stretcher. Much more sophisticated than the "Doc In The Box" (found in the Dark Tek sourcebook), it allows a patient to be treated and then left to be monitored by the AutoMed computer so that the medic can treat other patients. The AutoMed will alert the medic to any change in patient condition.

Medical systems carried on the AutoMed include a ventilator (using a mini oxygen bottle), fluid/drug IV set-up, suction, defibrillator, blood chemistry analyser and patient monitoring (brain, blood pressure, heart, respiration, temperature etc.). A self-contained power unit supplies power to all systems including the management computer which is also capable of logging all patient data and networking with other devices via cable or wireless technology. The first generation, this system is long and heavy due to the monitoring equipment being largely located at the 'head' end of the stretcher (2.2m long). The stretcher handles slide into the body when not needed to reduce overall length to 2 metres. This device gives a +1 bonus to Medical skill although this rises to +2 if using Medical (Trauma Aid).

A Medical skill of at least 2 is required to successfully use the AutoMed.

Wt: 75.0kg

Price: \$6200 (R/S)

AutoMed, Stretcher, 2nd Generation: A more technically advanced model to that described above, along with all the features mentioned in that entry this AutoMed is also capable of administering suitable treatment if necessary. Most of the equipment is smaller and lighter and the use of touch-screen, multi-function displays removes the multiple single screens of monitoring equipment of earlier tech. It features a medical diagnosis system for the computer (that is fully compatible with the Medic-Cam, see below for description) to supplement the patient monitoring system, an automated CPR system (consisting of a chest strap that constricts & releases based on patient blood pressure and physical size), multi-injection system (functioning as IV & drug infusion as required) and carries 20 units each of adrenalin, antibiotics, antifever, atropine, local anaesthetic and mild sedative.

This version also has fold-down legs to allow it to be raised to a standing persons' waist height.

This device gives a +3 bonus to Medical (Trauma Aid) although a Trauma Aid skill of at least 1 is required to successfully use the AutoMed. It also gives a +3 bonus to Medical (Diagnosis) although a Diagnosis skill of at least 2 is required.

Wt: 46.0kg

Price: \$14,500 (R/C)

Blood, Artificial (1 Unit), IV bag: Not a totally artificial blood as it makes use of bovine blood products as a basis. Developed in the 1990s to overcome the short shelf life of whole blood although it also requires refrigeration for storage and freezing for long term storage. A patient can have no more than equal to their Constitution score, in units applied in a 24-hour timeframe. When applied during surgery, gives a +2 bonus to Surgery skill. May cause a transfusion reaction and thereby increase the Difficulty Level of treatment.

Wt: 0.5kg

Price: \$40 (R/C)

Blood, Powder (1 Unit): Essentially a packet of chemically modified, dehydrated, human haemoglobin, it must be mixed with either plasma (or other blood volume expanders) or sterile saline solution before use. One unit makes up the equivalent of one IV bag although a suitable IV set-up is required to administer it to a patient (this may be an open container of some sort with all the

associated sterility complications). When applied during surgery, gives a +2 bonus to Surgery skill. May cause a transfusion reaction and thereby increase the Difficulty Level of treatment.

Not suitable as a long term blood substitute as the modified haemoglobin will be flushed from the patient's system within 48 hours.

Packaged in lots of five.

Wt: 0.6kg per lot of five

Price: \$95 (S/V)

Blood, Synthesized (1 Unit), IV bag: A blood substitute made from human haemoglobin that is suitable for long term use if whole blood is not available. Will keep for over 12 months if refrigerated and longer if frozen. When applied during surgery, gives a +2 bonus to Surgery skill. Immediately restores blood pressure and haemoglobin levels and will not cause transfusion reactions.

Wt: 0.5kg

Price: \$40 (-/C)

Dressing, Chitosan: Chitosan (kite-oh-zan) is a derivative of chitin, extracted from the exoskeleton of lobsters, crabs and shrimp. As a dressing, it forms a sterile wound exudate beneath a dry scab, preventing dehydration and contamination of the wound to optimize conditions for healing. The dressing helps control severe external, as well as arterial, haemorrhage and forms an anti-bacterial layer to prevent further infection. In game terms, this means a medical kit is not required for the treatment of bleeding injuries if this dressing is used, although the task difficulty remains the same. When used successfully, it reduces a critical bleeding wound to a serious wound. For serious wounds, successful application of this dressing reduces healing time by two days. It has no measurable effect on lesser wounds.

Chitosan dressings are individually packaged in sealed foil and are available in three sizes: -

Small: 100x180mm

Wt: 0.1kg per 2

Price: \$14 (V/V)

Medium: 190x205mm.

Wt: 0.1kg

Price: \$29 (C/C)

Large: 300x300mm.

Wt: 0.2kg

Price: \$40 (S/S)

Hypodermic Syringe: A piston syringe that is fitted with a hypodermic needle for giving injections. Older types are made of metal & glass while newer versions are of plastics. Both types can be sterilized for re-use.

Wt: one, negligible; set of 5, 0.1kg

Price: one, \$8 (S/V); set of 5 \$30 (R/S)

Hypodermic Syringe, Disposable: The same as mentioned above but only made of plastic and intended to be discarded after use as the plastic is not suitable for sterilization. Needle is permanently fixed to the piston and the whole unit is packaged in a sealed packet. It should be noted that in more remote areas, these items are often sold after use, having been given a cursory clean. Discerning buyers will take note of the absence of original packaging.

Wt: one, negligible; box of 20, 0.1kg

Price: one, \$2 (C/C); box of 20, \$25 (R/V)

Medic-Cam: The Medic-Cam consists of a lightweight visor incorporating a miniature digital (7-mm diameter), high-resolution colour camera and mini-boom mike linked by microwave to a vehicle within a range of about two kilometres. The vehicle has a satellite link that can send/receive audio-visual signals to and from doctors located anywhere in the world. The visor also has an 18mm colour HUD so the medic can see what is being broadcast. In addition, the Medic-Cam can also link to medical equipment to input and transmit data so it can be used to relay vital-signs information. If equipped with GPS capabilities, wounded personnel could also be located for immediate evacuation by other medical personnel.

When the visor is linked to computerised medical systems such as AutoMed or "Doc In The Box" computers (rather than just linking to monitoring systems) the medic has access to a comprehensive diagnostic/surgical suite that gives a +3 bonus to Trauma Aid, Diagnosis and Surgery but a minimum Medical skill of 2 is required to make proper use of the information.

An attached small control box contains the camera controller, microwave transmitter, and audio and video conditioners. The Medic-Cam is capable of eight hours of operation powered by a rechargeable battery.

The vehicle can monitor and manage up to four field medics when manned by two senior medical personnel using the cameras, audio and video processors, computers and microwave and satellite communications links. Medical equipment interfaces are also provided.

Wt: visor, 0.2kg; control box, 0.4kg

Price: visor & control box, \$1750 (R/S)

QR Powder: QR topical powder stops bleeding instantly, once applied to a wound, the powder adheres to the wound tissue and interacts with the wound fluid to form a scab and encourage clotting. QR powder is not biologically derived, nor is it bioactive and it does not depend on the body's natural clotting process to create a scab. It is not metabolized by the body but it does require blood to activate, it is not suitable for wounds that are not bleeding.

The scab is left to fall off naturally although if sutures are needed, the scab can be removed earlier by applying hydrogen peroxide. The powder needs to be stored free from humidity and air to remain effective. Packaged in a box that provides four applications for minor external wounds.

Wt: negligible

Price: \$8 (S/V)

Serum Albumin (1 Unit): IV bag. A blood volume expander (made of water-soluble animal protein) used to restore and maintain blood pressure of severely wounded personnel during initial treatment. It is not a substitute for blood. A patient can have only up to half their Constitution score in units applied in a 24-hour timeframe.

Wt: 0.5kg

Price: \$25 (R/V)

Sodium Chloride IV (1 unit): A saline solution used as a blood volume expander for patients undergoing the healing process. Medicinal drugs are often injected into the IV drip to allow the solution to be carried into the patient's bloodstream. Available in 500ml or 1000ml sized bags.

Wt: 500ml, 0.5kg; 1000ml, 1.0kg

Price: 500ml, \$20 (S/A); 1000ml \$37 (R/A)

LOW TECH

Honey Poultice: Known since ancient times for its anti-inflammatory and antibacterial properties, honey can be used as a dressing for minor wounds and infections although it is not suitable for infants (whose immune systems are not able to combat the botulism bacteria that can find its way into honey).

This product consists of honey thickened into a paste that is applied to the wound or to the dressing (before application to the wound site), although liquid honey can also be used it is messy and is much more useful as a cough suppressant. Weight and price are for one dressing.

Wt: 0.1kg

Price: \$5 (C/C)

Mink Oil: Mink have a thick fatty layer just below the skin that is recovered after the pelt is removed from the carcass and rendered down to make mink oil. It is the closest known oil to human skin oil. In highly refined, purified form, it is used by many people for the treatment of skin problems such as psoriasis, eczema and acne. It penetrates quickly to the epidermis layer of the skin to help prevent fine lines and wrinkles and also works as a natural sun screen.

Mink oil is also used to protect leather products particularly when combined with bees wax. Weight and price are for 200ml

Wt: 0.2kg

Price: \$25 (R/S)

Moss Dressing: More specifically, a wound dressing made from sphagnum moss due to that species of moss having a high absorption factor and it inhibits bacterial and fungal growth by virtue of it being highly acidic. However improperly prepared moss can potentially harbour the fungi causing the chronic disease sporotrichosis. As the spores from this fungus enter the skin through wound openings, any moss dressing should be applied over a gauze bandage or should be packaged in thin cloth bags for use. If not, the Referee should consider the possibility that the moss carries the spores and decided upon a percentage change that the patient contracts sporotrichosis. This can cause ulceration of the wound site and if left untreated can lead to infection of the joints, bones, central nervous system and brain. In this

form it can cause severe weight loss and lower resistance to other diseases.

Weight and price are for one dressing.

Wt: 0.1kg

Price: \$7 (C/C)

Olive Oil Ointment: While typically used for cooking and for making soap & cosmetics as well as lubricating oils, olive oil has also been found to have pain relieving properties and has provided the foundation of a number of medical ointments. For game purposes, olive oil can be used as an externally applied alternative to mild pain reliever with 20mls of olive oil ointment equivalent to one unit of mild pain reliever. Obviously it is of no use for deeper internal aches and pains. Typically found in 200ml containers.

Wt: 0.3kg

Price: \$5 (R/C)

Pine Poultice: Pitch (AKA tar), particularly from pines, has been used for centuries as a waterproofing agent for leather and wood etc. It also has preservative and healing properties and has been used for centuries as a first aid remedy to heal sores and wounds. It has been found to be a fungicide and a natural anti-bacterial agent as well as an anti-inflammatory. It also discourages the growth of mould and mildew. In game terms, it can be made into a poultice for use as a wound dressing to treat infections and/or reduce bleeding.

Weight and price are for 250ml.

Wt: 0.3kg

Price: \$16 (C/C)

Pine Tincture: Due to its properties as an antiseptic agent as well as an anti-inflammatory, a tincture made from the bark and needles of the pine tree can be used as a disinfectant or as a treatment for some skin conditions and for minor wounds (cuts, abrasions, scratches etc.) Although messy to apply directly to a wound, the liquid can be soaked into a dressing as needed.

Typically provided in 250ml bottles, weight and price are for one such container.

Wt: 0.3kg

Price: \$12 (C/C)

NO LONGER YOUR FRIEND

Hand grenades

by Jason D McEwen

FOR DARK CONSPIRACY



Creighton and Anna eased next to the storm drain and listened. The eyeless cannibals could be heard jabbering and sniffing the air. Both readied the green spheres in their hands, removing the safety bails and pulling the pins, "One, Two, Three, GO!" They readied their carbines as the twin booms belched debris and dust out of the tunnel.....

THES ARE JUST a few U.S. issued grenades that will be found just about everywhere, along with two common field expedients that may be encountered or created. This article concerns only lethal items, less than lethal munitions are worthy of their own article. Most of these grenades are common among other nations as well. Grenades are found in inventories long after a new model is adopted.

M26/M61: Known by its shape as the "lemon" grenade, the M61 has the safety bail to prevent accidental detonation. The British variant is the L2. Fitted with a standard 4-5 second fuse, the weapon uses a coil of notched wire for fragmentation. Weight is .45kg, cost is \$25 apiece, a crate of 30 weighs 24kg, and cost \$600

C: 4 B: 15

M67: This is called the "baseball" due to its shape, and instead of a wire coil the body is brittle to cause frag effects. It also has a safety bail. Canada and Turkey issue variants. Weight is .39kg, cost is \$20 (these are more common by the DC era). A case of 30 is 23kg, and costs \$550.

C:6 B:15

V40 mini frag: Used from the 1960's to the early 2000's, these grenades were designed for urban combat but Special Forces liked them for tunnel clearing. Roughly golf ball size, they also had a safety bail and were packaged 5 to a bandoleer, 160 in a 20MM sized can. Weight is .14kg each, cost is \$15, and a case is 37.6kg, \$200.

C:2 B:5

HG86: Chosen as a replacement for the V40 in special ops inventory. This is an Austrian refinement of their HG80 mini-frag. Weight is .18kg, cost is \$12 (more common).

C:3 B:5

"Jam Tin": Made by soldiers everywhere until reliable grenades were in inventory during most of the modern conflicts, this is a can packed with explosive and shrapnel, and a non-electric detonator cap with roughly 5seconds of fuse. One can make one with an Average: Demolition task. These have a slight chance of misfire (15%). Weight is .5kg, cost is \$10.

C:3 B:5

Molotov Cocktail: Not a true grenade, but these are the easiest devices to be made. A liter of gasoline, something to thicken the fuel, and one of two possible ignition systems. The fuel soaked rag is easiest (Easy: AGL) and has a 20% chance of failure and adds to the opponent's roll to spot you (double at night, or with IR). The second is harder to create (Average: AGL) but there is no vision bonus, as it uses an exothermic chemical reaction. A failure in assembly means the 20% penalty is applied as per the rag ignition. Anything or anyone within the blast radius also suffers burn damage from the ignited gasoline, as described in the rulebook. Weight: 1kg. Price as per Gasoline.

C:2 B:6





Greetings all!

Inspired by the interview with the inestimable Ken Hite elsewhere in this issue, I decided to do a round-up of a few podcasts that you might find interesting, entertaining and/or relevant to your gaming interests. Links can be found at the end of the article. Hope you enjoy them.



Ken & Robin Talk About Stuff: as mentioned in the interview this is an off-shoot of the conversations that Kenneth Hite and Robin D Laws often enjoy at conventions, given weekly MP3 form. A wide ranging and always involving series of shows, and it really feels like you have been invited to join in their personal chat.

<http://www.kenandrobintalkaboutstuff.com/>



The Good Friends of Jackson Elias: an all-British effort mainly focused upon Cthulhu gaming and the Mythos in general. Books, movies, gaming, arguments – they're all in there! Hosted by well-respected gamers-about-town Paul Fricker, Scott Dorward and Matthew Sanderson and recorded in Paul's shed in the picturesque English countryside, it never fails to entertain.

<http://blasphemoustomes.com/>

Miskatonic University Podcast: this one covers all aspects of Cthulhu Mythos gaming including creator interviews, reviews, and actual-play recordings. A neatly-done audio package of good Mythos wisdom in all of its gaming forms.

<http://www.mu-podcast.com/>

EERIE Radio: this is a little different to the others. As a complete entity it's more of a general weirdness podcast, delving into myths old, new, urban and rural. The show does cover gaming but is not primarily focused on it. That said, the GenCon 2013 special includes an interview with Lester Smith himself, conducted by long-time Dark Conspirator Rob Beck. Well worth hearing I say!

<http://www.eeriex.com/>

Improvised Radio Theatre With Dice: this one is an occasional show hosted by Roger BW and Michael Cule where they "pontificate about role-playing games". A general-purpose RPG show but there is a strong streak of Protodimension-relevant material, mainly down to Roger's liking of Dark Conspiracy and TORG among others. Reminds me, I owe Roger a pint...

<http://tekeli.li/podcast/>

Cheers!
Lee Williams

protodimension magazine

Totally ripped off the Internet...

