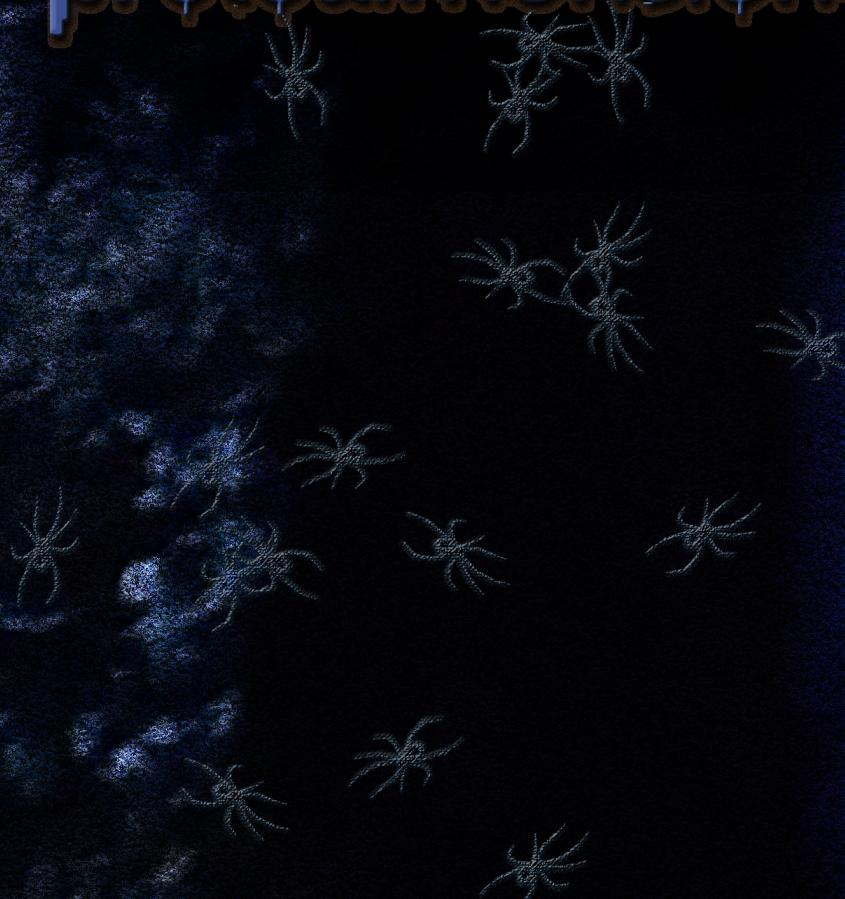


# protodimension magazine



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N'GHA-GHAA NAF LTHAGN



## VOLUME VII HALLOWEEN 2016

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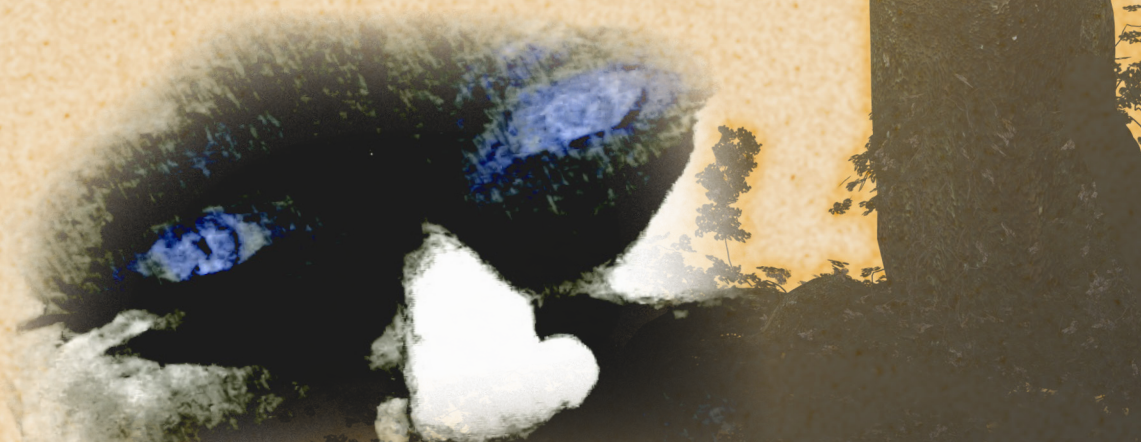
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## HALLOWANIGANS

By Tad Kelson

A Vignette Style Short  
Adventure for Call of Cthulhu  
(Modern Day)

### PREMISE

Pranks by a number of unknown individuals that are occurring on and during the weeks leading up to Halloween utilizing Wi-Fi repeaters, drones, cell phones, and cams to hopefully unnerve and scare the unaware or unwary. The pranks are being perpetrated by local college students into the Maker Community. None of the pranks are physically dangerous or even particularly terrifying, they are working more on the creepy factor vice gore and fear.

This is intended as a side trek or to add onto an existing investigation. It is presumed that it will be used in the Halloween Timeframe, which might lead characters to dismiss it, or lend credence to strange goings on. It could be used in conjunction with the prior adventure. These will need some ingenuity on the part of the Keeper to pull off successfully. Since there is no actual Mythos involvement, there is little to no actual SAN to risk. However, it is encouraged to ask for frequent rolls, especially if the players seem to be reliant on electronic devices. However, a crafty Keeper could roll this into the prior adventure Just NoWhere in Protodimension Issue 21 as a prelude or as a distraction for the investigators and characters. If this begins at a point close to the start point of Just NoWhere then the Wi-Fi set ups will only serve to speed up and increase the danger in the other adventure.

### TOOLS

The tools utilized by the pranksters are Light and Ultralight Drones, stripped down and hacked Cell Phones, customized and modified Apps, GPS Spoofers, and Wi-Fi repeaters to create the actual movements and effects. They also have used 3D Printers to make the ghosts and other apparitions ahead of time. There are also small Fog and Smoke Making machines along with Wi-Fi speakers to project sounds from their laptops. There are also small other items like staple guns, screwdrivers, hammers, etc.

### PRANKS

#### **Spoofed**

Using GPS redirects and spoofers they set up an area that GPS is unreliable and erratic. This will make navigation difficult, any apps relying on GPS will have a 75% fail rate, drastic jumps in locations, etc. Similar to trying to get a clear signal in the middle of a torrential thunderstorm.

#### **Ghosts and Spooks**

Using 3D Printers and carbon fibers they have created diaphanous, gauzy ghost like figures. With the aid of cell controlled light and ultralight Drones, the pranksters will have flying figures to rise up out of the ground and to zoom around. With the aid of fog and smoke



# HALLOWANIGANS

machines, as well as seeding an area to induce higher moisture content, they will work to make it seem there are strange apparitions are haunting an area. In these locations, they will have installed many of their spoofing devices to add an air of warped nature and unreal activity in the RF spectrum. The Drones will have cell phones stripped down to their bare essentials as control devices, and to have speaker and camera options to allow them to fly the drones and to have low level sounds and strange noises in the area of these "Ghosts".

## Haunted Devices

The Perpetrators of these pranks have off the shelf Wi-Fi gear rigged to transmit and to send out strong signals to any open RF connections, such as to Cell Phones, Tablets, or other Computing devices.

They will transmit various images and files to these devices to make it seem they have been taken over and possessed. Common files they are sending include:

- ▲ Screaming Translucent Figures
- ▲ Writhing, melting Screens
- ▲ 3D like pale mazes that move (savesaver like)
- ▲ Glitched Faces of users and owners (grabbing the features via the imbedded cams and then run through a script to glitch and distort the face and then sent back to the same device.)

They will also attempt to link up or hook onto portable electronic devices as well in the area being targeted. At that time, they will work to install stealthware to run pictures pulled from the device infected, randomly morphing and merging images, distorting, warping, as well as randomly deleting pixels and saving back over the files. They are not grabbing nor pulling the files off the devices, instead using the devices to manipulate via installed and Wi-Fi enabled graphics programs and scripts.

They also are having applications and games turn on and off, log in and out, in an effort to create a sense of chaos and madness.

## CLUES

Clues to help decipher what is going on in these circumstances include:

- ▲ Strange Cell Signals
- ▲ Odd Wi-Fi names
- ▲ Non-Descript hardware hidden in out of the way places
- ▲ Cams installed in hidden and concealed locations in public
- ▲ Repeaters in an area (sometimes installed on the tops of poles or on roofs or attached to eaves

## WRAP UP

Once Halloween passes then the pranks will stop. The perpetrators will pack up their stuff and get back to their normal lives. There is no closure

intended in this scenario. There are not supposed to be enough clues left to allow for characters to hunt down those responsible. Instead it is intended to be strange and unnerving and to leave the characters wondering what was actually going on.





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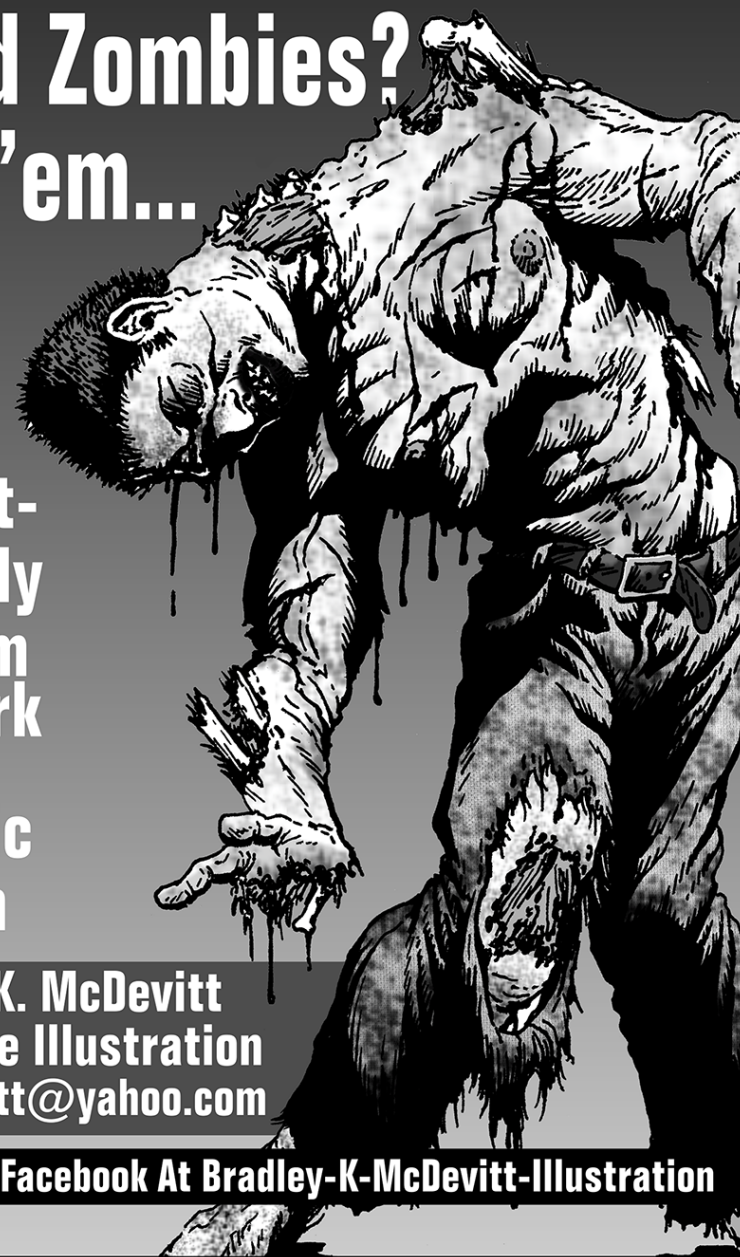
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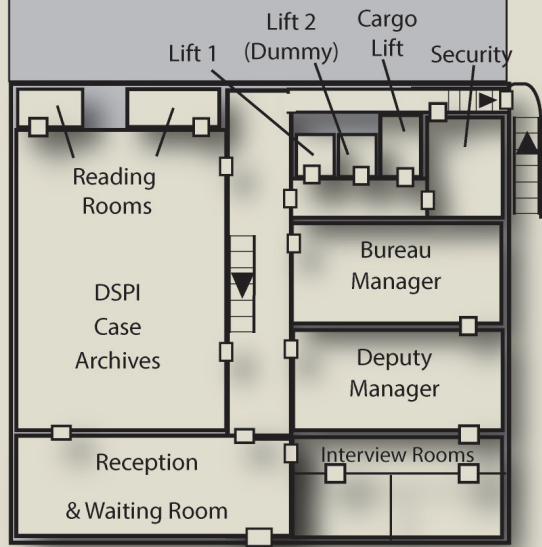
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The Clarence Pub

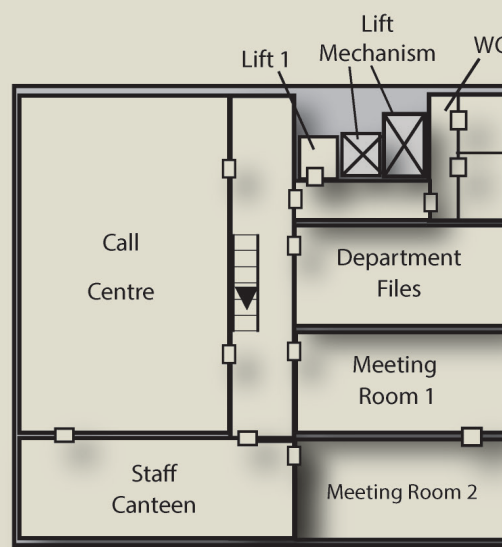
Great Scotland Yard



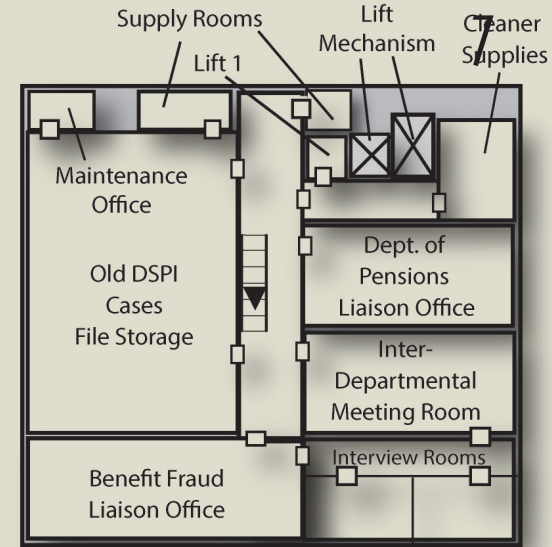
Ground Floor

Bus Stop

Whitehall Place



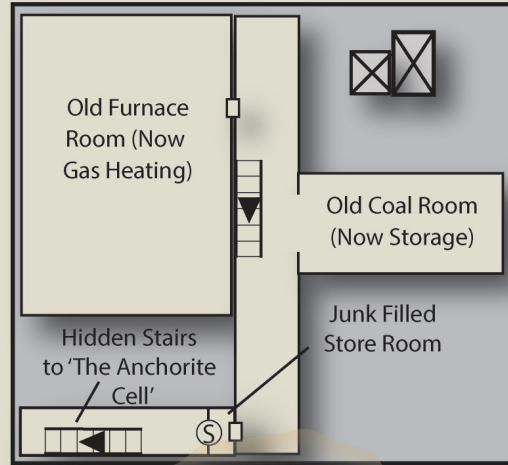
First Floor



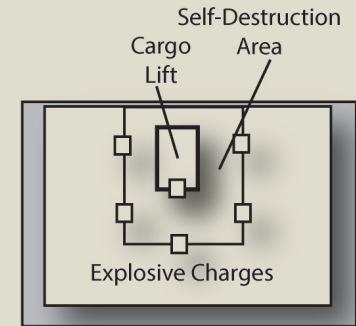
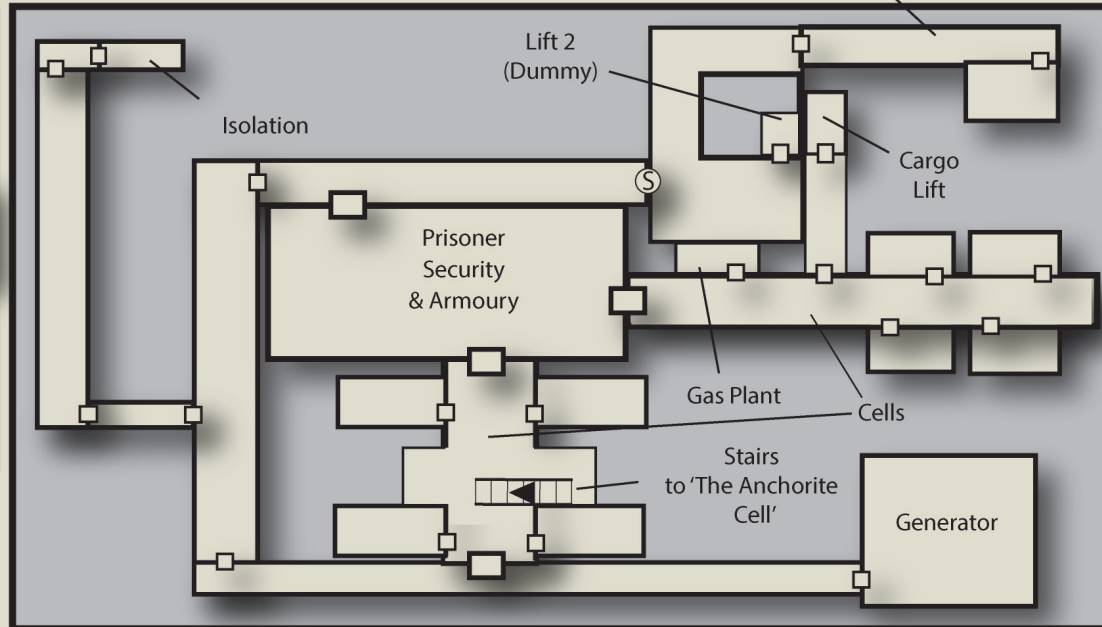
Second Floor

### Whitehall

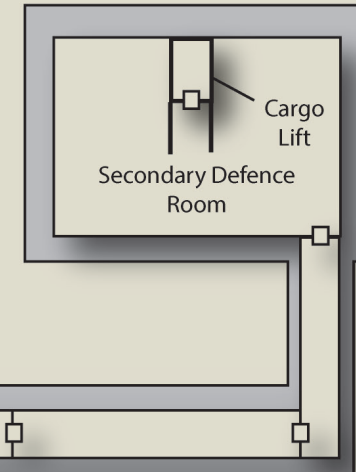
Sub-Basement Level One - "The Tea House"



Basement Level



Sub-Basement Level Two - "Fail Safe" Point



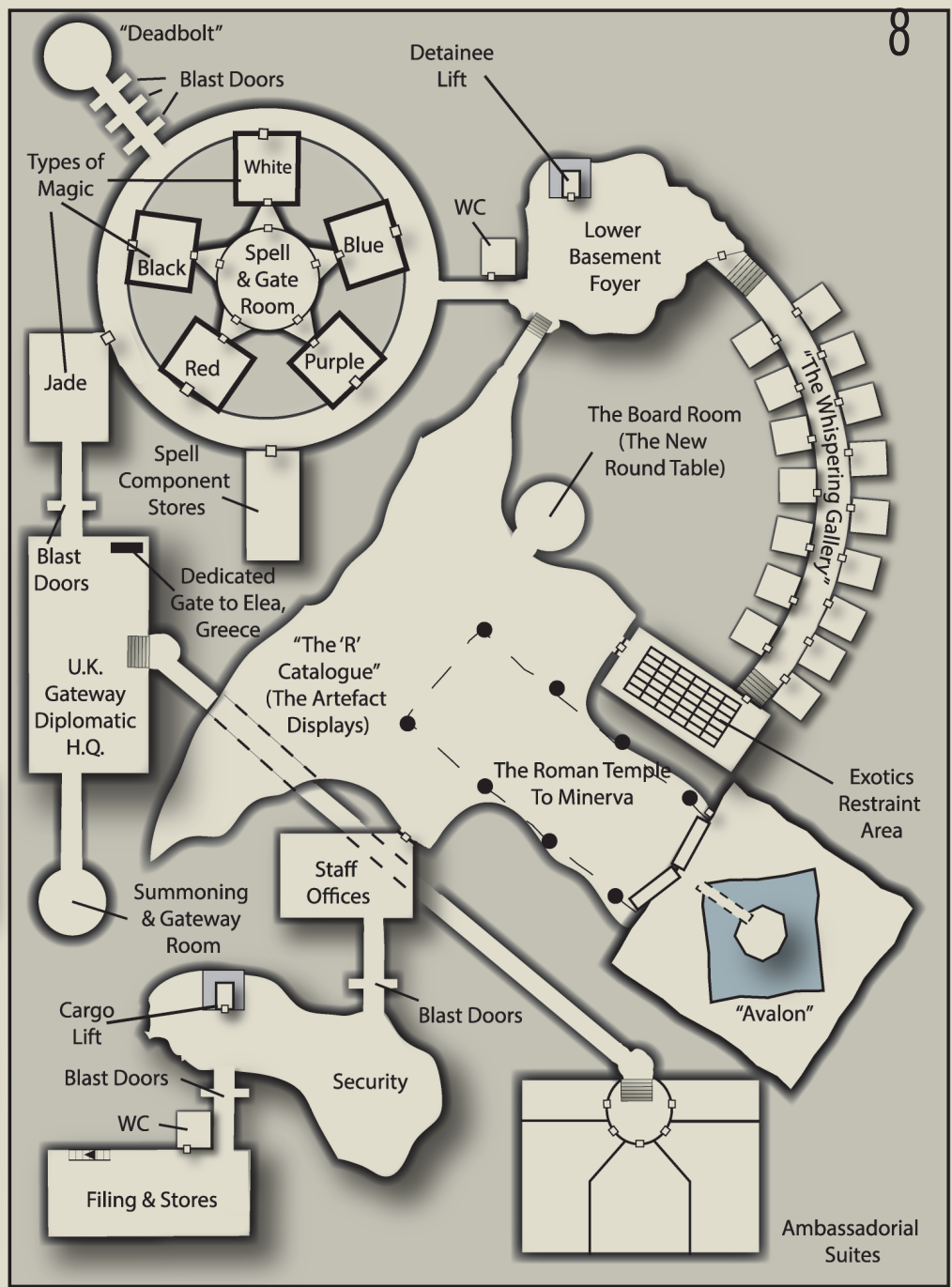
Sub-Basement Level Three - Secondary Defence Point

## "Tartarus" at 55 Whitehall.

Eyes Only, Compartmentalised, Restricted M.I.14  
PLAN A: Upper Building & Holding Area

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Sub-Basement Level Four - "The Lodge"

Sub-Basement Level Five - "The Temple"



# "Tartarus" at 55 Whitehall.

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Plan B: "Tartarus HQ & Special Talent Operations"

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## WOLF AT THE DOOR

By Linden Dunham

Dark Conspiracy scenario seed

### TEWKESBURY, GLOUCESTERSHIRE, UK

There have been several “Werewolf” sightings in the countryside around this historic English market town. In the first a farm worker for saw what he described as a wolf-like creature walking upright on the opposite bank of a disused canal, before it ran off into a belt of woodland. In the second a corporate executive exercising her pet poodle off the lead in a park on the edge of town saw the animal seized and carried off by a large “wolf-dog”. In addition there have been nocturnal attacks on sheep and cattle with half eaten carcasses being left in the fields for farm workers to find in the morning. There are claims of a large wolf or dog like creature being seen in the vicinity of the attacks. The tabloids have already run articles on “The Tewkesbury Werewolf” with some of them linking the sightings to the infamous Tewkesbury Shadow Hound, a sinister black dog reputed to have haunted the region in the late Middle Ages.

### THE LIE OF THE LAND

In the twentieth century Tewkesbury was a popular tourist destination, with visitors being attracted by the town’s impressive Norman era Abbey Church, well preserved Tudor buildings, its connection with author and conservationist John Moore, and its location as the site of a decisive battle in the Wars of the Roses. Post Greater Depression it continues to benefit from the tourist trade but, as with many other aspects of British life, there now is a far greater corporate influence. Modern day visitors are

well heeled Gnomes and other wealthy types, their excursions are tightly controlled by leisure providers - specialist holiday companies that organise every aspect of their clients’ “heritage tours” and keep them wedded to strict itinerary. Which isn’t to suggest that the town has been turned into some sort of twee historical theme park, at least not all of it...

On the east side of the town lies a large industrial zone: Engineering works, factories and hi-tech manufacturing plants sprawl out to the M5 motorway and beyond. Some of the companies with premises in the zone are engaged in defence work, primarily information security. Their presence may not be unconnected with GCHQ, the UK government’s signal intelligence headquarters located a few miles to the south east in the suburbs of Cheltenham.

Tewkesbury is situated at the confluence of two rivers, the Seven and the Avon. The land surrounding the town is predominantly low lying, criss-crossed by streams and drainage channels, with elevations of relatively low height when compared to the Cotswold Hills lying to the south and east. The area is notoriously prone to flooding after sustained rainfall. Traditionally it is a region of mixed arable and livestock farming. This continues post Greater Depression, but the traditional family farms described in “Portrait of Elmbury” John Moore’s celebrated novel of life in the locality have been bought up by International Cereals Corporation which now owns most of the countryside around the town. The corporation has continued with



region's mixed farming tradition but much more intensively.

Many of the old farms and villages in the district were abandoned during the influx into the cities, or have been turned into corporate dormitories for company farm workers, technicians, and other support personnel. A few higher ranking managers occupy the more impressive houses, turning them into palatial residences for themselves and their families. These properties are surrounded by walls and protected by corporate security personnel and hi-tech security devices, ultra-modern counterparts of the fortified manor houses of old.

ICC is taking the threat of an apex predator stalking its territory very seriously. The corporate bigwigs don't believe in Werewolves but they do know that their workforce are frightened, and the livestock losses are real. The company's own security people have drawn a blank. Perhaps more specialist help is needed?

## THE NATURE OF THE BEAST

### I. Wolf Pack

The Nemeth family have recently moved to the United Kingdom from Hungary, following Mr Nemeth's promotion to the upper ranks of ICC's operational management. In addition to Mr Nemeth, the family consists of his wife and two children - a boy and a girl in their early teens. They reside in a fortified farmhouse outside Tewkesbury.

They are also Werewolves (see Dark Conspiracy p229). The Nemeths are used to roaming the vast expanses of the Great Hungarian Plain. They find the more intimate scale of the English countryside a little claustrophobic and are still finding their feet when it comes to discovering how much freedom they have in Werewolf form. They are skilled at concealing their true nature though and take precautions to avoid detection. They have excavated a tunnel from the cellar of their farmhouse into a disused canal which gives them access to the surrounding area and bypasses their property's own ICC installed security measures. Mr and Mrs Nemeth are cautious and only let their human guise slip when they are compelled to i.e. at the full moon. However, their children are at a rebellious age and sometimes disobey their parents' strictures about remaining in human guise. The Nemeth children enjoy prowling the countryside in Werewolf form, hunting and killing prey. The majority of the sheep attacks and monster sightings can be attributed to their youthful exuberance. Neither they nor their parents will attack human beings though, except during the full moon when they throw their usual caution to the wind and go on a frenzied rampage killing everything in their path.

### 2. Lone Wolf

The Tewkesbury Werewolf is a Moreau Were that has escaped a Humanoid ET controlled corporation lab in the industrial zone. The ETs hoped that introducing lupine characteristics to a human subject could produce a super soldier prototype with enhanced physical characteristics





and high intelligence, but with a built in loyalty to a leadership hierarchy. The Were proved a little more intelligent and less loyal than its creators anticipated. It escaped the lab and evaded pursuit through the industrial zone, escaping into the countryside. It is currently holed up in a derelict farm in the middle of ICC land from where it emerges at night to feed. It kills sheep for preference but will prey opportunist on smaller animals.

The Were generally avoids people but will defend itself if attacked. It is capable of using any weapons such as firearms that it may acquire. Although animalistic in its habits the Were has human level intelligence. It is unable to speak, but PCs may be able to communicate with it via Animal Empathy/Project Thought, sign language or even the written word.

The PCs hunt for the Were will be made more difficult by the corporation that created it. They want to get the creature back to the lab, dead or alive, before its existence becomes known to the world at large. At the same time they are wary of treading on ICC's toes. They deploy a team of special operatives (equivalent to Men in Black – see Dark Races p68) to clandestinely scour the countryside for their missing super soldier. If the operatives fail (dispatched by the PCs perhaps) then a group of humanoid ETs are sent to continue the search. The arrival of both teams will be heralded by UFO sightings in the locality. The operative group will be equipped with normal human technology and weapons. The ETs will have Dark Tek items like Death

Rays, Stun Guns, Spectral Eye sensors, and Chameleon Suits. Both groups may make use of a Rover biological reconnaissance unit (see Dark Races p84).

### 3. Shadow Hound

ICC's intensive farming of the area includes the conversion of traditionally non-farmed land into productive acreage. In practice this means the uprooting of hedgerows, traditional orchards and woodland using massive earth moving machines. One woodland site targeted for this process of "agri-forming" is situated on a low hilltop and surrounds a clearing in which stands an irregularly shaped six foot high standing stone, known locally as The Wolf Stone. There are a couple of local legends about the stone: The more prosaic of the two is that it marks the spot where the last wolf in England was killed during the reign of King Henry VII. The other, more outlandish tale, is that the stone is the petrified body of the Tewkesbury Shadow Hound, a monstrous black dog that plagued the area during the late middle ages before being turned to stone by a local "cunning woman" (a white witch, often consulted specifically for their skill in countering black magic). The latter tale is closest to the truth. There was a Tewkesbury Shadow Hound, a Barghest which was banished to a pocket proto-dimension (see Proto-dimensions Sourcebook, p9) by a high level empath, the cunning woman of the legend. The Wolf Stone is a plug used to physically stop up the gate to the pocket proto-dimension. The gate has also been empathically dampened using a 200g gold bar.

A few weeks ago the Wolf Stone was toppled and smashed by an ICC Earth mover as it grubbed up the surrounding woodland. The sharp eyed driver of the mover spotted a gleam of gold in a pit beneath the fallen stone, quickly dismounted from his vehicle and took the bar for himself. With both impediments to the dimensional gateway gone the Barghest was able to free itself and resume its reign of terror. Gratitude not being a virtue in Darklings the beast has tracked down its liberator and is persecuting him with nightmares and apparitions. Once it has killed the driver it will move on to the residents of a corporate dormitory village. The PCs find themselves looking into a series of deadly dog attacks, always carried out at night, the victims often having suffered bouts of sleeplessness and paranoia before their deaths. Can there be a connection with the legend of the Shadow Hound, and why did the hound's first victim have a gold bar stashed under the mattress of his bed?

## COMPLICATIONS

The following encounters may be included in the scenarios above to help or hinder the PCs.

### I. Eco-Warriors

A militant band of Mother Earthers has arrived in the area bent on sabotaging ICC's operations. They are equipped with an assortment of former Eastern Bloc weaponry, including an RPG-7 rocket launcher which they use to target ICC Earth Mover, Auto Farmer and Crop Scout



units. They will try to avoid causing human casualties.

The Mother Earthers regard the Werewolf as a manifestation of the planet's displeasure, and as a potential ally. They won't be interested in assisting the PCs but may be persuaded otherwise.

## 2. Dealers

A biker gang has turned one of the derelict properties on the edge of ICC's land into a fortified cannabis farm. The bikers are growing a high strength product using a jury rigged but fully functional hydroponic system. They move the harvested drugs at night transporting it in a van to big cities like Bristol and Birmingham for sale. One or two of the bikers making this run have seen the Werewolf prowling around and may be able to provide information to help track it down. The bikers are an anti-social bunch, and not keen on talking to outsiders though.

## 3. Dogs

Some of the sheep attacks were committed by a pack of feral dogs loose in the area. Their presence will serve to confuse the PCs or possibly give an inexperienced party an easy victory before confronting the main threat. Alternatively if the GM feels that the PCs outmatch the primary antagonists then the dogs could be placed at the monsters' disposal. E.g. The Moreau Were may have acquired Animal Empathy skills during the experimentation process. Having escaped the lab it seeks out the company of those animals it feels it has most in common with.

## 4. Rivals

Others may be seeking the Werewolf in addition to the PCs (and any ET sponsored teams described above). Possibilities include a tabloid journalist with bodyguards, a rogue ICC security team unhappy at having been supplanted by the PCs and eager to show them up, or another band of minion hunters whose interest has been aroused by the media reports. These groups will exhibit varying degrees of helpfulness or hostility to the PCs as the GM deems appropriate.









# THE ZONE, A DIFFERENT KIND OF DEMONGROUND

By Kevin O'Neill

For Dark Conspiracy, any  
edition

## THE ZONE FROM S.T.A.L.K.E.R. AS

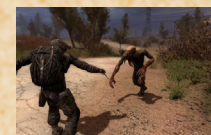
### DEMONGROUND, PART ONE.

While this series of articles is for the Dark Conspiracy RPG, this first article doesn't require any specific rules or game mechanics except in one example. Aside from that one case, the following material can be transplanted easily enough to your favourite system or game world if you find it appropriate for your campaign setting.

### INTRODUCTION.

I first heard of "the Zone" when I read a game review website announcing a new survival/horror/exploration video game to be released in 2004. The game was called S.T.A.L.K.E.R. Oblivion Lost and although it never actually made it to the shop shelves, it did morph into a trio of FPS style survival/sci-fi/horror games. While Oblivion Lost floundered for several years before being recreated, rebuilt, renamed and finally released, I, being driven by curiosity, did everything I could to find out more. This led me to a short novel, a series of apocalypse novels that were somewhat related in theme (James Rouch's WWII series titled, The Zone), a movie and a website all revolving around the concept of a "Zone" but also, finally, to the first released S.T.A.L.K.E.R. video game. But I didn't stop at just that, there were other movies, other websites, pen & paper game adaptations, other novels, some similarly influenced video games, an unofficial multi-player online spin-off (S-Zone Online), a legitimate multi-player

online spin-off (Suvarium) and many discussions on web forums. There was a wealth of material to satisfy my curiosity and now there's the potential for a TV drama series based on the novel (see Links below)



The three S.T.A.L.K.E.R. games were the creation of Ukrainian video game developer GSC Game World. The concept was heavily based on a Russian sci-fi novel called "Roadside Picnic" written by the Strugatsky brothers (Arkady and Boris), that involved an alien visitation of Earth where the aliens stopped by, didn't make contact with the inhabitants and departed, leaving various detritus behind. In Roadside Picnic, the title of the novel derives from the idea that the aliens were akin to humans stopping by the road at some convenient spot, having a picnic and when their meal was finished, they left but didn't bother to clean up their mess. The mess is subsequently claimed by the various insects at the picnic site even though the insects have no concept of what it is they've discovered. All they know is that, for good or for ill, they want it. We are the insects.

The first in the series was S.T.A.L.K.E.R. Shadow of Chernobyl (AKA SoC or ShoC), released in 2007 in which the basic concepts of Roadside Picnic have been transplanted to the exclusion zone around the Chernobyl



nuclear power plant (CNPP). But in this case, the people exploring the site aren't sure if the mystery of the Zone is as a result of the CNPP reactor explosion, an alien visit, the hand of God, something else supernatural or something else entirely. So it's not just the mysterious items found in the Zone that draw people to the site, the mystery of how it came to be and what to do with it compels many others to investigate and/or exploit the Zone. As in the novel, the explorers are called Stalkers.

In a case of art imitating life imitating art, the S.T.A.L.K.E.R. series revolve around the Chernobyl Exclusion Zone where in the real world, the engineers and scientist who went into the sarcophagus (built over a section of the CNPP to contain the radioactive material released by the reactor blast in 1986) to check on it, where dubbed Stalkers in informal recognition of the explorers of Roadside Picnic.

With the popularity of the video games and of the airsoft sport in Europe, there have been a number of S.T.A.L.K.E.R. themed airsoft events held in various locations in Eastern Europe where the players can take advantage of abandoned Soviet towns and military bases.

And in another example of the impact of the original story in its various forms, a subculture of urban explorers exists in Eastern Europe, particularly the Ukraine and Russia, who refer to themselves as Stalkers. They explore the abandoned Soviet infrastructure in the

Chernobyl Exclusion Zone with their Holy Grail a visit to the decaying city of Pripyat.

*V. is standing in front of a barbed wire fence, looking left and right, his head down. He is nervously entering near a militia post, a place where arrests happen frequently. He opens a flask and takes a shot of vodka, as is his tradition, anointing this trip into the Zone. He shimmies under the bottom strand of barbed wire and gets to the other side then holds it up for his friend.*

*"This is your first time in the Zone, right?"*

"Yes."

"Congratulations."

Extract from "The Stalkers: Inside the bizarre subculture that lives to explore Chernobyl's Dead Zone" [www.slate.com](http://www.slate.com)

The S.T.A.L.K.E.R. series has benefited from a strong fan-base constantly updating and modifying the game giving the first game of the trio a longevity not enjoyed by many better known FPS titles from Western game companies





## Horror and Terror

Ann Radcliffe, a Gothic writer of the late 1700s and early 1800s, chose to make a distinction between horror and terror in fiction that still defines both terms to this day. Because they are so closely related, the distinction seems to have been lost in the 2000s among the general public, particularly with the movie industry labelling anything terrifying as part of the horror genre.

**Terror** is about suspense, suggestion & implication, it is emotional; it's the dread of the unknown and the anticipation of encountering the imagined but unknown evils. Terror can make something more horrifying than it actually is.

**Horror** is explicit, immediate and physical; it is the shock of realization at the moment the unknown is revealed and leads to revulsion and to being appalled by what we've seen. And fearful of encountering it again, thus horror can induce terror.

– people are still playing SoC ten years after its release. Indeed, my motivation for writing these articles stems directly from my own interest in the series and my current game of SoC with the OGSE mod. I've played SoC at least twice a year, every year since it was released.

Some people will be curious about this level of interest, what makes the game so desirable for replay, what keeps people coming back to it ten years after it was released, what makes new players want to try a game from a decade ago?

In general terms, I think it's the emotional experience of the survival genre, the fear of failure, the joy of succeeding and the S.T.A.L.K.E.R. series implements this far better than most survival games which have tended to focus on creating stress rather than tension – health drains too quickly, resources deplete too quickly, combat is usually frustrating, either too difficult or too easy. You spend more time managing resources to keep your character alive than you spend being immersed in the game.

S.T.A.L.K.E.R. managed to avoid that trap but more specifically, I believe the interest stems from a successful mix of FPS, survival, weird science, mystery, exploration and frontier themes combined with a proper understanding of terror & horror. All this supported by a subtle background soundtrack creating a moody audio ambiance, coupled to a dynamic Artificial Intelligence (AI) that causes a believable ebb & flow of the various factions in the Zone. It also means that aside from central story themes, it's extremely rare that any two games will play out exactly the same because the AI reacts to changes in the environment and also to the actions of the Player. The game uses tension, not stress, to achieve its aims and if we make use of Ann Radcliffe's distinction between terror and horror, the game uses horror to induce terror (see boxed text), the horror was from encountering the dangers of the Zone, the terror was from anticipating the dangers that awaited – many experienced S.T.A.L.K.E.R. players dreaded (terror) the night cycle of the game because they knew

what they might encounter (horror) in the darkness.

There were also touches that were rarely seen in other video games; NPCs would sit around a campfire and talk to each other, they might eat or drink, one of them would eventually pull out a guitar and play a few tunes. The AI would continue to make things happen even if you weren't there to instigate it. We've been used to that in well-run pen & paper RPGs but it's something almost rare in video games where the tendency is to make the world revolve around the player character.

The Zone of the S.T.A.L.K.E.R. series exists as its own entity, it is not something that waits for the Player Character to instigate. It waits for no-one and because of this, it's a world that many video gamers want to go back to, indeed, some of us never quite left.

To quote two users on the S.T.A.L.K.E.R. Reddit when asked *"What makes you keep going back to play STALKER?"*

### Member: Nallenon

*"The feeling of huddling behind a concrete pipe, rain pouring down, lightning flashing overhead, bullets flying past, desperately trying to avoid being out-flanked by bandits while reloading your AKS-74U while avoiding the anomaly to your left and the radiation to your right, slightly drunk from the vodka you had to drink to avoid rad poisoning just before the bandits showed up, hoping your last bandage will be enough to save you if you can get away safely..."*





*I love the atmosphere, immersion and exploration. I love the constant sense of danger, be it mutants, radiation, bandits or anomalies you must stay on your toes to stay alive. The Zone is dangerous, and dynamic. You can make friends with other stalkers then find a bloodsucker feeding on their corpse (unscripted).*

*The feeling when you make the trek to an anomaly field, find as many artefacts as possible and finally hump them back to camp is unmatched. The game doesn't hold your hand either. If you don't plan right you WILL be stuck in some underground lab with 10 shotgun shells and too many snorks to use them on.*

*In essence, the S.T.A.L.K.E.R. series is the perfect blend of RPG, shooter, open world, survival horror, and stealth. There are games I've played more, but none has such a*

*place in my heart."*

Note that both these Reddit members posted those comments in the first week of September 2016.

The idea of "the zone" has exercised a fascination for many people over the years, not just the players of the video games. It has been explored in other forms that can serve as inspiration for your game. There have been RPG articles,

fan-made and official conversions to pen & paper gaming and also novels & comics based on the S.T.A.L.K.E.R. games. There have also been a few movies, the most well-known being "Stalker" by Andrei Tarkovsky and a novelization of an early draft of Tarkovsky's movie written by the Strugatsky brothers.

**So how does any of that relate to Dark Conspiracy?**

The Zone with all its strangeness and mystery could easily be a Demonground although one of much larger dimensions than some Dark Conspiracy players might have considered placing in their game world. The Zone in S.T.A.L.K.E.R. is meant to encompass the entire 30km radius of the Chernobyl Exclusion Zone. Many of the items and creatures found within the Zone in S.T.A.L.K.E.R. can be converted to Dark Conspiracy stats but even if they are not, the Zone is an ideal haunt for many stock Dark Conspiracy creatures and a place for DarkTek items. Even if the S.T.A.L.K.E.R. Zone is not used, the real world Chernobyl Exclusion Zone or any of the zones from Roadside Picnic are just as easily adapted for the same use. You could also take an excursion into John Tyne's version of the Zone in which the Tunguska Event of 1908 (in Siberia) caused a weakening in the fabric of time and space opening a portal to another world... although passing through that particular doorway is a one-way trip. You can of course, put the Zone anywhere that it suits your game world.

While this series of articles relies heavily on the video games for its base material, I'll also be

*Sitting around a fire with three other loners, brought together by circumstance, not really talking except the occasional comment about life in the Zone, someone brought a guitar and is gently strumming along, waiting for morning so you can all go on your way.*

*No other game delivers that feeling."*

**Member: Iamthelurker**

*"The Zone, it calls you back..."*



referencing the only officially licensed game adaptation of the STALKER mythos, the excellent pen & paper version from Mr. Ville Vuorela of Burger Games, titled “STALKER – the Sci-Fi Roleplaying Game”. The Zone is a weird and wonderful place, firearms certainly help you to survive but a well-planned mission, clever thinking, quick wits, accepting what fate dishes out and a good dose of luck can be just as important, sometimes more so. Vuorela’s adaption stresses those ideas over gunplay because some problems in the Zone cannot be resolved with bullets.

*The Zone is a very complicated system of traps, and they’re all deadly. I don’t know what’s going on here in the absence of people, but the moment someone shows up, everything comes into motion. Old traps disappear and new ones emerge. Safe spots become impassable. Now your path is easy, now it’s hopelessly involved. That’s the Zone. It may even seem capricious.*

The Stalker character from Tarkovsky’s “Stalker” movie.

**So why the emphasis on the S.T.A.L.K.E.R. video games over the novel or the Burger Games RPG?**

Because video games by their nature are a visual medium so it’s very easy to find a multitude of images from the various S.T.A.L.K.E.R. games on the internet that GMs can use to get a feel for the Zone or to illustrate it to their Players. There’s also a large collection of S.T.A.L.K.E.R. themed artwork that can be found online. That

plus the fact that like Dark Conspiracy, the video games have a greater emphasis on weapons than either the novel or the RPG.

That doesn’t mean that the novel and Mr. Vuorela’s adaptation of it will be ignored in these articles however. For example, while the video games derive some of their ambiance from the “loner” style of play common in single-player video games, the novel and the pen & paper RPG pay more attention to the idea of exploring the Zone as part of a group. And there are other concepts in those two sources that are too good to be ignored.

Also, 2016 is the 30 year anniversary of the real world Chernobyl Event and the 10 year anniversary of the fictional second Chernobyl event as portrayed in the S.T.A.L.K.E.R. video games.

*V. makes his way past rusted, still bumper cars, surreptitiously; it is dangerous to move through Pripyat at dusk. Usually he goes only at night. He keeps his dosimeter off so as not to make noise and alert police who might be on patrol. V. walks into a nine-story building, up the rickety stairs and into an apartment with peeling flowered wallpaper and many shades of grey. “Dobryj den.” Good afternoon, he says to three young men who are already there. They had agreed in an online forum that this is where they’d meet. This is their hideout.*

**Extract from “The Stalkers”:** Inside the bizarre subculture that lives to explore Chernobyl’s Dead Zone” [www.slate.com](http://www.slate.com)

**So what are the basics for converting the Zone to a Demonground?**

In the novel, the zone is placed in a fictitious town in Canada, in the video games the zone is a stylized version of the real world Chernobyl Exclusion Zone while the zone from the RPG by Burger Games is a portion of the countryside and some of the city of Toulouse in France.

Whether you use the real world exclusion zone, the Zone from S.T.A.L.K.E.R., the various zones from Roadside Picnic or the zone in the Burger Games RPG (or even in Japan, the “Zone of the Rising Sun” is included as extra material in the RPG), doesn’t matter as much as implementing the common background elements they share.

The cause of the Zones creation is easily accommodated by the Dark Conspiracy game.





Whether you choose to have the Zone as a result of alien intervention, humans under the influence of Dark Minions, the result of colliding proto-dimensions or as the direct workings of a Dark Lord, Dark Conspiracy allows any one and even multiple versions so don't feel constrained by the established lore of Roadside Picnic, the STALKER rpg or the S.T.A.L.K.E.R. video games. Mix and match so that it suits your game world, it will all work because in the Dark Conspiracy world, it's ultimately one Dark Lord or another who is responsible in one way or another (and maybe the Zone is the result of Dark Lords fighting amongst themselves, a battleground created by one of them to test new ideas for combating their rivals).

If you're not using Dark Conspiracy, the origin of the Zone can still be any one or more of the explanations given above. The exact origins are unknown to the people who operate in and those who guard the Zone. The Player Characters may never truly know or they may find out basic theories or hear and come to believe various speculations.

## DEFINING CONCEPTS.

The Zone is far removed from everyday life, even everyday life in the Dark Conspiracy world and while familiar, it's a far larger area and encompasses wilderness, rural and town sites. Some are desolate, some are inhabited but all can be dangerous and there's an obvious alien taint (not

simply the extra-terrestrial touch of a Demonground, but alien as in warped and/or disturbing). Vegetation is the most commonly seen example, with trees twisted into bizarre shapes by unknown energies, strange vines draped over electricity pylons or dangling from rafters inside a house, enormous predatory plants akin to a Venus flytrap lurking behind bushes (unlike Triffids, these plants fortunately don't move).

In the video games, part of the ambiance is derived

from the state of decay, the region has been abandoned for more than 20 years and all the manmade items are rusting or rotting away. This works for Dark Conspiracy where the Greater Depression has caused many rural areas and smaller towns to be abandoned for many years due to the collapsed economy. Other game settings may require some tweaking if there are no abandoned areas suitable for placing the Zone.

The Zone is a landscape of ruins and resurgent flora & fauna. It's a world where nature has taken over the manmade world and where the Zone has taken over both. It's foreboding, brooding, forbidding, dynamic and unpredictable; the fate of anyone who fails to plan for a mission into the Zone is to be taken by the Zone. You don't push your luck in the Zone, you take what it deals out and you walk away with whatever loot you could grab. It never pays to be greedy.

Death would be preferable to some of the things the Zone could do to you.

*"The Zone wants to be respected. Otherwise it will punish."* The Stalker character from Tarkovsky's "Stalker" movie.

*Attention. You are approaching the border of an ecological disaster. Illicit crossing of the perimeter is a criminal act.*

Warning broadcast by loudspeaker at the army checkpoint in Cordon. S.T.A.L.K.E.R. Shadow of Chernobyl





One of the things that makes the Zone different to other demongrounds is that it's recognized as a definite threat by the government (and other groups) while also a resource for exploiting by that same government, various corporations and some other groups. In the novel and the Burger Games RPG, it's not just the government of the affected country, but the United Nations that exercises control over the Zone. A military force has established a cordon around the Zone to prevent unauthorized people from entering and just as importantly (or maybe, more importantly...) to keep anything in the Zone from getting out (including those unauthorized people foolish enough to enter). They will use everything in their arsenal to contain or eliminate any threat seeking to breach the cordon including but not limited to heavy weapons, armoured vehicles and helicopter gunships. They are authorized to use deadly force.

*Any attempt to penetrate the secure Zone will be punished by any means necessary. Patrols have the right to shoot on sight.*

Warning broadcast by loudspeaker at the army checkpoint in Cordon. S.T.A.L.K.E.R. Shadow of Chernobyl

It also means that the area of the Zone is subject to decay because everyone within its borders was either evacuated, killed by the event that transformed the area into the Zone or worse, "converted". This means that any areas of human habitation are now abandoned and lying in ruins unless they've been occupied by one of the

various factions operating in the Zone. Expect to see examples of that abandonment and nature's reclaiming of the area everywhere you look - a tree growing through the collapsed roof of a village house, grass sprouting through the cracks in weathered pavement, roads crumbling from the lack of maintenance, vehicles rusting away in fields and parking lots, windswept leaves and sand gusting through buildings with broken doors and shattered windows, apartment blocks with collapsed walls and floors, the rusting hulks of high tension electricity pylons creaking in the wind (sometimes even without the wind), and leaf litter, the bones of small animals and the bones of... other... creatures... collecting in ditches.

*The Zone poses mortal danger. We're here to protect you from the Zone, not the Zone from you. Do not jeopardize your life, do not try to penetrate into the secure area.*

Warning broadcast by loudspeaker at the army checkpoint in Cordon. S.T.A.L.K.E.R. Shadow of Chernobyl

In the novel, a special United Nations military force guards the zones, while in the video games the Ukrainian army has that responsibility. In your game world it could be a UN force, the military from the affected nation, special police units, private military contractors or even a cyberpunk style, corporate owned police force. You could even place the Zone on the border between multiple nations causing tensions between them as they argue over who has authority,

responsibility and so on. With their militaries working for the same goal but not necessarily together, there are many opportunities for PCs to exploit the potential rivalries between those nations and their armed forces.

There are also groups that wish to save humanity by destroying the Zone and everything it has brought to Earth while other groups seek to exploit it and there are those who just wish to study it. There are even some who would like the Zone to expand. For most explorers and even the governments and corporations, there just isn't enough information to know how to effectively contain the Zone let alone control or destroy it. So they must continue to study it and all the items they can find within it, including plants and animals and even the people who have spent time in its confines. Study requires items to study and supplying them can be a very profitable job for enterprising individuals or groups. Enterprising... by that I really mean, those people brave enough to risk breaking through the cordon and motivated enough to live for weeks and months in the Zone.

By that, I mean Stalkers.

Like some of the Demongrounds found in Dark Conspiracy, the laws of physics can be different to what we're used to. Not just different but changed to suit the Zone. Like everything else in the Zone, they are subject to the Zone and explorers may find situations where the normal physical laws are not just bent but warped beyond comprehension.



Some believe the Zone is a living entity in its own right and there are many myths and campfire stories about the Zone, the creatures and events in it and the fate of those who challenge it. With the weirdness that is commonplace within the Zone, it's quite easy to believe these stories could be true. Some of them probably are.

It's worth considering that in the Ukraine and Russia in the real world, the Zone is still known by the designation given to it by the Soviet Union – the Zone of Alienation.

One of the lesser defining concepts is the attitude and beliefs of many of the Stalkers. There is a widespread use of nicknames among them and although first names are often exchanged, family names are never revealed and most experienced Stalkers discourage the discussion of family. This isn't just a case of Zone superstition of which there is an unhealthy dose, it's a very real security concern. Stalkers in the Zone might be tolerated by some members of the military but they're still regarded as trespassers at best and criminals at worst. The military will happily use any information you reveal to "convince" you to leave the Zone.

And then there's the bandits. They too will happily use any information you reveal but they don't care about you leaving the Zone, in fact, they'd rather you stay there and do all the hard, dirty work for them.

They'll use the information to intimidate you into surrendering any loot you might have

found and if they found out you made a good haul, they'll not shy away from harassment (or worse) of your family to "persuade" you to hand it over to them.

But there's also the superstitious dread that revealing too much about yourself may call you to the attention of the Zone.

Another thing that makes the Zone different is the number of alien items, commonly referred to as "artefacts", found within it. These range from the interesting to the miraculous but also to the harmful and lethal. Various groups will pay big money for just one of these artefacts but considering the danger in acquiring even the more common types, the payout might give you a marginal profit after paying all your expenses. While a GM could easily make the Zone a place to find various items of DarkTek (or alien/anomalous technology in other game systems), the artefacts are one of the two main defining aspects of the Zone and should remain as a feature to illustrate the Zone's difference to other areas of high weirdness. Artefacts will be covered in greater detail in another article.



The other main defining characteristic is also another thing that marks it as distinctly different to demongrounds.

The "anomalies".

These are described by researchers as energy phenomena and they are the most obvious example of the changed physics within the Zone. Typically they are found individually or in small clusters but sometimes in fields that are incredibly hazardous to traverse. They are sources of radiation, heat, flame, steam, poison gas, electricity or teleportation amongst other things. Sometimes they are not particularly harmful, they might even prove useful but those that are



harmful are deadly. The Meatgrinder anomaly will do to you exactly what you think it does.

But in S.T.A.L.K.E.R. it's the anomalies that spawn many of the artefacts...

And the most overwhelming example of the video game Zone's difference to anywhere else on the planet, is the Blowout. While a central theme in the video games, it is not necessary to have it as a defining characteristic of your Zone. The Zone is already wild and dangerous and unique due to the artefacts and anomalies, it doesn't need the Blowout to help define it but Blowouts can add another layer of mystery, tension and terror to your game.

More correctly known as an Emission, a number of Stalkers also refer to a Blowout as a Surge. It's a sudden, unpredictable, intensely powerful release of energy from somewhere deep in the Zone. Most people don't know what causes it or where it emanates from but there are a lot of tales and speculations among Stalkers. The energy covers many spectrums; light, radioactivity, electro-magnetic and psychic energy being the most obvious due to their effects on electrical and electronic devices and particularly living organisms which more often than not results in the death of the organism if they cannot find shelter. The blowouts emanate outwards from the centre to cover the entire area of the Zone. Blowouts will interfere with electronics and aircraft can be shut down and drop out of the sky unless heavily protected. Blowout effects are much stronger closer to the centre of the Zone

(the point of origin) and the power diminishes the further from the centre they travel so aircraft are safer staying on the outskirts of the Zone during an emission.

If a Stalker is paying attention there are some early warning signs, they'll notice a subtle change in the light, maybe a sudden change in the weather, a quietening of the animals nearby, a sound like thunder getting ready to release or maybe the booming rumble of approaching thunder. If they're smart, they'll always be looking at their surroundings, watching out for danger. If they're prepared, they'll be carrying detectors or a communications device that can warn them of an impending emission. If they're fated, they'll survive but be forever marked by the Zone.

Typically, if they're caught out in the open during a blowout, they'll see the birds fall from the sky, killed by the emission, the sky changing colour to brooding shades of grey then angry shades of red and orange and lightning lashing the ground with all its electrical fury. Certain medications might help you to survive but the best protection is to get into any solid structure that blocks the transmission waves of the blowout – the waves travels in line of sight so much like protecting yourself from an atomic bomb blast, even hiding behind a hill can offer some protection.

Psi-emissions are a variant of the blowout. While having far less radioactivity than a blowout, psi-emissions and the related psi-storms (see below) are also more localized. They don't

blanket the entire Zone like the blowout does but they are just as lethal to any creature caught out in the open, they affect your mental and emotional state and can cause short term psychosis if they don't overwhelm your psyche and kill you outright.

In some mods for the S.T.A.L.K.E.R. Call of Pripjat game, there is variant of the psi-emission known as a psi-storm. Psi-storms are particularly fearsome because although typically covering a smaller area than even a psi-emission, psi-storms follow you and try to strike you down with bolts of lightning and directed waves of powerful psionic energy. While psi-emission will generally burn out your brain and turn you into a barely functioning husk of what you were, psi-storms want to kill you. They will hunt you down and kill you like they were a living thing that exists for no other purpose than to see to your demise.

*"The Zone wants to be respected. Otherwise it will punish."*

**"The Zone, it calls you back..." - Iamthelurker.**

Those people who spend a lot of time in the S.T.A.L.K.E.R. Zone are sometimes beset by strange dreams. Often they are meaningless jumbles, fragments of the dreamer's own experiences mixed with the brains normal function of trying to clear out the days clutter from the dreamer's mind. Sometimes, the dreamer sees the experiences of others. A dreamer may get visions of places that they haven't been to, people



they've never met or events they never took part in. Sometimes the dreams may provide a hint of what's to come in the future and while these dreams may be thought of as useful predictions, they're the most dangerous.

The dreamer will never know if the visions are true or not until they attempt to follow them up and even if they are in themselves harmless, the journey through the Zone to whatever place was seen in the dream will probably be considerably dangerous, even lethal.

The deeper into the Zone you travel, the greater the likelihood you will suffer these dreams unless you can take some sort of precaution. People use various methods to counteract the dreams; some will consume quantities of alcohol before sleeping, others will take sleeping pills or doses of serotonin. A few have access to electronic devices that put them into deep slumber so that they avoid dream sleep. Stalker tales speak of sleeping with your head in a metal bucket to prevent whatever is projecting the dreams from affecting you.

Some believe the Zone itself sends you these dreams, sends them to you to encourage you to go deeper into the Zone, to go deeper in and obtain your heart's desire, your ultimate wish. The dreams promise to provide you with something to grant your wish.

While you sleep, the Zone will call to you.

And if you try to leave, it will call to you.

Иди ко мне (Idi ko mne)... – Come to me...

**NOTE:** GM's should consider the dreams as a random occurrence unless some sort of precaution against dreaming is in place. On the outskirts of the Zone it should be unlikely that they experience them but the deeper the PCs go into the Zone, the greater chance there is for one, some, or all of them to experience a dream of this nature. The same dream could even be experienced by the entire PC team at the same time even though they experience the dream from only their own perspective.

Even if a PC dreams in this way, it isn't necessarily the Zone (or something within the Zone), communicating with them. More often than not, it's either the brain trying to make sense of the Zone or it's the effect on the brain of various secondary emanations and radiations from the Zone.

If a PC does suffer a dream, there should be a random chance again, that the Zone is trying to communicate with the dreamer. In game terms it is a form of telepathy and if the game system has rules for withstanding telepathy they should come into play. In Dark Conspiracy specifically, it is a form of Empathic communication and should trigger a Willpower test to resist. In either case, the test should be easier for the PC to pass if they have taken precautions against dreaming.

### **Breaking through the embargo on the Zone.**

Just because the military has a cordon around the Zone, doesn't mean that it's impossible

to enter or to leave, just difficult. There are a number of factions working within the Zone and they all have their supply lines back to the "big world" To quote V.I. Suslov, a trader of the Clear Sky faction (from S.T.A.L.K.E.R. Clear Sky), *"It's an illusion that the Zone is under lock and key, and the army has all the ways in and out sealed and all that bullshit. Think about it, nowadays artefacts and rare specimens from the zone are found all over the world, and your fellow stalkers never had a shortage of canned meat, vodka, ammo or equipment – somebody's gotta be responsible for all that, right?"*

Getting items into or out of the Zone means breaking through the cordon around it. Breaking the embargo on Zone items can be very profitable for Player Characters if they can get a contract with a free trader, a corporation or a wealthy patron. But it could also mean an exorbitantly expensive adventure if the PCs can't find suitable items to sell – supply and demand in the Zone means gear from the outside world is high priced, bribing officials is expensive, smugglers won't work for free, neither will the traders who sell those smuggled items to you and they certainly won't give you a good price on that second-hand rifle or backpack you looted from a dead Stalker.

If they're lucky or have the right Contacts, PCs might secure a short term contract with one of the sanctioned scientific expeditions into the Zone or to the UN monitoring personnel to provide specimens, security, and information or guide services.



If they're very lucky, the PCs might even secure a contract with the Institute (see boxed text), the organization given the responsibility to study and contain the Zone.

## THE INTERNATIONAL INSTITUTE

From the novel and found also in the Burger Games RPG, the Institute is the custodian of all the Zones around the world. Their word is law but their control over the Zones is not absolute and the further into a Zone you travel, the less control they have. They are known to hire Stalkers to recover items, place monitoring devices, map the Zone, guide Institute groups and even spy on and/or sabotage other groups within the Zone and sometimes to rescue people lost in the Zone. They are established as the only legitimate buyer of artefacts and pay a good price for them to compete with the black market.

They are also believed to conduct experiments on human survivors of the Zone and to call the military onto Stalkers who displease them.

Much of the ambiance for the video games was derived from their setting. In the video games, the Zone was blocked off from the rest of the world and everything inside was officially abandoned. Just like in the real Chernobyl Exclusion Zone, this means that a fragment of the Soviet Union was captured and preserved, although with the passing of time it is slowly decaying. This abandoned, decaying remnant of the Cold

War era had a strong appeal for many Generation X gamers in the Western World while it also exercised a similar appeal to many Gen Y gamers in Eastern Europe whose memories of Soviet times are largely taken from their parents experience during that period.

But you don't need a fragment of the Soviet Union to make the Zone in your own game world. As mentioned already, the original story places the protagonist in a town in Canada and it is just one of several such Zones around the world. As stated before, what makes the Zone different to other demongrounds (or areas of bizarre, anomalous activity in other game systems) is its size, its treatment by the authorities, the anomalies and artefacts found within it, the strange, mutant creatures found there and the (sometimes secret) laboratories set up to study it all. These can be easily transferred to other sci-fi, horror or post-apocalyptic worlds if you want them to be a part of your game.

In later articles I'll go into more detail about the terminology of the Zone, anomalies, artefacts, inhabitants and conditions within the Zone and the lore, myths and superstitions of the Zone.

## PARTING WORD.

The Zone is a mysterious, exciting and profitable place to adventure even though it's also very dangerous. But what's an adventure without a little risk? The Players will be placing their characters into a new and oft times bizarre frontier where our world meets the alien. They'll

need their wits, good memory, good skills and maybe a trusty sidearm or two to survive it. But their rewards will justify the risks, although... that might just be up to Fate to determine...

*"This is the way it is with the Zone: if you come back with swag – it's a miracle; if you come back alive – it's a success; if the patrol bullets miss you – it's a stroke of luck. And as for anything else – that's fate"*

## Roadside Picnic

**Dedication:** To the Strugatsky brothers, Arkady (b: 25 August 1925, d: 12 October 1991) and Boris (b: 14 April 1933, d: 19 November 2012) for giving me a world I have continued to explore in many forms for more than ten years.

**Permissions:** Permission was sought and obtained from Ville Vuorela of Burger Games and from Reddit users Iamthelurker and Nallenon to quote them and their material. Their gracious approval and enthusiasm for this project is much appreciated.

## LINKS

Burger Games <http://www.burgergames.com/>

John Tynes article [http://johntynes.com/revland2000/rl\\_thezone.html](http://johntynes.com/revland2000/rl_thezone.html)

Reddit page [https://www.reddit.com/r/stalker/comments/51ayit/what\\_makes\\_you\\_keep\\_going\\_back\\_to\\_play\\_stalker/](https://www.reddit.com/r/stalker/comments/51ayit/what_makes_you_keep_going_back_to_play_stalker/)



# THE ZONE, A DIFFERENT KIND OF DEMONGROUND

Slate article [http://www.slate.com/articles/news\\_and\\_politics/roads/2014/09/the\\_stalkers\\_inside\\_the\\_youth\\_subculture\\_that\\_explores\\_chernobyl\\_s\\_dead.html](http://www.slate.com/articles/news_and_politics/roads/2014/09/the_stalkers_inside_the_youth_subculture_that_explores_chernobyl_s_dead.html)

S.T.A.L.K.E.R. gaming wikia [http://stalker.wikia.com/wiki/Main\\_Page](http://stalker.wikia.com/wiki/Main_Page)

WGN America orders pilot episode for Roadside Picnic <http://deadline.com/2016/03/roadside-picnic-strugatsky-bros-scalped-dc-comics-wgn-america-pilots-1201714920/>





## BAKER'S DOZEN

By Shae Davidson

Delicious Doughnut Shop-  
Themed Plot Hooks for any RPG

1. The radio playing behind the counter switches to the US Naval Observatory time station. The voice becomes progressively slower and slower as customers listen.
2. Two cops sitting in a booth discuss a horrific multiple murder that the media have never mentioned.
3. The rack of vending machines with toy football helmets and rubber throwing stars near the door includes a machine selling photos of the characters' loved ones.
4. A napkin pulled from the dispenser at the counter has the message "And the dogs shall know you" written on the inside.
5. A trail of handprints with abnormally long fingers runs between the dumpster and a large puddle in the parking lot.
6. Each month on the night of the new moon a man appears and asks the clerk to deliver a single chocolate doughnut to a different isolated spot in the woods when his shift is over, paying cash and tipping \$100.
7. A character finds a 1992 class ring inside a doughnut.
8. An old man sitting at the counter is only visible in peripheral glimpses.
9. A severed human ear appears floating in the decaffeinated coffee pot.
10. Soft giggling is heard from under the counter when the clerk goes to the back to get fresh doughnuts.
11. While stopping by to grab coffee in the middle of the night, the shop's phone rings and the caller asks to speak to a PC, saying only, "The wedding starts in twenty minutes . . . don't forget the black book," before hanging up.
12. A single large moth flutters against the outside of the broad window overlooking the parking lot. In a few moments others join it, covering the window completely.
13. Something--or someone--gently licks the cashier's arm when he hands orders out of the drive through window.

*Note: One summer night when I was eighteen my friends and I played a strange rambling game of Chill. We would play in one place for a little while and then pile into a car, continuing the story as we drove along dark roads and empty streets. Part of the night found us in the little doughnut shop in my hometown of Buckhannon, West Virginia, drinking coffee until we made ourselves sick while we played. It was an odd, wonderful time.*



## COSTUMES

By T Mike McCurley

A Dark Conspiracy short story

I had been following the clown for about six blocks now, ever since the drop. He had the briefcase in his hand, just plain as day, and I couldn't help but marvel at the blatancy of it all. I mean, a briefcase? Seriously? Who puts their cash in briefcases in the ass end of a rotten MikeTown?

Sure, if you're up in some corp hideaway or ivory tower, but here? Looks as out of place as it gets. Might as well be carrying a sign that says, "Rob me." Hell, you can't even wear a suit down here tonight, even if it is Halloween. Folks will still blitz you, and while you're wondering which one of them hit you, that suit is getting stripped. And this idiot is head-to-toe dressed up in the newest, shiniest Superclown costume he could find, so the case looks even more like it doesn't belong.

He ducked into the alley running behind OnlyABuck, cutting north and I could see that he increased his pace as he made the turn. Either he's behind schedule or I just got made. Bad news either way. I broke north in front of the store, sprinting past the barred windows and dodging shoppers as they shuffled out of the store. I had to get out ahead of him if I wanted this to work, and the only way was to push it.

Hard right at the corner, my shoes skidding on a questionable fluid spill, and I was running east again. I slowed a bit as I neared the back of the store, and when I reached the corner of the alley my breathing was almost back to normal. I strolled across the alley as if I owned it, tossing a casual glance to my right. Briefcase Boy was

about two-thirds of the way up, and he barely acknowledged my presence. I walked past the alley and continued east a few steps before stopping beside a garbage can. I pulled away the top and began rummaging through the contents, just another bum in need of a quick bite to eat. Dumbass bought it and kept on going, passing behind OnlyABuck and the next street before ducking into the front of a dilapidated hotel. I was two minutes behind him. A twenty got the old man behind the counter to point me to the room number that my quarry was headed for. Money talks.

The hallway was nasty as the floor of a taxicab, and it made squishy noises under my boots. The door to 137 was ahead and on my left. No one was around and it was closed. I paused at the door, pressing my ear to it to listen before making entry. Apparently it wasn't quite closed. It swung open in response to the pressure of my head and I overbalanced, arms flailing as I started to fall into the room. I just knew I was going to bust my head on the floor and that's how they would find me.

I needn't have worried. The arms that caught me were powerful and thick, and the hands were like iron bands on my forearms. The smell of thick musk, like you might find around unwashed animals, enveloped me as I was pulled back. I had barely moved before this monster had me gripped from behind and my arms coming up behind me like some first day loser at the Academy fight class. I did a hard stomp with the heel of my right boot, figuring to take



out a few metatarsals on his foot. It was pretty much like slamming my foot on a curb, and the monkey holding me didn't make a sound. His grip did tighten a bit, though, and I felt the bones in my left arm shift in his grasp. It was a not-so-gentle reminder of who was holding who, and I caught his meaning.

"Your efforts are in vain, I assure you," said a voice from the back of the room. It was thin and reedy, with a kind of hissing, buzzing tone to it. "Cicero is quite efficient at containing intruders."

"Catching on to that," I said.

"What brings you to my laboratory, sir?"

"Following the money."

"Is it your money, then?"

"Let's just say I have a particular interest."

"In?"

"Money always interests me."

"So you are a thief of others' property."

"Not a thief. An entrepreneur."

"Clarify."

"I'm looking for new ways to make some cash, right? I see your boy Murray the Mime or

whatever swing by with his briefcase and I know he's taking it somewhere. I figure if I get a chance to talk to the boss man, I might make myself useful, and get a fistful of scrip to boot."

He stepped out from the shadows and I suppressed a smile at his 'Invading Alien' costume. The lavender skin and the brow ridges were a bit over the top, and the giant black eyes were like mirrors. I could see the guy he called 'Cicero' reflected in them. Dude was dressed as some kind of werewolf or something.

"Halloween is in full effect, I see," I quipped. He paused, and then the weird slits over his mouth twitched upward.

"Ah, yes," he said. "We enjoy the candy."

The stilted snuffling sound from behind me might have been laughter, or maybe Cicero had a hairball. I'm not sure which. As long as he didn't hack it up on the back of my neck it didn't matter. I chuckled, too. The more, the merrier, right? I figured it couldn't hurt.

"Name's Tommy D," I said. The old street name flowed off my tongue like falsehood-flavored honey. "I've got access to buyers, sellers, users, you name it."

He turned to look at me, my distorted image reflected in the parabolic 'eyes'. His head quirked





to the side, and I felt the gaze on me that had me wondering if I had overdone it.

“Clarify,” he said again, and I cursed inwardly. Why do they always have to make it so tough?

The sleazy grin that had been my hallmark through undercover training appeared as if by magic, and my attitude changed with it. I relaxed more. I knew once this side of me emerged fully that I was in.

“I can move anything you need to move, man. I can get top dollar for it, and I can connect you with suppliers that can double your inventory. Hell, they can add to it.”

“Which inventory?”

“Yo, I could sit here and pussyfoot on the deets, but we both know only one thing brings a briefcase full of money like that. You’re slinging powder, and I want in.”

The laughter that came out of him was a mix of sounds so odd that it made me long for Cicero’s hairball noise again.

“Drugs?” he asked, still giggling like some kind of schoolgirl with a cybernetic lung and larynx. “I assure you, I deal in nothing so mundane. Tell me, though, why I should employ you rather than deal with you in a more unpleasant manner. Cicero?”

I felt the grip on my arms relax and they fell back by my sides. I massaged the palms together, hoping they weren’t totally dead. I might have to get out of here the hard way, and I wanted my fingers to work.

The boss beckoned me to follow him and I did, the hulking form of his bodyguard two steps behind me. I could still smell the big thug and his cheap-fur outfit, and that was a perfume I was tiring of in record speed. I couldn’t wait until I could see him with his arms behind his back, with me clicking the cuffs and ripping off his mask like a bad mystery cartoon. After the way he handled me, I would be using ice baths for the elbows tonight.



“You know, of course, of the issues in the AntHill to our south,” my host said. It was a statement, not a question, and I was glad I had some idea. I hate looking completely stupid.

“The mutants.”

He made a new strange sound, a cross between a gasp and a strangled squeak.

“I do not find that a pleasant term,” he said. The buzzing part of his voice was more pronounced.

“I don’t know what else to call them,” I said, spreading my arms in an ‘I’m-clueless-so-don’t-kill-me’ kind of gesture.

“The Unfortunate,” he said. “They are blessed with shared genes, but cursed with the effects of that interbreeding. I am familiar with the one who created them.”

“This ain’t some kind of religious thing, is it?” I asked, making sure I looked properly panicked. “I ain’t getting in the middle of that shit. Last guy I knew did that, they found him nailed to a fence.”

“Religion,” he mused. He erupted in the sickening laughter sound once more. “Even more quaint an idea than the drugs. I speak of science in its purest form.”

Great. So now there’s some kind of mad scientist bullshit going down. This was supposed to be a buy-in at the dealer’s place. I was about to comment when we stepped around a corner and my mouth fell open.

Jars and containers took up all the available flat spaces in the suite. They were filled with various colors of liquids, and in each one of them floated what looked like body parts. I could see an eye here, a lung there. One long case held an entire spine, and it was longer than most of my body.

“What the hell?” I whispered. I spun on a heel to see the host staring at me.

“This is our business,” he declared.

I tried desperately to maintain my composure, but this was the kind of thing no one ever



gets trained to walk into. I took a long breath, noting the faint chemical tang to the air in the room. I let my gaze wander over the exhibit while I tried to process what I was seeing and decide on how to speak to someone who had just revealed to me that he was selling body parts.

“You, uh, you got a real Frankenstein kinda thing going on here, man,” I stammered. I tried to smile, but it just wasn’t happening.

“Far from it,” he said. “You’ll note that your Doctor Frankenstein gathered body parts to construct what was a monster. I, on the other hand, am paying for those parts to be harvested from monsters that are already existent.”

“So people are taking these from...”

“It is fairly rare to encounter one who will surrender their liver without a fight.”

I nearly threw up at that point.

“I see you disapprove,” he said. “This, too, is unfortunate. Cicero.”

I heard the rushed step and dropped to the floor, diving to the side in a shoulder roll as the giant arms scooped air from where I had just been. I popped up with the .45 from my waistband pointed at the big guard. Christ, from this angle he was monstrous. Easily seven feet of solid muscle under that fur.

“Don’t do it,” I warned him. He took a step. “I’ll ...”

I never finished the threat. As Cicero launched himself, I snapped off four quick rounds, the light pistol thundering in the confines of the room. The first went in his neck and the next three ripped through his chest. His body hit the floor with enough force to shake the furniture, and I spun to get the host in my sights.

“Now you get on your fucking knees, and I mean right now, or I’ll blast your head smooth out of that costume!” I ordered.

The mocking sound of his laugh sounded even worse with my ears ringing from the gunfire.

“You have come to us dressed as one of the myriad who wander the streets. It is you who wears a costume.”

“Yeah, pal. Happy Halloween. My usual outfit is a uniform and badge. The dirty sweats and ripped jeans, that’s a costume.”

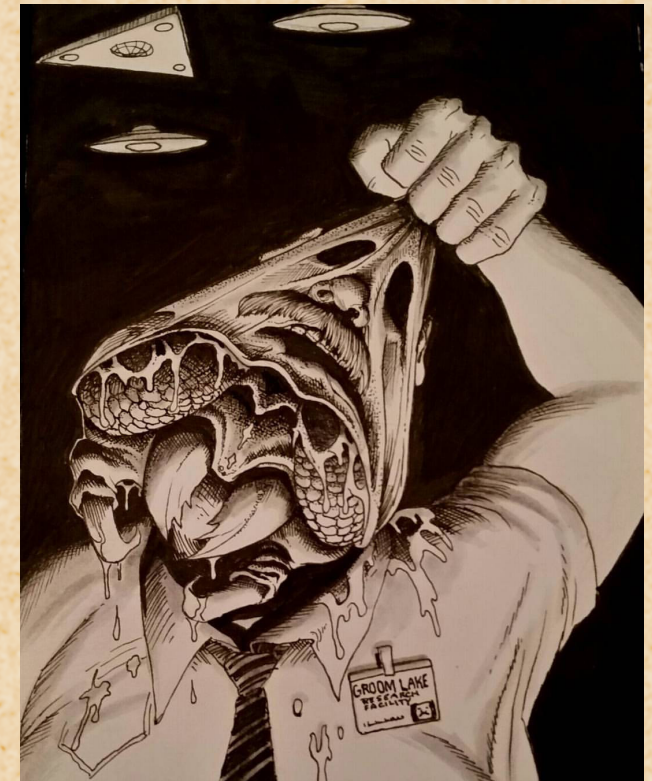
He tapped at his chest with a long finger.

“This is not,” he said. It took a second for the words to sink in, and the main reason they did was the low growl from behind me. The kind of growl you would imagine you might hear from a pissed off seven foot werewolf...that you just shot.

“Neither is Cicero,” the host said.

I was in mid turn when the first blow came. Two more and I was on the floor, spewing blood like a fountain from several different places. I saw the host walk toward me, but I couldn’t speak or move to stop his approach, even when my pain-addled brain recognized the electric saw in his hands. He laughed again and leaned close to my face.

“Let us see who you are beneath that costume of flesh.”





## TRICK OR TREAT

By Anthony Lee-Dudley

A scary tale

He didn't know where he was going; he only knew he had to keep moving. He couldn't shake it no matter how far or fast he ran, no matter which tricks or shortcuts he used it was always there.

Pushing through the wisps and curls of the fog that concealed everything but him, he knew he was running out of energy, out of breath.

*Out of time!*

He had to stop, his lungs were burning. Just one minute and he would be good to go again.

What was that?

He whirled, but all he could see was the fog around him; unable now to even see the route ahead.

In all honesty he wasn't sure why it hadn't caught him already; it was so fucking fast.

No, he realised, not fast. Persistent maybe, implacable. Like it was hunting him, tracking him.

Taking one last deep breath he turned and began to run again. He moved through the nightmare world; vague landmarks popped into view, and just as suddenly slipped away.

But he was closer now, In fact, wasn't that home ahead? Yes! Yes! He was ....

Suddenly it was there, off to one side mocking him. He sprinted, putting everything he had into one last effort.

The welcoming glow from the doorway ahead drawing him on, he called forth the last dregs he had inside. He felt it beside him, matching him stride for stride. Ignoring it as it paced him, he threw himself forward, lunging for home. He was safe! He had made it!

He heard the strangely jubilant whisper "Trick or Treat".

He was .... Awake?

Reality poured over Jake's sweaty body like a balm. Soothing his terror and slowing his racing heart. He sat up, freeing himself from the sheet that had entwined him during his dream flight. Sunlight was starting to slip through the blinds, illuminating the dust motes that swam lazily through the morning.

"S'matter hon?" The voice was muffled by sleep and a pillow, but reassuringly recognisable as his girlfriend Celine.

"Nothing babe, I'm fine" he strove to keep the tremors from his voice "I'm just feeling a little rough is all."

The dry chuckle from the mound of bed clothes beside him held a hint of sympathy.



"I'd be surprised if you weren't hon. We hit it pretty hard last night. Brad and Rowena could barely keep up."

The mound shuffled and twisted, eventually resolving into a pretty blonde girl, her good looks muted under a layer of smeared makeup that should have been removed the night before.

Jake regarded himself to be lucky to be dating such a hot girl; and at 21 she was a whole three years older than Jake himself.

Not that you'd know it to look at her, Jake conceded a little smugly to himself, her petite body made a mockery of any age gap that might have existed.

Jake rubbed his hand over his close cut hair. "Must've been a good night if we were outpacing Brad."

Brad was Jake's best friend, only real friend truth be known, and often partner in crime. They were the same age and had hung together since school began. Both from somewhat dysfunctional families, it had only been natural for them to run away to the city together. Now, two years later, they still watched each other's back and egged each other on in equal measure. Rowena was Brad's girlfriend, another runaway who had found security amongst her own.

"Don't you remember?" Cel's voice was muffled and there was the sound of her scrabbling for something on the floor.

"I remember drinking a lot." Jake screwed his face up in concentration "I remember going to a lot of different places too ... Hey! It was Halloween ..."

Jake turned triumphantly to Cel, only to be confronted with a hideous zombie staring back at him.

Taken completely by surprise Jake scrambled back across the bed, the zombie coming after him. It was making a weird noise that it took Jake a few seconds to recognise.

"Jesus Cel!" For the second time that morning Jake was forced to consciously slow his breathing and heartrate "You almost gave me a fucking heart attack!"

The zombie lay on the bed making the same odd noise, one that Jake now recognised as Cel laughing hysterically.

Eventually managing to regain some composure; Cel pulled off the rubber mask and dropped it.

"Sorry hon, I thought you'd remember the mask. It was your idea we wore them and went trick or treating."

"Shit!" Jake ignored the sudden shock of hearing those words again; it was starting to come back slowly.

The drinking had given way to the destructive boredom that often accompanied their nights

out. Last night however, there was method to the madness.

Seeing the young people going around in their costumes had sparked something inside Jake, perhaps a longing for a youth not experienced, and he had suggested getting the masks and having a little fun.

Then ... something else, something that remained elusive.

Jake stood and began to stumble towards bathroom "Gonna grab a shower Cel, see if it helps at all."

Assuming Jake meant help his hangover, Cel motioned him onward "There's some painkillers in the cabinet hon, don't want to eat messed up brrraaiinnsssss ...." The last was spoken in a drawn out moan and followed by further laughter.

Jake muttered profanities to himself as he shut the bathroom door. Sitting on the toilet he groped around in the cabinet until he found the pills and dry swallowed three. Then hauling himself to his feet, he turned on the shower and stepped in.

Feeling the water wash over him, Jake sighed. What the hell is wrong with me? Why can't I remember all of last night?

Over the sound of the water, Jake vaguely heard the sound of Cel's ringtone from the other room.



He could remember drinking, no surprises there. He could also remember the four of them; himself, Cel, Brad and Rowena, following the groups of kids and parents as they moved into the suburbs and knocked on the doors there.

Cel's raised voice from the living room was followed by the sound of the TV coming on and channels being surfed.

He remembered stealing the masks from a costume shop; open late to supply the suburban partygoers no doubt, and deciding they were going to have some Halloween fun of their own when ...

Cel's agonised scream pulled him unceremoniously back to the present.

Jake leapt from the shower. Stumbling a little as he slipped on the wet floor, he wrenched open the bathroom door, ran through the bedroom and into their small living room.

Cel was knelt on the floor facing the muted TV; her phone lay on the floor beside her, the remote control slipping between her nerveless fingers to lie beside it.

"Cel? Cel? Baby what's wrong?"

Jake knelt in front of Cel, his hands on her shoulders. Her face was lowered and animal sobs shook her. He tried again.

"Babe, tell me what's wrong. Please Cel, you're scaring me!"

Jake could hear a small voice. He looked at the TV, still muted. He turned his attention to the phone. Glancing at the screen he could see the call was from Owen, a friend of theirs who lived in the same block as Brad and Rowena, the call was still connected and it was from there he could hear the voice.

Picking up the phone and cradling it to his ear he spoke "Hang on Owen, one sec," without waiting for a reply he pulled the rug off their old couch and draped it round the still sobbing Cel, hugging her in tight to him.

Taking the phone from between his head and shoulder, he juggled it into a more comfortable position, "Owen, man what the hell is going on?"

Owen was speaking fast "Jesus Jake, I'm sorry! I thought you guys would already know, I was just calling to say, you know, sorry and that. I didn't know Cel hadn't heard, sorry. I guess you guys were out last night and, sorry ..."

"Owen!" Jake roared, trying to stop the torrent of words, "Owen, what are you sorry about?"

There was a pause "Oh Jesus! You don't know either do you. Jake I'm sorry ..."

Jake jumped in quickly to forestall another flood of apologies "Owen!"

"I'm sorry Jake, its Rowena," Owen was subdued now, "I saw the lights from the ambulance outside, went out to take a look y'know, she was real messed up man. Look, it's on the news man, channel 9. I'm sorry for your loss dude ..." Jake ended the call.

For the first time Jake turned to the muted TV. The anchor was silently mouthing words whilst the picture behind him showed what was clearly the block Brad and Rowena lived in; the flashing lights of emergency vehicles illuminating the scene.

Pools of blood mixed with shards of broken glass and red stained dressings gave testimony to the level of trauma that had occurred; paramedics stood around looking shaken, and the covered body on the gurney showed the outcome.

Suddenly a picture of Rowena, younger looking and somehow fresher, appeared on the screen.

Jake grabbed for the remote and, after a few fumbles, managed to unmute the TV in time to hear the anchor say "... eyewitnesses say she seemed to rotate and twist as she fell through the window, making her injuries all the more severe. She was pronounced dead on the scene." There was a pause "In other news ..."

Jake hit the off button and they sat in silence except for Cel's sobs for a couple of minutes before Cel leapt to her feet and dashed into the bathroom.



Jake pulled the rug around his still damp and naked body, following behind Cel.

He leant his head against the locked bathroom door. Hearing the sounds of retching and crying followed by the bath running, Jake decided to give Cel a little space to get herself together.

Lying down on the bed, Jake rolled over onto his side and tried to make sense of what had happened.

“Jesus!” he quickly grabbed his phone from the bedside table and called Brad. There was no answer and after a few tries it quickly began to go directly to voicemail. Jake left a quick message of support for his friend and promised to come over as soon as Cel had gotten herself together.

After replacing his phone he resumed his position and thought.

Almost inevitably it seemed, he dozed off. His subconscious mind trying to make sense of the days shocks.

Visions of the night before came to the fore.

A large house at the end of a winding drive. Brad and Rowena trying the bell to no avail. Sneaking round the back to continue this weird adult Trick or treat game.

He began to wake up when he felt Cel’s weight on the bed; feeling the sense of comfort when she snuggled in behind him.

My skin must be over sensitive, he thought, Cel’s touch almost painful in its intensity. The scratching feeling continued as he felt her hand slide lower down his naked body.

“Cel” he murmured “I don’t think this is the time for that do you?”

Her hand continued to descend and he smiled to himself. “Ok then babe, if it makes you feel better.

He rolled over and opened his eyes, smiling at her.

Rowena smiled back.

Jake’s face froze; his body paralyzed and words stuck in his throat.

Rowena lay before him, her salacious grin and lack of clothes at odds with her horribly torn body; terrible wounds gaping open, slashed skin hanging in flaps from her face and elsewhere.

She reached for him with one gore-covered arm; he found himself unable to do anything as she slipped her arm around his neck and pulled him closer.

Her lips moved as if she was about to kiss him and she whispered into his mouth, “Trick or Treat,” before pressing her lips to his.

The contact drove Jake to break the paralysis, and he threw himself backwards; tumbling

screaming off the bed and to the bedroom floor.

Scrabbling backwards, Jake’s feet failed to find purchase amongst the discarded bedclothes; the rucked up sheets, a flimsy, ineffective barrier against the approaching shape.

“Thank you Jake” Rowena’s voice had a rough, bubbling undertone that spoke eloquently of the depth of her injuries.

Jake screamed again; begging, pleading for the thing to leave him alone, to go and not return. Tears streaming down his face he turned his head away, raising his hands to ward off the terrible spectre.

“Jake?” something inside his overloaded brain told him the voice had changed, “Jake, you had a nightmare. Wake up.”

Jake looked slowly up; struggling to blink away his tears, he dragged the back of his hand roughly across his face, strings of snot and tears clinging to it as he let it fall to the floor.

The shape above him resolved into the face of his girlfriend, clad in her heavy towelling dressing gown.

Looking around the familiar room, Jake pushed himself up against the wall; unconsciously pulling the discarded bedclothes around himself as he did so. His eyes darted furtively from corner to corner as they searched in vain for what he’d seen.



"I...I was...I saw..." He looked at Cel, "I saw Rowena...she was all cut up..." his voice trailed off.

"It was a dream Jake, you had a dream," Cel was calm and matter-of-fact.

"But I wasn't asleep!" Jake pushed himself up to his feet, "I just lay down for a minute while you were in the bathroom and then ..." He gestured at the bed.

"Jake, it wasn't real. You ... we had had a shock and your brain reacted, that's all."

Cel's clinical detachment was beginning to get on Jake's nerves.

"What about this Cel? He snapped. Holding up the bedsheet he thrust it under Cel's nose. "Did I dream this too?" He presented the bloodstains to her.

Cel gazed up at him for a moment, before holding out her hand, "I cut myself in the bathroom Jake," the bloodstains on her hand were evident, "I stained the sheet just now."

Jake shrugged helplessly, unable to make sense of what was happening; he began to throw his clothes on.

"I know what I saw Cel," he said to his passive-acting girlfriend, "I wasn't asleep, she was ..." He punched the wall in frustration before

grabbing his smokes and stomping towards the front door, "I'm going up for a smoke."

Cel said nothing as he slammed the door behind him.

Jake opened the door and stepped outside. Closing his eyes, he raised his face and allowed the breeze to wash over his skin; feeling himself relax a little as the wind cooled the sweat on his brow.

He let the door swing shut behind him and moved across the rooftop.

Hopping over a low railing, Jake slumped down into an old, battered couch tucked under the overhang of a maintenance structure. Pulling out a smoke he lit up and took a long pull.

Looking out over the city, Jake remembered all the times he had sat up here with his friends; first with Brad, laughing as they got high, loaded or both. Then with Cel; sometimes with Brad too, joking around and partying like before; sometimes alone with Cel, making out and making love beneath the open skies. Later Rowena had come along and the four had hung out when the weather allowed.

"Rowena," he whispered her name, letting it slip from his lips along with the smoke he exhaled.

Watching the smoke drift away, Jake let his mind float free with it. He used the ritual

of smoking to centre himself, gain some perspective.

What the hell was going on? His memories of last night were still fragmented; flashes of the rear of the large house, trying doors and windows until one opened. Images of creeping around inside, then he drew a blank.

And what the fuck was that shit with Rowena, he began shaking at the memory. I wasn't asleep was I? I don't remember being tired.

"Maybe you just missed her." The voice startled Jake.

"I know I do," the voice came from behind one of the brick stacks, just out of sight from the sofa.

"Brad?" Jake had recognised the voice immediately. Lifting himself off of the sofa, Jake edged round the stack.





Brad sat with his back to Jake, his legs dangling off the edge of the rooftop. He was gazing off into the city sky. His clothes were rumpled and his collar raised against the breeze.

“Brad?” said Jake again, “man, what are you doing over there? What happened? What happened to Rowena?” The questions came thick and fast and left no gap for a response. Not that there was one forthcoming.

Jake edged further round. Now that he was able to see some of Brad’s profile, he could see that his friend looked awful. Brad’s skin, the little Jake could see at least, was pale and grey; his hair lank and lifeless. Cuts and scrapes could be seen on his hands and face.

Jake tried once more, “Rowena Brad, what happened to her?”

Brad answered without turning his head, his voice dull.

“It was you Jake, it was your fault.”

Jake was taken aback by the accusation. “What do you mean by that dude?” His mind searched for possible reasons and found none, “c’mon man, I know you’re hurting but how in the hell can this be my fault?”

There was a pause before Brad responded in the same dull tones, devoid of emotion. “Last night, don’t you remember?” Jake shook his head in bewilderment as Brad continued. “Breaking into

that house because you wanted to play like a kid.”

“But I don’t ...” Jake began, but Brad continued as if he hadn’t heard, his emotionless delivery at odds with his statements. “We could’ve just taken a few things from the house, there were plenty around, but you wanted something special, something fun.”

Jake sat, closing his eyes and letting his head fall back against the stack; the bricks were warm, bathed as they were in the morning sun. Listening to Brad’s words was stirring his memories, ugly kernels of understanding floating to the surface.

“We could’ve backed off. Just gone. Wrecked the joint even. But you just kept on pushing.” Jake flinched uncomfortably. “Cel tried to stop you; rein you in. But you were wild man, almost like something was pulling you in.”

And it was, Jake realised with a start.

That damn house! Even as he had started up the drive he had begun to feel drawn, driven even. It had been intoxicating, like something had removed the last vestiges of his social boundaries.

Jake’s memories continued apace with Brad’s words.

“You’d already been through most of the ground floor; disregarding money and stuff. You were like a barbarian of old.” Jake was trapped in his

own memories now, his eyes flickering beneath closed lids, “You found the main stairs and came up them two or three at a time.”

Brad’s tone had changed, now almost gloating. Jake barely noticed.

“Then you opened the bedroom and saw him in the chair. Do you remember Jake? Do you remember what you shouted at him?”

Jake’s phone rang, breaking the moment.

Almost as if his drowning mind grabbed at any interruption, Jake reacted instinctively in the manner of his generation. Glancing at the screen as he swiped to answer, he saw Owen’s name.

“Owen, what’s .... “

“Jake man, I just heard, I’m so sorry. I didn’t know earlier.”

“Owen, for fuck’s sake, what are you going on about?” Jake yelled over the still ranting Owen.

“I didn’t know man, I thought it was just Rowena, I didn’t realise he was dead too.” Owen sounded distraught, shocked.

“What Owen? What are you babbling about dude? Who else is dead?”

“You don’t ... you hadn’t heard?” Owen took a deep breath, “It’s Brad man. He’s dead too.



He hung himself. They're just taking him away now..."

Jake didn't hear anything else.

His phone fell from his suddenly nerveless fingers; his heart was beating in his head and iced water poured down his spine.

He turned slowly towards the figure that was suddenly, shockingly, standing inches away from Jake; perched precariously on the edge of the building.

The face was Brad's, and yet somehow not. Brad had never leered so maniacally. The bruised and torn visage sat loosely above a neck that was clearly stretched and broken; the noose around it no longer hidden by the raised collar.

"Trick or Treat!" The apparition spoke clearly before stepping backwards and vanishing from sight.

Jake's world twisted and writhed as he stumbled through the corridors of his building; memories and images flashing and flaring through his mind, clashing jarringly with the here and now.

Crashing round the corner he nearly flattened Mrs Dreiger from down the hall. He turned to apologise to the tutting old woman, only to be greeted by her weathered face, twisted almost beyond recognition into a leering grin.

"Trick or Treat!" her voice held a disturbing duality, as if overlaid by another.

Recoiling, Jake lunged for the elevator, jabbing incessantly until the car arrived. Throwing himself inside, he mashed the door close button until they mercifully blocked the demonic grin plastered across the old woman's face.

Once the doors closed he hit the button for his floor, immediately stumbling back as the digital display lit up with "tr1ckor3at"!

Sobbing wordlessly he sank to the floor in the corner, cradled his head in his hands and waited for the ride to be over.

"But this is so much fun."

Jake jerked his head up at the unexpected voice in the confined space. His eyes widened and he tried to push himself back through the elevator wall.

Brad stood on the other side of the elevator, looking exactly as he had on the rooftop, noose and all. Beside him and draped over his shoulder stood Rowena, her naked and torn form smearing Brad's worn clothes with the blood from her wounds.

She grinned at Brad "Trick or Treat!"

Jake was still screaming when the doors finally opened and he half-crawled, half-scrambled through.

Mocking laughter followed him down the hall as he tried to reach his door, and safety.

Long agonising seconds stretched into aeons as he fumbled the key into the lock with recalcitrant fingers. Falling through the entrance, he swung the door behind him; it took an age to close.

Jake stood for a moment, peering through spy hole in the door. The corridor looked clear, but today he wasn't sure he could trust his own eyes.

Locking the door he backed slowly away from it and into the living room; his arms hugged tightly around himself, as if trying to keep himself together, to stop himself from flying apart.

"What's the matter Jake?" Jake span round, almost tripping over the coffee table.

Cel sat on the couch, her hair was wet and she was still dressed in the same bathrobe from earlier.

Jake dropped into the armchair. Cel sat patiently, seemingly happy to wait for him to organise his thoughts.

"Brad's dead." It seemed crazy even as he said it.

Cel nodded. "I know."

"I guess Owen called?" he waited for Cel to say something, but she seemed committed to hearing him out in silence, "Whatever. Look Cel, this is gonna sound crazy, but I saw him on the



roof, him and Rowena both. They were dead but Brad blamed me ...”

His voice trailed off as he realised something was wrong.

Why was Cel’s hair still wet? She came out of the bathroom a couple of hours ago. His eyes were drawn to her wrists where red blood stained the white towelling of her robe.

“What happened to your wrist?” His voice was shakier than it had ever been.

“I told you Jake, I cut myself in the bathroom earlier.”

A sick feeling stole over Jake; never taking his eyes off of Cel, he rose and hurried through to the bathroom.

The bathroom had the faint smell of cooling water; rivulets of moisture running down the mirror and pooling on the cold, white porcelain surfaces. A regular drip, drip, drip sounded from behind the curtain that obscured the bath.

Edging across the bathroom floor, Jake’s feet struggled to find purchase on the slippery tiles. Pausing before the curtain he had to fight his own fear, willing his own hand to rise; pulling the curtain back was possibly the hardest thing he had ever done.

Set against the white of the bathroom suite, the vivid pink of the water in the bath was shocking;

only the steady drip from the tap disturbed the surface.

Jake reached out and tightened the tap.

As the drips stopped and the surface gradually stilled, Jake leaned forward and peered into the cloudy water. Like a TV channel gradually tuning in, the contents of the bath swam into view.

Cel lay suspended in the water; her eyes were wide as if in shock and her mouth gaped, no bubbles escaping from within.

Her hair wreathed around her face, mixing with the tendrils of red that wound lazily from the long gashes on her wrists.

Jake stared for a long moment then retching, turned to push his face into the toilet bowl.

Rising unsteadily, Jake wiped the back of his hand across his mouth before staggering in confusion back into the living room.

Cel still sat on the sofa, wet hair and all. She was not alone.

Brad and Rowena sat next to her; curled around each other in a vision of awful intimacy.

Cel smiled at Jake “Trick or Treat!”

Jake ran for the front door, wrenching it open only to reveal Rowena, naked and covered in blood, blocking his escape.

Stumbling backwards, he turned and ran to the bookshelf.

Digging quickly through the items there, Jake pulled out an old cigar box; pulling it open he grabbed for the small revolver inside.

Quickly checking it was loaded he turned and brandished the gun at the three apparitions.

“Stay the fuck away from me!”

All three began to chuckle.

It was enough for Jake. Pointing the revolver he began pulling the trigger, only to be met with the “click, click, click” of the hammer falling on empty chambers.

Brad held out his hand and let six unfired bullets fall to the floor.

Jake screamed and fell to his knees; clutching his head with both hands.

Cel spoke, “I owe you so much Jake, and it wouldn’t do to let the game end so quickly.”

“When you found him in the chair Jake, you shouted ‘Trick or Treat’; you were so deliciously malevolent, so perfect,” this time it was Rowena that spoke.

Brad continued, “You scared him so much Jake, you scared him and he was so old.”



“It was his heart you see,” Rowena added helpfully, “his heart was weak. I think he knew in the end that he had failed in his duty; failed to keep me contained.”

Cel smiled warmly at the thought, “I certainly hope he did anyway. So you killed him Jake, and the ritual failed. I was free at last.”

Jake could no longer tell who was speaking; they spoke as one.

“After so long, so many centuries; no longer restrained by their rituals. He was weak, and I was strong; Hallowe’en you see, when the walls are thin and darkness waxes full.”

Jake clutched his head, sobbing and rocking.

“And you Jake, you gave me this wonderful gift, this game, and I knew I must repay you. I searched for you, followed you, let you lead me home. Oh! How you ran! Your mind thought to evade me, but in truth you never could. You led me here, led me to your friends. More wonderful gifts. So I took them and they shall twist forever in excruciating torments beyond your ken.”

Jake only knew he must escape; get away from this fiend.

“And you shall join them Jake; but only when our earthly game is done.”

Summoning every last erg of energy, Jake threw himself at the window; razor shards cut at him

as he smashed through and plummeted screaming towards the pavement.

Laughter followed him all the way down to where blackness waited.

The beep of the machine was the first thing Jake heard, calling him towards consciousness.

The room swam into focus; a hospital room clearly, but why couldn’t he move?

“I think he’s awake Doctor.” The voice was female, but try as he might, he could not turn towards its source.

“Poor guy, I almost hoped he wouldn’t regain consciousness.” This voice was male; pitched low as if to try and prevent him from hearing it. The same voice spoke louder, “Jake? Jake? I don’t know if you can hear me? My name is Doctor White.”

A man in scrubs stepped into view.

“You’ve had an accident Jake. You fell out of a window and you’ve sustained severe injuries. Jake, there’s no easy way to say this,” there was a pause; “Jake you’re paralysed.”

After waiting a few seconds to let his words register, the Doctor continued.

“There is some cause for optimism however.” He shifted and picked up a medical chart, “unusually for these cases, the paralysis is motor skill

specific. Normally with this sort of trauma the damage is complete; in your case however the damage is partial, only the nerves that govern physical action have been compromised. This means that, even though you can’t move in any way, you have a full range of sensation. You can feel everything that you could before. Frankly I can’t explain it; I’ve never seen anything like it before. It does however give us some possibilities for treatment in the future, so try not to give up hope.”

The Doctor stood up and turned to leave, speaking to someone else as he did, “Nurse, remember he can feel everything; he must be treated accordingly.”

Time seemed to slow down for Jake as Cel stepped into view dressed in a nurse’s uniform. How could the Doctor not see the blood oozing down her wrists?

“Of course we’ll take good care of him Doctor,” she grinned at Jake in a terrible, familiar way “I have every intention of giving him my full attention.”

She leaned down towards Jake, taking a long moment to enjoy the terror in his eyes and the screaming in his mind before whispering in his ear, “Trick or Treat!”



## MEMBER-GUEST ZOMBIE APOCALYPSE

By Brian Glenmarchie

New England Undead Fiction

The double decker ZomCon tour bus stopped at the front gates of the exclusive Sea View Country Club. The bus blocked Carl Roland, the golf club President, from turning on to the

property, so he lowered the window of his BMW ALPINA to hear the tour guide give the all too familiar story of the horrible event that now defined his club and the town of Sea View.

The organizers of the Zombie Conference, called ZomCon, claim that they selected Sea View, Rhode Island because it was the home of the early horror author H.P. Lovecraft, but Roland researched it, and Lovecraft never resided outside Providence save a short while in New York, and never wrote about Zombies. Roland knew why the crazy conference took place where it did, and the Club's law firm clocked hundreds of billable hours fighting ZomCon over every aspect of their festival, especially the tour bus. The club had a minor victory over the summer when the lawyers were able to stop a series of helicopter tours scheduled to buzz the club on the grounds that the copters would have broken several of the town's laws on excessive noise.

"It was a breezy fall day not unlike today except the morning fog had stayed around well past noon." the tour guide said over the crackling bus speakers that echoed through the gates and up the long hill to the clubhouse. "That year the Member-Guest Tournament at the Seaview Country Club, originally scheduled for Columbus Day, was pushed back three weeks because

of Hurricane Karen that flooded several of the holes and damaged dozens of trees on the course. So on that Halloween day, there was a steady wind coming in from the ocean. The thick fog moved eerily across the golf course like smoke from a raging forest fire."

"It was just after 1:00PM when the wind stopped, the fog dissipated, and the sun came out, changing the weather from a cold damp day to a hot and hazy Indian summer afternoon. Laura Rose Reilly was stirring the chowder in the small food shack." The tour guide pointed toward a tiny building between the 9th hole and 10th tee. "She looked out the window and saw the foursome she had just served hot dogs and chowder to coming back up the 10th fairway toward her. They were walking like they were drunk - not an uncommon occurrence on this golf course." The crowd on the bus laughed and at the reference to the country club's Irish heritage.

The ZomCon bus started to move down West Wharf Road to the harbor and Roland followed. "Laura Rose leaned around the corner to check for any customers at the counter then glanced back to the window to see a bloody contorted face pressed against the panes. She jumped back, knocking a large pot of chowder off the stove. It splattered on her burning her left leg up to her thigh." There was a sound of something burning coming from the bus

speakers. "She looked back in anger at the person at the window that scared her thinking



it was a Halloween prank and saw three bloody, deformed faces staring back at her. She moved towards the clubhouse to complain to her boss and get something for her leg. The golfers on the clubhouse patio turned towards her with bloody faces and arms, and started walking in that same drunken way towards her. One fell to the patio hitting his head solidly on the stone wall. Blood and vomit came from his mouth.”

“Laura knew then that it was no prank and that something was very wrong. One the players from the window was now standing next to her and reached out and grabbed her arm with his bloody hand. He whispered in a hissing voice, but she could not make out what the person was saying. She broke free of his grip and headed for the woods running down the hill toward the bay.”

The tour guide pointed to a tree line high on the hill as the bus moved to follow the girl’s escape path. “She bolted through those trees and headed to Harbor. The Prudence Island ferry was pulling from the dock, and it gave two quick toots of the horn.” The tour guide sounded a horn, and everyone on the bus jumped. The bus pulled alongside the same ferry, now at the dock.

“As the boat pulled away it again made two quick hits of its horn, signalling it was pulling into Narragansett Bay. The ferry was moving but still running alongside the dock. Laura Rose hit the dock in a full sprint. The harbor master yelled to her that she needed a ticket

and that she’d never make it. The boat began to pick up speed, and smoke coughed from one of its stacks. She leaped into the air stretching for the ship. Her foot caught the outside of the railing, but Laura’s momentum carried her over in a flip, landing hard on her back on the ship’s deck.”

“Then, Laura Rose Reilly, a Fulbright Scholar mind you, looked up at Clyde Bruner, the long-time ferry deckhand, and said one word before being hospitalized until almost Thanksgiving. And that word was “Zombies”.”

Roland admired the charismatic flow of the story from the tour guide. It had a beguiling beat of a carnival barker pulling in an audience. He watched the people get off the bus and walk down the dock to the ferry. The tour guide got on the boat and pointed to the area of the dock where the girl had jumped from and where she landed on the vessel. These were at best remote artifacts from that day’s event, but the tour guide had the crowd entranced by the story.

The people got back on the bus, and the tour continued. “Now we know this from what Laura’s brother who she told in confidence later that day. That and the 911 calls from the golf course.”

“911 operator.” The voice recording came from the bus speakers.

“The golfers are zombies and they’re trying to get into the building!”

“911 Operator.”

“I’m at the Sea View country club, and you need to send the police, maybe the army. There is something very wrong going on here. This is no joke” said the recorded voice of a man in a panic over the speaker.

“There were 27 911 calls made from the Country Club, all describing some Zombie attack. That is all we know officially. The government documents are sealed, and people that survived the attack aren’t talking. Even Laura Rose denies her brother’s story that I just told you. What we do know is the death toll: 42 in all and...”

Roland didn’t follow the bus and the tour guides voice faded over as they turned and crossed over the metal drawbridge.

For him the events of that day also started at the Ferry. The ship captain phoned him about a female employee of the club that was on his boat and hysterical, talking nonsense and possibly on drugs. Then came the report from security that someone had fallen on the patio. Then a golf cart was found crashed on Ocean Road. The driver, dead and bloody, was found half a mile from the damaged cart.

Then the call from Jack Kirkpatrick, the Head Greenkeeper, a veteran of Vietnam and a man that Roland knew his entire life. Without hesitancy, qualification or apology Kirkpatrick directly stated. “Carl, they are all turning into Zombies.”



Then the panic as the people all ran from the Zombies. The unaffiliated barricaded themselves in the bowling alley on a lower level of the clubhouse. The banging on the doors from the stricken. The desperate search for a cell signal to the outside world - if there was still an outside world. The fear in everyone's eyes was palpable. What caused the golfers to change? Could some of the people that made it to the makeshift bunker still change into Zombies?

Somebody stumbled onto a Zombie Survival Guide on-line guide from an old desktop computer in the kitchen. The guide was rich with detailed information about the virus that caused Zombies and how to survive and attack. There were three doctors in the bunker, and all claimed Zombies weren't real and were the creation of Hollywood, but they were unconvincing to the people in the room, given there were very solid Zombies banging the blockaded doors.

The pounding stopped followed by a long and even scarier silence. Then the knocking from a volunteer fireman explaining that all the Zombies were dead or dying. Then the hazmat suits.

The open conflicts from all levels and departments of the government over jurisdiction and the weeks in the hospital in quarantine observation as the cause of the incident was determined.

Finally, they discovered the cause; it was the gift baskets, the token presents given to each participant in the member-guest tournament. Each

basket contained different products from the local Sea View businesses, including Saltwater Taffy, Canned Lobster, and cranberry juice. The baskets looked light so the event coordinator searched through her stash for things that could fill out the gift. She found some soap, Chap Stick, key chains with miniature flashlights and sun block.

It was the sun block that was the culprit. Manufactured by a large multinational skincare company, the bottles were from a sample run on a production line located across the bay in Bristol. All the ingredients were harmless, but one of the specifications in the sample batch run was incorrect. The birch extract was somehow replaced with sweet birch abstract sourced from a remote region of China. Nothing harmful to humans but chemically much different from regular birch.

That fall, Narragansett Bay was hit by an unusually thick Red Tide. The red bacteria in the water hurt the fishing industry but never got much press because it was well passed the beach season and was harmless to people. It was the freakish combination of a rare herb from China with a Red tide bacteria carried in the windy fog combined to create a highly toxic compound that immediately impacted the nervous system and created an acid effect on the skin. Anyone that applied the sunscreen after being exposed to the morning fog instantly was victim to one of the most toxic compounds known to man. The CDC calculated it as a trillion to one chance that these safe and rare substances would ever

come together in nature, but it happened - with disastrous impact.

Sun care is a \$500 billion global market and when its leading company is partial cause to a Zombie Apocalypse, the lawyers, money, and confidentiality agreements drop from the sky. The money was streamed over time so if you spoke the money stopped. Everyone took the money, and no one talked.

The extreme cover up the incident was a double-edged sword. The public, not knowing the details, never looked to the club as the cause of the deaths and never accused the survivors as cowards running from suffering victims. But the secrecy allowed people to speculate what on what did happen, and those theories were often worse and stranger than reality.

Under Roland's stewardship, the Seaview Country Club went from one of the prestigious golf courses in the country and on a regular rotation for PGA majors to a joke mentioned in the same breath as Area 51, the Bermuda Triangle and Dealey Plaza. The ultra-elite country club to New England's one percent was now home base to conspiracy theorists of all types and Mecca to Zombie fandom. Almost daily, security would catch someone scaling the walls to see a Zombie. The Sea View police gave notice that they would start charging the club for all the disturbances and trespassing reports they were filing. Even the town merchants that profited handsomely from the from three-day ZomCon around Halloween each year found the crazies that

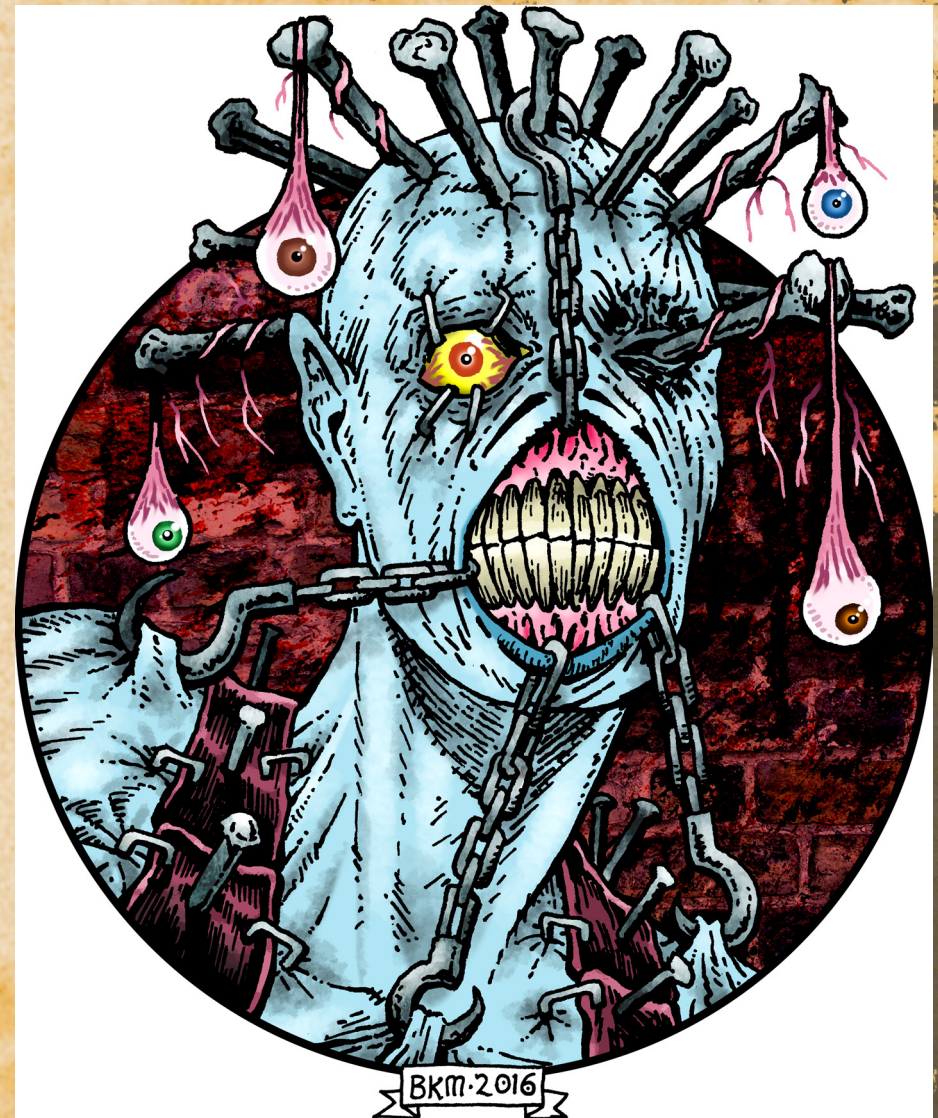


came into their quiet seaside town not worth the hassle. Last year there were several thousand people dressed like Zombies and at least two hundred women dressed like Laura Rose Reilly, right down to the chowder on the leg.

Back in his wood-panelled office, Roland looked out on the 18th green. It was about this time of day three years ago that everything changed. He opened the window to smell autumn and heard a distant but familiar voice. It was that of the bus tour guide. He was surprised that the sound from the next bus tour could travel this far up the hill. The voice of the tour guide seemed to be getting louder, and Roland jotted a note to call the lawyers to file a request to lower the volume on the tour bus speakers.

A cloud shadowed and darkened the green and Carl thought it might rain. There was a quiet hum that seemed to be coming from the tree tops. Then Roland saw it. The familiar colors of the festival filled the sky as a large blimp with the ZomCon logo hovered overhead.

The tour guide's voice echoed over the property as people on the blimp dressed as zombies and Laura Rose look-a-likes leaned backward over the railings taking selfies. As they did, Roland watched as fake blood, body parts and other Zombie pieces fell onto the manicured grass.







## MOMO

By Jason D McEwen

An Ogre Variant for Dark Conspiracy

First reported in 1971 near St. Charles, Missouri, this being is between 2-3 meters tall, with a large pumpkin-shaped head, red eyes and long dark brown or black shaggy fur. Momo has three fingers and toes, and a horrible odor is also reported. Momo apparently has a taste for dog flesh: some eyewitnesses claim dead dogs were found nearby, and one early report claimed Momo had a partially eaten dog in its clutches.

<b>Strength:</b>	20	<b>Education:</b>	1	<b>Move:</b>	2/10/15/30
<b>Constitution:</b>	22	<b>Charisma:</b>	1	<b>Skill/Dam.:</b>	5/4D6
<b>Agility:</b>	4	<b>Empathy:</b>	1	<b>Hits:</b>	50/90
<b>Intelligence:</b>	2	<b>Initiative:</b>	5	<b># Appearing:</b>	1

### Encounter seeds:

Lure the PCs to a rural or small town with rumors of a werewolf. One could have them find the werewolf killed and gnawed upon, or have a three way cat and mouse chase.

A self-designated crypto-zoologist is missing in the northern Ozarks. The locals are spooked and hostile. Fill in the rest!

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Momo\\_the\\_Monster](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Momo_the_Monster)



# DREAMLAND NIGHTMARES

By Linden Dunham

Dark Conspiracy scenario seed

A corporate tower inside the Dreamlands has suffered an outbreak of aberrant behaviour. In the year since construction of the tower was completed corporate employees of all levels, as well as their dependants have committed assaults, self-harming, gone on wrecking sprees and in some cases committed suicide. Surviving perpetrators have been admitted to the corporate hospital in a state of nervous collapse. The corporation's productivity and reputation are suffering. Its security and medical departments appear incapable of resolving the situation. Perhaps a suitably remunerated third party can find a solution. Enter the minion hunters...

**1. The Hunger:** The tower has attracted a Dream Weaver (see Dark Races p28) which haunts the residential floors at night. Being in such a food rich environment has made the creature rather greedy. On average it gets through one victim per fortnight. The stresses and strains of corporate life, particularly in the junior executive and middle management levels provide a ready supply of vulnerable victims. Fear of missing out on promotion or even worse, losing one's job, can easily be tipped over into full blown neurosis. These account for the majority of the suicides and self-harm episodes. Employees with a more competitive streak are responsible for most of the assaults and criminal damage - their aggressive personalities warped by the Dream Weaver to create grandiose delusions e.g. "the only way to get on in this company is kill your immediate boss and take his job. Make sure everyone sees you do it so they know exactly who they're dealing with."

In both types of incident, self-harming or aggressive, the PCs discover that the perpetrator had often previously complained that they weren't sleeping well to company medical staff and/or friends and family. Many also claimed that they were suffering from vivid and disturbing dreams. Medical intervention proved to be largely ineffective in these cases.

In the course of their investigation the PCs learn that the company's CEO has recently been looking bleary eyed. He claims that he's been staying up late at night working on a strategy that will enable the company to increase market share at the expense of one of its competitors. If left unchecked the CEO will recruit a team of unscrupulous mercenaries (possibly a group of Darklings unrelated to the Dream Weaver, such as Dark Elves or Cobra People) to plant a bomb in the foundations of the rival company's tower located on the other side of the Dreamlands. The PCs have to find a way to stake out the CEO's residential quarters and kill or capture the Dream Weaver before its depredations cause the CEO to go through with his plan.

**2. The Prisoner:** The tower's occupants are being victimised by a Dream Master (see Dark Races p26). There has been a spate of deaths while sleeping along with a number of sleep walking related deaths and injuries. Many exhibited paranoid behaviour prior to their deaths or hospitalisation e.g. barricading their apartment doors and windows, claiming that they were being followed, or persecuted at work.



The PCs learn of a company executive who has recently started taking elaborate security precautions. She was head-hunted from the company's main competitor six months ago and believes that her former employers are plotting to kill her in revenge, and as an example to other would be defectors. Her residential suite has been turned into a fortress, protected by VISMAR, and DNA/retinal scan operated Maxigard Multilocks, with a RoboGuard IV stationed in the entrance hall. The executive insists on working from home and is rarely seen in the company offices. Meetings are conducted remotely and communications are handled by couple of trusted (for now) subordinates who act as intermediaries. As a last line of defence she has armed herself with a pistol which she keeps close to hand at all times. The PCs need to win the executive's trust before being admitted to her electronic fortress. They then have to convince her that the threat to her life is internal rather than external. Battling the Dream Master should be conducted as detailed in Dark Races and should ideally be led by an empath. If the Dream Master is defeated but the GM feels that allowing it to leave and search out new prey is anti-climactic and/or inconclusive the PCs can follow the monster back to its home dimension for a physical confrontation.

**3. Working Girl:** The deaths and hospitalisations have been caused by high ranking executive, in reality a female Dark Elf. She joined the corporation a few years ago in a junior administrative position and since then has progressed steadily up the corporate ladder as

her immediate superiors have died or fallen sick. Assigned to the new corporate tower headquarters shortly after its completion she is intent on reaching the very top of the company hierarchy. The Dark Elf uses her Human Empathy and Project Thought powers to send nightmares to her victims and drive them insane. She has covered her tracks by selecting some victims from the tower's residents with whom she has no workplace connection. This makes her pattern of targeted attacks harder to detect, although by no means impossible. A diligent search of corporate records should enable the PCs to make a connection between the Dark Elf's name appearing in every employee roster at company sites and offices that have experienced numerous unexplained deaths and breakdowns among personnel and dependants.

The Dark Elf's ultimate goal is to become CEO of the company and then use its power to increase human suffering across the world. To her warped alien sensibilities she is engaged in a noble artistic endeavour, the creation of a masterpiece of pain and suffering. The broken lives she has left behind her so far are merely sketches and studies, preparation for her final great work.





# GHOST SEEKERS, GHOST HUNTERS AND ASSORTED OCCULTISTS

By Paul Riegel-Green

Spooky Careers for Dark  
Conspiracy

Hey there. For all you players and game masters who want to bring in the amateurs and professionals that deal with the paranormal and supernatural in their campaigns here are some career paths and equipment that you will need. Where noted, items are from the [Gear Up supplement](#) available via DriveThru RPG.

## CAREERS:

A \* indicates a new skill. Skills followed by (Conspiracy) are for Conspiracy characters only.

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### Demonologist

These characters have studied those supernatural beings that most would call demons.

For Dark Conspiracy First and Second Editions.

**Entry:** EMP 4+, Ghost Seeker or Law Enforcement (any) or Nun or Occultist or Paranormal Researcher or Priest.

**Social Class:** (DCII) Any (Conspiracy)  
SOC 1-9

**First Term Skills:** The character receives the following skills in the first term:

Interview (Conspiracy) 1  
Intimidation\* 1  
Leadership (Conspiracy)  
Religion\* 1  
Paranormal Sense\* 1  
Supernatural Knowledge\* 2

**Subsequent Term Skills:** A total of 5 levels from any one or a combination of the following;

Endurance\*  
Exorcism\*  
Interrogation  
Interview (Conspiracy)  
Intimidation\*  
Leadership  
Observation  
Paranormal Communication\*  
Paranormal Sense\*  
Paranormal Sight\*  
Religion\*  
Supernatural Knowledge\*

**Contacts:** One Per term, Clergy (Priest, Clergy, Exorcist, Nun), Law Enforcement, Ghost Hunting (Seekers or Ghost Hunters), Paranormal (researcher or parapsychologist) or Paranormal Techie

**Special:** Makes \$1d10 hundred a month consulting.

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### Druid

These are the modern extension of the ancient Druidical traditions of the Celts.

For Dark Conspiracy First Edition

**Entry:** CHR 4+, EMP 3+

**Social Class :** (DCII) No Gnomes (Conspiracy) SOC 1-7



**First Term Skills:** The character receives the following skills in the first term:

- Animal Empathy 1
- Endurance 1
- Farming (Conspiracy) 1
- Herbalism 1
- Leadership 2
- Observation (Conspiracy) 1
- Plant Empathy\* 1

**Subsequent Term Skills:** A total of 5 levels from any one or a combination of the following:

- Animal Empathy
- Circles\*
- Dimension Walk (Conspiracy)
- Farming (Conspiracy)
- Herbalist
- Leadership
- Paranormal Sense\*
- Plant Empathy\*
- Religion\*

**Contacts:** One Per Term, Clergy or Occultist

**Special:** None.

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## Exorcist

An exorcist is a priest character who has specific training and experience to deal with supernatural beings.

For Dark Conspiracy First Edition

**Entry:** EMP 4+, Ghost Hunter or Priest or Nun.

**Social Class:** (DCII) No Gnomes (Conspiracy) SOC 1-7

**First Term Skills:** The character receives the following skills in the first term;

- Exorcism\* 2
- History (Conspiracy) 1
- Intimidation 1
- Religion 1
- Research (Conspiracy) 1
- Paranormal Sense\* 1
- Supernatural Knowledge\* 1

**Subsequent Term Skills:** A total of 6 levels from any one or a combination of the following:

- Act / Bluff
- Empathic Healing
- Endurance\*
- Exorcism\*
- History (Conspiracy)
- Human Empathy
- Interrogation
- Paranormal Communication\*
- Paranormal Sense\*
- Paranormal Sight\*
- Religion\*
- Research (Conspiracy)
- Supernatural Knowledge\*
- Willpower

**Contacts:** One Per Term, Clergy (Clergy, Priest, Nun), Psychology, Paranormal (Ghost Hunter, Demonologist) or Parapsychologist.

**Special:** Can receive favors, housing, and support from local church.

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## Ghost Hunter

These are professionals who have the ability to collect proof and information on the dead and other supernatural beings.

For Dark Conspiracy First Edition

**Entry:** CHR 3+, EMP 3+, Seeker or Law Enforcement (Any), or Parapsychology Student.

**Social Class:** (DCII) Mike Only (Conspiracy) SOC 3-7

**First Term Skills:** The character receives the following skills in the first term:

- Act/Bluff 1
- Computers (Conspiracy)
- Endurance 1
- Paranormal Sense\* 1
- Research (Conspiracy) 1
- Supernatural Knowledge\* 2

**Subsequent Term Skills:** A total of 5 levels from any one or a combination of the following:

- Act Bluff
- Computers (Conspiracy)
- Electronics
- Endurance
- Foreboding
- Intimidation
- Paranormal Sense\*



Paranormal Sight\*  
 Research (Conspiracy)  
 Supernatural Knowledge\*

**Contacts:** One Per Term, Clergy (Demologist, Clergy, Exorcist, Priest, Nun), Medium, Seeker, or Paranormal (Parapsychologist, Paranormal Researcher, Paranormal Student or Paranormal Techie).

**Special:** Makes 1d10 thousand dollars per month selling tapes of the characters ghost hunting adventures.

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## High Priest

This is the head of a typical Occult or Satanist group.

For Dark Conspiracy First Edition

**Entry:** CHA 5+ EMP 4+ Occultist or Satanist

**Social Class:** (DCII) Mike Only (Conspiracy) SOC 3-7

**First Term Skills:** The character receives the following skills in the first term;

Circles\* 1  
 Leadership 1 (Conspiracy) +1  
 Human Empathy 1  
 Musical (Conspiracy)  
 Paranormal Sense\* 1  
 Ritual\* 1  
 Supernatural Knowledge\* 1

**Subsequent Term Skills:** A total of 6 levels from any one or a combination of the following;

Act/Bluff  
 Circles\*  
 Dance  
 Foreboding  
 Human Empathy  
 Hypnosis (Conspiracy)  
 Leadership  
 Musical  
 Observation  
 Paranormal Communications\*  
 Paranormal Sense\*  
 Paranormal Sight\*  
 Project Emotion  
 Religion\*  
 Ritual\*  
 Streetwise  
 Supernatural Knowledge\*  
 Sympathetic Magic\*

**Contacts:** One per term Occultist, Satanist, Law Enforcement

**Special:** Can call upon 1d10 Occultist/Satanists of their religion to perform a non-combat task lasting up to 8 hours, Usable once per month.

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## Houngans

This is a Voodoo Priest.

For Dark Conspiracy First Edition

**Entry:** AGL 5+, EMP 4+ Occultist or Seeker, Males Only

**Social Class:** (DCII) No Gnomes (Conspiracy) SOC 1-8

**First Term Skills:** The character receives the following skills in the first term;

Animal Empathy 1  
 Herbalist\* 1  
 Leadership 1  
 Foreboding (Conspiracy) 1  
 Hypnosis (Conspiracy) 1  
 Paranormal Sense\* 1  
 Ritual\* 1  
 Supernatural Knowledge\* 1

**Subsequent Term Skills:** A total of 6 levels from any one or a combination of the following;

Circles\*  
 Hypnosis (Conspiracy)  
 Paranormal Communications\*  
 Paranormal Sight\*  
 Paranormal Sense\*  
 Religion\*  
 Ritual\*  
 Streetwise  
 Supernatural Knowledge\*  
 Sympathetic Magic\*  
 Willpower  
 Willpower Drain

**Contacts:** One per term, Houngan, Mambo, Occultist, or Seeker



**Special:** Can spend one day and create a potion worth 1d10 hundreds of dollars.

## Mambos

This is a Voodoo Priestess.

For Dark Conspiracy First Edition

**Entry:** AGL 5+, EMP 4+ Occultist or Seeker  
Female only,

**Social Class:** (DCII) No Gnomes (Conspiracy) SOC 1-8

**First Term Skills:** The character receives the following skills in the first term;

- Animal Empathy 1
- Herbalist\* 1
- Leadership 1
- Foreboding (Conspiracy) 1
- Hypnosis (Conspiracy) 1
- Paranormal Sense\* 1
- Ritual\*
- Supernatural Knowledge\* 1

**Subsequent Term Skills:** A total of 6 levels from any one or a combination of the following;

- Circles\*
- Hypnosis (Conspiracy)
- Paranormal Communications\*
- Paranormal Sight\*
- Paranormal Sense\*
- Ritual\*
- Streetwise
- Supernatural Knowledge\*





Sympathetic Magic\*  
Willpower  
Zombification\*

**Contacts:** One per term, Hougan, Mambo, Occultist, or Seeker

**Special:** Can spend one day and create a potion worth 1d10 hundreds of dollars.

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## Medium

This character has the ability to interact with the dead and other super natural beings.

For Dark Conspiracy First Edition

**Entry:** CHA 5+, EMP 4+, Sensitive

**Social Class:** (DCII) Mike Only (Conspiracy) SOC 3-7

**First Term Skills:** The character receives the following skills in the first term;

Human Empathy 1  
Observation (Conspiracy) 2  
Paranormal Communication\* 1  
Paranormal Sight\* 1  
Supernatural Knowledge\* 1  
Willpower 2

**Subsequent Term Skills:** A total of 6 levels from any one or a combination of the following;

Animal Empathy  
Empathic Healing  
Foreboding

Human Empathy  
Observation  
Paranormal Communications  
Paranormal Sense  
Paranormal Sight  
Psychology  
Religion

**Contacts:** One per term Demonologist, Ghost Hunter or Medium

**Special:** None

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## Monster Hunter

This character is a full time monster hunter (demons, vampires, werewolves, etc.).

For Dark Conspiracy First Edition

**Entry:** STR 4+, AGL 5+, EMP 3+ Seeker

**Social Class:** (DCII) No Gnomes (Conspiracy) SOC 1-7

**First Term Skills:** The character receives the following skills in the first term;

Armed Martial Arts (Conspiracy) 1  
Melee Combat 1  
Paranormal Sight\* 1  
Small Arms 1  
Stealth (Conspiracy) 1  
Supernatural Knowledge\* 1  
Tracking 1  
Willpower 1

**Subsequent Term Skills:** A total of 6 levels from any one or a combination of the following

Archery  
Armed Martial Arts (Conspiracy)  
Circles\*  
Melee Combat  
Paranormal Communication\*  
Paranormal Sight\*  
Small Arms  
Stealth  
Streetwise  
Supernatural Knowledge\*  
Thrown Weapon  
Tracking  
Religion\*  
Willpower

**Contacts:** One contact per term, Gunsmith, Law Enforcement, Priest, Nun. Or Journalist

**Special:** None

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## Nun

These are female clergy that are traditionally in support of Priests

For Dark Conspiracy First Edition

**Entry:** CHA 4+, EDU 4+, EMP 0+

**Social Class:** (DCII) Any (Conspiracy) SOC 1-8



**First Term Skills:** The character receives the following skills in the first term;

- Interview (Conspiracy) 1
- Instruction 1
- Leadership 1
- Observation 1
- Religion\* 1 (Conspiracy) +1
- Ritual\* 1
- Willpower 1

**Subsequent Term Skills:** A total of 5 levels from any one or a combination of the following;

- Empathic Healing
- First Aid\*
- Human Empathy
- Interview (Conspiracy)
- Instruction
- Observation
- Paranormal Communications\*
- Paranormal Sense\*
- Paranormal Sight\*
- Project Emotion
- Religion\*
- Ritual\*

**Contacts:** One Per term Clergy or Priest

**Special:** None

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## Occultists

These are believers in the occult and whose holy day is Halloween when the veils between the worlds are the thinnest.

For Dark Conspiracy First Edition

**Entry:** AGL 3+, INT 3+, EMP 1+

**Social Class:** (DCII) No Gnomes (Conspiracy) SOC 1-7

**First Term Skills:** The character receives the following skills in the first term;

- Dance (Conspiracy) 1
- Herbalist\* 1
- Musical\* 1
- Paranormal Sense\* 1
- Religion\* 1
- Song (Conspiracy) 1
- Willpower 1

**Subsequent Term Skills:** A total of X levels from any one or a combination of the following;

- Animal Empathy
- Circles\*
- Dance (Conspiracy)
- Endurance
- Foreboding
- Herbalist\*
- Human Empathy
- Musical\*
- Paranormal Sense
- Project Emotion
- Religion\*
- Ritual\*
- Seduction\*
- Song (Conspiracy)
- Streetwise
- Supernatural Knowledge\*

**Contacts:** One per term, Occultist, High Priest, Druid, Houngans, Mambos, Satanist, or Law Enforcement.

**Special:** None

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## Paranormal Researcher

This character has devoted this term to researching paranormal phenomenon.

For Dark Conspiracy First Edition

**Entry:** EMP 3+, Education 7+ Parapschology Student

**Social Class:** (DCII) Any (Conspiracy) SOC 1-8

**First Term Skills:** The character receives the following skills in the first term

- Computer Operations 1
- Instruction 1
- Linguistics\* 1
- Religion\* 1
- Research (Conspiracy) 2
- Supernatural Knowledge\* 2

**Subsequent Term Skills:** A total of 5 levels from any one or a combination of the following;

- Bargaining
- Computer Operations
- Instruction
- Linguistics\*
- Paranormal Sense
- Paranormal Sight



Religion\*  
 Research  
 Supernatural Knowledge\*

**Contacts:** Term one, Parapsychologist, subsequent terms one contact Seeker, Parapsychology Student or other academic

**Special:** Can call upon Parapsychologist for support if a find made of significance. Graduate Degree after second term.

## Paranormal Techie

This character is devoted to developing and using devices to capture proof of the paranormal.

For Dark Conspiracy First Edition

**Entry:** AGL 5+, INT 5+, EMP 2+, Seeker

**Social Class:** (DCII) Mike only (Conspiracy) SOC 3-7

**First Term Skills:** The character receives the following skills in the first term;

Carpentry (Conspiracy) 1  
 Computer Operations 1  
 Computer Programming (Conspiracy)  
 Electronics 2  
 Mechanical Empathy\* 1  
 Paranormal Sense\* 1  
 Supernatural Knowledge\* 1

**Subsequent Term Skills:** A total of 6 levels from any one or a combination of the following;

Carpentry (Conspiracy)  
 Computer Operations  
 Computer Programming\*  
 Electrical\*  
 Electronics  
 Engineer  
 Instruction  
 Mechanic  
 Mechanical Empathy\*  
 Paranormal Sense\*  
 Research (Conspiracy)  
 Science\*  
 Supernatural Knowledge\*  
 Vehicle Use

**Contacts:** One per term Ghost Hunter, Parapsychologist, Paranormal Techie, or Seeker

**Special:**

## Parapsychologist

This character has reached the pinnacle of education about the paranormal and supernatural.

For Dark Conspiracy First Edition

**Entry:** EDU 7+, CHA 5+, EMP 5+ Paranormal Researcher

**Social Class:** (DCII) Any (Conspiracy) SOC 1-9

**First Term Skills:** The character receives the following skills in the first term;

Instruction 2  
 Paranormal Sense\* 1  
 Psychology 1  
 Research (Conspiracy) 2  
 Supernatural Knowledge\* 1  
 Willpower 1

**Subsequent Term Skills:** A total of 6 levels from any one or a combination of the following;

Circles\*  
 Computer Operation  
 Exorcism\*  
 Foreboding  
 Human Empathy  
 Instruction  
 Linguistics  
 Luck  
 Paranormal Communications\*  
 Paranormal Sense\*  
 Paranormal Sight\*  
 Persuasion  
 Psychology  
 Religion\*  
 Research (Conspiracy)  
 Science\*  
 Supernatural Knowledge\*

**Contacts:** One per term, Parapsychologist, Paranormal Researcher, Parapsychology Student, Exorcist, High Priest, Druid, or Academic

**Special:** None



## Parapsychology Student

This character is conducting studies in the paranormal and supernatural.

For Dark Conspiracy First Edition

**Entry:** INT 5+, EDU 5+, EMP 1+

**Social Class:** (DCII) Any (Conspiracy)  
SOC 1-9

**First Term Skills:** The character receives the following skills in the first term;

- Computer Operations 2
- Instruction 1
- Research (Conspiracy) 1
- Science\* 1
- Supernatural Knowledge\* 2

**Contacts:** One per term Academic

**Special:** Undergraduate Degree : (DC

## Priest

This is a variant of Clergy and a traditional priest who has some knowledge of the supernatural.

For Dark Conspiracy First Edition

**Entry:** EMP 3+, CHA 5+, EDU 5+

**Social Class:** (DCII) Non Prole (Conspiracy) SOC 4-9

**First Term Skills:** The character receives the following skills in the first term;

- Human Empathy 1
- Interview (Conspiracy) 1
- Leadership 1
- Persuasion 1
- Psychology 1
- Religion\* 1 (Conspiracy) +1
- Ritual\* 1

**Subsequent Term Skills:** A total of 6 levels from any one or a combination of the following;

- Act/Bluff
- Human Empathy
- Interview (Conspiracy)
- Leadership
- Paranormal Sense
- Psychology
- Religion\*
- Ritual\*
- Supernatural Knowledge
- Willpower

**Contacts:** One per term, Any

**Special:** None

## Psychotic

This character is clinically insane, but by being so has thrown off the traditional way that people look at things.

For Dark Conspiracy First Edition

**Entry:** Empathy 3+

**Social Class:** (DCII) Any (Conspiracy)  
SOC 1-9

**First Term Skills:** The character receives the following skills in the first term;

- Act/Bluff 1
- Human Empathy 1
- Observation (Conspiracy) 1
- Paranormal Sense\* 1 (Conspiracy) +1
- Psychology 1
- Sleight of Hand \* 1
- Streetwise 1

**Subsequent Term Skills:** A total of 6 levels from any one or a combination of the following;

- Act/Bluff
- Human Empathy
- Observation
- Paranormal Communications\*
- Paranormal Sense\*
- Paranormal Sight\*
- Psychology
- Sleight of Hand \*
- Streetwise
- Supernatural Knowledge\*
- Willpower

**Contacts:** One per term Psychotic, or Psychologist

**Special:** Must convince the authorities that they are cured (Act/Bluff or Persuasion Difficult Check) or escape and become a fugitive.



## Satanist

This character is a follower of Satan and very familiar with him and his demons.

For Dark Conspiracy First Edition

**Entry:** CON 5+, CHA 5+, EMP 1+

**Social Class:** (DCII) Any (Conspiracy)  
SOC 1-9

**First Term Skills:** The character receives the following skills in the first term

- Act/Bluff 1
- Musical\* 1
- Observation 1
- Paranormal Sense\* 1
- Recruiter (Conspiracy) 1
- Religion\* 1 (Conspiracy) 1
- Ritual\* 1

**Subsequent Term Skills:** A total of 5 levels from any one or a combination of the following

- Act/Bluff
- Animal Empathy
- Human Empathy
- Hypnosis (Conspiracy)
- Musical\*
- Paranormal Sense\*
- Paranormal Sight\*
- Recruiter (Conspiracy)
- Religion\*
- Ritual\*
- Willpower
- Willpower Drain

**Contacts:** One contact per term High Priest, Law Enforcement, Satanist

**Special:** None

## Seekers

These are less experienced Ghost Hunters who pursue the collection of proof and information on the dead and other supernatural beings.

For Dark Conspiracy First Edition

**Entry:** Empathy 1+

**Social Class:** (DCII) Any (Conspiracy)  
SOC 1-8

**First Term Skills:** The character receives the following skills in the first term;

- Act/Bluff 1
- Interrogation 1
- Observation 2
- Paranormal Sense\* 1
- Psychology 1
- Research (Conspiracy) 1

**Subsequent Term Skills:** A total of 5 levels from any one or a combination of the following;

- Act/Bluff
- Interrogation
- Computer Operations
- Foreboding
- Human Empathy
- Observation

- Paranormal Sense\*
- Psychology
- Religion
- Research (Conspiracy)
- Science

**Contacts:** One per term Ghost Hunter, Priest, Medium, Paranormal Techy

**Special:** None

## Sensitive

This character has the ability to feel the dead's presence and there general demeanor

For Dark Conspiracy First Edition

**Entry:** Empathy 2+

**Social Class:** (DCII) Any (Conspiracy)  
SOC 1-9

**First Term Skills:** The character receives the following skills in the first term;

- Animal Empathy (Conspiracy)
- Foreboding 1
- Human Empathy 1
- Observation 2
- Paranormal Sense\* 2

**Subsequent Term Skills:** A total of 6 levels from any one or a combination of the following;

- Animal Empathy
- Computer Empathy
- Foreboding



Herbalist\*  
 Human Empathy  
 Mechanical Empathy\*  
 Observation  
 Paranormal Sense\*  
 Project Emotion  
 Project Thought  
 Religion\*  
 Supernatural Knowledge\*  
 Willpower

**Contacts:** None

**Special:** None

## Shaman

This is a traditional priest for a more primitive society.

For Dark Conspiracy First Edition

**Entry:** AGL 6+, EMP 1+ Occultists

**Social Class:** (DCII) Any (Conspiracy)  
 SOC 1-8

**First Term Skills:** The character receives the following skills in the first term;

Human Empathy 1  
 Leadership 1  
 Musical\* 1  
 Religion\* 1 (Conspiracy) +1  
 Ritual\* 1  
 Psychology 1 (Conspiracy) +1

**Subsequent Term Skills:** A total of 6 levels from any one or a combination of the following;

Act/Bluff  
 Animal Empathy  
 Circles  
 Empathic Healing  
 Human Empathy  
 Instruction  
 Leadership  
 Observation  
 Paranormal Communications\*  
 Paranormal Sight\*  
 Persuasion  
 Recruiting (Conspiracy)  
 Religion\*  
 Ritual\*  
 Supernatural Knowledge\*

**Contacts:** One per term Occultists

**Special:** None

## SKILL CHECKS

Dark Conspiracy (Change) (As Written) There are Easy, Normal, Difficult, Very Difficult, and Impossible. Very Difficult checks are done at ¼ normal, Impossible checks are made at 1/8th normal.

<i>Skill Check as Written Level</i>	<i>Dark Conspiracy II Level</i>
N/A	Automatic (as designated by GM no corresponding level written.)
N/A	Easy (as designated by GM no corresponding level written.)
Easy	Average
Normal	Difficult
Difficult	Formidable
Very Difficult	Impossible
Impossible	None Available

## NEW SKILLS

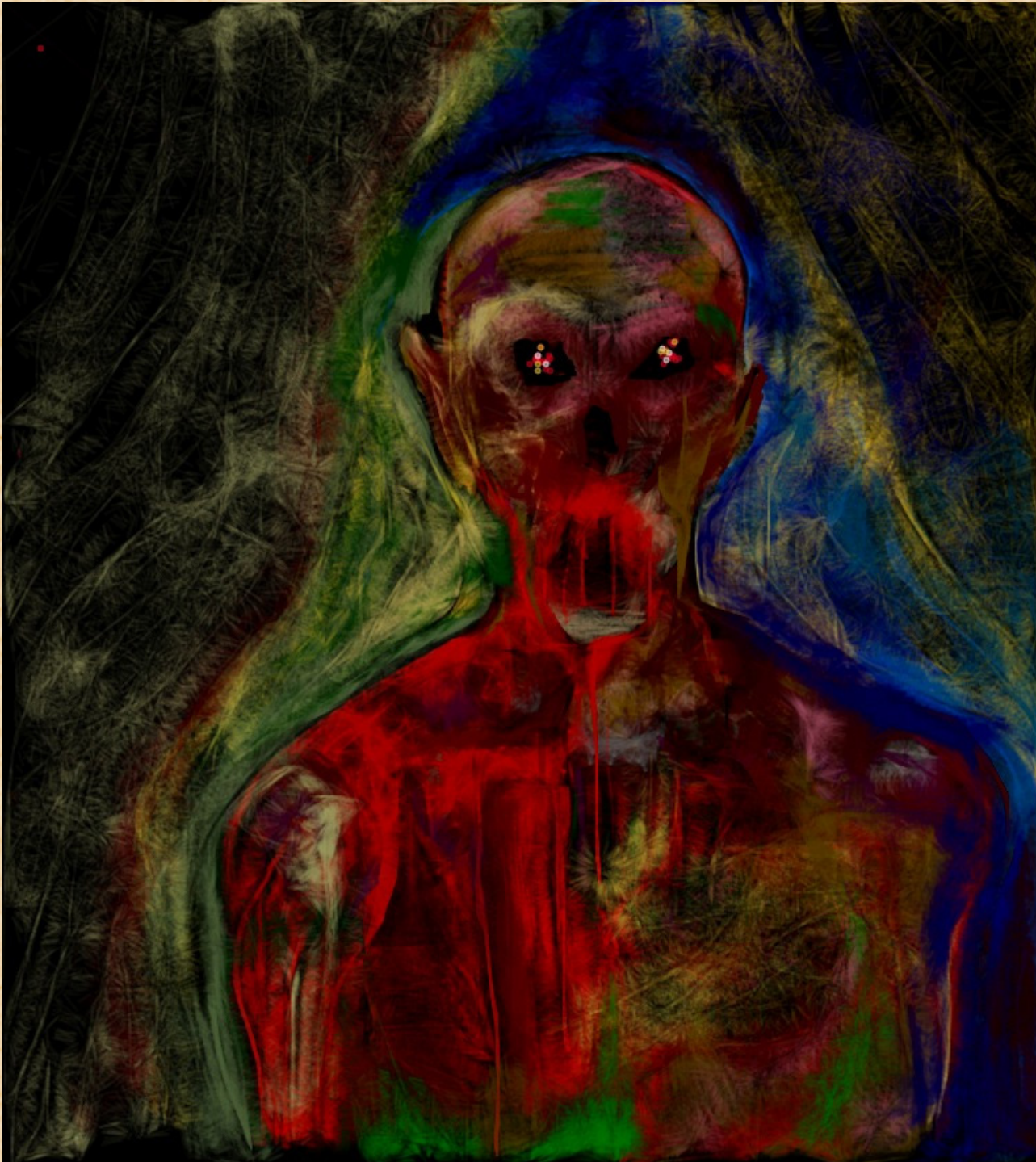
### CIRCLES EMP (Trained) (New)

Circles allows the character to lay down a circle of materiel around a given area and through the use of Empathy be able to have physical effects. A character may choose one kind of circle to know for every two points of Empathy the character has. The circles are as follows:

**Binding:** This forces a creature to perform a task got the person using the circle. In order to prepare the circle takes one minute per height of the creature (which determines the diameter of the circle) and requires iron filings spread around the perimeter. It takes five minutes per foot diameter of the circle.

Once the creature is inside then the character will make the task demanded known to the





creature. The caster will then make a check as follows:

<i>Type of Creature</i>	<i>Character's Attributes</i>	<i>Creature's Defense</i>
Animal	EMP + Animal Empathy + d10	EMP + d10
Human	EMP + Human Empathy + Persuasion + d10	EMP + INT + d10
Supernatural	EMP + Persuasion + d10	EMP + ½ INT + d10

**Modifiers**

***Time to complete mission***

	Less than 1 hour	+2 to Character's Side
	1-6 Hours	-
	6-12 Hours	+1 Creature's Side
	13-24 Hours	+2 Creature's Side
	1-2 Days	+5 Creature's Side
	3-5 Days	+10 Creature's Side

***Danger to Creature***

	None	+1 Character's Side
	Slight	-
	Major	+4 Creature's Side
	Chance Death	+6 Creature's Side

Whatever side has the higher total wins. If the character wins then the creature will perform the task. If the creature wins then it will not perform the task. It may be angry with the character and attack or just leave.

**Empathic Power:** This circle when entered and as long as remaining within gives the character



who cast it (only) a doubling of EMP and \_\_\_\_\_ Empathic skills for as long as the character remains inside (Up to one hour). If the character leaves the circle it is broken and the effects are lost and cannot be regained in that circle.

This takes a three foot circle made of ashes and takes five minutes to set up.

**Exclusion:** These tend to be large irregular shaped “circles” is designed to drive out and keep out supernatural creatures. It takes a character one hour for a home size lot up to a day for a farm. It takes burning sage and salt to complete. To be successful the character must be higher than the supernatural creatures present (Character’s EMP + Persuasion+ d10 vs creature’s EMP + ½ INT + d10). If it fails then it can be redone from the start.

**Protection:** The character sets this up around themselves and others to protect them from supernatural creatures and empathic attacks or control. This circle takes five minutes per person to be protected and requires five burning candles. All those protected must remain in the circle or else the circle will be broken and the effect will be lost for everyone.

A completed circle prevents supernatural creatures from entering and doubles the Willpower of each character within. The effect can last up to six hours.

**Summoning:** The character sets up a circle very similar to a Binding circle. Then calls on a

specific supernatural creature to appear inside the circle. The creature will appear within 1d10 rounds and will remain 1d10 round (Minus ½ the creature’s EMP plus ½ the character’s Bargain).

It takes the same time to set up just like the Binding Circle (in fact can be combined with a Binding circle if both are known and set up by the same character. It requires a chalk outline being drawn or chalk dust cast if a surface that cannot be written on.

**COMPUTER PROGRAMMING: EDU (Trained) (From Gear Up)** Computer Programming Skill allows the character to develop their own programs and maximize the use of existing programs. The development of programs will have the GM set up difficulty check(s) and time based off the complexity of the program.

Also Computer Programming skill also acts as Computer Use skill at ½ the Computer Programming skill level.

**ELECTRICAL: AGL (Trained) (From Gear Up)**  
The electrical skill is used to work on, repair or disable electrical devices. It also gives the character a basic understanding in how the device works.

**ENDURANCE: CON (Untrained) (From Gear Up)**

Endurance comes into effect the characters in one of two ways; the Long March, and the Continuous Activity.

The long march consists of any walk, hike, run etc. that lasts more than one hour. The first check will start off at normal, then increasing in difficulty for every 30 minute check after. If running then that will cause the difficulty to increase one level to, unless the character has specifically trained for long distance running. Failing means that the character must stop and rest for 30 minutes for every check that they had to make before failing a check.

The continuous activity endurance check is made after 12 hours of active or 24 hours of quiet activity. It takes a normal check at first. It increases in difficulty by a level for every 12 hour check thereafter. Failure means that the character must get some sleep, at least 4 hours for every check that they have had to make.

**EXORCISM: EMP (Trained) (New)**  
This skill allows the character to remove a supernatural creature that may have taken over a person, object or location.

**Oppression:** A supernatural creature can oppress a location, object, or individual.



To take over a location, it takes one week per cubic yard if unopposed (no religious symbols or persons occupying) If religious symbols are placed in an area it takes a month to take over the space. If a person is occupying it regularly (living or working in the room) then it takes 3 days per point of INT + Willpower the person has. Upon entry to an oppressed space, anyone will feel a heavy, sad feeling that over time (number of weeks equal to the characters INT + EMP + Willpower) will make the person either depressed, sick and suicidal or angry and up to a murderous rage. Characters in the oppressed location can be physically or sexually attacked.

To take over an object the supernatural creature would have had to have had some contact with the object in life (i.e. a supernatural creature from the 1860s couldn't oppress a computer). This oppression takes no time but over the years will allow more control. It starts off with the inability of the person to give up, sell or trash the item in question without passing a difficult Willpower check. The next stage, the object can move on its own, usually back to where it was kept during the oppressing creature's lifetime. Next it can cause a character to venerate the object (The characters must pass a Very Difficult Willpower check not to be effected. Lastly, the object can come back together complete if it was damaged or destroyed.

To take over a person, it takes the supernatural creature one month per point of EMP + Willpower the person has. Once the oppression begins the person will be feeling "not well".

For each time period, as above, passed with the supernatural creature's oppression the person will either feel worse, developing unexplained diseases, get depressed, leading to suicide, or angry, leading to murder.

Exorcising all three types of oppression are basically the same. The character using the skill takes their INT + EMP + Exorcism + Religion + 1d10 verses the creature's INT + EMP + Willpower.

Every attempt it takes one hour and the character using the exorcist can go one hour per point of Exorcism the character possesses. It takes the number of hours equal to the supernatural creature's EMP + Willpower, minus the oppressed person's EMP if an individual is being exorcised, in order to be removed. If the exorcism is broken off the character using the skill must rest 2 hours for every hour exorcising and the supernatural creature will regain 1/2 hour of control for every two hour break.

**FIRST AID: INT (Untrained)**  
(From Gear Up)

This gives the character the ability to treat Slight wounds without a Medical Skill. In addition, they can use this skill to stabilize a character until someone with Medical ability and / or needed equipment or medicines are available to treat them.

**HERBALISM: INT (Trained)** (From Gear Up)

This is a low tech Medical skill. The character is familiar with the use of Essential Oils, Mosses, Poultices, and Tinctures. They can find the natural ingredients for the low tech medicines and those higher tech medicines and compounds.

**INTIMIDATION: CHA (Untrained)**  
(From Gear Up)

Intimidation is used in two ways. The first way is to extract information from a character without having to spend the time to convince them in other slower ways. It's used a lot against characters that are naturally opposed or hostile to the questions being asked.

The second way is to get someone to do something or allow your character to do something that they would normally be opposed to.

The more opposed the character is to revealing or doing something the harder the check will be.

**LINGUISTICS: INT (Trained)**  
(From Gear Up)

This skill is used to be able to translate an unknown language. This language can be modern, or a dialect, or one that is long extinct. The chances are based off of the size of the sample and if it is a dialect, unknown or extinct.



Type	Difficulty
Dialect of Character's Main Language	Easy
Dialect of Known Language	Normal -1 DM
Dialect of Modern Language	Difficult -1 DM
Unidentified Modern Language	Normal
Unidentified Rare Modern Language	Difficult
Identified Extinct Language	Difficult
Unidentified Extinct Language	Very Difficult
Small Sample	One level more difficult
Verbal only	+2 DM

**Known Language:** This is a language other than the character's main language that the character has a skill level in.

**Modern Language:** This is a language that exist in the modern world.

**Rare Modern Language:** This is a language that is only rarely used in the world, Native American Languages, some African Languages.

**Extinct Language:** This includes Latin, ancient Greek, etc.

**Small Sample:** a sample of less than 25 words

**Verbal only:** Means that the character only has a chance to hear it once, i.e. not on tape.

**MECHANICAL: EMP (Trained) (New)**

This is just like Computer Empathy except it deals with all kinds of mechanical devices. It can be used to cause a malfunction, fix a malfunction, or keep a machine running.

**MUSICAL: AGL (Trained) (From Gear Up)**

This allows a character to select a type of instrument (Keyboard, Percussion, Guitar, Orchestral Stringed or Wind) and know how to play it. The difficulty will come from the piece that the character is trying to play with the instrument and how much time they have to practice the piece.

In addition, this will allow the character to sing, again the difficulty comes from the difficulty of the piece and how much practice the character has.

The character must select the piece their Musical Skill is for when the Musical skill selected. This skill can be selected again to get a different instrument.

**PARANORMAL COMMUNICATION: EMP (Trained) (New)**

This skill allows the character to communicate with supernatural creatures. In order to initiate communications the character must surpass

the supernatural creature's defenses (Character EMP + Paranormal Communication + INT + 1d10 verses creature's ½ EMP + ½ INT +1d10 (+3 if the character knows the living name of the creature that they are trying to communicate with). Once communications had been established the supernatural creature may be asked questions as follows:

Type	EMP + Skill + INT + 1d10 – creature's Willpower
Yes or No	4
One Word Answers	6
Short Sentences	10
Long Sentences (up to 12 words)	15

Certain supernatural creatures (Demons and other very evil creatures) double the number needed.

The creature will answer questions doe up to 2d10 rounds minus a round for every failed question,

**PARANORMAL SIGHT: EMP (Trained) (New)**

This skill allows the character to see different supernatural creatures.

**Semi-Corporeal Creatures** is a Normal Check

**Shadow Men** is a Difficult Check

**Non-Corporeal Creatures** is a Very Difficult Check



**PARANORMAL SENSE: EMP**  
(Trained) (New)

This skill allows the character to feel the presence of supernatural creatures.

- Corporeal Creatures** is an Easy Check
- Semi-Corporeal Creatures** is a Normal Check
- Shadow Men** is a Difficult Check
- Non-Corporeal Creatures** is a Very Difficult Check

**PLANT EMPATHY: EMP (Trained)**  
(New)

This skill is like the Animal Empathy skill except specifically dealing with plants.

**RITUAL: CHA (Trained) (New)**

This skill allows the character to turn those present to view the characters words, actions, and requests in a positive light. This takes thirty minutes per attempt.

**SCIENCE: EDU (Trained) (From Gear Up)**

This skill covers all Scientific fields in a general way. It give the character reduced abilities in Biology, Chemistry, and Physics. If a Biology, Chemistry, and Physics check is called for the character can make a Science check at one level more difficulty. If a different field of science is called for then the Science check is made at the normal difficulty.

**SEDUCTION: CHA (Untrained)**  
(New)

This skill enables the character using it seduce another character. If the character is attracted to the sex of the character using the skill then a roll is made. The character using the skill adds CHA + Seduction + Persuasion or Act/Bluff + 1d10 verses the targets INT + 1d10. If the character surpasses the targets total then the target will become friendly. The initial attempt takes five to fifteen minutes.

Once friendly the next successful seduction attempt is made with the target receiving a -1 to its side, it will allow the character to ask non-sensitive questions. This check takes thirty minutes.

After that each successful check will reduce the targets side by -2 per success, it will allow more sensitive questions to be asked and takes a further thirty minutes.

If the character want the target to do something for them that they would not normally do (vouch for them, etc.) they will have to make a successful check at ½ normal and will require one hour of privacy.

**SLEIGHT OF HAND: AGL (Trained)**  
(From Gear Up)

This is the ability of the character to make quick motions of the hands that can go unseen by the casual observer. Among these are making small objects disappear out of their hands, slipping small objects into their hands, picking up or

placing small items. Unless the character is under close observation the character will need to pass an easy skill check, GM's discretion depending on the situation and size of objects being manipulated. If under direct observation then the check will become normal. If under close scrutiny, i.e. someone thinks you're up to no good, it takes a difficult skill check.

**SUPERNATURAL KNOWLEDGE: INT**  
(Trained) (New)

This skill allows the character to be able to identify the type of supernatural creature that they have encountered.

Type	Identify	Number of Questions		
		1	2	3
Corporeal Creatures	Easy	Easy	Normal	Difficult
Semi-Corporeal Creatures	Normal	Difficult	Very Difficult	Impossible
Non-Corporeal Creatures	Difficult	Difficult	Impossible	N/A

This skill is done in two stages first to identify. If that is passed then a second roll is made and depending on how well it is passed the character may ask 0-3 questions about the creature. If the character has a copy of Tobin's Spirit Guide and they take five minutes then the identification is lessened by one difficulty level and if passed they get one extra question.



## **SYMPATHETIC MAGIC: EMP**

(Trained) (New)

This skill allows the character to create “Voodoo Dolls” and “potions”, the effects of which are specified by the person using the skill. The only way that they have any effect is if the character’s EMP + Act/Bluff + Persuasion + Sympathetic Magic + Religion verses the targets / recipients INT + Willpower + 2d10. If the character employing the skill is successful then the character will believe the effects of the item and act accordingly. If resisted the target / recipient will not believe.

If the target / recipient sees a successful use of Sympathetic Magic within ½ hour then they must make another check this time only with 1d10 roll.

If the target / recipient is an Occultist or Satanist then they only get INT + Willpower.

## **ZOMBIFICATION: EMP (Trained)** (New)

This skill allows the character to create a zombie. This requires the character that is to become a zombie to ingest a potion. It takes the character using the skill 1 hour to prepare and must be ingested within 12 hours. When the zombie ingest the potion the character must make a very difficult Willpower check. If they pass the zombie will feel weak and sick for 48 hours. If the zombie fails then they will fall into a death like coma.

Once the zombie is in the coma then the character using the skill must perform a ritual that lasts 4-6 hours. It takes candles, salt, and sage to perform as well as drumming, live or recorded. The Zombie will arise four hours after the completion of the ritual.

The zombie will perform specific tasks for the character. This will last up to 24 hours minus the zombies living INT. Upon completion of this time period the zombie will collapse and stay in the coma like state for two more days before returning to life, not remembering anything that happened.

## **NEW EQUIPMENT**

All equipment with no source is available on Gear Up

### **CLOTHING:**

**Gadget Holster, TAPS Hol2:** This is a “holster” with its own belt that can be worn on either hip. It holds three pockets. The main pocket is 9” by 5” by 1”. The side pocket is 5” by 4” by 1”. The top pocket is 7” by 3” by 1”. It perfect to contain small devices or gear. Weight: Negligible Price: \$30 Availability (C/C) Special -

### **HAND SET RADIO:**

**Commercial, Radio Shack WT45:** This is a set of two commercial walkie-talkies. They have a range of from a ¼ mile out to the maximum of a mile, depending on terrain and battery charge. They are not capable of being encrypted but they also do not stand out in a civilian setting.

They operate on a single frequency but not all hand set radios use the same one. Weight 1 Kg Price \$100 Availability (V/V) Special -

### **COMPUTERS:**

**Desktop Personal Computer, GE9000:** (see Dark Conspiracy Pg 268). Weight 8 Kg Price \$6,500 Availability (S/C) Special -

**Laptop Portable Computer, Zenith FX2:** (see Dark Conspiracy Pg 268). Weight 2 Kg Price \$4,500 Availability (R/C) Special -

**AV Feed, Zenith 1450:** This allows the computer to either to receive a cable television signal or a closed circuit television signal. The type of signal being received doesn’t matter but can only process one kind of signal at a time. The signals can be received via a cable, a wireless connection, or by a modem. Weight Negligible Price \$100 Availability (V/V) Special -

**Image Processing, Nikon:** This piece of software allows the user to clean up, restore, or doctor an image or video. It comes with the capacity to hook up to any scanner, digital camera, video camera, video cassette recorder, or similar device.

It takes one minute to upload a photograph to the system or the run time of the video tape. Once there it can be viewed no matter what format it started off in and be converted with the proper output device to any other format. I.e. you can take PAL videotape from the UK run it through the system, with no skill check,



and with a standard video recorder produce as many tapes of it as you want to spend time to do. You can also convert videotapes to DVD format, although it does not alter the quality to DVD quality.

This software was designed to edit and clean up photos and videotape but it can also be used to alter them. The use of this software gives the character a -3 DM to all Computer Use attempts to doctor an image or determine if an image has been doctored.

Installation takes a Computer Programming normal check and takes 2 hours. Weight Negligible Price \$150 Availability (S/C) Special -

**Sound Processing, dbx:** This software plays, restores, enhances, and may doctor sound recordings and live audio feeds. All the hardware and connections required to link the computer to a recorder, transmitter telephone are included.

Hooking the gear up requires no skill check, nor does feeding the base audio into the computer, though the entire process takes 5 minutes, plus 1 minute per minute in length of the audio recording or feed.

Once loaded, the character may analyze the audio, or alter them using the rules for Doctoring Images rules above.

If the character is trying to analyze a recording the program will allow character to clean up and enhance the audio so that it can be heard clearly.

This takes a Computer Operations / Computer Programming skill check at normal.

In addition, it can isolate specific noise patterns in the recording, allowing it to be deciphered what they are. To isolate a specific noise takes a Computer Operations skill check at normal and takes 3 minutes per minute of the recording being analyzed. To decipher what specific sounds are is at least a Computer Operations difficult skill check and 5 minutes per minute of the recording. The difficulty and time can be varied by the GM depending on the sound being analyzed and how long the sound is.

Lastly, this can be used to voice prints and compare them. It takes a Computer Operations skill of normal and takes 10 minutes for the comparison. Weight Negligible Price \$500 Availability (S/C) Special -

## FLASHLIGHT

**Minilight Head Harness, Grizzly HHH2:** This harness fits on a helmet, hat or even a bare head. It attaches to a mini flashlight (not included) to allow hands free illumination wherever the wearer looks. Weight 0.5 Kg Price \$35 Availability (S/C) Special -

**Penlight, Martin Dynatech:** This is a small LED light the size of a pen. Despite its size it put out a lot of light but is only useful to illuminate objects out to 5 feet. Weight Negligible Price \$20 Availability (V/V) Special -

## GHOST HUNTING:

**EMF, Temperature Detector, Digital Recorder Unit, GA Technology Triple Threat:** This device combines three basic ghost hunting instruments. It has an Electromagnetic Force (EMF) detector that picks up on variations in electromagnetic fields. It has a digital recorder to record all sounds in the area, heard and unheard. It also has a built in digital thermometer to record changes in the temperature around the device. Weight 1 Kg Price \$85 Availability (R/S) Special -

**EMF Trigger Bear, GA Technology BooBoo:** (New) Price \$100

## Kits

**Dead Files LLC Blessing Kit:** This small case includes several crosses, chalk, holy water, a small bible, several sage sticks, disposable lighter and a container of salt. This is used by the Ghost Hunter to sanctify an area and force netherworld beings and spirits out or prevents them from coming in. Weight 4 Kg Price \$200 Availability (S/C) Special -

**TAPS Industries ATK-900 Advanced Ghost Hunting:** This includes everything in the TAPS Industries BTK-50 Basic Ghost Hunting Kit plus some additions. These are a computer central hub, three infrared cameras with tripods and 100 meters of cord each and a hand held thermal imaging device. Weight 5 Kg Price \$270 Availability (S/C) Special -



**TAPS Industries BTK-50 Basic Ghost Hunting:** This kit includes all the basic tools used by “Ghost Hunters”. It includes a digital recorder, a video camera equipped with an infrared light and film, a mini-light flashlight, and an electromagnetic field meter. The various pieces are explained in different sections except the electromagnetic field (EMF) meter.

The EMF meter picks up changes in electromagnetic fields, which are given off by all electrical devices but also are reported to be given off by spirits, ghosts, and demonic entities that are trying to manifest in our plane of existence. Weight 5 Kg Price \$180 Availability (S/C) Special

**Van Helsing Vampire Hunting (new):** This includes a wide variety of equipment needed to track down and kill various supernatural creatures. Weight 7 Kg Price: \$400 Availability (R/S) Special: -

**Alba Industries Paraphysicist Field:** (See Dark Conspiracy Pg. 272) Weight 5 Kg Price Special Availability (-/-) Special -

**Laser Grid Projector, TAPS Industries LGP2:** This is a small box that projects out a series of laser dots in a cone out to one hundred feet and to 45 degrees to each side. Anything solid moving between the projector and the end of the laser dot will be able to be noticed even in complete darkness. Weight 2 Kg Price \$500 Availability (R/S) Special -

**Motion / EMF Fluctuation Sensor TAPS Industries ME2:** This is a small round device when set on the ground will pick up and light up when it detects movement close by. In addition, it has several small lights that pick up electromagnetic fields, the stronger the field the more the lights light up. It also has an audio alarm should either the motion sensor or EMF be set off. Weight 1 Kg Price \$500 Availability (R/S) Special -

**REM Pod:** This looks like a canister about five inches across with an antenna and four lights. It is set on the floor and will detect fluctuations in electromagnetic fields and temperature. It is useful in detecting supernatural creatures that pass close to it. Weight 0.5 Kg Price \$300 Availability (S/C) Special

**Spirit Box, GA Technology SB-9:** This is a small round box when turned on scans through radio frequencies rapidly in order to pick up spirit voices. It has the capacity to pick up from words to entire sentences. However, it produces a lot of white noise. Weight 1 Kg Price \$600 Availability (R/S) Special -

**Spirit Guide, Tobins:** This tome is hard to find but it is invaluable for the ghost hunter in identifying the various types of orbs, mists, spirits, and demons that have been met by ghost hunters over the years. This gives the character a bonus with Supernatural Knowledge skill. Weight 2 Kg Price \$1,000 Availability (I/S) Special -

## RELIGIOUS :

**Holy Book (New):** This book is the holy book for a given religion and is used by various rituals. Weight 0.5 Kg Price \$5 Availability (C/C) Special -

**Holy Water (New):** This is a pint sized vial of water that has been blessed through a ritual with a Clergy type person. Weight: 0.5 Kg Price: \$10 Availability: (S/C) Special

## Kits

**Exorcism (New):** This kit contained, in a black leather case, everything needed for an exorcism including a book with step by step actions to perform the Exorcism skill. It also contains 2 vials of Holy Water and a specially blessed Religious Symbol. It gives those performing an Exorcism skill a +5. Weight 3 Kg Price \$800 Availability (I/S) Special: The church will provide to a Priest conducting an exorcism that is condoned by the church.

**Field Services (New):** This is a small wooden chest contains the basics needed to perform a religious service. Weight 7 Kg Price \$500 Availability (S/C) Special

**Services (New):** This is a large chest containing everything needed to perform a religious service. Weight 15 Kg Price \$1,500 Availability (R/S) Special One per church

**Religious Symbol (New):** This is a symbol that those of the religion will revere. Certain supernatural creatures are repelled by the sight of this



item. Weight 2 Kg Price \$20 Availability (C/V) Special

## SURVEILLANCE:

**Motion Sensor, Sony MS500:** The Sony MS500 Motion Sensors do just that - sense the pressure waves given off by motion. They have settings for various sensitivities according to height and mass being moved. These settings are used to eliminate false alarms by eliminating the motion of small animals and blowing of curtains. If an area is known that it will be totally unoccupied during the time the sensor is on then the maximum setting can be used but for example in a home setting you would use a lesser setting because of pets and other things. It is effective to about 30 yards in a conical shape, when there are no physical obstructions. Weight 2 Kg Price \$5,000 Availability (R/S) Special -

## CAMERAS

There are two basic kinds of cameras, still and motion picture.

### Still:

**360 Degree, LG Supply:** This camera is set up on a tripod and will slowly pin in a full circle taking a series of digital images. These can be downloaded directly or printed out as digital photos. This will show a three hundred sixty degree view from the cameras position. This is excellent for getting accurate picture of a location. Weight 8 Kg Price \$1,500 Availability (R/S) Special -

**Disposable Kodak – Disney Snap:** (see Dark Conspiracy Pg 268). Weight 0.3 Kg Price \$10 Availability (C/C) Special -

**Full Spectrum, Nikon:** This camera takes pictures that cover not only the normal light spectrum but ultraviolet and infrared spectrum. It was developed by “ghost hunters” but can also be useful for picking up things not normally seen by the naked eye. Weight 3 Kg Price \$1,200 Availability (S/C) Special -

**Miniature, Kodak-Disney:** Here is a camera can easily fit in the palm of your hand. Miniature cameras cannot be improved with additional lenses or support equipment and come equipped with flash. They have a range increment of 10 ft., and it has 12 exposures. Weight Negligible Price \$250 Availability (I/R) Special -

**Professional, Nikon SPS5000:** This is a fully manual 35mm camera designed to be used by a professional photographer with professional or intelligence grade film. Professional Cameras have a range increment of 50 ft. Weight 3 Kg Price \$1,000 Availability (S/C) Special -

**Still Camera, Nikon DLR-35 Advanced:** (see Dark Conspiracy Pg 268). Weight 3 Kg Price \$850 Availability (C/C) Special -

### Still / Video:

**Digital, Sony:** This camera stores images electronically (on removable memory chips). With the proper equipment and cables, pictures

taken with a digital camera can be uploaded into a computer, ready for email or printing. A standard memory stick holds up to 250 images or 10 minutes of motion pictures. Digital cameras have a Spot check cap of 25 and a range increment of 40 ft. Weight 1 Kg Price \$350 Availability (S/C) Special -

### Video:

**DVD, Sony:** This camera records DVD quality video and sound directly onto a DVD. Weight 4 Kg Price \$450 Availability (S/C) Special -

**FLIR Thermal, Sony TH2250:** Cost \$2,350

**Professional, Fuji:** This is a professional grade shoulder video camera with a removable microphone. It is designed for use with Professional and Intelligence Grade Tapes. Weight 6 Kg Price \$1,000 Availability (R/S) Special -

**Video Recording Camera, Tojicorp Kapture II:** (see Dark Conspiracy Pg 268). Weight 4 Kg Price \$500 Availability (C/C) Special -

## CAMERA ACCESSORIES

**Infrared (IR) Filter Lens:** This lens can be used with Standard or Professional cameras. It allows photography in complete darkness. If used with an IR Illuminator (see above) reasonable quality pictures can be shot in darkness without a flash (+1 DM) to Observation checks. Without an IR Illuminator it will allow the picking up of heat signatures on film without a flash, which can be identified later by type but not individual in an image (i.e. human, truck, tank (sometimes



even type) etc.). Weight Negligible Price \$25  
Availability (S/V) Special -

**Night Vision Filter:** This acts as a night vision goggles for a camera allowing it to see in the dark but in a green tint. It can be used in all but complete darkness. It, however, can flare out, produce an all-white screen, when exposed to a sudden change in lighting. Weight Negligible Price \$30 Availability (S/V) Special -

**Special Vision Adapter, Nikon:** (see Dark Conspiracy Pg 268). Weight Negligible Price \$15 Availability (S/C) Special -

## Film

There are three basic types of film.

**Commercial Grade, Fuji:** This is the standard for film and it is easily acquired; available for all cameras. There are 24 exposures per roll. Weight Negligible Price \$5 Availability (V/V) Special -

**Professional Grade, Fuji:** (Replaces Fiji Film, Conventional Dark Conspiracy Pg 268). This film is of higher quality and resolution than commercial grade film. This film, if used in Professional Camera gains a -2 DM to all Observation checks on the developed film. There are 12 exposures per roll. Weight Negligible Price \$8 Availability (C/C) Special -

**Intelligence Grade, Fuji:** This is rarely found outside of intelligence and military circles. If used with a Professional Camera then those viewing the pictures gain a -4 DM to





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Observation checks on the developed film. There are only 6 exposures per roll. Weight Negligible Price \$15 Availability (C/C) Special -

**Film Developing:** All film must be developed in order to be viewed. It take one hour per grade (professional 2 hours, etc.). Weight Negligible Price \$10 Availability (V/V) Special -

## **Tripod:**

**All Terrain:** This is a standard tripod fitted with wide grips on the base and legs that can be adjusted to any angle. It is made to be used outside in all terrain and weather conditions. Weight 3 Kg Price \$100 Availability (S/C) Special -

**Standard:** When set up, taking 3 minutes and using a standard or professional camera it doubles the range increments. Weight 2 Kg Price \$50 Availability (C/C) Special -

**Tabletop:** This is a small tripod that is used to hold a camera steady while only being 24 inches off the table or floor. Weight 1 Kg Price \$25 Availability (C/C) Special -

## **Tape**

There are three basic types of tapes.

**Commercial Grade Video, Verdadero:** (Replaces Verdadero Video Cartridge Dark Conspiracy Pg. 268). This is the standard for film and it is easily acquired; available for all cameras. There is two hours of time available on a tape. Weight Negligible Price \$5 Availability (V/V) Special -

**Professional Grade Video, Verdadero 200:** This film is of higher quality and resolution than commercial grade film. This film, if used in Professional Camera gains a -2 DM to Observation checks on the developed film. There is one hour of time available on a tape. Weight Negligible Price \$15 Availability (S/C) Special -

## **Intelligence Grade Video, Verdadero 1000:**

This is rarely found outside of intelligence and military circles. If used with a Professional Camera then those viewing the pictures gain a -4 DM to Observation checks on the developed film. There is thirty minutes of time available on a tape. Weight Negligible Price \$30 Availability (R/S) Special -

**Microphone, dbx Parabolic:** This looks like a clear plastic bowl with some electronics in the center of the bowl and a handle on what would be the bottom of the bowl. It has two output cords one for a headset the other to go to a recorder. It's designed to pick up voices and noises from a distance. Weight 5 Kg Price \$1,350 Availability (R/S) Special -



## GO ASK ALICE - CONCLUSION

By Tim Bisailon

A retro adventure for Unknown  
Armies (1st ed.)

*The following is a conclusion to the adventure published in Issue #24 of Go Ask Alice. The conclusion was omitted in error.*

Alice is non violent. When asked what has happen to the police officers she will state that “They are taken care of by Bessy”. She means the bull whose name is Bessy, she has no knowledge that Bessy is an Unspeakable Servant.

Alice was created to be a companion to Otto and haven’t been with anyone for decades any character that touches her skin will feel a slight static charge creating a bond. She will look at the PC and smile and nod and will proceed to follow him/her.

She tells the Pcs that Otto is usually in his workshop in the cellar but she hasn’t seen him in so long.

### IN THE ROOT CELLAR

The root cellar doors are located below the kitchen window and it’s a heavy reinforced door with three locks on it. It’s like the owner didn’t want anybody to go down into the lab.... or doesn’t want anything to come out of it either. It can only be open with the three keys found in the Master Bedroom. This is Otto Sybil’s workshop.

It has several work benches his desk with notes and other stuff. There are various of incomplete mechanomancer devices on benches and items as well. In the centre of the workshop is a huge orb like device with wires and flashing lights that is on and flashing, this is a generator that Otto had built to make power in his house he called it the “Gilbert’s Orb”.

Named after William Gilbert, who was an English scientist and the first man to research the properties of magnetic iron ore. Gilbert is the one who coined the word “electricity”.

In his notes he has references to his wife Alice dying of a cancer and that he was lonely so he created Alice Mark II to as a companion. He wanted to keep private and have the bull deal with any intruders who set foot upon his land. Also had completed the Gilbert’s Orb to generate electricity for the house. Otto had also set up a savings account with the bank and had money drawn to lawyers so that it could set up the deliveries of food to the farm house every two weeks. Stating that since this is a family estate he wanted to keep it going for the next few generations.

He wanted to make sure he had his privacy and order to ensure that he sacrificed his eye for an Unspeakable Servant to roam the estate for protection. As a result in a few weeks he got an infection and it became septic and he died in his bed leaving Alice Mark II and the Bull on the estate.



## THE BIG BOSS BATTLE

Since the Unspeakable Servant has used it's major charge to go back in time. It has to wait another year to do so. It has been dealing with anyone who trespasses onto the property over the decades: solicitors of all sorts have ended up disappearing over the years if they are on foot. The Unspeakable Servant has no specific instructions about vehicles but once anyone gets out and enters the house than it follows the rules to the letter.

Bessy will be waiting for the players once they emerge from the lab and this will be one hell of a battle. As it monsters out and goes all guardian mode on the intruders.

Unless someone tells Alice to tell Bessy to go home the players will have a hard time fighting it since the Unspeakable Servant only takes 1 would of damage from each attack or the bones of it's former master will do damage or anyone that the owner has bequeathed it tells it to stop.

Once Bessy is dealt with. There is an alignment shift in the cosmos and the players along with Alice are brought back into the here in now, standing in a filed of tall grass overlooking the Sybil House that has long fallen into ruins.

### End Scene

Anna, the waitress from Will's Place, is standing there waiting for them. She is 58 years old and is holding one of the players wallets.





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