

#3

protodimension magazine



protodimension magazine

Issue #3
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protodimension magazine



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FROM THE SHADOWS

Lead Editor

Tad Kelson

(tadk)

www protodimension org

Welcome to the 3rd issue of Protodimension Magazine. For this issue I am your host, bringing you the best content we have been able to source from various and sundry dark corners as well as febrile imaginations.

Protodimension Magazine is a labor of love for the three Editors, along with the massive generosity of the contributors as well as the game companies that allow us the freedom to create with their toys, to make our own brand of influence and unease.

So now onto the content in this fine issue.

We have for your enjoyment several adventures, fiction and poetry, artwork submitted and done in-house, as well as a few other small surprises (such as an interview).

Adventures include two this time around. Linden Dunham brings us an updated and revised version of *Call of Cthulhu* adventure *Spear of Y'golonac*. This has seen print in another RPG Online Gaming magazine in an older, less refined format. I am confident that time has made this worthy of several evenings of entertainment for your gaming group.

Newcomer (to our magazine) Joe Kleemann has created *Preference for Oblivion*, an adventure for the **GUMSHOE** system. This is my first exposure to **GUMSHOE** and it looks like something I need to pick up here in 2010. The cartography and artwork for this adventure came courtesy of the author as well.

The other articles that grace our issue include The Cutting Edge of Tomorrow, an in depth discussion of *Fringe* and *Weird Science* for use in the **Spycraft 2.0** system and settings. Written by DT Buchino and with artwork from Octographics, it is chock full of ideas, gear, and plot hooks. So we bid you **Welcome to The Dimension** and all of us here look forward to the future of Spycraft and the Fringe Sciences.



Next article is a fine weapons write up of the Magnus Arms AS-500 Automatic Shotgun, as presented by Dave Schuey for the *Dark Conspiracy* game system and setting. Which means it works wonders in *Twilight 2000* as well.

The artwork of Bradley K McDevitt is with us. He is a long time artist, game designer, writer, and horror genre enthusiast. Even around his busy schedule for multiple companies, as well as his own work, he has donated a piece of his ghoulish artwork for our dear entertainment. The rest of the art comes to us from the editors (ok really just Norm Fenlason for the most part with Lee Williams helping out quite a bit) of PDM.

Our fiction and poetry selection continues with Lester Smith and his poem *Night Musings* along with author CJ Wright having created a brand new piece of fiction for this issue. Peyton Bisaillon returns with a brand new story dealing with the effects of the 7 Deadly Sins.

Lee Williams has his third installment in his *Under the Floorboards* column with a short agency write up suitable for your Modern/Conspiracy/Espionage games as well.

So come find us in Web 2.0 at Facebook over at [here](#) or just search for **Protodimension Magazine**.

Otherwise the activity resides on the forums and in the issues themselves.

Many thanks to Norm Fenlason and Lee Williams for allowing me to join them in this excellent product, without their work **Protodimension Magazine** could not be as magnificent as it is.



Later days and Stranger Ways

—Tad

NIGHT MUSINGS

Poetry

by Lester Smith

A million nights from now, when mankind's fear
of death is nearly dead, and the last priest
lies dying, the last ghoulie, ghost, and vampire
will gather at his campfire,
to gasp their fading poisons in his ear.

And when the sun illuminates the ash,
and vermin come attend to the deceased
with hungry jaws, their work will demonstrate
no hint of demon's trait--
they are but reprocessing the trash.

What then, I wonder, will the writers write,
what tales to keep the populace policed,
contented? Can men defer to science
without a touch of séance?
The apprehension keeps me up at night.

© 2009 Lester W Smith

PREFERENCE FOR OBLIVION

An Adventure
by Joe Klemann (Citizen-X)
For the **GUMSHOE® System**

Rose Tyler: Is that why we're here? - I mean, is that what you do? Jump in at the last minute and save the Earth?

The Doctor: I'm not saving it. Time's up.

--Doctor Who
The End of the World (2005)

INTRODUCTION

Strange amorphic alien beings, horrible to behold, have existed on Earth for millennia. These beings may have been somewhat responsible for the direction of mankind's evolution – the details have been lost to time. These beings, aptly named as *Devourers*, can consume the DNA, memories, and protein of their prey, allowing them to shift their forms in strange ways. A technique unique to their species, they can actually condense their forms into specific shapes and they are capable of digesting even metals, bone, and stone for use in their dense forms. These creatures have watched mankind, fed upon them, and perhaps even fostered their growth on Earth. It may that the first Devourers were simply scouts to our planet or early colonists and farmers – waiting for when the rest of their species would arrive on Earth and the harvest would begin. Regardless of the truth, they occasionally intervene in the technological inventions of mankind and infiltrate human organizations using their shape-changing abilities. Their goal is not to increase mankind's understanding of the universe, in most instances

they create technological disasters or setbacks in order to keep mankind ignorant or in the dark of the underlying laws of reality. Mankind has already almost destroyed itself through the invention of the Atomic Bomb and it may be that the Devourers acted their best during the Cold War to prevent such annihilation. In any event, a new threat has been uncovered, that of the new Hadron Collider and the fear that it could, in fact, create particles of a phenomenon known as "Strange Matter." What is Strange Matter? Pulled from "The Story of Strangelets" by Joshua Holden (www.physics.rutgers.edu/~jholden), they are as follows:

"A negatively charged strangelet would have no coulomb barrier against absorption of normal matter, and would in fact attract it. The resulting exothermic reaction would simply produce a larger strangelet. Since the energy per baryon always decreases with A, a negatively charged strangelet on earth would continue to digest all of the matter it came into contact with until the earth itself was



(Oblivion from page 6)

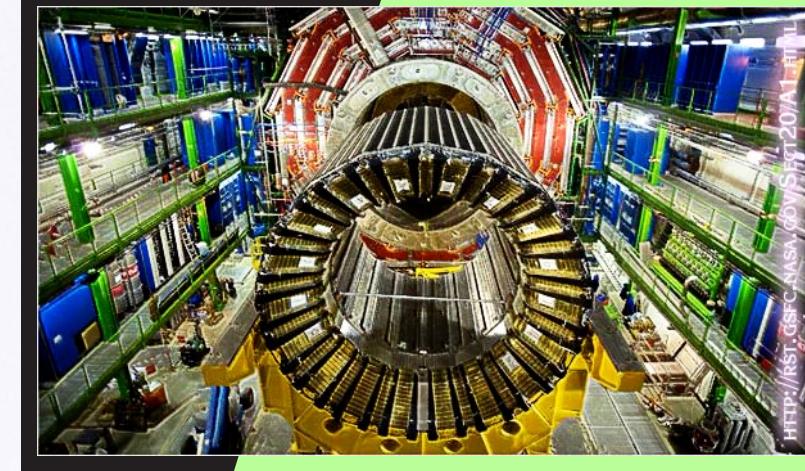
*entirely strange.” (2002 Richard Wagner,
chess.captain.at)*

In this scenario, physicists from the Brookhaven laboratories in New York have created an experimental, miniaturized Hadron Collider. It should be able to do the same things as the Heavy Ion Hadron Collider in the New York facility, but with only the size of a single laboratory building, rather than requiring a whole facility. The two scientists are considered very *fringe* in their views and most of the scientific community laugh at their efforts and doubt that it will even work. These men are Dr. Chris Drake and Dr. Martin Cleeson. Not being given space to test their design in Brookhaven, they were contacted by the Illinois-based Fermilab facility after Dr. Jim Norris, head of the Advanced Quark Department (AQD), read their paper on the new miniature collider and found the science duo’s math to be spot on. Now given space for their new Collider, the New York team has transported the equipment and been in the month long process of getting it up and operational for its first test.

Outside of Dr. Jim Norris at AQD and his senior researcher Weiqiang Han, two other people are aware of the new collider and believe in its operation – one of them is a Devourer agent who has been active on Earth for uncounted years and pays attention to the affairs of the scientific community. The other is a conspiracy theorist from a watchdog website called WorldsCollideForum.net, named Stewart Hogg. Mr. Hogg’s most recent post is concerning the miniature Collider and its movement to his home-state of Illinois. Hogg believes the world is on the brink of destruction and will do anything to try and save it. He has armed himself, is prepared to infiltrate Fermilab and has resigned himself to killing

one of the lead scientists or maybe all of them using a scoped rifle. So far he’s had no success and spent much of his time avoiding guard dogs or patrols and squatting in the wilderness.

The Devourer has arrived in Illinois under the guise of an Insurance Agent from Maryland named Alfred Pendle. His car is in the parking lot of the University at Batavia, but it is unlikely to be linked to him or discovered as abandoned for months; and therefore is irrelevant to the adventure. The Devourer does research on the scientists working at Fermilab and is unable to get close to Dr. Zhu who works in the AQD from the University. The Devourer decides to instead get close to his research assistant Tom Silver, by determining where his girlfriend lives and instead consuming her body and identity. No one is likely to remember Alfred or his snooping around, as he never directly talked to any of the members of the Fermilab project. The Devourer left his car on campus and actually walked, in a way so as to not be seen, to the property of Misha Jedeski – the first victim and the reason for the investigators’ involvement in the story. His original identity of Alfred Pendle, is largely irrelevant to the story at large. A GM may feel free to place a witness who saw a man in a suit walking late at night or during the day towards the home of Misha before her going missing. The investigators must piece together the clues and uncover that all the signs lead to Fermilab. If they get in the path of the Devourer, they may find themselves one of its victims or worse. If they finally uncover the truth behind the effects of the Collider, they may find themselves alongside the rest of the world — facing Oblivion.



“Fermi National Accelerator Laboratory (Fermilab), located in Batavia near Chicago, Illinois, is a US Department of Energy national laboratory specializing in high-energy particle physics. As of January 1, 2007, Fermilab is operated by the Fermi Research Alliance, a joint venture of the University of Chicago and the Universities Research Association (URA). Fermilab is a part of the Illinois Technology and Research Corridor.

Fermilab’s Tevatron is a landmark particle accelerator; at 3.9 miles (6.3 km) in circumference, it is the world’s second largest energy particle accelerator (CERN’s Large Hadron Collider is 27 km in circumference)...The laboratory was founded in 1967 as the National Accelerator Laboratory; it was renamed in honor of Enrico Fermi in 1974. The lab’s first director was Robert Rathbun Wilson. Many of the unique sculptures on the site are of his creation. He is attributed as being responsible for it being finished ahead of time and under budget. The high rise laboratory building located on the site, the unique shape of which has become the symbol for Fermilab, is named in his honor, and is the center of activity on the campus.”

From: [Wikipedia](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fermilab). Donate!

NEW RULE FOR THE GUMSHOE SYSTEM:

NEW INVESTIGATIVE ABILITY: PHYSICS

You are knowledgeable in the field of physics. You can:

- understand clues to the workings of modern technology based on theoretical laws
- comprehend the mathematical language of science reports concerning new breakthroughs in Physics
- speculate upon the nature of particles underlying physical reality

SETTING

The setting of this scenario takes place in Kane County, Illinois around the town of Batavia and focusing on the events that occur at the nearby Fermilab facility. The laboratory in the country and the Illinois State University in Batavia are likely places to be explored, but if larger resources or geographical reach is necessary, the city of Chicago is nearly next door.

INVESTIGATORS

The players' characters are probably members of local law enforcement or have been hired as private investigators or similar profession, by the family of the first missing person, Misha Jedeski. Clever GMs can think of other group dynamics for the investigators. During a play test, one player was actually a member of the Batavia University as a decidedly eccentric professor and was involved in a damages lawsuit with Misha Jedeski after his

medieval replica catapult destroyed her fence; this made him a prime suspect in her disappearance and invariably leads him to attempt to clear his name. Because I assumed at least some of the investigators would be law enforcement, however, I have not designed any law enforcement supporting cast, but I welcome any GM to create them for such a scenario.

TIMELINE

⌘ 1 Month Ago, Dr. Jim Norris contacts

Brookhaven scientist Dr. Drake and agrees to move the Nanotech Collider to the Fermilab facility. After his contact and agreement, the DOE approaches Dr. Norris and shows him WATCHDOG and provides him a top-secret briefing on the dangers of Devourers and how they have infiltrated high-energy physics facilities in the past — the cause of numerous disasters such as the Philadelphia Experiment. Equipment is provided to prevent this potentiality from occurring in this case. Dr. Han is let in on the secret briefing and Dr. Han in turn reveals a philosophy that he has been espousing to Dr. Norris for years, seeking an end to the struggle of the world and rest in oblivion — convincing the Doctor that destruction of the world through activating the collider is preferable than being fed upon by alien monstrosities.

⌘ 2 Weeks Ago, Dr. Drake and Dr. Cleeson began moving the Nanotech Hadron Collider to Fermilab in Illinois from Brookhaven, New York via a large flatbed truck. Since then the two men have been staying at the Fermilab village.

⌘ 2 Weeks Ago, Sunday, late at night, the Devourer, disguised as Alfred Pendle, breaks into the Jedeski home and consumes her in the shower; taking her form and waiting for the dinner with Tom Silver the following week on Tuesday.

⌘ Last Week, Tuesday, At ~5 PM Tom Silver arrives at the residence of Misha Jedeski in his silver car, he leaves late that night (after midnight) having been taken over by the Devourer

⌘ Last Week, Wednesday, the father of Misha, Michael Jedeski, arrives at her home about 6 PM and finds his daughter isn't answering the door.

⌘ Last Week, Thursday, Misha's father breaks down the door to his daughter's home. Unable to discover her, he files a Missing Persons report with local law enforcement. Misha's non-disclosure agreement (NDA) signing meeting was at 1 PM with Fermilab. Dr. Zhu would have been alerted that she missed the appointment but he's been too busy to inquire besides an email.

⌘ Now, Monday, the current start date is the day the investigators receive word from the parents of Misha Jedeski, demanding inquiry into the missing status of their daughter. This is likely to occur anytime during the morning of that day. The parents are furious that no one has investigated the home of their daughter and that she's still missing.

⌘ This Week, Tuesday, just after noon, a call is made to law enforcement or to the investigators through an intermediary by Dr. Cleeson,

(Oblivion from page 8)

concerning a sighting of Tom Silver inside the Fermilab village. Dr. Drake had been seen fleeing his house on his bicycle.

⌘ **Next Week**, Monday, by midnight, the AQD has scheduled its first test of the Nanotech Hadron Collider at Fermilab, it is unlikely the event will ever occur on schedule.

LIST OF SUPPORTING CHARACTERS (NPCs)

- ⌘ Alan Bozell, Public Relations representative for Fermilab
- ⌘ Dr. Jim Norris, Head of AQD
- ⌘ Dr. Weiqiang Han, Senior Researcher
- ⌘ Dr. Weishong Zhu, AQD researcher from Illinois University
- ⌘ Tom Silver, Student and Researcher under Dr. Zhu
- ⌘ Misha Jedeski, Girlfriend of Tom Silver
- ⌘ Dr. Chris Drake (staying in Fermilab Village), Researcher from Brookhaven to help with setup
- ⌘ Dr. Martin Cleeson (staying in Fermilab Village), Colleague of Dr. Drake
- ⌘ Barry Nolte, farmer and neighbor of Misha Jedeski
- ⌘ Stewart Hogg, conspiracy theorist and creator of WorldsCollideForum.net
- ⌘ Michael Jedeski, father of Misha
- ⌘ Nina Jedeski, mother of Misha
- ⌘ Nadeem Busailah, Tom Silver's roommate
- ⌘ Arthur Plates, Security Guard at Fermilab Village
- ⌘ Dr. Michael Sana, head of the Neutron Therapy laboratory

MISSING PERSON #1: MISHA JEDESKI

The Missing Person's Report

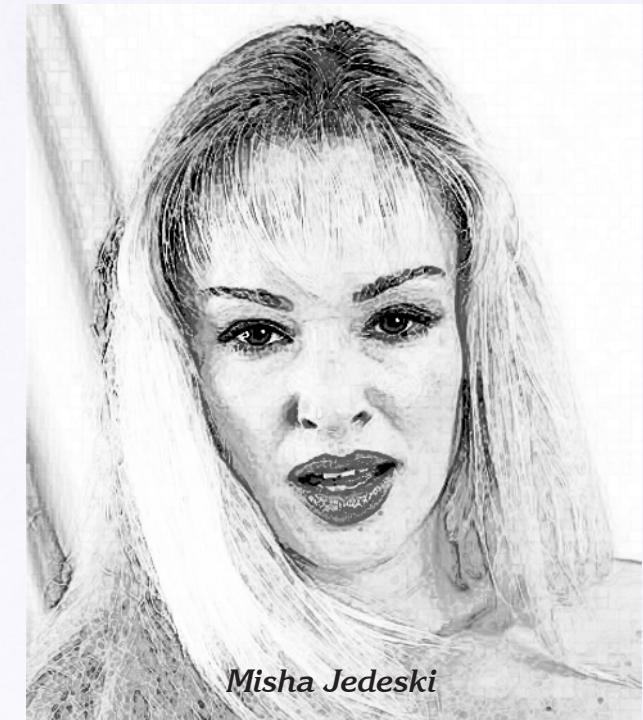
Misha Jedeski's family went to her small country house sometime in the evening five days ago (Wednesday) and have not seen their daughter since. The father, Michael, broke down the door the morning of Thursday, the 2nd day of her being missing, after there was no response; and he noted that her Ford Explorer still sat in the driveway. Inside he searched and did not find her. He talked to all the neighbors nearby, one (Barry Nolte) who said that the last he saw of anyone at Misha's residence was Tuesday afternoon at around 4-5, when he saw a silver car (he said it looked foreign made) arrive at her house. A skinny guy with dark curly hair got out and went inside. He didn't see the car leave late that night. He only heard it and saw headlights. Barry was out mowing his lawn when he saw the exchange earlier in the day.

Witnesses

- ⌘ Neighbor, Barry Nolte
- ⌘ Father, Michael Jedeski
- ⌘ Mother, Nina Jedeski

Details about Missing Person 1

Misha is unemployed but she used to go to Illinois University in Batavia and hoped to get a job at Fermilab. She did not finish her degree but was dating a researcher there, named Tom who had promised her a job if she went back to school part time.



Misha Jedeski

The House

Outside there is a small garage. In appearance it is somewhat sunken in the roof, doors open and a white trashy Ford Explorer with a mismatched paint job sits just inside. The yard is unkempt and the front door is wide open – on investigation it appears the door has been broken in. There are numerous areas inside the house and the GM can fill in the blanks for the areas that are not pertinent to the investigation. There is a front room, living room, bathroom, bedroom, kitchen, basement, and attic in the home.

(Oblivion from page 9)

Clues in Misha's House

Clue #1, The Front Room (Check the Mail)

The front room is messy with trashbags that haven't been taken out and boxes of old clothes. Piled up mail has been left on the doorstep (the mail only goes back three days, the father had grabbed some of the mail, players who press him can find the mail he removed, although none of it is relevant unless the GM wants to make the job more difficult by giving the father the clues instead). They are mostly bills but one piece of mail is from Fermilab (this is only noticed if someone has mentioned Misha's job). The letter states that she must sign a nondisclosure agreement if she wants to work at the AQD laboratory and has listed an appointment she has already missed (for Thursday at 1 PM) to fill out this paperwork.

Clue #2 (Check the Trash)

If anyone thinks to look at the Trashbags in the front room, they find one of them full of papertowels and bath tissue stained with brown (a trained eye or lab test identifies it as blood, Evidence Collection Expenditure). There is no shower curtain in either. (Forensic Anthropology Expenditure) The blood can be tested with Tom Silver's Doctor to reveal it is his blood. If tested against Misha's blood, it will not be a match.

Clue #3, The Living Room (Check the Appointment Book)

The living room is filled with dirty couches, a TV, and a table covered in old fast food trash. An appointment book by the couch lists "dinner with Mr. Silver" at 6 PM on Tuesday.

Clue #4, The Bathroom (Too Clean)

The bathroom is immaculately clean in a fashion similar to the kitchen, almost sparkling. There is no shower curtain hanging in the shower.

Clue #5, The Bedroom (Check the Phone)

The bedroom is well kept but somewhat dusty. There are some dirty clothes in a pile on one side of the room. Misha's cell phone, car keys, and purse sit on a nearby table. Among other various contacts, the phone has a number listed as Tom and a number listed as Mr. Zoo (if these names mean anything to the players by already encountering information on Mr. Zhu or Tom Silver).

Clue #6, The Kitchen (Check the Back Door)

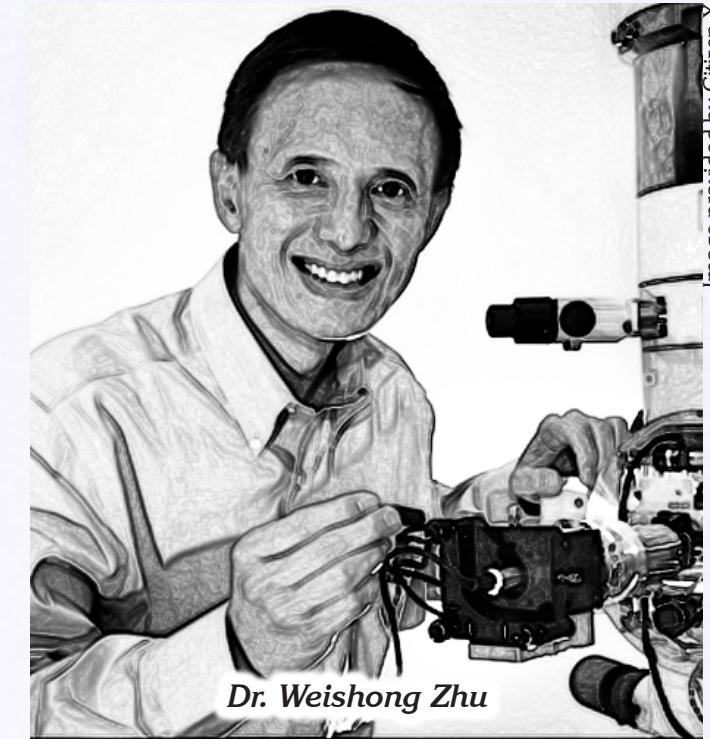
The whole kitchen looks as if its immaculately clean compared to the rest of the house, the tiles sparkle, the countertops smell with scented cleaner and compared to the rest of the house it is in mint condition. If someone looks at the backdoor in the kitchen, they may notice that the lock is slightly scratched around the edges, as if it was tampered with by a crude locksmith. The backdoor lower window is also broken but has been repaired using duct tape and a trashbag.

Clue #7, The Backyard (Requires Evidence Collection Expenditure)

Faded footprints lead from across the yard and a section of collapsed fence to the back door. Extra Expenditure: The footprints were from a Size 11 shoe of a man, but who was very heavy for his size, near 500 pounds. The footprints have eroded and can be placed at more than a week old.

Calling Tom or Dr. Zoo

Calling Tom Silver does not reach anyone. By pursuing the Tom Silver lead further, either by



Dr. Weishong Zhu

contacting someone at Fermilab or visiting his dorm residence in Batavia IU, the players stumble upon Missing Person #2.

Calling Dr. "Zoo" (Zhu), however, will get a hold of him while he's either doing work at the University or more likely at Fermilab. If the player's inquire about Misha or Tom, he would be helpful and be willing to meet with them as long as they have some sort of credentials or authority. Dr. Zhu would certainly be concerned about the well-being of his employees or students.

The Truth About Misha

The Devourer in the guise of Alfred, trekked across Misha's backyard and broke in the back door. Misha,

(Oblivion from page 10)

who was in the shower at the time, did not hear the intrusion. Alfred then surprised her in the bathroom and consumed her completely. He has long since pretended to be her and thrown away any evidence. This was done by cleaning up the crime scene by consuming much of the remaining evidence and then scrubbing what remained with mops and household cleaners. After pretending to be Misha, the Devourer met with Tom when he arrived for a dinner the two had planned. The Devourer then consumed him once the two were alone in the kitchen.

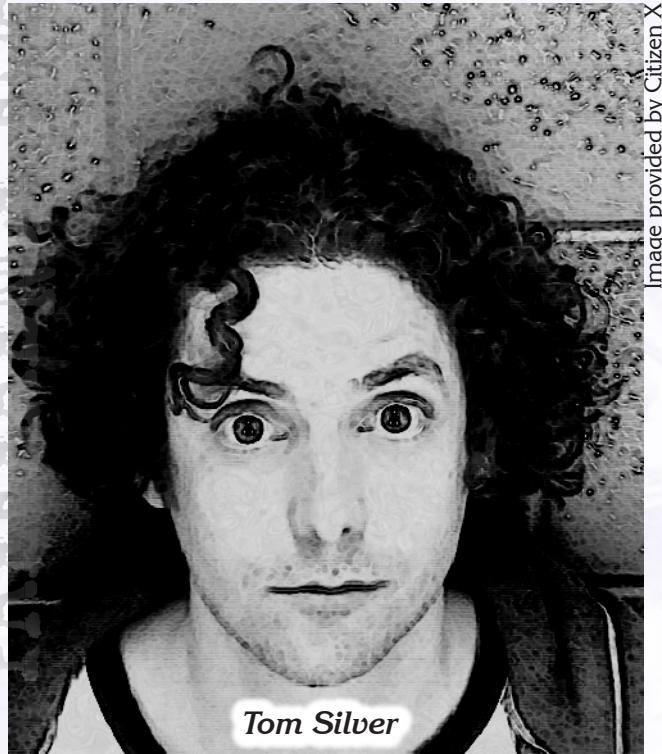


Image provided by Citizen X

Where to Go From Here?

The core clues of this first investigation should revolve around the nature of the man in the silver car, who is revealed to be Tom Silver. Exploration could easily begin at the Illinois State University in Batavia or with Fermilab, Misha's soon to be employer.

Investigation at the University

Contacting administrators on campus — if the investigators are law enforcement or have credentials (possibly requiring a Bureaucracy or Law Expenditure) — is an easy way to learn about the majors and the department in which Misha Jedeski or Tom Silver studied. Both students share one commonality, that of Dr. Zhu as their professor and chief academic adviser. Dr. Zhu heads up the Physics department of the University's science wing. He has his own office and is available on weekdays from 10 AM-Noon, likely the investigators will have difficulty contacting him at the rate the adventure unfolds. Dr. Weishong Zhu's information can be found through the University and they can probably reach him on the job at Fermilab and schedule an appointment.

MISSING PERSON #2: TOM SILVER

Tom's Roommate

Tom's roommate is a physics exchange student named Nadeem Busailah. Nadeem was out most of the day but stopped in to get some of his research papers and saw that Tom was home. Tom was studying a large number of magazines on particle physics and some other research. Nadeem mentions that Tom is usually not so proactive on his studying, instead he usually spends time with his girlfriend or

THANK-YOU KURT VONNEGUT

"Ice-nine is a fictional material conceived by writer Kurt Vonnegut in his novel *Cat's Cradle*. It is supposed to be a more stable polymorph of water than common ice (Ice Ih) which instead of melting at 0° Celsius (32° Fahrenheit), melts at 45.8°C (114.4°F). When ice-nine comes into contact with liquid water below 45.8°C (which is thus effectively supercooled), it acts as a seed crystal, and causes the solidification of the entire body of water which quickly crystallizes as ice-nine. A global catastrophe involving freezing the Earth's oceans by simple contact with ice-nine is used as a plot device in Vonnegut's novel." ([Wikipedia, Entry for Ice-Nine](#))

at a club. Nadeem asked him how he was doing, but he was rather nonresponsive, just urging that he was too busy to talk. He has not seen Tom come home since, but he remembers as he was leaving, Tom got a phone call and took it in their back room.

Nadeem is so busy that if Tom's room is never checked, he won't notice for a week that he is missing. Which is too late for the world based on the timeline. It's more likely that the players will come looking for him before then — it could be that they never piece together who Tom is until it's too late.

Witnesses

室友, Nadeem Busailah

Details:

Clue #1 (Automatic)

The materials set out on the dorm apartment table are a collection of science journals, almost all of them with articles about particle accelerators and

(Oblivion from page 11)

piles of Tom's own notes from the ADQ department of Fermilab. His notes talk about the replication of the conditions of a neutron star by accelerating quarks until they become "Quark Matter" and eventually "Strange Matter."

(Additional Expenditure in Physics)

Spending time researching the materials takes nearly two hours but reveals that Strange Matter could theoretically be so dense that it swallows all normal matter it comes into contact with — a theoretical "ICE-9" situation. Use the description provided for strange matter in the Introduction. Some of the paperwork has been signed by Dr. Weishong Zhu.

Clue #2 (Data Retrieval Expenditure)

Looking at Tom's laptop (which is password secured but could be defeated by a knowledgeable character) reveals some internal files about AQD that details the Brookhaven shipment of the nanotech particle collider. The collider was shipped two weeks ago and has been set up by a couple researchers (Dr. Drake and Dr. Cleeson) from Brookhaven who've been assisting the AQD team. It names all the members of the team at Fermilab (see the Fermilab entry).

Where to Go From Here?

Investigation is likely to lead to AQD and Fermilab. But on the 2nd day (Tuesday) the players are likely to get a phone call about Missing Person #3, Dr. Drake.

Contacting Brookhaven Laboratory

Getting a hold of someone at Brookhaven Laboratory who is knowledgeable about the AQD, Doctors Drake and Cleeson, or the Nanotech

Collider project is difficult (1 point Research expenditure) and may be time consuming. Eventually they will contact a man named Dr. Albert Fullerton who will assure the investigators that Dr. Drake and Dr. Cleeson are running a scam on the DOE and that their project is unfeasible scientifically. Dr. Fullerton will be able to provide any information that the characters might desire of him about the project, Dr. Drake and his colleague, and the DOE grant money.

Putting Out an APB for Tom Silver's Silver Car

If the police are actively searching for Tom's silver car, they are likely to hear something shortly before Missing Persons event #3, in which case Tom is stopped in his car along the side of the road headed to Fermilab's facility. The investigators, if they are law enforcement, will be notified immediately and asked to come out to where they've stopped Tom by the roadside. If they order his arrest or if they wait to speak with him on the roadside, invariably, the Devourer doesn't wait any longer. The creature that used to be Tom Silver does the most overt murder it will have committed up to this point in the story, killing the officer who stopped the vehicle in a way that leaves most of the body intact but decidedly bloody. Those that find the dead officer will seem to believe that he was skinned alive or bitten on by what appear to be hundreds of animals all at once based on the tiny tooth marks — it is as if he were stripped down to the muscle by a swarm of piranha — an unlikely event on an Illinois highway. Additionally, the officer's hands are both severed completely and missing, as if in trying to defend himself. They were cut off or removed in some way not immediately obvious.

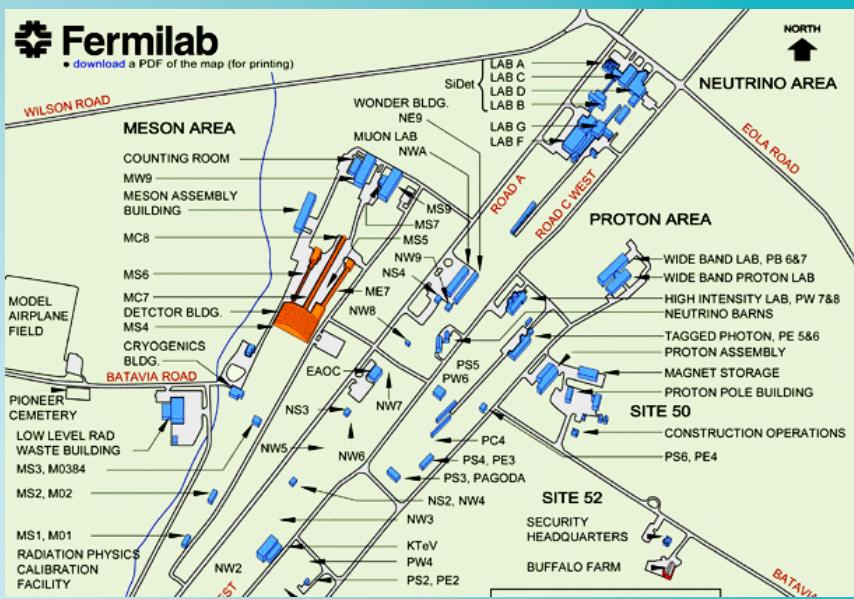
Dead Officer Clue (Forensic Science Expenditure)

The body of the officer if checked for forensic evidence will be revealed to be covered in powerful digestive acid saliva that has already destroyed much of the evidence during transportation from the murder scene to the laboratory. The tooth marks previously visible in muscle have been eroded away and it seems that the body died of trauma and blood loss that occurred almost instantaneously. The saliva if extensively tested appears to be unlike any previously known animal and has an effect on stone and even the metal medical instruments which might be used in the autopsy.

MISSING PERSON #3: DR. DRAKE

The local law enforcement and/or the investigators are called when Dr. Drake is seen fleeing his apartment by Dr. Cleeson after he recognized Tom Silver enter the Doctor's household. If the player characters are not local law enforcement, Dr. Zhu might contact them as an intermediary. He is still concerned about what Tom has been doing and the status of Dr. Drake. Tom's car is still sitting outside and the man was not seen leaving the location. The Doctor has fled on a bicycle from the scene and took to the bike trails outside of the Fermilab village.

At this point, unknown to anyone but the late doctor, Dr. Drake is now the Devourer in disguise — who was consumed after meeting with the creature in the guise of Tom Silver. The Devourer as Dr. Drake did not have time to clean up properly before Dr. Cleeson arrived back home on the opposite side and witnessed the car, so it fled the scene. If anyone investigates inside the home they will find the kitchen mostly cleaned up, with mops and buckets



(Oblivion from page 12)

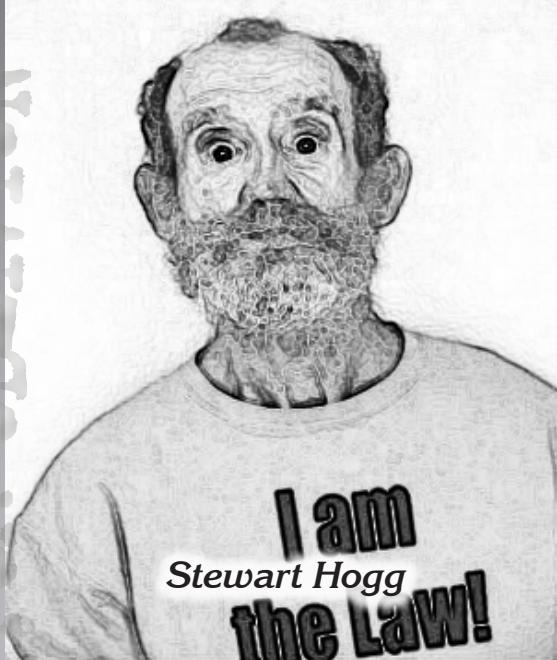
still sitting out – while careful investigation reveals flecks of blood or filthy rags in the garbage can. If the blood is tested, the results will point to Dr. Drake.

Tracking Dr. Drake

If contacted, one of the Fermilab security men who guards the edge of the village recalls seeing the Doctor flee on his bike into the Lake Law wilderness area. Other witnesses in the area may have seen the same thing. There is only a small section of woods where the Doctor could be hiding. Searching the woods does not seem to reveal the Doctor unless players are very observant; otherwise they only encounter a small hideaway watching Eola Road and the Tevatron. This is where they will encounter Stewart Hogg with his binoculars and “I am the Law!” t-shirt. Stewart will explain that he’s out here trying to figure out a way to stop the collider from becoming active and ending the world. He’s very crazy and if the area is searched it will reveal Stewart’s bicycle and a high powered hunting rifle (which can be broken down to fit into his golf bag). Judging by the trash and the lean-to tarp tent, he has been out here for several days. If asked he’ll admit to having been out there a week. He only rides back to Fermilab village to buy food. If the players don’t listen to his ranting about the end of the world and how the Collider needs to be stopped, he may attack them — especially if they decide to arrest him. He’s unlikely to shoot at them and more likely to knock a lone investigator out with a golf club or similar item.

Return of Dr. Drake

While the PCs are searching the woods, the Doctor will actually emerge from hiding and race on his bike back towards his house where he will hide



(Image provided by Citizen X)

Stewart Hogg

Athletics 2
Shooting 8
Health 8
Scuffling 10
Infiltration 4
Surveillance 4
Stability 2
Hit Threshold 3

Weapons:

+0 (Iron Pipe)
+1 (Scoped Rifle)

Armor: None

(Oblivion from page 13)

out. Dr. Cleeson will witness this and call the players if he has their number — otherwise he will search for himself. In this case Dr. Cleeson will go missing and either way — when the players arrive only one Doctor will be waiting for them. A PC that splits off from the group will find themselves consumed by the Devourer. If the other PCs revisit the room where they were alone, they will find the place a bloody mess with scraps of skin and gore all over everything (if this mess of gore and skin is tested by a laboratory, it will be revealed to be a genetic match to the missing character and perhaps mixed with bits of the former Dr. Cleeson as well). One of the players is now the doppelganger and there is no sign of either of the Doctors. If the Devourer does not get the opportunity to consume a character, Dr. Drake is simply missing and Dr. Cleeson (the current guise of the Devourer) is very worried. He will then attempt to enter the facility using the guise of the investigator or Dr. Cleeson. If a player has become a doppelganger, just suggest to him alone that perhaps he should check out the laboratory where Dr. Drake and Dr. Cleeson worked.

Note on Doppelgangers

The element of surprise is very important towards maintaining the horror of the adventure — a taken-over player should never be told what he/she now is. Uncertainty is very important and heightens the paranoia. Remember — even if a player suspects he is a Devourer and commits suicide — this could easily be a trick by the creature to make the other investigators believe he is dead now and was not the creature at all. The only sure way to know would be a blood test or similar — likely this process alone would give it enough time to find and consume a

new host. Wouldn't it be embarrassing if the body of the suicide victim suddenly went missing after the crime scene investigator was assigned to test the blood?

Witnesses

- ✖ Associate, Dr. Cleeson
- ✖ Fermilab Security, Arthur Plates

Details

Dr. Drake and Cleeson are colleagues at the Brookhaven New York laboratory where the DOE is using a particle accelerator for different experiments. They have both managed to create a miniaturized accelerator and collider using nanotechnology and due to a lack of funding at their other location, have come to Illinois after linking up with Dr. Norris at Fermilab.

TOM SILVER'S SILVER CAR

The keys have been locked inside it and it sits in the driveway of the duplex on Dr. Drake's side. Inside on the passenger seat is Tom's phone. Breaking into the car (involving an Infiltration task or a brick) reveals the phone and that the last call made was to Dr. Drake hours before he was seen fleeing on his bicycle. The phone has all the numbers from the AQ Department inside it, as well as Misha's number.

THE DUPLEX

There are two identical sides to the duplex, one where Dr. Drake is and one where Dr. Cleeson lives. Dr. Drake's side is likely to be the only relevant area in this investigation.



Image provided by Citizen X

DR. DRAKE'S SIDE ROOMS

Front Room

This is where his bicycle would normally sit and there is a small couch and a rack filled with science magazines on the wall. There is a security alarm system but it has been disabled. There are no signs of a struggle or a break-in.

Picture Room

This room just has a lot of windows that look out into the front yard. It has a large wall TV that can fold away and a few couches and a desk with a computer.

Clue #1 (Check the computer)

By logging into Drake's personal computer, both his personal and private emails and his login for Fermilab can be found — Drake has a bad memory so all his notes are pinned to his desk to keep track of passwords. It seems that the Collider could be activated at any time since it has been hooked into Fermilab's grid, it's simply that safety checks and procedures have delayed its activation — along with spot checks for veracity.

Kitchen

The kitchen is surprisingly spotless, as usual. There is also a small dining room table and chairs in here. If the dining table is looked at carefully, the investigators will notice small flecks of still sticky blood under it and on the inside of the table legs (A Forensic Anthropology expenditure reveals it is human blood, getting a sample of Dr. Drake's blood from his Doctor in New York to create a positive match, would take up to two weeks).

Storage Room

This room is filled with a lot of boxes of Dr. Drake's effects which haven't been unpacked yet. Many of the boxes that are opened contain blueprints of the Brookhaven Nanotech Collider — anyone with mechanics and physics abilities can gain a gist of how it works (an expenditure for Physics required) — although it's still very complicated, they are certain they could deactivate it if need be.

What Happens Now?

Likely the investigators are very confused, a lot of people have gone missing — people who were either their prime suspects or seemed to be innocent victims. If the Devourer is Dr. Cleeson

it will want to go to Fermilab Lab building B and the AQD, if it can convince the investigators to either take it there or allow it to leave on its own. Otherwise, the investigator who is currently a masquerade of the Devourer will find themselves thinking that this somehow all connects back to Fermilab and AQD — you may have to sell the player on the clues connecting and leading to an epiphany pointing to the laboratory — this may even be the Devourer inventing clues to throw the group off track and guide them towards the Nanotech Collider developed by the now dead and missing scientists. The doppelganger's player will not perceive themselves inventing connecting clues, but will instead be 'finding them' in game, another investigator who analyzes the clues carefully (such as a forged note from the missing Dr. Drake talking about the danger he feels he's in from the leadership of the AQD project, could be revealed as a fake using a Document Analysis expenditure and with an additional 1 point, may even reveal that it is in the doppelganger's handwriting).

Fermilab

The Fermilab particle accelerator operates outside of Chicago in Batavia in Kane County, Illinois and is responsible for quite a bit of high-energy physics research in the Midwest United States. The part of the Fermilab facility most pertinent to investigations will be Fermilab Village and eventually, Fermilab Lab building B, where the AQ Department is located.

Contacting or Gaining Access to Fermilab

If players call Fermilab or visit it, they will invariably be directed to Alan Bozell, the company's Public Relations representative. Alan will stress that

(Oblivion from page 15)

Fermilab is doing great research to fight cancer and isolate specific proteins for medical use using the Neutron Therapy Center (a Physics Expenditure of 2 points may reveal to someone already aware of WATCHDOG or the Devourer entity, that if the Neutron Therapy can kill cancer, it might have an effect on the creature's cell regeneration). If asked what the AQ Department does, he'll act confused and say most of it is over his head. If pressed he'll mention that they are doing some work for the DOE and collaborating with Brookhaven New York. Some of the research, he knows, is classified — therefore only in an extreme case will he allow access to the laboratories by individuals who are not already on the staff.

Gain Access to the AQD Laboratory: 2 pt. Bureaucracy or Cop Talk expenditure

Talking directly to the AQ Department finds Dr. Weiqiang Han, who informs the investigators that Dr. Norris is extremely busy working to get the collider online. He is almost always in his lab, which has been locked and most of the personnel say they don't want to disturb him this close to "activation."

Clue #1 (Forensic Accounting 2 pt. Expenditure)

If anyone looks into the personal finances of the scientists of the AQD, they will discover that Weiqiang Han possesses a sizeable personal fortune, although he donates much of it to an international science institute known as Rising Horizons International. This think-tank, if investigated further (with a Research expenditure), will be discovered as linked to the Asian cult Aum Shrinru. In the past RHI has been investigated by the Russian and Japanese

governments for being a front used by the cult to obtain radioactive materials.

THE AQD

The Advanced Quark Department or "Department of Strange Matters" or "Department of Strange" is a section of Fermilab in Laboratory building B, where a nanotech miniaturized Particle Accelerator has been moved from the Brookhaven facility in New York. The accelerator was moved on a flatbed truck and arrived two weeks ago. It's set to be activated for the first time in another 7 days, with the intent of proving that strange matter exists and can be replicated in a laboratory.

The AQD Staff

- ✖ Dr. Jim Norris, Head of AQD
- ✖ Dr. Weiqiang Han, Senior Researcher
- ✖ Dr. Weishong Zhu, AQD researcher from Illinois University
- ✖ Tom Silver, Student and Researcher under Dr. Zhu
- ✖ Dr. Chris Drake (staying in Fermilab Village), Researcher from Brookhaven to help with setup
- ✖ Dr. Martin Cleeson (staying in Fermilab Village), Colleague of Dr. Drake

Searching Dr. Norris' Office

Usually near Dr. Norris himself, although theoretically it can be stolen from his briefcase, is a DOE report on WATCHDOG, with designs



Weiqiang Han

Athletics	8
Shooting	6
Health	6
Scuffling	10
Mechanics	8
Stability	8
Hit Threshold	4

Weapons:
+1 (Shotgun)

Armor: None

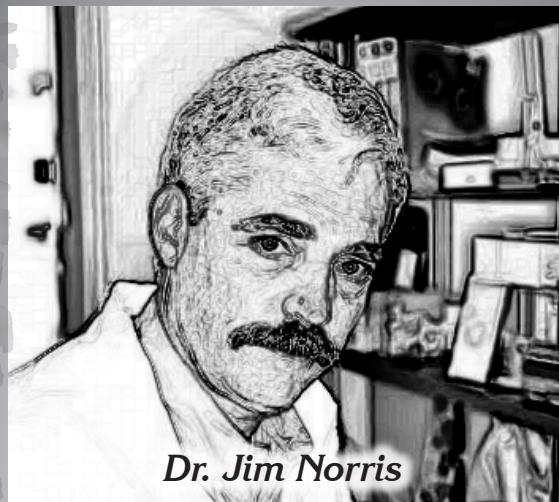


Image provided by Citizen X

Dr. Jim Norris**Dr. Jim Norris**

Athletics 4
Shooting 6
Health 10
Scuffling 4
Mechanics 12
Stability 2
Hit Threshold 3

Weapons:

+1 (Shotgun)

Armor: None

(Oblivion from page 16)

on building mobile and stationary fields of beta radiation emitters.

Clue #1 (Physics Expenditure)

In the document it explains that beta radiation emitters act like X-Rays against creatures labeled simply "Intruders" in the document. This beta radiation at the specific levels also disorients and seems to trap the creature who's cell structure is not resistant in the same way as human cells. A note mentions that beta radiation exposure can be harmful over extended periods of time and those who are exposed should scrub down immediately.

Dr. Norris also has done the mathematics that seem to show that creation of a Strange Matter particle is nearly certain using the design of the nanotech collider.

Clue #2 (Data Retrieval Expenditure)

There is on a file in his computer with a printed copy of this research locked in a drawer of his desk (an Infiltration task and a possible Physics expenditure). If put together with notes found or taken from Tom's apartment, it should be obvious that destruction of the Earth will occur upon activation of the collider.

Neutron Therapy Center

The Neutron Therapy Center is connected to the building where the AQD is located at the end of a hallway in Lab building C. The laboratory has a control room that regulates its main therapy room where a chair strapped patient is lowered into a huge block of cement; and then bombarded with protons until their cancer is cured. This could have the effect

of trapping the "Intruder" into one form by killing its ability to rapidly mutate, but the creature must be restrained or forced into the area first. Once trapped in one form it could be killed as any other organism (losing its ability to heal wounds or shape shift). The head of this laboratory is Dr. Michael Sana.

RESEARCHING FERMILAB**Forensic Accounting (1 pt. Expenditure)**

A majority of the funding for the AQD collider project is not coming from Brookhaven, New York or other scientific institutes, but directly from the DOE and that because of its status as a government funded experiment, there are several classified documents that cannot be obtained about its funding — although the amount of funding, which can be viewed without a security clearance, does seem to be very high for such a small and scientifically uncertain project.

Research (1 pt. Expenditure)

The AQD is only a small and relatively new department that has been expanded. The rest of Fermilab is still a very ambitious project. Much information can be publically found at <http://www.fnal.gov>.

Makeshift Weaponry

A Particle Accelerator contains a lot of liquid nitrogen and so it's likely that barrels could be found simply laying around that could be used as weapons against the Devourer or even human opponents. Additionally, fire extinguishers, tools, and other objects may be useful. The Neutron Therapy Center and other types of radiation emitting devices could

(Oblivion from page 17)

be used as weaponry against the Devourer along with numerous other imaginative scenarios.

INTRUDER CAPTURE

Secretly Dr. Han and Dr. Norris expect someone to try and stop them. They have been warned by a mysterious group inside the DOE and briefed on project WATCHDOG, that there are beings which occasionally attempt to intervene in high energy experiments — such as in the Philadelphia project. They've generated a method of identifying the "Intruder" using either a scannerway inside the AQD laboratory that automatically identifies and creates an energy field that cannot be crossed by the creature — or by a deployable field that must be set up that triangulates the "Intruder" while preventing its escape. This means that if the Devourer enters the facility through a scanner hallway, it will instantly be detected and the field emitters from WATCHDOG activated to cause it to lose control of its shape and reveal its true form. Once revealed, it is trapped within the hallway until subdued by some means, anyone within the field or the hallway is still in danger however.

The field actually causes damage to humans if they spend more than a few minutes inside it (the radiation does 1 Health point of damage per 10 minutes and may cause many other complications later in life, such as cancer). The being can still move around inside the field, but cannot exit it. Dr. Han has rigged up a liquid nitrogen sprayer to freeze the entity and capture it in a special sealed room inside the lab once it has been isolated. The entity will also react to fire by cocooning, which is why the room has been fitted with a "Burn Safety" that can flood the room with gasoline fueled flames. The

room contains Beta emitters that bathe the room in radiation and keep the creature from leaving (this is not as fool proof as Dr. Han thinks, as the creature can actually tunnel beneath the floor given enough time — likely measured in hours — to leave behind an empty cocoon). A control room in the AQD lab has both audio/visual hookups allowing surveillance of the sealed room and also has links to the controls for the "Burn Safety."

THE INTRUDER REVEALED

The Intruder, once its identity has been revealed (likely through use of the WATCHDOG detectors, but possibly by clever characters), may attempt to communicate with any investigators who are willing to listen to a shape changing blob that can form mouths and other organs at will. It will try to convince them with the truth that the Nanotech Collider will create a neutron star which will destroy Earth by creating strange matter. It claims that it is from a race that has lived on Earth for millennia and travelled across the stars, a race that is trying to improve humanity and guide them down the right avenues of scientific development without them destroying themselves in the process. Bullshit Detector expenditures don't work on the Devourer; unfortunately, because it is simply too alien of a creature to read properly and likely it has thousands of years of experience manipulating humans. Helping the Devourer to stop the collider from activating may be a noble goal, but it is still unlikely that the Devourer will simply leave them alone after its task is complete, perhaps preferring to consume any witnesses to its existence. If given enough resistance, however, it is likely to flee as long as its main goal is complete.

Devourer

Athletics 10

Driving 2

Health 30

Scuffling 12

Infiltration 3

Surveillance 3

Hit Threshold 4

Weapons: +3 (Teeth and Claws)

Armor: +1 vs. Scuffling and Shooting

Shapeshift

Can add 10 points divided among or all used in any General Ability (when used on health, wounds are healed), Weapon Rating, or Armor as an action.

Consume

This all out attack is used to utterly devour an opponent and absorb their body, assuming their likeness. This is made as a normal attack and used against an opponent who is typically unaware. The GM may wish to not describe the outcome at all if a lone individual loses in this roll and instead just proceed as normally, although anyone who enters the room they were in earlier — may discover it painted with a fresh lining of gore. The creature also consumes the memories and therefore the General Ability and Investigative skill ratings, of the last creature it absorbed, if the creature already has that ability — the higher is used.

Complete Mimic

This ability comes from the Devourer's ability to remember every detail of the memory of the creature it's consumed, thus preventing it from making any mistakes in its acting in the impersonation of its last victim. This means that Bullshit Detector expenditures simply do not work against it.

THE DEVOURER

A horrible shape shifter that has learned to live on Earth for millennia, the creature is actually a “Devourer” and can become a *doppelganger* of any human by utterly consuming them. The entity has come to stop the experiment and prevent the Collider from destroying the Earth, solely so its species can feed on humanity and eventually come to harvest the planet. The Devourer is one of the primary antagonists of the scenario.

ADVICE ON RUNNING THE DEVOURER

The creature can take over, consume, and become almost anyone who remains alone with it for some period of time. A character who is separate from the group investigating a room where the creature has been hiding could be taken over by the entity if the GM chooses (this may anger some players so it is necessary that the GM can gauge the reaction of the player to having their character becoming a *doppelganger* without them even realizing it). In play sessions, a character went to find the creature by himself and instead found the creature’s trail of destruction (in reality his character would have come to a messy end, but for purposes of suspense and terror in the metagame, did not reveal this fact to the player) and began following the trail — eventually the trail of destruction led him back to one of the other players. At that point the paranoia was heightened; neither character was sure which might potentially have been taken over. This paranoia is a great moment for games, where the players realize how dangerous and spooky their opponent really is. One of the players (the GM chooses) is actually the creature — and invariably

will transform and attack the still human PC when the time is opportune.

DEVOURER TACTICS, IDENTIFICATION, AND DEFEAT

Tactics

The Devourer is an incredibly dangerous entity who can form its body into any shape it desires. This ability is often reactive; meaning that if someone shoots it with a firearm, the next phase of combat it is likely to grow chitinous body armor resistant to that type of weapon. Additionally, the only sure fire way to subdue the creature is to use weaponry or attacks that can shock the entire system at once, fire is very effective, as would be liquid nitrogen or similar. When so assaulted, the Devourer often forms a cocoon around itself, allowing part of its body to die off and calcify into a hard shell, kind of like that of an egg (it also resorts to this state if its health is reduced to 10%) and is treated as having all of its shapeshifting points into armor — making it nearly impervious. When in this form, it can be transported and handled safely; the creature does not emerge again if it knows there is danger and may wait minutes or hours as an inert form. The creature can also begin to tunnel out of its cocoon, digesting stone and metal slowly in the floor beneath it, leaving only a hollow shell of hard ash or dead cells, it loses some of its mass and health permanently under this circumstance.

Identification

The Devourer can condense its body mass in order to appear much smaller, but this means that its body weighs quite a bit more than average (typically between 500-600 lbs before it decides

to shed some of its body mass — usually in a way that’s disposable, like a toilet), even if pretending to be a human being. It may find itself simply too heavy for certain activities. An investigator or character who has unwittingly become the *doppelganger* may find themselves breaking chairs they sit in for too long or otherwise causing damage to certain objects in strange ways. These events may be used to identify the Devourer in human form or may help a player comprehend that something is “not quite right.” Additionally, the devices from Project WATCHDOG, can be used to pinpoint the Devourer and the use of beta radiation can trap the entity and keep it from transforming (halving its shapeshifting points and preventing it from crossing the threshold where the beta radiation emitters emanate strongest).

Defeat

If the Devourer can be trapped into one form through the Neutron Therapy, it cannot heal itself any longer and its cells would be subject to destruction the same as any ordinary organism. Additionally, complete incineration or some other equally devastating event — complete emersion in liquid nitrogen for instance — could theoretically destroy the creature.

ESCALATION TO OBLIVION

Following the missing status of Dr. Drake or capture of the Intruder, Dr. Norris begins stepping up his activation procedures and orders Dr. Han to retrieve two weapons they've had smuggled into the facility — both are pistol grip pump shotguns. Dr. Han is secretly a member of the notorious Aum Shrinru cult and this is a part of his plan to negate mankind after destroying the Earth (he has learned along with other members, that Earth is simply a food source for cosmic beings). Dr. Norris has been brainwashed by Dr. Han and both men have a preference for oblivion.

Dr. Zhu has learned some and overheard their conversations, but is not fully convinced. He may try to warn someone as he sees the men preparing to activate the Collider. It's more likely that he will get taken hostage. If he has the number of one of the investigators, he will send them a text message alerting them as to what is happening. It will take roughly 5 hours to activate the Collider, if Dr. Zhu is killed this takes another hour. This process can be sped up by a half hour for each additional hostage that the insane Doctors have working for them as slaves at gunpoint or with investigators who agree with their plans. The Doctors, if trying to persuade others, will not reveal their nihilistic plans. Instead will say that they wish to see humanity step into the next level of scientific understanding and that the "Intruders" are attempting to stop them from discovering the technology that will allow mankind to travel into deep space at the speed of light. These "intruders" they say, are trying to keep mankind from reaching the stars (a Bullshit Detector expenditure will reveal that these are lies).

HOW TO END IT

Mission Accomplished

The Devourer may not be destroyed, but the Collider was never activated and the world is safe. The end of the scenario should mark a spectacular victory for the players, although at possibly a terrible cost to their sanity and their health. Law Enforcement backup may be called in and begin asking questions, perhaps the investigators themselves will be investigated depending on their actions and how well they can explain these away to the authorities (Cop Talk would come in handy here). It could be that danger still exists if the Devourer is somehow trapped inside the building. It is also likely that a DOE team will be arriving shortly with a number of men prepared for a dangerous clean up situation. The clean up team may bring in federal powers to hedge out any more interference from local law enforcement and simply "take things over from here." All in all, this is the best thing that could happen and seeds for further scenarios involving the Devourers or a government conspiracy covering up their existence may lead from here.

The Worst

Well... if the Collider activates then its POOF, Game Over. The world is destroyed and all the investigators die as their bodies are converted instantly into strange matter. Or, maybe it doesn't work at all? Maybe it was all hyped up to begin with? If so, what was the real agenda of the Devourer in all this? This is up to the GM to decide.

DESIGNER NOTES

I have decided to use GUMSHOE for this adventure due to its highly investigative nature and due to its relative lack of combat encounters except in instances where the players themselves initiate such an event or in the rare case that they find themselves alone in a room with a Devourer. I have built the adventure using the rules presented in "the Esoterrorists" guide published by Pelgrane Press and have included a new investigative ability for purpose of this adventure. The game may be quite a stretch for those used to more paranormal or occult investigations, as it is highly based on a foundation of sci-fi horror. Although I'm confident that a clever GM can find a way to make it appear more supernatural if they so desire it. I have tried to present advice for GMs throughout the document based on play testing.

The climax of this adventure is very difficult for some players, as they have to figure out who to trust, the alien shapeshifter who they have been tracking through its victims, or two insane scientists who've taken an entire laboratory hostage. The truth is that they are both villainous and manipulative in their own way, but I wanted to present a situation where humans are the actual antagonists — the creature simply a conundrum that opens up more questions about the nature of the world than it answers.

SUSPENSION OF DISBELIEF

The Large Hadron Collider is likely to not destroy our world, but in this scenario it is used as a sort of MacGuffin to move the story along. Some particularly science-minded players might find the notion that

(Oblivion from page 20)

a collider could create strange matter and destroy the Earth, preposterous. If they won't buy that this is indeed a game of Science Fiction Horror, there are a couple explanations for them you could give as a GM:

1. The Colliders activated before were also interfered with and the process stopped by the Devourer agents. Perhaps they were even involved in the designs of those colliders and made sure they would not function in a way that would cause destruction of the planet — therefore the one presented in this scenario is the "real deal" and nothing like it has been activated before.

2. The device is not really a collider at all, but perhaps some sort of gravity device, warp generator, or even a black-hole generator. Perhaps the more fictional and obscure the device, the more likely your more particular players will accept it as an unexplainable magic box capable of destroying the world. You might simply tell players without the proper skill level of their characters in Physics, that it is simply beyond their understanding.

Additionally, you as a GM can always put a twist on the whole story — perhaps the Devourers are not attempting to stop activation at all, but to change its operation in a specific way, trying to use the machinery as a gateway to bring more of their kind to Earth or simply escape back to their world...

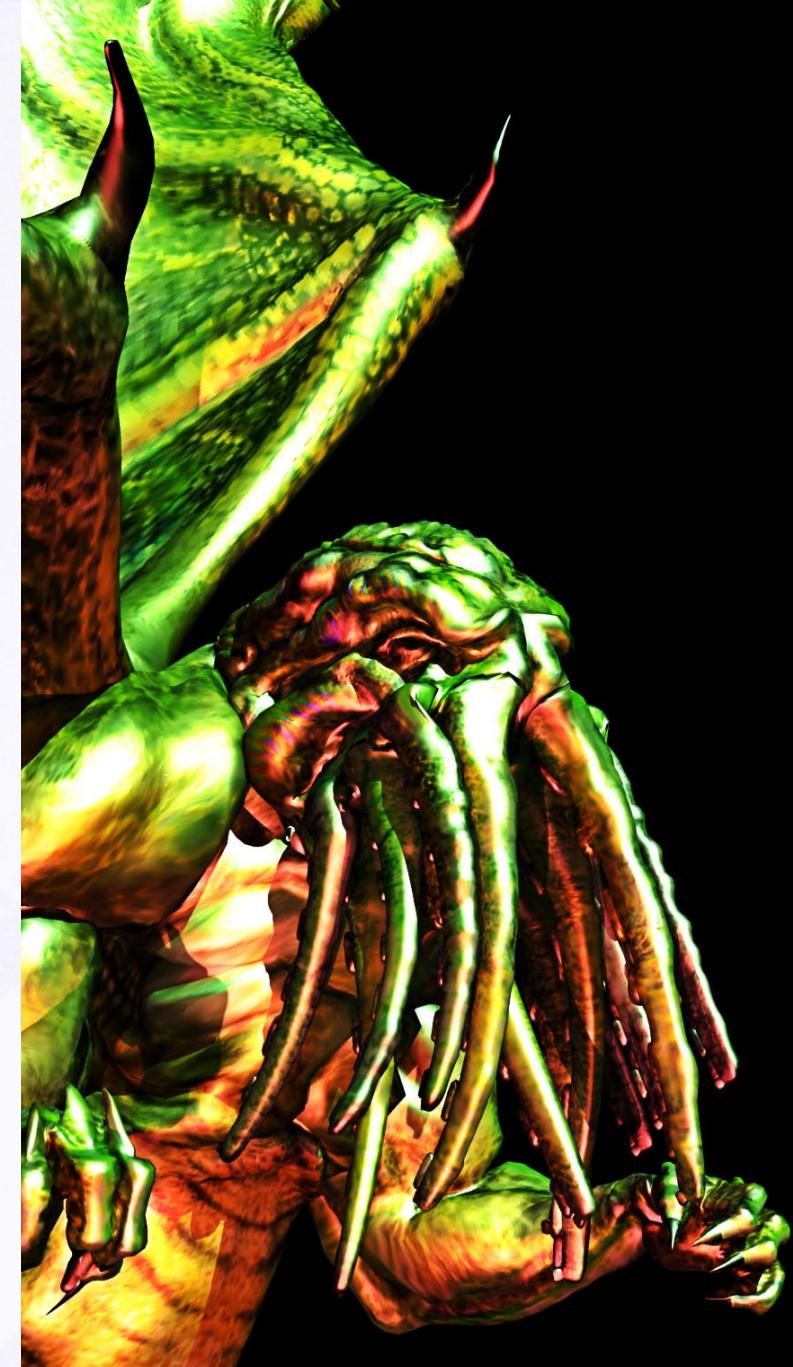
ABOUT THE AUTHOR:

24, self-employed, who spends his spare time drinking, shooting guns, and making movies about people who drink and shoot guns. We have a web-episode series for YouTube in production called *Dirty Blue*, here are a couple trailers: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2cBH66Up-vw>

FROM JOE HIMSELF:

I prefer situational horror and good role playing to the usual "heavy handed" sanity systems that most games incorporate. I'm a pretty long veteran of tabletop role playing and I like to scare even veteran players by showing them how little control they really have — that is not to say I like trapping players in a death maze and watching them squirm as the walls grind closer — this usually involves manipulating the perceptions of the player through the lens of his character. Perception is the key to horror. I prefer the horror feel of something like *Aliens* or John Carpenter's *The Thing* to movies like the *Grudge* or *Saw*. Human slashers and ephemeral beings have their place and can be done right, but I tend to lean on cosmic horrors that are unfortunately for the investigators — very solid and in this dimension. I'd have to say my favorite published adventure would be "Convergence" from the *Delta Green®* line by Pagan Publishing, for these very reasons.

Joe can be contacted at joe.crazyperson@gmail.com



NEW BLOOD

An Interview

with Horror Writer, CJ Wright

Protodimension Magazine interviewed rising Horror Writer, Chris Wright:

[PDM]: What originally interested you in the horror genre, first as a fan and then as a writer?

[Chris]: Watching horror movies at my friend's house when I was twelve probably did it, though even before then I remember loving ghost stories, and painting creepy pictures in art class. I won a special prize at school when I was about seven or eight I think it was, with a picture of a graveyard scene, with a ghost sitting on top of a grave stone. To be honest, the ghost sitting on the grave stone was a bit of a fluke, it was just the way the ghost looked as I drew it; I didn't intend it that way. (I have kept that secret until today, just don't tell my mother, who was proud of my artistic 'genius'.)

I've always found the horror genre fascinating, and that almost any story can be told within its context. For some reason I can't really pinpoint, I'm drawn to it. Everything I write has to have an element of horror about it, probably because real life is full of fear to one degree or another.

[PDM]: What's the best piece of advice that you could give to other writers?

[Chris]: The best piece of advice I could give is read a lot and write a lot. Writing is a skill that you'll continue developing. The more you write the better you'll get. By reading the types of novels you like, especially in the genre you write in, you'll be able to see what works and what doesn't work. How sentences flow and draw you into the world the writer has created for you. It will also hopefully give you inspiration in your own writing, but try to find your own voice.

[PDM]: Where or from whom do you take writing advice?

[Chris]: I read and listen to a lot of author interviews in writing magazines, books and on the internet. YouTube has a great number of these interviews; they are great to watch and you can pick up brilliant tips from those who have been through many of the difficult, and wonderful, experiences that writers face.

Also, *On Writing* by Stephen King is a gem of a book, filled with great advice for writers, and gives an insight into the life of the greatest horror writer there has ever been.

[PDM]: What are you working on at the moment?

(Interview from page 22)

[Chris]: I am working at the moment on a standalone YA (Young Adult) horror novel called *Falling Star*. The story revolves around a fifteen year old girl, Katie Jenkins, who is just beginning to discover she has psychic abilities, which her grandmother noticed and tried to develop by teaching Katie about *Tarot Cards*. After her grandmother dies she meets and befriends a girl called Star, who has run away from home. Katie's awareness of her powers then begins to increase, and she finds that not only is she being visited by the spirits of the dead, but that there is also a shadowing evil stalking her new friend.

[PDM]: What other authors would you recommend to people, without hesitation?

[Chris]: Agatha Christie. She was an amazing story teller. Books are about taking the reader out of their normal life and entertaining them, or at least they should be, and her books do that with great effect.

As far as horror is concerned, for YA I would recommend Darren Shan. Also, Derek Landy's *Skulduggery Pleasant* series is really good.

James Herbert is also an adult horror writer I'd recommend, especially his novel *Once*.

[PDM]: Who are your favourite writers?

[Chris]: As well as the ones mentioned above, I would have to say Stephen King (though some of his books are better than others), and J K Rowling are my favourite writers.

[PDM]: Where do you get your inspiration from? (Yes I know, another cliché question but important!)

[Chris]: I'll answer this cliché question with a cliché answer. My ideas can come from anywhere. Just looking at something from a different perspective can be a catalyst for a story.

[PDM]: How important is it to you for your characters to be believable?

[Chris]: They need to be believable, though not necessarily realistic as it pertains to the real world. This is where the horror genre shines. You can have almost any scenario you can imagine, as high or as low as the depth of your depravity will go, but the reader needs to believe that the characters you create are real to the world around them. A writer of horror needs to let the reader know why this character acts in a certain way, and why that character wouldn't. Believability of characters is more important in horror as you are putting them, and the reader, in a world that is really unbelievable.

[PDM]: What do you think of the current trend in movie horror towards sadism? How does this affect your work?

[Chris]: I think it is cheap. Horror is about fear, and the most powerful element of fear is the unknown. The best horror films were the ones that didn't graphically show the intense violence, but let you imagine it.

This 'splatterpunk' style of horror gives the whole genre a bad name, and makes people think that it is easy to write horror. Bad horror, which is played to make people grossed-out, full of blood and gore just for its own sake, is easy to produce and very formulaic. Good horror, taking something that on the surface looks ordinary, mundane, and twisting it ever so slightly so that you are taken out of your comfort zone to something truly terrifying, is difficult

and takes skill to perform, especially in books. You can have graphic blood and gore in horror, but it must be used correctly, and more importantly, sparingly; and shouldn't be the only thing that makes the film, or book, a horror.

When I was younger I watched a bootlegged copy of the banned horror film, *Zombie Flesh Eaters*. The scariest part of that movie wasn't the zombies ripping people apart and eating them, it was the last few minutes when the camera showed close ups of zombies lumbering along, and then the camera panned back to reveal that they were walking across the top of the Brooklyn Bridge, with people in their cars below them fighting to get out of the city. That image still sends a shiver down my back every time I think about it.

John Carpenter's film, *Halloween* (1978), is a perfect example of how to get horror right. The violence is there, but Carpenter doesn't let you see it fully, it's hidden behind the mask, quick cutaways and shadows. The biggest fear in this type of horror comes from the stalking monster, in *Halloween's* case, Michael Myers, and not knowing when he will strike. The quick glances of him as he stalks his prey builds up the tension for the finale, and makes the 'pay off' that much sweeter.

[PDM]: What do you think of the romantic horror genre in print and the likes of *Twilight* -- romance novels in a classical horror setting and all that romance novels bring?

[Chris]: I haven't read *Twilight*, and probably never will, for me it's not really horror; it's more in the Supernatural/Paranormal Romance genre. Love can be the driving force for the horror in a story; love itself can be the most frightening thing in the world,

(Interview from page 23)

especially when it turns into obsession. *Misery* by Stephen King shows how that type of obsessive love can be truly terrifying.

I do think that those types of books, which are geared for a predominately female audience, will bring more women into the field of horror, along with more strong female characters, which really horror has always had but has rarely been recognised. That can only be a good thing.

[PDM]: Do you find that music, lyrics, or other sources of poetry effect your work? If so, any one in particular inspire you?

[Chris]: I hear from other writers that music can be good to listen to when trying to get in the mood of a scene, though I usually have a DVD on when writing to get me in the right frame of mind.

For *Falling Star*, the poem 'I saw a man who wasn't there' by Hughes Mearns was the inspiration for the poem Star recites when she sees the thing that is stalking her to try and make it go away.

I also love the poem '*The Raven*' by Edgar Allen Poe.

[PDM]: What about creepy locations? Do you walk around darker parts of the countryside to get the ambience? Obviously avoiding the areas of personal safety risk :)

[Chris]: There are a number of creepy locations in the town where I live, and if I obviously avoided areas that were a risk to my personal safety then I'd never visit them.

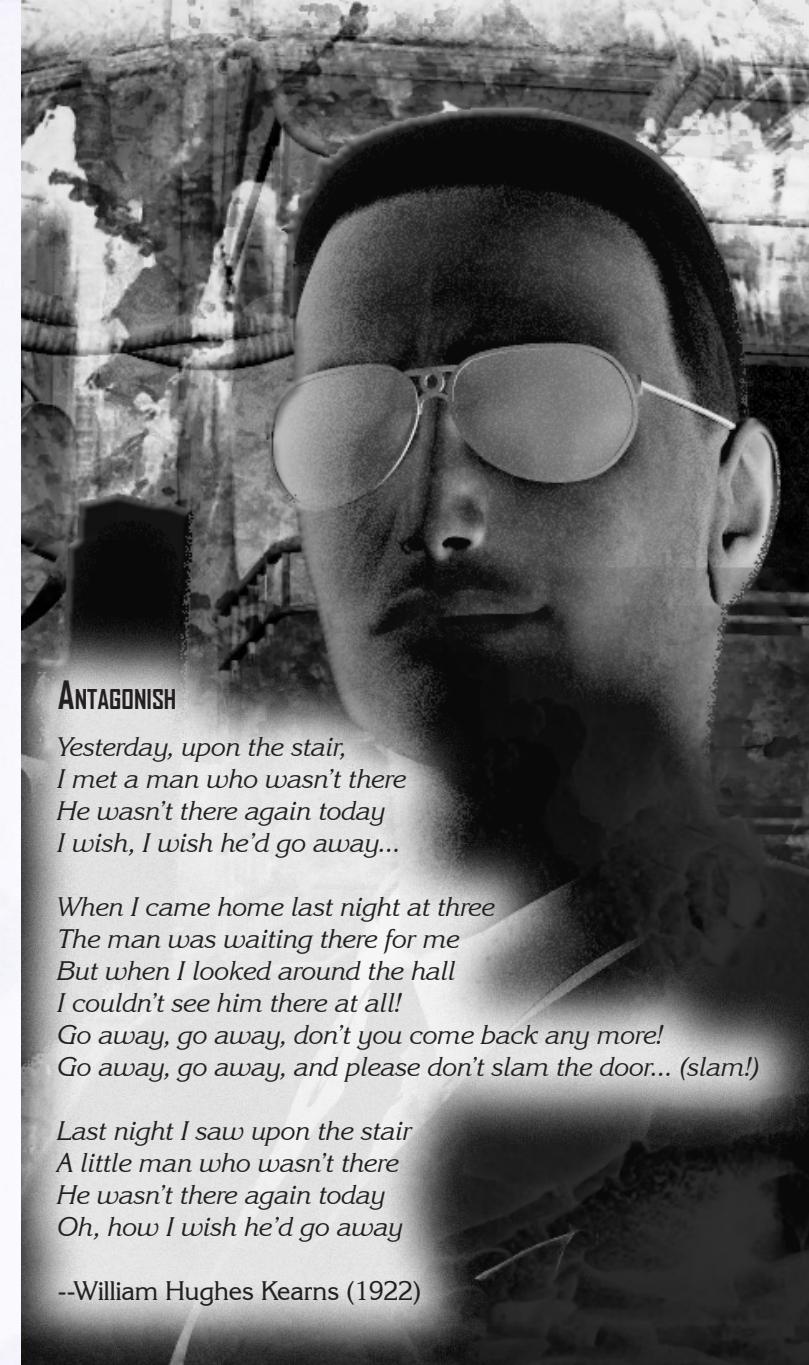
[PDM]: How do you keep the idea mill stoked and then organized when it is running three shifts?

[Chris]: I have a terrible memory, a limited concentration span and a vivid imagination. In order to make sure I keep the numerous ideas that pop into my head, I have to write them down quickly before I forget them. I have a folder full of notes and ideas, some that will grow into novels, others into short stories, and others that will be kept for when I find out where they are supposed to go. Some ideas that I thought would be good novels have been cut down into short stories, or used as subplots, and vice versa.

[PDM]: Finally, is the Adrian Mole story true? :-)

[Chris]: Yes, it is true. From the first few months of my life, up until I was nearly nine, I lived in Leicester. The primary school I went to was the one Sue Townsend went to when she was a child. She did a book signing there a few months before I moved to Worcestershire, and I can still remember being in the school hall as she talked to us and our parents and teachers about writing. She then did a book signing, I had her sign *The Secret Diary of Adrian Mole, Aged 13 3/4*, and my two brothers had her sign *Growing Pains*. It was on the 23rd November 1985. Though I lost my copy of *Secret Diary* over the years I still have the copy of *Growing Pains* she signed. From the day I met her I knew that I wanted to be a writer more than anything else in the world.

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To whomever is reading this I'm sorry, I'm so, so sorry.

I wish that these words, the last ones you'll ever read, would be words of comfort, but alas, I'm afraid to say, they won't be. You have come too far to be comforted, and you can't ever go back, not now. All I can do is prepare you for what you are about to face, what will be from this moment on. Be brave, don't let him, the Dark Man, have the satisfaction of your terror, look him square in the eyes, if what he has can really be called eyes, and show him you are not afraid.

He has been watching you your whole life, him or others like him; they have been watching all of us. They have walked the earth for as long as there has been an earth, since the dawn of creation they have been bound to this home of ours, and we have been their sustenance.

You probably hadn't realized they were there; most people are unaware of their existence and that, I am sure, is how they like it. It is only the few, those chosen few, who know that they are here, can see them for what they are, and have fought them for the delicate souls of us who are unfortunate enough to be noticed as we cross their path.

I am sure there have been times in your life that you have felt the air around you suddenly get cold, sensed the hair on the back of your neck stand on end, or a chill through your

body for no real reason, making you shudder. You've probably followed these feelings by saying 'someone's just walked over my grave'; the truth is far more frightening than that. It was him, the Dark Man feeding off your soul. At those times he was only taking the smallest of bites, an appetizer, wondering if at that time you were ready for him to swallow you whole. Now is that time.

You can feel him at this moment, can't you? Just over your shoulder, beyond your peripheral vision, but there. Don't turn around. I know you want to, probably more than you've ever wanted to in your whole life, but don't. Resist his pull as long as you can.

The smell is about to come. Rank, nauseating; the stench of flesh that has putrefied, filling your nostrils as the Dark Man starts to encompass you. Hold on to all those thoughts, those feelings that have been your substance.

Remember who you are. Remember the life you have had. Remember those who you have loved. Remember those who you have lost. Remember the times you have laughed. Remember the times you have cried.

It's not long now, and before these words blur while your senses diminish, as the Dark Man takes control of you, I just want to say again, my friend, I am sorry.

L. Ostforeva

CUTTING EDGE OF TOMORROW

An Adventure

By DT Butchino
for **Spycraft 2.0®**

Walter: Am I required to keep him alive?

Olivia: That would probably be... best!

--Fringe (2009)

protodimension magazine

FRINGE SCIENCES

Somewhere between reason and fantasy lie the fringe sciences. To some, these are nothing more than science fiction, relegated to the realm of faster-than-light travel and laser weapons, yet many items we use every day were once just as casually dismissed. Consider the cell phone and its eerie similarity to the communications devices of a certain seminal television program, or “green” cars running on electricity alone, or Project Natal, which lets us interact fluidly and directly with an artificial intelligence. All were spawned from sciences people originally dismissed as impossible.

At their core, fringe sciences aren’t independent disciplines so much as the unconventional application of mainstream ideas, proving improbable theories through meticulous research and practical testing. This does little to bridge the gap, however, and despite occasional proof beyond the edge of accepted wisdom the general scientific community disregards the “crackpots” indulging in fringe

research, frequently pelting them with ridicule and worse.

Thus it remains that a certain degree of faith is required to investigate the fringe, often against all odds and despite mountains of available “evidence.” Still, some researchers continue the work, diligently seeking critical clues and hoping for auspicious accidents that might eventually prove their theories. They are occasionally assisted by patrons in the private sector and universities and think tanks looking to blaze new trails, though this support nearly always has a price, often robbing fringe scientists of credit, compensation, or even their lives.

ESPIONAGE AND THE FRINGE SCIENCES

Future science and espionage have long gone hand-in-hand, from Q Branch’s wondrous gadgets to the alien hybrids and other experiments of the X-Files to the A.I. and incredible capabilities of the Knight Industries Two Thousand. The pairing is especially prevalent in espionage gaming, where “super-science” is regularly employed in a

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character's pack-out, not to mention fielded by the team's enemies to subjugate, corrupt, or even destroy the world.

By contrast, fringe science tends to be unpredictable, and often unstable. A fringe teleportation device might not only run the risk of transferring a character to the wrong location but alternately into another person's body, or worse, into an animal or communication cable as electricity. Fringe science might create a bomb from thought alone, the creator never realizing what's actually fueling the explosion until years later, when children born miles from the explosion start flying into homicidal rages at puberty.

Espionage being a matter of precise risk assessment, fringe science is often discarded as a viable tool, though Game Controls may introduce it through adventuresome agencies and opportunistic criminal groups, especially those whose research is driven by the eccentrics and the criminally insane. It can also be used as a mission's MacGuffin: a unique technology recently discovered in the remnants of a former Soviet bunker, its creators long dead, or even in the long-buried ruins of an ancient civilization, primitive ingenuity bridging thousands of years of natural development.

This article introduces a few common examples of fringe sciences, along with advice for including them in your games and suggested rules for *Spycraft 2.0*. Remember, mood and presentation are everything when introducing the fringe sciences at your table — they're rarely clean, often a hodgepodge of seemingly random bits and pieces held together by inventive will and sheer, dumb luck, and they usually fail to instill any faith that they'll work at all, let alone correctly. The *Fringe* television show captures this

perfectly, introducing risk with every foray into the realm of weird science and "skinning" the machines of its fringe sciences with ominous contraptions decorated with dizzying arrays of naked wires and invasive probes. Controlled substances are often required to interface with these devices, and they often leave subjects scarred, mentally and physically, for the experience.

CLONING

Cloning is illegal in many parts of the world and considered generally unethical, yet it's been fact for many years, and while scientists speculate on its applications there really hasn't been much headway over the last decade or so (at least, none in the public eye). For now, we remain at the cusp of true application, beyond proving it can work and not yet ready to use what we've learned.

RULES

In a fantastic game, the clone can become a character's exact duplicate, possessing his attributes, skills, feats, and other physical options. By contrast, a clone in a semi-grounded game might be a blank slate awaiting skill and memory programming. In either case, the Super-Science skill is used to create the clone (see *Spycraft 2.0*, page 155), assuming a Caliber of V (10 Challenges) and a Complexity of 75. This Complex Task gains synergy from Science (Genetics) and Science (Pharmacology) only, and the player or GC may replace any error, threat, critical failure, or critical success with a special alternative.

Critical Failure: The clone's growth continues but not as planned, producing a horrible side effect

of the GC's creation that isn't obvious until the specimen matures. For example, a contact disease may develop in the clone's cells, leading to a possible pandemic. Alternately, the clone may grow pathologically fearful of a particular color or other sensory stimulus, attacking anything in the vicinity when exposed to it.

Error: If the clone is successfully grown, it has a limited lifespan: 1d10 years. Each subsequent error replaced with this result reduces the clone's lifespan by 1/2 more (rounding up to the nearest full day).

Threat: If the clone is successfully grown, it has an extended lifespan: 1d10 years beyond the average for a member of its species per threat replaced with this result.

Critical Success: If the clone is successfully grown, it doesn't age and may effectively live forever, though it may be killed through violence or other intentional means.

APPLICATION

Perfected cloning could produce an army of agents available to any organization in a relatively short time. With the right master copy and skill training, these clone agents could wage wars, subvert organizations and nations, or provide a stable workforce to help underprivileged nations and protect their borders. In some cases, they might even offer immortality for fellow agents, assuming the research also devised a way to transfer minds.

PLOT SEEDS

Needs of the Many: In a pitched battle, an agent gets a good look under an enemy's helmet,

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discovering it's a long-dead former ally. It isn't long before another copy of the same ally is found elsewhere on the same battlefield, triggering a new mission to find how and where the copies were made, and of course, why.

Unstoppable: The agents are looking forward to a little downtime after finally taking out a long-sought mastermind, but before their debriefing is over they're called back into the field — to investigate another sighting of the same villain! That's impossible, of course, as the mastermind's still lying on a slab in the morgue...

AWAKENING

Anytime after an agent is knocked unconscious and/or killed, read the following aloud to start a separate solo scene.

You bolt awake, finding yourself strapped to a table and hooked up to an IV cart and heart monitor. Looming around you are green tubes with blinking red lights, which on closer examination contain bodies hovering in dense liquid. Each body... looks like you!

The character has, of course, been cloned — perhaps by an enemy who sampled his DNA or maybe by his own agency. Escaping the straps requires a successful Escape check (DC 25, 8 rounds) and pulling out the IV inflicts 1 wound unless removed carefully (First Aid DC 10). What

happens after? Depends on the GC's story, and how cruel he is, of course.

COLD FUSION

As many in the world strive to go green, others seek the perfect energy source. There have been many contenders — solar power, wind power, efficient hydrogen use, and more — but at the fringe of them all is cold fusion. In theory, this elusive process could provide nigh-unlimited, clean power and better yet it could be miniaturized for use in homes and even appliances. Though cold fusion is currently well out of reach, theoretical physicists and company scientists are always working on large-scale experiments in the hopes of cracking its mysterious physics code.

RULES

Depending on how thoroughly cold fusion is mastered, the science could produce batteries ranging from man-portable satchel-packs (a few pounds) to immobile structures taking up most of a factory building and requiring several industrial-grade cranes to move. In either case, however, all supposition points to a cold fusion battery's power being effectively limitless in an RPG (lasting for months or years, even by the most conservative estimates). Any iteration should be available to agents only with Reputation or Net Worth, likely beginning at a cost of 50/\$2,500,000 and rising depending on the tech's scarcity.



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APPLICATION

Cold fusion triggers a whole new escalation in any campaign that likely plays out very much like the nuclear arms race — whoever doesn't have the science will want it, and many will stop at nothing to get it. Having few practical limits, cold fusion could be used to power the most insanely destructive devices in creation, from city-leveling lasers to orbital rail weapons, or it could simply be used as a weapon, toppling nukes from the pinnacle of man-made devastation. It could just as easily change the face of battle, leading to personal force shields, invisibility suits, and other items requiring massive power (and in fact this may be the secret behind many of *Spycraft 2.0*'s existing gadgets). The rate of subsequent developments, of course, hinges on the needs of the campaign, and the story the GM's trying to tell.

PLOT SEEDS

A Better Mousetrap: During a field op, the agents recover a curious gadget with a seemingly limitless power supply (potentially from an enemy operative who used it against them). The item works just like any powered Gadget pick available in *Spycraft 2.0* but never runs out of uses. Unless a character succeeds with an extremely difficult Super-Science check (DC 35), the team doesn't realize the gadget's second function — as a tracking device, leading the enemy back to the team's home office if they bring it back with them — let alone its third, as a detonator of its cold fusion core should it be tampered with (dmg 6d12 lethal, blast 20 ft.).

The Science Project: A gifted child unlocks the secrets of cold fusion and unwittingly unveils them

at a national science fair. The agents are dispatched to protect the boy and preserve his working model before rival organizations can seize them.

THE INFINITY MACHINE

When the team enters a seemingly barren room within an enemy complex, read the following aloud.

The doors swing shut and the lights go out. There's a low hum and you're overcome with a strong sense of vertigo. Though you're able to keep your footing, the room feels like it's spinning sideways and you nearly lose your lunch. A moment later the sensation is gone and your senses return to normal. You shiver in the dark and suddenly feel very distant from the world around you.

Escaping the unlit room is relatively easy for skilled and/or well-armed agents, but when they do they find themselves alone in the world. The mastermind's lair is devoid of life, all the guards seemingly fled. Everything is as they remember it except for the people, but where could they have gone?

In truth, the room was a trap, and a test of a new technology the mastermind developed that required enormous power — power he harnessed in the form of cold fusion (perhaps from the child in The Science Project, above). The room operated a bit like a microwave oven, bombarding the characters with high-intensity energy waves that accelerated their component atoms just the slightest bit. The process didn't kill them but instead left them slightly

out of sync with their surroundings, alone in a phantom world where they can see what's been built but not what lives.

Soon, others might appear — other enemies of the mastermind doomed to the same fate. Perhaps one of them knows where another of the rooms is, and maybe, just maybe, the team can get there before it's used and find a way back to the world of the living — or perhaps they're intent on ruling this phantom land, and all its new inhabitants...

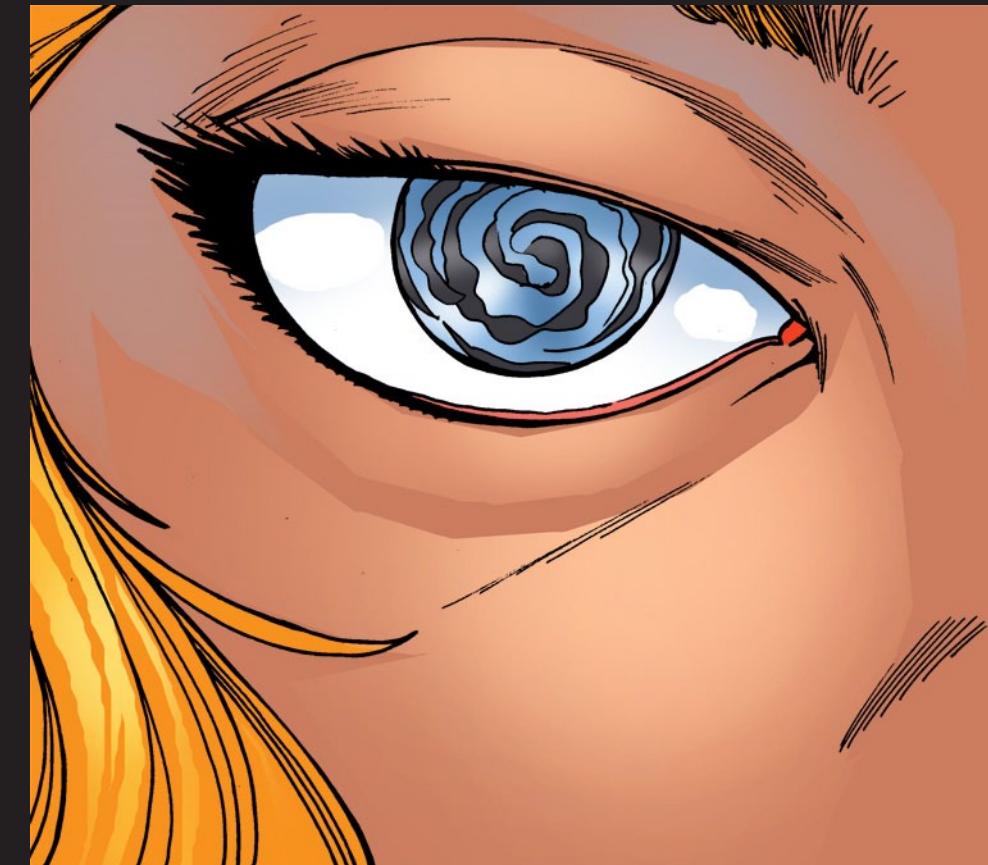
GENE MANIPULATION

Perfection has become part of human nature. Whether it's a perfect child, perfect eyes, or the perfect soldier, people long to become flawless. Meanwhile, the interminable march of science has rendered even one's genes violable. Like any experimental science, of course, there are still bugs in the process; some benefit from gene manipulation while others suffer adverse effects like cell damage or even death. Among the fringe sciences, gene manipulation is one of the closest to reality, with everyone from disease specialists to fertility doctors striving to perfect the procedure, yet there are still many eggs to break before anyone serves up the perfect omelet.

RULES

Not a gentle procedure in the least, gene manipulation can augment an agent in many ways. Some sample therapies follow.

- **Brainpower:** Steroids for the mind, this formula grants the recipient a boost to their mental facilities, as well as extended memory.



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(Tomorrow from page 29)

The subject gains +1 Intelligence and the Photographic Memory feat for the next 1d6 adventures.

- **Hydra:** Everyone wants to live forever. This formula retards degeneration of the recipient's cells, keeping him from aging for 2d12 months.
- **Night Owl:** Who needs night-sight goggles and a stealth suit? This formula grants the recipient the ability to ignore the effects of dim and faint ambient light, as well as a +3 bonus with Blend

and Sneak checks for the next 1d6 adventures. However, in bright ambient light, the subject suffers a -2 penalty with all actions and may only move at 1/2 their standard Speed (rounded up).

• **Spartan:** This formula improves the recipient's physical prowess and makes him less prone to combat stress. He gains +1 Strength and +5 ft. Speed for 1d6 adventures.

• **Venus:** For anyone who believes beauty is more than skin deep, there's Venus. This formula grants the recipient +1 Charisma and a +3 bonus with Impress checks for 1d6 adventures.

Administering each dose requires a successful Genetics check (DC 20 + 5 per previous successful gene therapy), which gains a synergy bonus from Science (Super-Science).

With failure, the patient's physiology is incompatible with the desired gene therapy and a new regimen must be developed before another Genetics check may be attempted (Genetics check with 6 Challenges and a Complexity of 40). With a critical failure, the therapy acts as an advanced lethal poison (see *Spycraft 2.0*, page 287). Otherwise, the gene therapy takes and the patient gains the listed benefits. A patient may not benefit from multiple gene therapies at any time.

APPLICATION

Though controversial and publicly restricted, gene manipulation might be embraced by clandestine agencies, creating truly "super" spies and ushering in a new age of high-powered intrigue. Less scrupled agencies might even augment their assets without permission, sneaking gene therapies into "routine" physicals and other "mundane" protocols. Agents so betrayed might be moved to expose their superiors' misdeeds but consider what might happen if the agency's actions were revealed? How would the world change if everyone could suddenly change who they are? These are questions at the very heart of any campaign involving gene manipulation, and may offer strong grist for a villain's actions as well.

PLOT SEEDS

Cleaning Up: The agents are tasked with the strange case of Roberta Jones, a Queens housewife who's quietly become an overnight multi-millionaire success story. She made her fortune at online stock predictions and gambling sites, despite the fact that she dropped out of high school with a 2.0 GPA. The team heads to her unassuming home only to find her murdered, her money transferred to an offshore bank account. A search of her house reveals she was also secretly part of an online weight loss drug trial, for a company closing up shop as quickly as the home office can call up its credentials. How's all this connected? The agents' mission leads to a sinister money laundering scheme using unwitting drug testers and a variant of the Brainpower gene therapy to amass a huge fortune... but for what?

Too Handsome: A routine investigation leads to a dead waiter whose face and body are horribly

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disfigured, despite everyone who knows him saying he was gorgeous. Investigation reveals that his system rejected a flawed version of the Venus formula, though the home office isn't aware of any other group researching the serum. How did the waiter get hold of the drug and, assuming it's an inside job, who helped him? Is this a sign that something bigger is going down inside the agency?

Berserker

In preparation for a particularly trying mission, the team's Mission Bundle includes a round of Spartan gene therapy — or so the agents are told. The therapy is indeed Spartan but the home office is also using the mission to field test a new advancement of the formula proposed by R&D. For a time, the agents enjoy double the listed benefits (+2 Strength and +10 ft. Speed) until a critical moment in the mission, when you should read the following aloud.

Suddenly your muscles cramp up and you double over in pain. The feeling passes quickly but you're left with an odd sense of urgency, that something's very, very wrong. Images you've never seen before press at the edge of your conscious mind and you have the sickening feeling that time is all too short.

The truth of the matter is that this Spartan update directly incorporates the genes of the agency's highest skilled former operatives (frozen for posterity after their demise, of course). Each of these agents "failed" his or her last mission, leading to the impulses the characters now feel. The GM can use these impulses to direct the team toward unfinished agency business and generally complicate the

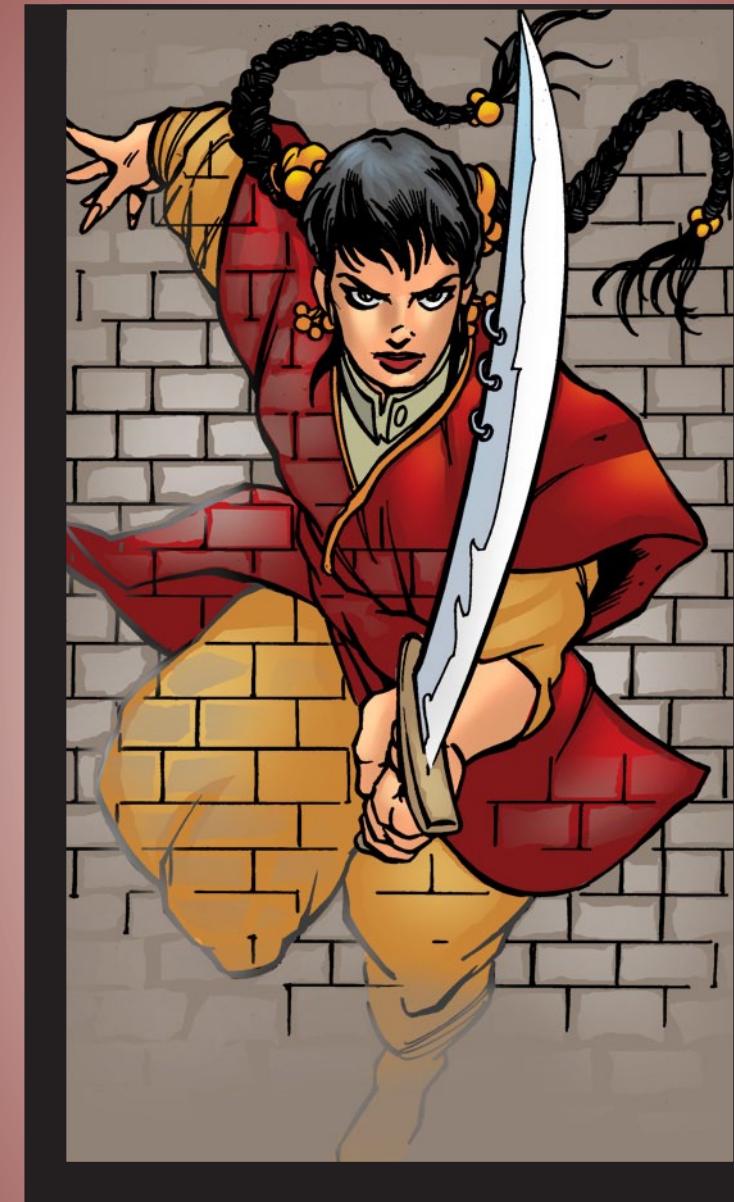
campaign as desired. The team only has until this round of therapy wears off to follow up on these leads, though, as the agency wants some things to stay buried, and kills the new trials to avoid the embarrassment of their former agents' lives from impacting current operatives.

INTANGIBILITY

Passing through solid matter has long been a staple in comic books and ghost stories, yet there are some in the real world who hope to one day prove it's possible. Some theories revolve around the use of sub-harmonics, shifting matter to a phase state that lets objects pass through it. Others believe the answer lies in micro-miniaturization, allowing one object to pass between the atoms of another. Field tests have been happening since the 1940s, though rarely with any reliable success. Subjects have fused with walls or simply blown apart on contact. Radiation poisoning is common, a side effect thought to be related to a subject's unstable atomic structure.

RULES

Unlike the incorporeal Gadget Mechanism (see *Spycraft 2.0*, page 279), intangibility targets a solid, non-moving object rather than an individual. The science can take the form of a bulky tripod-mounted "gun," an acidic paste or fluid that eats through flesh, inflicting 2d6 acid damage per application (without further impact on the target), or another form of the GM's choosing. It renders an object or 5 ft. × 5 ft. surface up to 5 ft. thick fluid and passable for 2d10 minutes, during which time characters can move through and/or push other objects through it.



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Moving through an intangible object takes 10 ft. of Speed and prevents actions other than movement during the same round (due to disorientation). Anyone moving through an intangible object is also exposed to advanced radiation poisoning (see *Spycraft 2.0*, page 288).

Anyone caught in the intangible space when it becomes solid again suffers the same fate as being trapped solidifying from incorporeal.

APPLICATION

The ability to walk through solid walls and objects has incredible utility in espionage, allowing agents to easily breach the most secure facilities without leaving evidence behind (or any more than the fringe method leaves). Of course, it also leaves all other agencies in a precarious position, having to worry about their own internal security — not as desirable if, say, the enemy discovers the science first. The first order of business for any organization facing a foe with intangibility tech is to determine how to defend against it. This may be as “simple” as lining HQ’s walls with lead, or as difficult as installing vibration webs in every surface to disrupt sub-harmonics.

PLOT SEEDS

Ghost Hunter: During a routine inventory, the home office discovers that it’s missing a few sizeable prototypes. Reviewing surveillance tapes, Control discovers that a group of thieves walked right through the wall and carted the prototypes off without anyone the wiser! The team is assigned to track down the culprits and recover the agency’s material. Fortunately, they only have to follow the traces of unique radiation the thieves leave behind,

which leads to the ring’s safe house. Unfortunately, the safe house happens to be located in a dense series of sewer tunnels — the ideal place for someone with intangibility, letting the thieves sneak through walls and repeatedly get the drop on the team.

Sky Sabotage: The agents board a low orbital aircraft and paraglide to their target, an allegedly unmanned drone craft mysteriously surveying friendly borders. As the team soon discovers, however, the drone is very heavily manned — by smaller drone sentries with integral intangibility tech that causes attacks to pass directly through them. The drones phase in and out in waves, moving to flank the agents when they can’t be damaged. If the team can defeat the sentries and capture the drone plane, they recover not only its valuable photo payload but also that of the sentries, which were used to enter sensitive areas on the ground without triggering alarms.

And the Ground Fell Away

Anytime the GM needs to slow the team down for a bit, or wants a fleeing villain to escape alive, he can read the following aloud — assuming there’s reason to believe the villain prepared the location in advance.

Your footfalls suddenly pass right through the ground and a second later you find yourself tumbling into darkness. You hit soft earth a moment later, winded but without further injury.

If the GM’s nice, the trap merely makes the ground *above* the team’s new location intangible. He could just as easily create a timed trap, forcing the characters to climb out of the pit before the earth they’re standing in solidifies, killing them instantly.

NECRO-TELEPATHY

The curious, gullible, superstitious, and foolhardy once attended séances and consulted mediums to speak with the dead but fringe science offers a multitude of other methods, from consuming or “reading” human remains to inducing a “shared mind” state with a corpse through drugs and shock therapy. None of these options are without risk, and the gap between the worlds of the living and the perished is not to be bridged lightly. Countless are the stories of spirits lingering to haunt those who have roused them from their eternal slumber, sometimes through their dreams or by terrorizing their days, and other times leaving behind slivers of their former selves: memories, fears, or even love for people left behind.

RULES

Speaking with the dead is a Complex Task using Investigation with a synergy from Medicine (if reading remains), or Super-Science (if inducing a shared mind state). The number of Challenges is equal to $4 +$ the number of full months the target’s been dead (maximum 10 — a spirit cannot be contacted more than a year after death). Each check is opposed by the spirit’s Resolve skill in life, as the process is violent and disturbing to those on the other side.



(Tommorow from page 32)

The connection lasts a minimum of 1 minute, during which time the person(s) communing with the spirit may learn its emotions, sights, and general thoughts from death backward (if reading remains), or converse directly (if inducing a shared mind state). In both cases information gleaned is often far from clear, the spirit or its memories confused and scattered.

Each additional minute of prolonged contact requires another successful check with the same skill, though the spirit gains a cumulative +2 bonus with their opposed result. Eventually every spirit flees back to the afterlife.

APPLICATION

Never again need an agency go without a proper debriefing — assuming field agents can recover all their fallen fellows' bodies, of course. Likewise with enemy operatives, who could be interrogated after death when the agents need to bring them down in the field. The drawbacks of necro-telepathy are legion, however, and scrupulous or skittish agencies may shy away from its use on moral or ethical grounds, or simply because it gives them the shivers.

PLOT SEEDS

Ask the Dead Guy: One of the agents gets a call from an informant. It seems he's got some intel that could crack their current mission wide open. Unfortunately, he's dead when the team arrives, leaving them to utilize a new fringe science the agency's developed. Who killed the informant and why? What other secrets was he keeping from his friends? Most importantly, how can they put his unsettled spirit to rest?

The Collective: Scientists are mysteriously dropping dead across the globe, their bodies vanishing without a trace. The agents are dispatched to investigate, leading to a bizarre scheme in which one of the agency's oldest rivals is tapping the world's greatest minds — from beyond the grave. What are they working on, and what's keeping them so focused despite their grisly demises?

Dead Man Walking: At any point, read the following aloud to kick off a side mission.

All your cell phones suddenly go off in unison, alerting you to new text messages. Assuming it must be the home office with a recall note or mission update, you reach for your phones and find... a map marker, pointing you to a house in the local suburbs. No further details are included and more importantly, there's no agency ID, so whoever sent the messages isn't one of yours.

The text messages were sent from a personal computer in the home. The machine has seen significant, bizarre upgrades, many of which baffle even the most computer-savvy agents. Evidence points to some kind of power surge and a struggle, though no body, blood, or other evidence is present. The house is owned by a Dr. Gregor Molineaux and putting a trace on his credit cards shows him buying an airline ticket an hour ago. The agents can move to intercept him or call in agency assets to do so but when they have him in custody they find that despite him being upright and talking he's got no pulse; for all intents and purposes, he's a real life zombie.

(Tomorrow from page 33)

Hoping to get to the bottom of the strange case, the agency authorizes use of its necro-telepathy assets, which the agents may not have heard of before now. Surprisingly, the process yields nothing, as if Molineaux were in fact still alive, but that's impossible — except, of course, for the walking and the talking. Meanwhile, the agents continue receiving cryptic text messages from someone claiming to be trapped in the house. The messages describe the captive's location as cold and silent, which may lead the agents to search the basement extensively, but the truth's far less obvious.

In life, Dr. Molineaux specialized in A.I. development (a detail the agents or the home office may dredge up if the right questions are asked), and when his superiors shut down his research he continued on his own. He succeeded in creating digital life and one day, when it saw the opportunity, it returned the favor by taking his. The power surge stopped his heart and he was dead before he hit the floor, or so it seemed. In truth, the A.I. seized the chance to escape, swapping Molineaux's consciousness with its own.

Running on electrical impulses alone, the body began to decompose, albeit slowly, leaving Molineaux precious little time to find help. He used the house's internet connection and his advanced knowledge of security architecture to hack into the personnel files of a local espionage service, hoping the best of the best could save him. Sadly, his own specially coded anti-virus software identified him as malicious software and quarantined him soon after, stymieing further efforts to explain his predicament. He gets the occasional text message out but he's no longer



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TABLE 1: TELEPORTATION

Result	Effect
Critical Failure	Teleportation failed, traveler is killed due to mishap
10	Subjects transferred to location of GM's choice and exposed to advanced radiation poisoning (<i>see Spycraft 2.0, page 288</i>)
15	Subjects transferred 4d6 miles from target location (<i>see Deviation on page 346 of the Spycraft 2.0 Rulebook</i>) and exposed to improved radiation poisoning (<i>see Spycraft 2.0, page 288</i>)
20	Subjects transferred 2d6 miles from target location (<i>see Deviation on page 346 of the Spycraft 2.0 Rulebook</i>) and exposed to basic radiation poisoning (<i>see Spycraft 2.0, page 288</i>)
25	Subjects transferred 1d6 miles from target location (<i>see Deviation on page 346 of the Spycraft 2.0 Rulebook</i>) and stunned for 2d6 rounds
30	Subjects transferred to target location without ill effect

(Tomorrow from page 34)

fully aware of what's happened to him. From his perspective he really is somewhere cold and silent, cut off from his senses and growing more confused and scared by the hour.

Figuring out what happened is just the first step. There's still the question of reversing the process, and the agency will be very interested in replicating it for its own research.

TELEPORTATION

Like intangibility, teleportation requires intimate knowledge of physics and mathematics, specifically

dealing with angles and dimensional space. In theory, a subject is broken down on a sub-molecular level and transferred, via digital signal, to another location to be reassembled just as they were. Sadly, many subjects don't arrive exactly as they left, contracting fatal illnesses or worse, coming back... *wrong*.

RULES

Teleportation is as much art as science, requiring on-the-spot calculations and snap judgments in response to the myriad conditions that may crop up during transfer. Every teleportation attempt requires

a Super-Science check with a synergy bonus from Survival. Consult Table 1: Teleportation, above for results.

APPLICATION

Teleportation is an agency's dream, allowing instant transport of operatives and materials into nearly any theater. The trick is whether the particular fringe science applied allows for *covert* transport. At the very least teleportation probably emits massive electromagnetic disturbance at both ends; at worst, the points of arrival and destination may be charred or even partially disintegrated by impressive displays of electro-thermal energy visible for miles around.

PLOT SEEDS

Jaunting: The agents are tapped for the inaugural field test of a new teleportation device. As expected, they arrive at an allied base in another country — three days later! Returning home, they find their home office wrecked and the teleportation device missing. Recovering it becomes the agency's highest priority, as the only science more dangerous in the hands of an enemy than teleportation... is time travel.

Leap of Faith: At the center of a mastermind's lair rests a familiar device: a teleportation pad locked into one specific location on the other side of the globe. It's powering down, the mastermind nowhere in sight, but did he use the device to escape or is it ready to transfer the team into a mountain? Or perhaps something even worse than instant death: capture.

Body Swap

Anytime the team walks through a door that might feasibly have been "augmented," the GM can read this aloud to kick off a whole new mission.

You step into the room and there's a flash behind you — or perhaps alongside you, it's hard to tell. Something doesn't feel right and when you glance down at your hands you find... Your bodies aren't your own.

The characters have been transferred — using a divergence of teleportation technology — into other bodies, perhaps in another location. Their own

bodies are now controlled by those they've replaced, but to what purpose? Perhaps a villainous group plans to use them to infiltrate the agency, or maybe this has more to do with revenge for something the team did to the perpetrator(s)? It's possible those inhabiting the agents' bodies are being blackmailed, which would certainly make it harder for the team to learn what's going on by investigating their backgrounds.

UNIVERSAL CURE

For years, scientists have labored to discover cures and antidotes for the world's vilest maladies. Most attack them one at a time, or by family of illness, but a few have faith there's a panacea in the offing — a universal cure to all man's ailments. Even theoretically, such a cure-all would require incredible cross-training with every biological science, from genetics to pharmacology... even botany, geology, climatology, and more.

RULES

No Science check result should create a universal cure — such a monumental discovery must be plot-driven, and its profound impact on every level in every corner of the globe cannot be understated.

Assuming a universal cure becomes available it cures all diseases and counters all poisons in a subject's system within 24 hours (the subject may still die from existing ailments before then). However, like any fringe science, there are side effects. The subject makes a Fortitude save (DC 20) and with failure, the universal cure fails for him, converting to an advanced lethal poison in his system (see

Spycraft 2.0, page 288). The subject suffers this exposure in addition to his existing ailments.

APPLICATION

Even once it's perfected, it's unlikely a universal cure would be made widely available; doing so would collapse a large segment of the private sector and bankrupt many large corporations, some of which are certainly indebted to the agency and therefore still useful. The agency might go so far as to task the team with securing a universal cure from any "well-meaning idealists" hoping to offer it to the world, especially if they can manage it before word of its creation hits the evening news.

PLOT SEEDS

Prognosis — Death: The agents are sent to investigate a rash of disturbing murders at a metropolitan hospital. According to the autopsies, each victim was injected with an odd chemical that not only cured their diseases but also eliminated all the bacteria in their systems, rendering their immune system useless. What could do such a thing? And why would someone use it? Is it intended as a weapon or a miracle?

The Cure to All That Ails: While searching a villain's lab, the agents discover files for a universal cure. Unfortunately, it's incomplete and refers to an operation codenamed Panacea. The files also identify scientists who've been abducted, or soon will be. Perhaps the agents can save the scientists and keep the cure out of the enemy's hands at the same time.

(Tomorrow from page 36)

Outbreak

The next time an agent is on the losing end of a battle against disease or poison, a mysterious visitor slips in and injects something into his IV. Read the following aloud to the recovering agent.

You only catch sight of the stranger's face for a moment and you're too weak to call for help. Your eyelids grow heavy as he rushes from the room, pocketing the syringe on his way out.

No one sees the visitor arrive or leave, perhaps because he's using teleportation or intangibility tech (see pages 35 and 31, respectively). The agent fully recovers 24 hours later, all toxins in his system inexplicably gone, leading the agency to front-load finding the stranger.

When hours with INTERPOL and other databases yield no ID, and no other leads are forthcoming, the team is given a seemingly insane order: to infect a small, isolated town with a virulent, incurable disease in the hopes that the news will draw the stranger out of hiding. Will the agents go along with it, and if they do, will the brazen plan work? Perhaps the stranger works for a well-meaning rival organization that wouldn't mind recruiting a team disenfranchised by its progressively cutthroat superiors.



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MIDNIGHT STROLL

Horror Art

By Bradley K. McDevitt

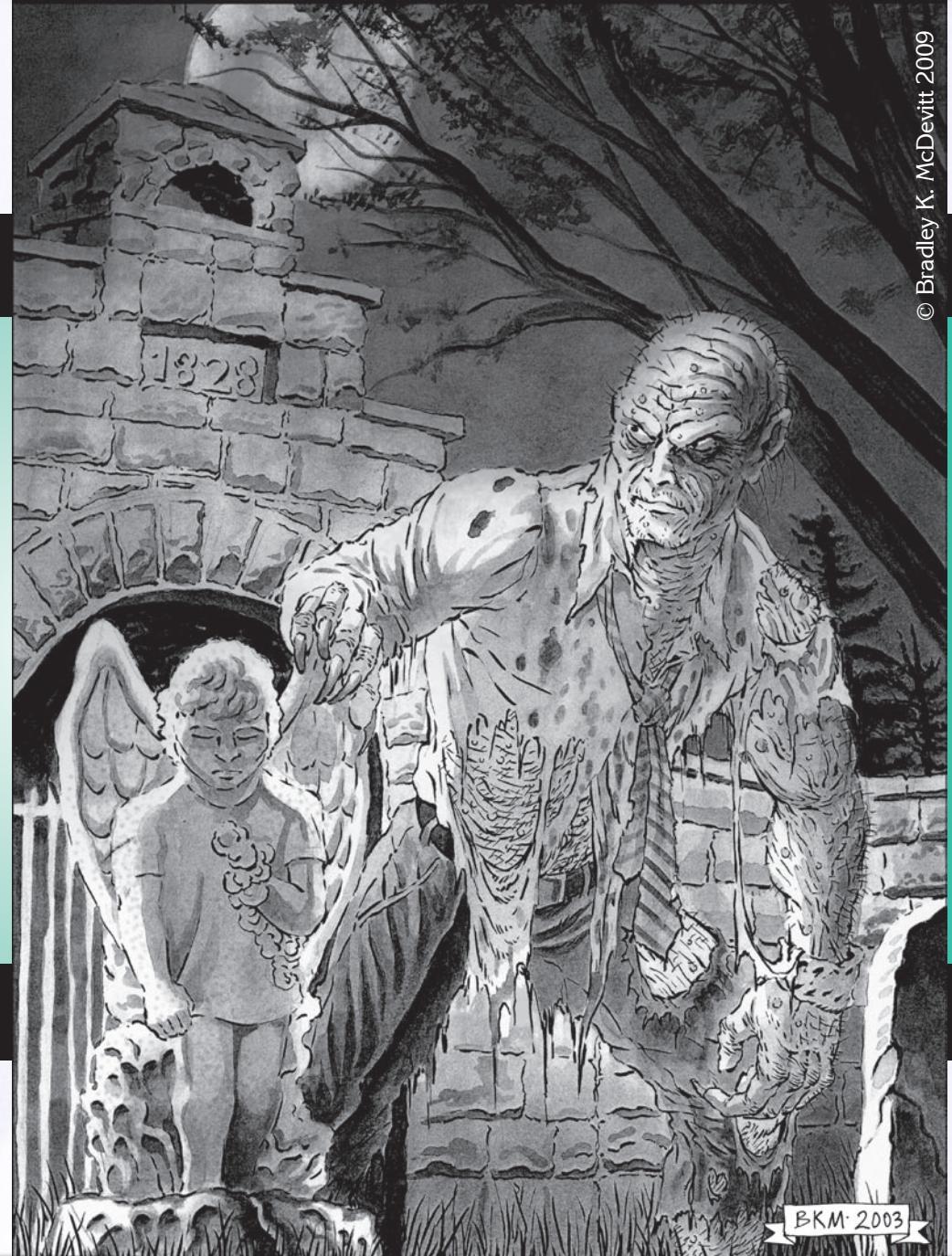
CONTRIBUTOR BACKGROUND:

BRADLEY K. McDEVITT

A lifelong horror fan and twenty-year veteran of the RPG industry, artist Bradley K. McDevitt can claim almost four hundred credits for dozens of different companies from *Wizards of the Coast®* to smaller publishers like *Goodman Games®* and *Postmortem Studios®*. His work may be most often seen in *Battletech®*, *Dungeon Crawl Classics®*, and his long-running *Clip Art Critters®* series.

He lives in the US, in rural Ohio with his wife Jessica. When not drawing, he is fiddling on the Internet or plugging away at any number of (usually-stalled) writing projects. His website may be found at:

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THE SPEAR OF Y'GOLONAC

An Adventure
by Linden Dunham
for *Call of Cthulhu®*

"In Heaven, all the interesting people are missing."

-Friedrich Nietzsche

INTRODUCTION

This is a Call of Cthulhu scenario for 3+ experienced investigators. It is set in the British new town of Redgrove which is located in the West Midlands region of England. Ideally one of the investigators should be a resident of the town or have some connection with it. The events in the scenario take place in June 2004 but this date can easily be altered to suit existing campaigns.

PLAYERS' INFORMATION - THE HOOK

Monday 7th June 2004: One of the investigators is contacted by Andrea Watson, a solicitor who lives and works in Redgrove. Her brother Richard, an archaeologist engaged in a dig in the town, has been murdered. Although the killing took place a month ago the local police don't seem any closer to making an arrest. The case is a strange one and Miss Watson believes that someone with a more "unconventional" approach has a better chance of getting to the bottom of her brother's death than the local police. Richard was killed by a pack of black

rats which attacked him as he slept. Miss Watson is aware of the investigator's penchant for the bizarre and thinks he/she is the ideal person to look into her brother's death. Her exact relationship to the investigator should be determined by the Keeper. It is most likely that they know each other from both being local to Redgrove e.g.:

- A **Lawyer** knows Miss Watson professionally. They may have been on opposing sides in a closely fought court case. Alternatively, they could be colleagues in the same firm.
- A **Doctor** knows Miss Watson as a patient, although she isn't a frequent visitor to the local surgery.
- A **Police Officer** has encountered Miss Watson on the occasions when she attends the police station to advise suspects in custody.
- A **Private Detective** has previously worked for Miss Watson, serving documents or tracing witnesses.

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- A **Journalist**, particularly a crime reporter, has seen Miss Watson in the local magistrates' court where she often defends those charged with minor criminal offences.
- A **Professor or Historian/Antiquarian** is acquainted with Richard Watson by reputation. If the investigator makes a Know roll he/she and the professor were colleagues at some time in their respective careers. In any event Watson seems to have heard of the investigator and must have mentioned their name to his sister.

Other investigators, particularly those with criminal tendencies, may have consulted Miss Watson for advice in a legal matter.

KEEPER'S INFORMATION

Professor Watson was murdered by Ken Dickinson, a local councillor, businessman and worshipper of Y'golonac. Watson and his students were excavating a derelict section of Redgrove town centre known as The Bomb Site. A leisure centre is due to be built on the site by the borough council within the next few months. The council had agreed to allow a brief archaeological dig by a team from Brichester University before the builders moved in.

A Cthuloid artefact, an enchanted spear, is buried beneath the site. Y'golonac has charged Dickinson with recovering the weapon as a test of his loyalty and ability. The Great Old One has promised to make Dickinson his high priest if he obtains the spear. A building firm controlled by Dickinson has the contract to redevelop the site and the councillor was hoping to use the construction works to cover his own excavations. The prospect of an

archaeological dig in the area made Dickinson nervous but he decided to bide his time. He counted on Watson's dig being of too short a duration to uncover anything important. Unfortunately for Dickinson, Watson chose to concentrate his efforts in the immediate area of the spear. Shortly afterwards Watson began to talk about making "a find of extraordinary significance." Fearing that Watson was about to unearth the spear Dickinson used one his Y'golonac given powers (the ability to summon rats) to murder the professor.

In the four weeks since Watson's death Dickinson has been trying to persuade his colleagues on Redgrove Council's development committee to allow the work on the Bomb Site to go ahead. The committee delayed its approval so that Brichester University could consider whether they wanted to carry on with their dig. The university declined, unable or unwilling to replace Professor Watson at short notice.

At the start of the scenario the archaeological team has left the Bomb Site and the builders are about to get council approval to move in. The investigators have only three days to stop Dickinson from getting his hands on the spear.

THE POLICE

The police are baffled by Watson's death. Detective Inspector David Hill at Redgrove station tells the investigators that: "Watson was literally eaten alive by rats. It's like something out of one of those Charles Fort books."

A Persuade roll is needed to convince Inspector Hill to supply copies of the paperwork on Professor Watson's death. If the investigators fail to make a

case for access to the papers Miss Watson will be able to obtain a copy file after 1D3 hours phone calls/visits to the police station.

The salient points of the file are as follows:

Professor Watson was attacked by an undetermined number of black rats in the early hours of Sunday 9th May while sleeping in the spare bedroom of his sister's house. Miss Watson is noted as being absent from the house after being called to advise a client at the police station. Fur and dropping samples taken from the house indicate that the rats gained entrance to the property via the upstairs toilet U-bend. The animals crossed the landing, pushed open the bedroom door which had left been ajar then set upon the professor en masse. The professor suffered extensive trauma and blood loss from rat bites but contrary to Inspector Hill's comments this isn't what killed him. It appears that Watson managed to stagger downstairs, apparently trying to reach the front door before he succumbed to suffocation. Rat hairs were found in his throat and mouth and it appears that one of the animals became lodged there somehow.

The rats are believed to have left the property the same way that they entered. The attack and the rats' general behaviour are described as "almost completely without precedent." Miss Watson discovered her brother's body on returning from the police station at around 5.00 am that morning.

The description of Watson's gory death makes for distressing reading and causes the loss of 0/1pt SAN.

Investigators who make the following skill rolls after reading the file can make some deductions that

(Spear from page 40)

might not have occurred to the police officers or other persons involved in the case:

Biology or Natural History: Black Rats have been supplanted by the Brown Rat in Britain. They are now largely confined to coastal and dockland enclaves. For them to appear so far inland as Redgrove is highly unusual. (This may be mentioned in the file, at the Keeper's discretion, if the investigators don't have the necessary skills.)

Occult: rats were sometimes used as familiars by witches. Conceivably such creatures could be directed to attack a person.

Cthulhu Mythos: Black rats are connected with Y'golonac. They are sometimes used as servitors by his priests and may actually worship the Great Old One in some basic, animalistic fashion.

THE UNIVERSITY

If the investigators make enquiries with Brichester University they are referred to Doctor Atkins, the Head of the Archaeology Department. The Doctor tells the investigators that Watson seemed very happy to be conducting a dig in his home town, although he was concerned at the lack of time allotted to him and his team. Watson was convinced that Redgrove contained an important pre-Roman site and was hopeful that his dig would turn up some evidence of this. Atkins was doubtful about this but admits that Watson "seemed to have it all figured out. From what he'd told me he'd read a fair bit about the area."

A week before his death Watson telephoned Atkins and told him that he'd found the remains of a long barrow on The Bomb Site. Atkins recalls

that Watson was very excited by the discovery and intended to petition Redgrove Council to allow the dig an extension so that the barrow could be properly excavated.

Investigators talking to any of the students who assisted at the dig find that they are all upset at the professor's death. They say that Professor Watson worked them very hard in the last few days before his death. He wanted to excavate as much of the barrow as possible before petitioning the Council. Perhaps he hoped to find some artefacts that would help his case. One of the students recalls that a man came on site a couple of times to speak with Professor Watson and was overheard asking him when he thought the dig would be finished. If asked to describe the visitor the student says he was middle aged with a burly build and wore a sheepskin coat.

A second student recalls visiting Watson at his sister's house and him taking a phone call. She tells the investigators that he seemed irritated with the caller telling them that he was busy and would phone them back. The student doesn't think the caller was anyone the professor knew because he had to write their phone number down on a piece of paper.

It is a sixty mile drive to Brichester from Redgrove. Visiting the University to interview Professor Atkins and the students takes the investigators six hours. If the investigators go for the telephone option it takes two hours as they are transferred to and from various university buildings and departments.

DEATH HOUSE

Andrea Watson will give the investigators the key to her home. She is currently staying at a hotel in town and isn't sure if she wants to return the house where her brother died so horribly. The property is a three bedroom terrace located in one of Redgrove's older (i.e. pre-new town) districts.

Inside, bloodstains on the landing, stair and hall carpets mark the route Professor Watson took to his death. There are more bloodstains in the spare bedroom. As well as sleeping here the professor also used the room as an impromptu study: This room also contains a large number of books and publications on historical and archaeological subjects with a bias towards Ancient Britain. On a desk there is a stack of books and papers which form the bulk of the professor's research into Redgrove and The Bomb Site. Investigators who examine the material should be allowed one Library roll per hour to obtain each of the following pieces of information:

1. Local History Book: "A Midlands History" by Edward Aldridge (a hardback book published in 1932). The following passage is marked in red pencil:

"The spring making town of Redgrove is popularly supposed to have acquired its name from the properties of the water of the nearby River Spar. The river runs through ancient woodland north of the town, flowing over clay soil which gives the water a distinctive reddish hue. However, an obscure account by one Marcus Flavius, a Roman tribune who took part in a police action against druidic remnants in 65AD suggests

MAP 1A - LAKESIDE VIEW GROUND FLOOR AND GARDENS

THE SPIDER OF YCLOONAC



7 LAKESIDE VIEW

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MAP 1A: DOWNSTAIRS AND GROUNDS

1. Privet Hedge

This is twelve feet high and encloses the property. Investigators trying to push their way through the hedge without the proper equipment (e.g. shears or machete) must make a resistance roll pitting their STR against the hedge's STR of 15. Failure means they take 1D4 damaged as they are gouged and scratched by branches. Depending on the time that they are trying to gain entry the Keeper may like to impose Sneak or Luck tests. Failure means that the investigator's noisy blundering has alerted the occupants of the house (if present).

2. Gate

Ten feet high, iron barred, double gate attached to brick pillars. It is opened electronically from the house or via hand-held remote control. Visitors gain access by speaking into the intercom fixed on the right hand pillar. This is connected to the downstairs office (see 5 below).

3. Garden

Landscaped garden and flowerbeds with a gravel drive leading up to the house. Not much cover for a stealthy approach to the house. All Sneak and Hide rolls are made against half usual skill.

4. Double Garage

Fitted with doors that operate on a similar system to the gates, but without the intercom: The doors can be opened with a remote control or from the downstairs office (see 5 below). The garage

usually contains two cars, Dickinson's Rover 75 and Carswell's Mitsubishi Challenger.

5. Downstairs Office

Formerly a box/utility room, this has been converted into a small security station. A desk and chair face a bank of four video monitors which are connected to the cameras covering the four sides of the house. The gate intercom feeds into this room and there is a control panel for the gate, garage doors and burglar alarm.

Carswell can generally be found in this room except when he is not running errands for Dickinson. He is as likely to be reading the paper as watching the monitors. This may give the investigators a chance of avoiding the security cameras.

Carswell keeps a baseball bat to one side of the desk (treat as large club doing 1D8 damage) and a .38 revolver in the top drawer. Both weapons are for use against intruders but Carswell will only resort to firearms if heavily outnumbered. Guns mean police and the last thing he and his boss want is the law swarming all over the house.

6. Sitting Room

Furnished in extravagant style: Lots of brass fittings, reproduction ceiling and corner mouldings, overstuffed sofa and armchairs, huge flat screen television with dvd player, and video recorder.

7. Dining Room

Similar decor to the Sitting Room. A heavy glass topped table is surrounded by six brass framed

chairs. The room also has a large and well stocked drinks cabinet.

8. Hallway

Floored with wooden parquet tiles. A console in the wall enables those entering via the front door to switch off the burglar alarm.

9. Kitchen/Breakfast Bar

This is well appointed with granite work surfaces and high quality appliances.



MAP 1B: UPSTAIRS

1. Stairs and Landing

These are carpeted with thick pile: +10% bonus to all Sneak rolls and corresponding -10% penalty to any Listen rolls.

2. Master Bedroom

This is Dickinson's room. It is decorated in the same flamboyant but tasteless manner as the sitting and dining rooms. Contains a double bed and large wardrobe full of good quality clothes. There is an en suite toilet/bathroom which contains the usual porcelain furniture.

3. Smaller Bedroom

Carswell's room. Contains a single bed, wardrobe and set of drawers. Carswell's clothing isn't as high quality as Dickinson's. Tracksuits and football tops tend to predominate.

4. Main Bathroom

Similar to the en suite in Dickinson's room, but bigger.

5. Upstairs Office

Formerly a bedroom, now converted for Dickinson's business use. Furnished with desk, swivel chair, computer and two filing cabinets.

The computer is used for legitimate Council and CSS business. There is nothing incriminating on the hard drive.

The filing cabinets are both locked but can be opened with a Locksmith/Mechanical Repair roll if the investigators haven't managed to obtain the keys (Dickinson and Carswell both have sets).

One cabinet contains documents relating to Dickinson's business activities, both legal and otherwise. Investigators reading through the papers (which takes 25 - INT hours) and who make and Accounting or Law roll will realise that they comprise sufficient evidence to bring multiple prosecutions for bribery, corruption, fraud, and tax evasion against Dickinson, Saunders and various associates.

The other cabinet contains cult material:

- **Twenty video cassettes:** These are films, shot on video camera, of cult rituals taking place in a cavernous, dark room, possibly a warehouse. The films are of variable quality, mainly due to poor lighting but all feature a human sacrifice being tortured by the cult. Each one climaxes with Saunders transforming into Y'golonac and devouring the sacrifice. Watching one of these filmed rituals costs 1/1D6 SAN. Dickinson likes to show the videos to visiting cult members or sometimes watch them by himself.
- **Mobile phone:** Dickinson uses this to contact other cult members, usually to arrange meetings. The telephone numbers of fifteen cultists are stored in the phone's memory. When not in use the phone is kept "locked". Bypassing the code requires an Electronics roll and, at the Keeper's discretion, specialist equipment.

• **Title Deeds:** A land certificate issued by HM Land Registry proving NBS's ownership of a premises identified as Oakley Park. The purchase took place in 2000. Local investigators who make a Know roll realise that the certificate refers to a derelict bowling alley situated near one of Redgrove's main dual carriageways. There is a 1:1250 plan of the property and its surroundings attached to the certificate and its location can easily be found by comparing the plan to a Redgrove street map.

- **Booklet:** A sheaf of A4 papers stapled together. The first page is a letter dated 1999 from a bookshop with an address in Lower Brichester. It is addressed to Dickinson thanking him for his order of pornographic books and magazines before going on to say: "Please accept the enclosed as a gift. I am sure it will be of interest to you." The signature at the bottom of the letter is illegible.
- The remaining pages are poor quality photocopies of a handwritten ledger, essentially a samizdat edition of volume 12 of the Revelations of Glaaki (the original was destroyed back in the early 1970s, and the samizdat version is taken from a copy done on an old photos tat machine). Reading these pages drew both Dickinson and Saunders into the service of Y'golonac. Investigators who read the manuscript open themselves to direct attack by the Great Old One.





7 LAKESIDE VIEW

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(Spear from page 41)

that the town's name may have a more sinister origin.

Flavius describes leading an expedition against a particularly degenerate druid band which occupied a dense region of forest near the town of Salinae (modern day Droitwich Spa). The druids and their followers preyed on nearby settlements belonging to the pacified Dobunni tribe. Flavius mentions rumours of people carried off for sacrifice to primitive British gods.

The Roman expedition began by crossing a river whose water ran red "as if blood flowed between its banks" - surely a reference to the modern River Spar. The sight of the river discomfited the soldiers who took the red water as a bad omen. Showing an astute intellect Flavius had a priest accompanying the expedition address the troops and convince them that the river was a prophecy of Roman victory: The legionaries would defeat their enemies and wade ankle deep in British blood.

Emboldened the Romans pressed on through the forest, until at dusk they came to a clearing. There they found a druidic ceremony taking place with naked worshippers cavorting ecstatically between sacrificial pyres and abasing themselves before a vast glowing idol. Appalled at the spectacle, Flavius gave his men the order to attack. Taken by surprise the Britons were no match for the well trained legionaries and most were killed in the initial onslaught. At this point the account becomes unreliable. Flavius maintains that the idol at the centre

of the grove was actually a demon of some sort that tore at the attacking legionaries with its two vast mouths or impaled them with a spear that literally took their souls from their bodies. The creature was eventually driven off by volleys of javelins, retreating into a passage that led under a small hill. Unable to make his men pursue the monster underground Flavius ordered the passage sealed with a heavy stone which was then ritually blessed by the legionaries' priest using a 'powerful holy sign.'*

We can safely discount the latter part of this account as utterly fantastic. Nonetheless, it does raise the intriguing possibility that the name Redgrove may refer to a sacrificial glade which existed long before the town itself was built."

*Professor Watson has made a marginal note here. It reads "Long barrow? Likely to be Neolithic. May even pre-date woodland"

PCs who make a Cthulhu Mythos roll after reading this account will realise that the reference to a glowing idol actually describes an instance of possession by Y'golonac. The book's bibliography lists the source of Flavius's account as the Vatican Library, a major repository of esoteric writings. Investigators making a History or English Language (the latter at half listed skill) will realise that Aldridge's account fails to point out that "Spar" in old English means "spear". It is quite possible that the river takes its name from the artefact mentioned in Flavius's account. The legend of the spear may have

persisted in local memory until well after the Roman occupation.

2. Wartime Press Clipping: From "The Redgrove Indicator" dated 21st December 1940 (photocopy of an old local newspaper article):

"Artefacts found in rubble in King Street following the bombing in November have now been examined by noted local historian Edward Aldridge who described them as "very significant."

The artefacts, several Roman javelin heads and a small stone statue were found by local fireman Charles Mitchell after German aircraft raided the town on the night of 14th November. Several houses in King Street were destroyed in the raid but there were no casualties.

Mr Aldridge believes that the javelin heads are relics of a bitterly fought battle between Roman soldiers and British druids which took place around 65AD. Mr Aldridge said, 'I believe that Redgrove was once a centre of worship for the British religion before being destroyed by the Romans in their campaign to exterminate the druids. The discovery of what appears to be an idol along with the javelins only reinforces my belief.'

Mr Aldridge has now returned the artefacts so that they can be displayed in the town museum.'

3. Wartime Photo: A black and white aerial photograph with writing on the back. A

(Spear from page 46)

Language (German) roll is required to understand the writing which states that the photograph was obtained from a German historical archive and is a copy of an original taken by a Luftwaffe reconnaissance plane in November 1940. The photograph shows the centre of Redgrove after it was bombed. Several large craters are visible, one of which has been ringed in red pen.

4. Map: Modern street map of Redgrove folded so that the town centre section is uppermost: A red circle has been drawn to the south of King Street. Investigators who compare the map with the Luftwaffe photograph will realise that the circles on both documents cover exactly the same area.

5. Interview Notes: Brief hand written notes of an interview with a Charles Mitchell dated 3rd January 2004.

"Was fireman in Redgrove during the war... Bomb fell on King Street. Started blaze along the entire terrace. Massive crater left in terrace. Helped fill it in afterwards. Found spears and idol. Also saw massive carved stone at bottom of crater... (possible entrance to barrow - see Aldridge)...but crater was ordered to be filled in before anyone could look further...dangerous to public. Says idol made him uneasy...unable to be more specific."

If the PCs try to trace Mitchell they will find his name and address in the local telephone directory. If they go to visit him refer to LIBRARY/BACKGROUND INFORMATION below.

6. Recent Press Clipping (i): From The Redgrove Indicator dated Thursday 29th April 2004:

"Archaeologists excavating the Town Centre Bomb Site claim to be on the verge of making an important discovery. Professor Richard Watson who is heading the dig told the Indicator that he and his team are within days of uncovering the entrance to an Ancient British long barrow. Unfortunately, the dig is scheduled to come to an end this week so that work can begin on the long awaited Bomb Site development. Professor Watson intends to petition to the Council's development committee for an extension of time."

7. Recent Press Clipping (ii): From the Redgrove Indicator dated Thursday 6th May 2004

"Following a special meeting of the Council's development committee archaeologists excavating The Bomb Site have been granted to leave to remain on the site for an extra two weeks. Chief archaeologist Professor Richard Watson said that "I am very pleased by the committee's decision. I feel sure that we're on the verge of discovering something very important here in Redgrove. We just need a little more time so that we can make a proper job of it."

However, comments by committee chairman Ken Dickinson show that the decision was far from unanimous: "The Council gave Professor Watson and his colleagues ample time to excavate the site.

CONVERSION TO DELTA GREEN

PISCES will take an interest in Professor Watson's death because of its unusual nature. Assuming the investigators are PISCES agents they are assigned to look into the matter to establish whether it has any paranormal aspect. Once they uncover Dickinson's cult the investigators will be expected to take the appropriate action.

Non-PISCES investigators will at some point encounter the agents assigned to the case. PISCES will initially warn the investigators away but may later seek their assistance. A request for help occurs if the PISCES team are short handed due to lack of resources, or if they've been decimated in an encounter with the cult. Investigators who appear knowledgeable in relevant fields (e.g. local history, the occult or Cthulhu mythos) may also be consulted by PISCES.

In the Delta Green milieu "American Books..." was raided by PISCES in 1974 and its proprietor interned in the Magonia containment facility. However, not all of the Brichester cultists were rounded up and they have since regrouped. Rather than open a new bookshop and present another sitting target for PISCES the cult has gone into the mail order business instead. The business operates out of a suburban house in Brichester. Advertising and distribution of pornography and "the Revelations" are as described in CONCLUSION AND SAN AWARDS above. A box number is used in all advertising to discourage any casual callers. The enterprise is moderately profitable and the cult is thinking of making the move to a website based service with the aim of expanding its reach beyond the British Isles. If PISCES learns of the existence of this revitalised Brichester cult it will attempt to destroy it. This new assault on the worshippers of Y'golonac could form the subject of a follow on scenario.

Name: Nick Baker
Occupation: Local Government Officer
Colleges, Degrees: Redgrove Technology College
Birthplace: Redgrove, UK
Mental Disorders: Fetish, Gambling
Sex: M **Age:** 43
STR: 9 **DEX:** 10 **INT:** 13 **Idea:** 65
CON: 11 **APP:** 10 **POW:** 5 **Luck:** 25
SIZ: 15 **SAN:** 25 **EDU:** 16 **Know:** 80
Damage Bonus: None

Skills: Accounting 30%, Bargain 30%, Computer Use 50%, Conceal 30%, Credit Rating 25%, Drive Auto 40%, Fast Talk 30%, Hide 20%, Law 30%, Library Use 40%, Persuade 20%, Spot Hidden 30%

Notes: Baker works in the Redgrove Council's committee services department which provides administrative support to elected representatives. Consequently Baker is privy to many of the decisions made by Councillors. He is quite willing to pass on confidential information to the investigators, for a price. Baker has a gambling problem and is perpetually in need of money to bet on horse racing, and other sports. He had intended to pass information to Professor Watson regarding Dickinson in exchange for payment. It's unlikely that the professor would have involved himself in anything so tawdry as bribing corrupt officials for information. The investigators of course may well be a different matter. If the investigators want to obtain any other Redgrove Council records Baker will agree to try and get them but always for a price. Baker knows and fears Dickinson's murderous nature and thus expects to be paid for his trouble. He can usually be bargained down to about 50% of his initial asking price though.

The investigators should be wary of trusting Baker. If the cult find out about his activities Baker will betray the investigators in the hope that it will save his skin (it won't of course).

Baker is overweight and balding with watery blue eyes. His general manner is furtive. He is shabbily dressed even when wearing a suit at work.

(Spear from page 47)

I'm sure that if there was anything there worth digging up it would have been found by now. It's grossly unfair to expect the people of Redgrove to wait any longer for this development which will bring badly needed jobs to the town."

8. Mystery Phone Number: A piece of paper with a mobile phone number written on it. This is placed inside the Aldridge volume above and will fall out of the book if the investigator currently holding the book makes a Luck roll. An investigator who calls the number will find themselves talking to one Nick Baker. He will be wary of identifying himself at first but if an investigator explains that they are looking into Professor Watson's death he agrees to meet in his local pub, The King's Head, 8.00 that evening. He is not willing to discuss the matter on the phone but a Persuade roll is sufficient to make him admit that he has information which might be relevant to the professor's death.

"I'll be sitting at the table nearest the back door," he says before hanging up.

THE KING'S HEAD

The King's Head is a traditional pub in the older part of Redgrove, located within half a mile of the town centre. It has only one bar. When the investigators arrive they see an overweight man sitting at the back of the room near the door to the garden. He spots the investigators as they approach his table and says, "Hope you've brought plenty of money with you."

Baker wants £1000.00 for the contents of an A4 size brown envelope he has tucked into his jacket. He will be cagey about its contents but a successful Fast Talk roll will get him to reveal that it contains incriminating evidence relating to a local councillor with a strong motive for getting rid of Professor Watson.

Once he has been paid Baker produces the envelope which contains the documents listed below (along with other pertinent information that Baker may provide if asked):

1. Tender Document: A tender submitted by Newtown Building Services Ltd (NBS) in its bid for the contract to develop the Bomb Site. An Investigator who makes an Accounting roll or who has building/civil engineering experience will see that the tender is priced well below cost. There is no way for NBS to make a profit on the project. Attached to the tender is letter from Redgrove Council to Redgrove Building Ltd informing the company that their bid has been successful.

2. Company Search Results: Computer printouts from a specialist firm of search agents showing vital information relating to NBS and Citadel Security Services Ltd (CSS).

The directors of NBS are listed as Gavin Saunders, Simon Carswell and the company secretary as Gordon Foster. The directors of CSS are Ken Dickinson, Simon Carswell and the company secretary is Gordon Foster. Both companies have the same registered office of 6 Market Square, Town Centre, Redgrove. The reports also list the home addresses of the persons named in them:

(Spear from page 48)

- Dickinson and Carswell: 7 Lakeside View, Redgrove
- Foster: 16 Worcester Close, Redgrove
- Saunders: The Old Vicarage, Fakenham Green
- NBS's main trading premises are Unit 9, Springfield Industrial Estate, Redgrove.
- CSS's main trading premises are Unit 48, Springfield Industrial Estate, Redgrove.

Baker doesn't know Carswell but tells the investigators that Dickinson and Saunders were friends at school and went into the building trade together. They made a fortune in Redgrove during the new town building boom of the late 1960s and early 1970s. Their partnership was dissolved in 1988 when Dickinson went into local politics. The reason Dickinson gave for this was that being involved with a building firm would adversely affect his political career due to the potential for conflicts of interest. The two men remain close friends though, and Baker believes a lot of Dickinson's money remains tied up in NBS and that he still has a major say in running the firm. Dickinson founded CSS in 1989 claiming he still needs to work to earn a living. The firm has contracts for guarding industrial premises all over the West Midlands.

3. Committee Minutes: Notes of various meetings of the Council's Development Committee over the last twelve months. From reading these it is apparent that Dickinson has

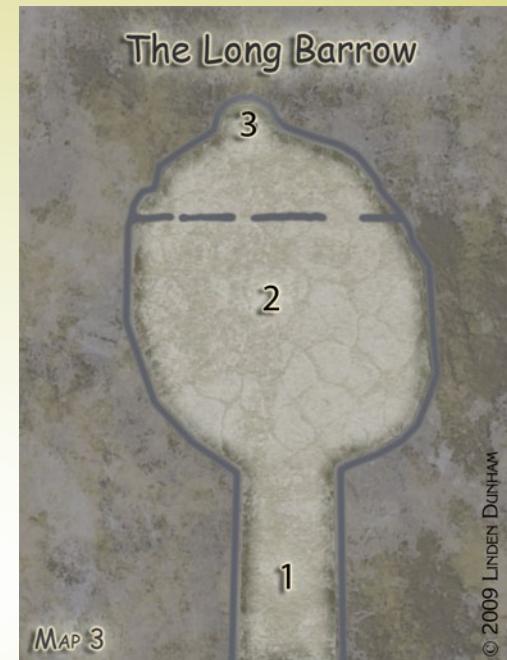
THE LONG BARROW

Originally a neolithic burial chamber the barrow was occupied by Celtic Y'golonac worshippers who converted it into a summoning chamber. Once called by his priests Y'golonac would leave the barrow and appear to the celebrants gathered outside.

1. Passageway: Around eight feet high and three feet wide, its sides are lined with slabs of stone similar to the one used to seal the entrance. Small falls of solid trickle from the earthen roof but there is no immediate danger of collapse. Investigators who make an Idea roll find it strange that the passage is so high and guess that something larger than humans used it at some time.

2. Worship Chamber: After twenty yards the passageway widens into a roughly oval shaped chamber. The chamber is bisected three quarters along its length by a low wall made of stones. A Cthulhu Mythos roll is required to deduce that the wall represents the vast pile of bricks behind which Y'golonac dwells. Worshippers would remain in the larger section of the chamber while the object of their adoration stood in the smaller section.

3. Alcove: A dark recessed area in the upper quarter of the worship chamber. Anyone standing in the worship chamber will notice that it contains a skeleton. A Spot Hidden roll is required to notice that the skeleton appears deformed in some way. These are the remains of the avatar of Y'golonac that was sealed inside the barrow by the Romans. The avatar was mortally wounded by multiple javelin strikes and bled to death. Close up the skeleton is a hideous sight, exhibiting numerous deviations from normal human anatomy: Distended limbs and ribcage, complete absence of skull and neck vertebrae, and perhaps worst of all two sets of perfectly preserved fangs, one in each bony palm. Viewing the avatar's remains costs 1/1D6 SAN but it is otherwise harmless.



Half a dozen javelin heads litter the ground at the skeleton's feet. They are similar to the weapons in Redgrove museum. Amongst the javelin fragments is a spear of markedly different design: A long iron blade surmounts a shaft of well preserved ash wood. This is the spear referred to by Marcus Flavius and currently sought by Dickinson. It is similar in function to the enchanted cane described in the Lesser Grimoire (page 153, CoC 5th edition). Creation requirements and SAN loss are the same. However, the spear can only drain POW from victims that it actually wounds. Each successful strike with the spear does 1D8 +db physical damage to the target and leaches away an equal amount of POW (both doubled in the event of an impale - Y'golonac likes to cause pain). Anyone touching the spear who isn't a worshipper of Y'golonac loses one point of POW which is absorbed by the spear. There is one point of POW stored in the spear at present.

Volume 12 of the Revelations of Glaaki**Language:** English (Early 19th Century)**SAN Loss:** 1/1D3,**Cthulhu Mythos:** +2%**Spell Multiplier:** x0

Photocopy of a handwritten version of this rare mythos text. It doesn't contain any spells but reading it is almost certain to lead to contact with Y'golonac.

A Midlands History**Author:** Edward Aldridge**Language:** English**SAN Loss:** 1/1D2**Cthulhu Mythos:** +1%**Skill Checks:** +2 % Occult, +3% History**Spell Multiplier:** x0.

A vanity press hardback book published in 1932 taking an idiosyncratic look at the history of the British Midlands region since the Neolithic period. It covers the counties of Worcestershire, Staffordshire, and Warwickshire as well as the urban centres of Birmingham, the Black Country and the Potteries. It is by no means a comprehensive work. Aldridge tends to give prominence to events and places that he personally finds interesting (basically anything to do with Ancient Britain and Roman times). Some of the events Aldridge describes are mythos related although he himself is resolutely sceptical about alleged supernatural phenomena.

(Spear from page 49)

lobbied hard for the town's new leisure centre to be built on the Bomb Site. The minutes also show that he opposed plans for an archaeological dig on the site saying it would lead to "unacceptable delay."

Baker admits that the papers are circumstantial evidence but feels that they do show Dickinson is "up to something" and has some kind of plan for the Bomb Site, one that which doesn't involve making a lot of money. He believes that Dickinson had Professor Watson killed but scoffs at any suggestion that supernatural means were employed to carry out the murder. He thinks it far more likely that some paid thugs from CSS were involved.

TAKING ACTION

At this point the investigators should at least suspect that Dickinson is responsible for Professor Watson's death. It should also be apparent that Dickinson wishes to unearth something from the long barrow on the Bomb Site. The investigators must prevent this. Rather than prescribe a set course of action for them to follow the Keeper should allow the investigators to make their own plans for dealing with Dickinson and his cult. The information below is intended to assist the Keeper in adjudicating the outcome of the investigators' actions. It is assumed that the investigators will visit various locations connected to Dickinson and his associates.

REDGROVE MUSEUM

The town museum referred to in the wartime clipping is long gone. It was replaced in the 1980s by a new facility located in a former spring factory

on the edge of town near the main road leading north to Birmingham. Most of the exhibits relate to Redgrove's industrial past. There is a smaller display given over to pre-industrial times which includes the javelin fragments found by Charles Mitchell. There is no sign of the idol. Enquiries with the museum's curator reveal that it was stolen in a burglary in 2000 and was the only item taken. The curator has some photographs of the idol which he is happy to show the investigators. The photos show an obese, almost spherical human figure standing around ten inches high and made of black stone. The idol has malformed trunk like limbs. Deep holes have been bored into the ends of its arms and investigators making a Spot Hidden roll discern crude triangular teeth carved around each hole. Investigators who succeed in a Cthulhu Mythos roll recognise the idol as a statue of Y'golonac.

The curator will happily talk to the investigators about the idol although he admits "to never caring for it very much. It's got an evil look about it." He believes the idol is quite unique for its period and that nothing else quite like it has been found before or since. His theory is that it was stolen by, or for, a collector of some type. The curator thinks it likely that other artefacts may be buried under Redgrove. If something like the idol was discovered by accident then who knows what a proper dig might find?

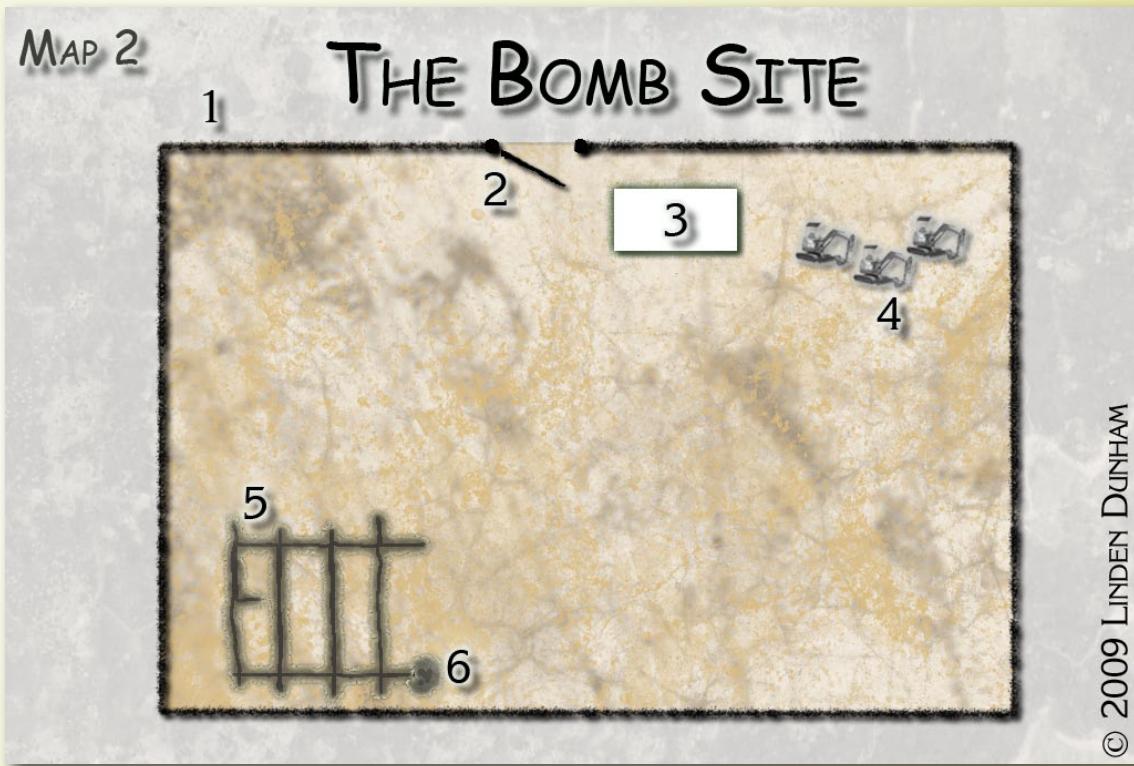
MESSRS DAVIS LODGE AND FOSTER

6 Market Square turns out to be the town centre offices of a firm of solicitors. Investigators who try to see Gordon Foster will find it impossible without an appointment. Investigators with a police or other official background can probably invent a compelling reason to see Foster right

GENERAL DESCRIPTION

A rectangle of dirt 500 meters long by 200 wide on the outer edge of the town centre, sandwiched between the ring road and a multi-storey car park. The surface of the site is strewn with old bricks and is very uneven. Anyone moving across the area at more than half usual speed (i.e. 4 yards per round) needs to roll their DEX or less on 1D20 to avoid tripping and falling.

1. **Fence:** The site is enclosed by 10ft high temporary steel barrier fencing which requires a Climb roll to scale.
2. **Gate:** Double gate of similar construction to the fence. Kept open during the day but is padlocked at night.
3. **Site Office/Portakabin:** Contains facilities for the site workers. At night it houses a CSS security guard who is supposed to patrol the perimeter of the site once an hour.
4. **Heavy Plant:** Three "JCB" type diggers are parked here. One has a pneumatic drill attachment fitted to it.
5. **Dig Site:** A series of carefully excavated trenches left by Professor Watson's team.
6. **Entrance to Long Barrow:** Set into one side of the deepest trench is a partially uncovered piece of light grey rock with angular markings inscribed upon it. Investigators who make a Cthulhu Mythos roll recognise the marks as two vertices of an Elder Sign. Exposing the Sign in its entirety takes an hour if proceeding with picks and shovels. An investigator with the appropriate Operate Heavy Machinery skill could use the diggers near-by to remove the remainder of the earth in ten minutes provided they make a skill roll (one per five minutes allowed). Eventually the complete Elder Sign is revealed, cut into a six foot diameter rock slab. If the investigators wish to remove the slab it should be treated as having a STR of 100 for resistance roll purposes due to its weight. Alternatively one of the diggers could be used to lift the slab or even just smash it. Again an Operate Heavy Machinery roll is required. Behind the slab is a passageway sloping gently down into the earth.



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BLACK RATS

Highly intelligent specimens of the infamous Plague Rat. They worship Y'golonac and sometimes act as low level servitors for his cultists. Their small size makes them ideal for spying, and they are dangerous if they attack en masse.

STR:	2
CON:	4
SIZ:	2
INT:	15
POW:	4
DEX:	18
Move:	14
HP:	3

Attacks: Bite 60% for 1HP of damage.

Special Attack 40%

If victim has their mouth open e.g. to scream or shout the rat will attempt to jump into their mouth and lodge its forequarters in the throat. The victim usually dies of shock and suffocation. Drowning rules apply the first round after a successful attack. The victim also loses 1D4/1D6 SAN.

Skills: Climb 85%, Hide 60%, Jump 60%, Sneak 60%

CALL FORTH THE BLACK HORDE

This is a Contact spell costing 1MP and 1D3 SAN. Success brings 1D6+6 black rats to the caster. The rats are intelligent and, although they cannot be bound, they will generally carry out one request for the caster, provided he or she is a worshipper of Y'golonac. Non-worshippers will be attacked.

(Spear from page 50)

away. Otherwise they will have to wait until the next working day for Mr Foster to fit them in.

Foster refuses to discuss his dealings with NBS and CSS citing client confidentiality. Accusations of cult membership are of course denied. Unless the investigators are prepared to strong arm Foster in his office they won't learn anything useful from him. At the same time they could end up tipping their hand to the cultists. Foster will go straight to Dickinson if he believes the investigators are a threat to the cult.

Foster keeps some files relating to NBS and CSS in his office. They relate to legitimate business activity and don't contain any incriminating material.

FOSTER'S HOUSE

16 Worcester Close is part of a modern development of mock tudor detached houses on the west side of Redgrove. In addition to Foster the property is also occupied by his wife and two daughters aged 7 and 9. Foster's family are not involved with the mythos. They believe that his nocturnal absences from home are due to his having to meet clients outside usual business hours. There are no cult items kept in Foster's house although he does keep some records relating to NBS and CSS's illegal activities in a floor safe. Anyone reading these papers who makes an Accounting roll will realise that Foster has been swindling his clients by "skimming" from their profits and diverting the money to his own account in the Channel Islands.

SAUNDER'S HOUSE

The Old Vicarage, Fakenham Green is a venerable former church property located in one of the small

villages lying to the south of Redgrove. The property is surrounded by an overgrown hedge, the garden is unkempt and the house itself looks dilapidated: Its windows are encrusted with dirt, the paintwork is peeling and ivy has run riot over the walls. Locals tell the investigators that Saunders has let the place go since his wife was murdered. He has also become something of a recluse and is rarely seen in the village. He still goes to work though and sometimes goes out in the evening as well.

Investigators who knock on the door of the house won't receive an answer. Breaking into the house is extremely dangerous. If Saunders is at home he will transform into Y'golonac and attack the investigators. Breaking in during the day, when Saunders is at work, is safer but runs the risk of attracting the attention of the local neighbourhood watch who promptly call the police. Saunders may have withdrawn from village life but his neighbours are still looking out for him.

If the investigators gain entry to the house they find that the interior seems unlivied in: There is no food in the kitchen and most of the rooms and furniture are covered in a layer of thick dust. The house contains nothing of interest. It is quite possible that the investigators will have risked their liberty or lives getting inside for no real gain.

NBS OFFICES

Unit 9, Springfield Industrial Estate consists of a low rise office building and a vehicle depot containing heavy plant. Saunders can usually be found here during the day. If confronted in his office he is unlikely turn into Y'golonac, but as with Foster, the investigators may end up announcing

SOURCES/ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The main inspiration for this adventure came from growing up in a British new town and working in local government. Although Redgrove is a thinly disguised version of my home town of Redditch I should emphasise that Redgrove Council is entirely fictional and is in no way meant to be a portrayal of any of my employers, past or present.

The company names used in the scenario are, at the time of writing, also fictional. No resemblance is intended to any similarly named body existing in the real world.

Cold Print by Ramsey Campbell from the anthology of the same name (ISSN 074724059 0). This was my starting point for information on Y'golonac and his methods of recruiting worshippers.

"Memento Mori" by J B Hill from issue 74 of Challenge magazine (ISSN 08945535). Call of Cthulhu scenario featuring Y'golonac worshipping black rats which are rather more formidable than the generic rat packs given in the CoC rules. I've adopted these "super rats" for this scenario and have added to the statistics given in "Memento Mori."

Imperial Governor by George Shipway (ISBN 0304363243). An excellent mock autobiography of Suetonius Paulinus, the Roman general who quelled Boadicea's uprising. Shipway's druids, with their enthusiasm for torture and gory sacrifice, could easily be Y'golonac cultists.

"PISCES: Her Majesty's Watchmen" by Adam Crossingham, with Graeme Price, from issue 2 of The Black Seal Magazine (ISSN 14761939). Article expanding on the PISCES chapter of Delta Green: Countdown. Referred to for the Delta Green conversion notes.

Historical information came from the Roman Britain website at www.roman-britain.org.

(Spear from page 52)

themselves to the cult without much to show for it. There is a staff of twelve at the offices and depot, none of whom are cultists. The premises are guarded at night by CSS.

CSS OFFICES

Unit 48 Springfield Industrial Estate is a small single storey office building with a large wire fenced compound in which are parked an assortment of car-vans and transits. Almost all of the vehicles are marked with the company logo (a stylised castle tower). The only exception is a white transit van parked at the back of the compound. This is the van used in cult abductions and forensic examination of its interior will reveal blood, hair, and skin traces as well as rope fibres.

The premises has a staff of four none of whom are connected with their boss's cult. At night it is staffed by two CSS security guards. Dickinson can often be found here during the day when not involved in council business.

DICKINSON'S HOUSE (MAPS 1A AND 1B)

7 Lakeside View is a part of an executive development of twelve modern detached houses. The estate overlooks Redgrove's main park which has a lake in the middle hence the name. The property is usually occupied by Dickinson and Carswell although both are often absent from the house on business.

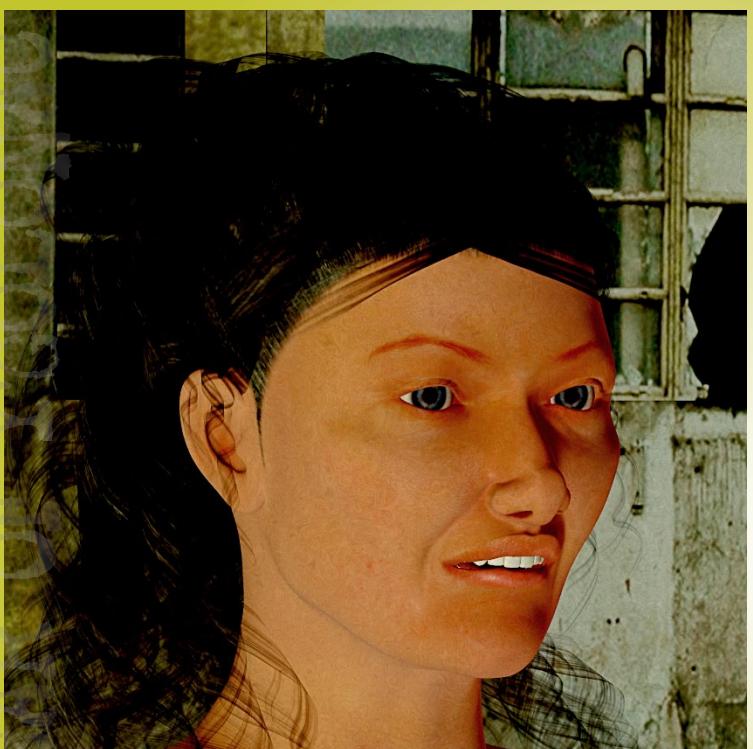
THE CULT

Dickinson heads a cult of sixteen other worshippers. Some cultists, such as Collins, are

outwardly respectable men but have perverted desires which cult membership enables them to satisfy. Others such as Carswell and six CSS employees are simply violent sociopaths. If the investigators are able to obtain the criminal records of any of this group they find a grim litany of drug abuse, serious assaults and sexual offences. These individuals provide the cult's muscle and are responsible for procuring sacrificial victims once a month from the streets of nearby Birmingham. They prey on the city's vulnerable groups because they're the least likely to be missed: Prostitutes, alcoholics, drug addicts and the homeless are all liable to be bundled into a van and taken to the abandoned bowling alley where the rest of the cult are eagerly awaiting the commencement of the night's ritual. These abductions are always carried out by two CSS employees under the supervision of Carswell.

At 19.00 on the night of Thursday 10th June, the first day that work is allowed to recommence, Dickinson and Carswell go to the Bomb Site and are let into the compound by a security guard/cultist. Carswell uses one of the diggers to excavate the Elder Sign and smashes it with the machine's drill attachment. Dickinson enters the long barrow and emerges ten minutes later with the spear. Saunders then fills in the archaeological workings. Carswell and the security guard depart for Birmingham in their white transit van while Dickinson proceeds to Oakley Park where the rest of the cult awaits having been summonsed. At 23.30 Carswell returns from Birmingham with two sacrifices. One is dispatched by Dickinson using the spear and charging it with 10 points of POW. The other is devoured by Y'golonac manifesting itself through Saunders.

ANDREA WATSON



Name:	Andrea Watson			
Occupation:	Solicitor (Lawyer)			
Colleges, Degrees:	UICE/Bham Poly - LLB			
Birthplace:	Redgrove, UK			
Mental Disorders:	None			
Sex:	F	Age:	35	
STR:	10	DEX:	11	INT: 16
CON:	11	APP:	14	POW: 15
SIZ:	12	SAN:	75	LUCK: 75
EDU:	17	Know:	85	
Damage Bonus:	None			

Skills: Accounting 40%, Bargain 60%, Computer Use 50%, Credit Rating 50%, Drive Auto 50%, Fast Talk 60%, Law 80%, Library Use 60%, Listen 40%, Persuade 70%, Psychology 50%, Spot Hidden 40%

Notes: Andrea Watson grew up in a middle class liberal household. She went to university to study law, aiming to become the kind of crusading lawyer who defended the downtrodden and overturned miscarriages of justice. Although she qualified as a solicitor prolonged contact with Redgrove's criminal classes has eroded much of her early idealism. Nonetheless she takes pride in being a professional and thus remains committed to doing a good job for her clients. She has a reputation as a highly competent criminal solicitor and advocate.

The horrible death of her brother has left Miss Watson badly shaken. In the past she's acted for defendants in murder cases but Richard's killing is like nothing she's ever encountered before. She isn't inclined to believe in the supernatural but on the evidence to date she is prepared to accept the possibility of its existence. She has contacted the investigators in the hope that they can provide an explanation for what happened to her brother.

Andrea Watson is tall and slim with shoulder length black hair and blue eyes. Her skin is quite pale due to the long hours she spends working into the night on her case files. She is attractive in an angular sort of way.

(Spear from page 53)

Having recovered the spear Dickinson has proved his ability but Y'golonac is not prepared to make him high priest yet. The Great Old One will reward him with the ability to cast more spells but in return expects Dickinson to perform other tasks (including the enlargement of the Redgrove cult) before it confers the ultimate honour. It's possible that Dickinson might never attain the high priesthood. There are plenty of other candidates scattered across the world.

Obviously the events described above are subject to change, depending on the actions of the investigators. If Dickinson becomes aware of the investigators' interest in him he will attempt to "discourage" them. Having dispatched Professor Watson in a spectacularly gruesome manner and stirred up a lot of unwelcome fuss as a result Dickinson will be more circumspect in dealing with the investigators. Initially he will use CSS employees as frighteners: Investigators find themselves being followed, threatened, beaten up and warned to stay away. These attacks may escalate to potentially fatal "accidents". Kidnapping and subsequent murder in a remote place by Carswell and his thugs is also a distinct possibility. If all else fails Dickinson resorts to summoning the rats again. He is reluctant to call on Y'golanac/Saunders to deal with the investigators because this would be an admission of failure i.e. he is incapable of completing his given task without his deity's help.

LIBRARY/BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Newspapers: At various points in the scenario investigators may wish to do some research into the background of Dickinson and his associates. The following information is all in the public domain and

(Spear from page 54)

can be obtained from back issues of the Redgrove Indicator. These can be found in the town's central library or at the paper's offices (Persuade roll needed to access the latter). Much of the paper's archive is also on-line. Each of the following items requires one hour of research and a Library Use or Computer roll to obtain:

The Bomb Site: There have been plans to rebuild the derelict South-East part of Redgrove town centre since the early 1980s. Mooted projects have included a luxury hotel, leisure centre, residential flats and a retail park. All of the projects have fallen through due to the local Council not being able to come up with the necessary finance. A common factor in each abortive project since 1988 is support from Councillor Ken Dickinson. The Councillor has championed every proposal in the local press. His comment that the latest development "will really put Redgrove on the map" is typically enthusiastic.

Ken Dickinson: Local businessman active in the building trade until 1988 when he was elected independent councillor for the Chapel Hill, an estate on the new town and one of Redgrove's more deprived areas. Has held the seat ever since. Became chairman of the planning committee in 1998 which was regarded as quite a feat for someone with no affiliation to, or support from, the mainstream parties. However most councillors, regardless of political persuasion, seem to regard Dickinson as a man of integrity who always does what he thinks is best for the town. There is also respect for his business sense and practical nature. He has a reputation as a man who can get things done. As well as his political interests Dickinson is also director of CSS, a local company which

DAVID HILL

Skills: Bargain 50%, Club/Baton 45% Computer Use 20%, Conceal 40%, Credit Rating 30%, Dodge 40%, Drive Auto 40%, Fast Talk 60%, Fist/Punch 60%, Hide 50%, Kick 30%, Law 60%, Listen 40%, Persuade 50%, Psychology 40%, Spot Hidden 60%

Notes: Inspector Hill is a stolid policeman of the old school: Politically incorrect and just a little right wing. He has a good arrest record but his unfashionable attitudes mean that his career is unlikely to progress as quickly as the new breed of fast track graduates and those fluent in management speak. Hill is slightly resentful of this but by and large he is happy doing a job he feels is worthwhile.

Hill doesn't believe in the supernatural and is deeply troubled by the murders of Ann Saunders and Professor Watson which are very much out of the ordinary. If the investigators share information with him regarding either crime he will reciprocate by providing what assistance he can. This may include use of police resources if he can justify it to his superiors.

The inspector stands over six feet tall and is of bulky build. Suspects often find him physically intimidating. He has brown hair worn as long as police regulations allow.



Name:	David Hill				
Occupation:	Detective Inspector – West Mercia Police				
Colleges, Degrees:	Police Training College				
Birthplace:	Wolverhampton, UK				
Mental Disorders:	None				
Sex:	M			Age:	40
STR:	16	DEX:	13	INT:	14
CON:	12	APP:	10	POW:	15
SIZ:	16	SAN:	75	EDU:	15
Damage Bonus:			+1D4		

GLENN SAUNDERS



Name: Glenn Saunders
Occupation: Businessman/Avatar
Colleges, Degrees: Secondary School
Birthplace: Redgrove, UK
Mental Disorders: Not applicable
Sex: M Age: 57
STR: 14 DEX: 11 INT: 0 Idea: 0
CON: 14 APP: 13 POW: 0 Luck: 0
SIZ: 15 SAN: 0 EDU: 14 Know: 70
Damage Bonus: +1D4

Skills: Accounting 40%, Bargain 50%, Computer Use 15%, Credit Rating 50%, Drive Auto 40% Electrical Repair 40%, Fast Talk 50%, Fist/Punch 60%, Mechanical Repair 50%, Operate Hvy. Machine 60%, Persuade 50%, Psychology 20%, Spot Hidden 50%

Notes: Always happy to ride Dickinson's coat tails, Saunders followed his friend into the building trade and went into partnership with him when they set up NBS Ltd. He also shared some of Dickinson's sexual urges although to nowhere near the same intensity: Saunders was able to marry and have a normal home life, something Dickinson never had any inclination to do. As the weaker member of the partnership Saunders was the natural target for Y'golonac after the two men had read volume 12 of The Revelations of Glaaki. On possessing Saunders Y'golonac immediately butchered his wife to get her out of the way then blamed the killing on a random psychopath. Although the police were never really satisfied with this explanation there was never any evidence to connect a respectable, middle aged businessman with the mutilated corpse of his spouse. Shortly after the murder Y'golonac manifested itself through Saunders to offer Dickinson the priesthood.

Saunders isn't really alive any more. His "soul and mind are destroyed, and replaced with Y'golonac's ". The Great Old One uses him as a vessel so that it can appear at cult ceremonies. When not taking the form of Y'golonac Saunders is able to function in normal society, just. He usually appears distracted, passive and generally lacking in affect. Most people attribute this to the shock of his wife's death.

When at home Saunders falls into a dormant state superficially resembling sleep. Nonetheless Y'golonac remains fully aware inside him and will manifest itself if disturbed.

Saunders is of medium build and appears to be in good shape for a person of his age. His brown hair is thinning and going grey. His eyes are also brown and seem quite vacant. Looking into them is like staring into two deep, dark holes.

(Spear from page 55)

provides security for many commercial premises in Redgrove.

Gavin Saunders

Former partner of Dickinson. Continued to run NBS after his partner entered local politics. Wife Ann murdered in 1999 after intruders broke into their home. Nobody was ever charged over the killing although Saunders was arrested and questioned in 2000.

Simon Carswell

Numerous criminal convictions when younger, mostly for public order and offences against the person. No court appearances in the last five years.

Gordon Foster

Solicitor with Davis, Lodge and Foster of Redgrove. He is often featured in the local press when the paper does an article on local business, running your own firm, or the strength of the town's economy. Foster can be relied upon for an upbeat quote on the health of Redgrove's commercial sector along with a plug for his firm's services.

PEOPLE

Information that the investigators might obtain from NPCs:

Detective Inspector David Hill

The inspector was involved in the enquiry into Ann Saunders' murder:

"I've never seen anything like it in my life. It was even worse than this thing with the rats."

(Spear from page 56)

Looked like a wild animal had been at her, she was covered with these bloody big bites. The pathologist or the forensic boys never could say what had done it, whether it was an animal or some freak with special dentures. Most of us thought the husband did it. He said he came home late from work and found her all chewed up. That's bollocks. We pulled him in one time for questioning see if we could shake him. Didn't do any good, he phoned his brief soon as we got him to the station. Let the lawyer do all the talking while he sat there with this vacant look on his face like he was away with the fairies. The bloke's definitely not all there.

On Dickinson: "I should think he's pretty bent, probably right from the get-go: Cash in hand for building jobs, then moving on to giving his mate Saunders building contracts once he was on the Council. Still, we've not got anything on him."

On Carswell: "I remember he was a right scrote. Always getting pulled for assaults, bad ones as well: Glassings, stamping on people's heads, knocked some bloke's teeth out with an ashtray once. We had him down for some sexual offences as well but they never went anywhere. Couldn't get the evidence."

Andrea Watson

The investigators' client has a fair amount of local knowledge, and moves in some of the same circles as the cultists.

On Dickinson: "Met him a few times. First time I saw him I got the feeling that he was a crook. I make my living defending criminals. I know bent when I see it."

Skills: Accounting 50%, Bargain 50%, Climb 50%, Computer Use 50%, CREDIT RATING 60%, CTHULHU MYTHOS 7%, DODGE 30%, DRIVE Auto 40%, FAST TALK 50%, HIDE 20%, JUMP 30%, LAW 80%, LIBRARY USE 60%, LISTEN 40%, PERSUADE 55%, PSYCHOLOGY 20%, SPOT HIDDEN 40%, SWIM 40%

Notes: Foster is a greedy man who went into law with the aim of making a lot of money. He is also extremely lazy and was never prepared to put in the huge amount of hours demanded by big city commercial firms. Working for a medium sized practice in Redgrove was more to his liking although he resented the lack of opportunity to earn big money. This all changed when Foster met Dickinson and accepted his offer to become company secretary of CSS and RBS. Foster was paid extremely well to minimise tax liability, hide company assets and generally conceal Saunders and Dickinson's corrupt activities as much as possible. Dickinson subsequently inducted Foster into his cult but he is not a particularly devout worshipper. He is more interested in material wealth than the carnal pleasures offered by Y'golonac. If the investigators decide to apply pressure (physical or psychological) to any of the cultists Foster would be an excellent choice. He will break far more readily than the others.

Foster is tall with blonde wavy hair. He is boyishly good looking but is starting to run to fat.



Name:	Gordon Foster					
Occupation:	Lawyer/Cultist					
Colleges, Degrees:	Birmingham University - LLB					
Birthplace:	Loughborough, UK					
Mental Disorders:	Fetish: Acquisition of Money/Wealth					
Sex:	M	Age: 32				
STR:	13	DEX:	10	INT:	15	Idea: 75
CON:	10	APP:	11	POW:	13	Luck: 65
SIZ:	12	SAN:	65	EDU:	17	Know: 85
Damage Bonus:					+1D4	



OAKLEY PARK

Formerly the site of a bowling alley operated by a national leisure chain. The "bowl" is a large, windowless, flat roofed building surrounded by a car park. Similar premises exist in towns and cities across Britain. Redgrove's "bowl" was never profitable and closed in 1999 after only two years of business. The property was empty for nearly a year before it was bought by NBS and turned into a temple to Y'golonac.

1. Trees/Hedges

The site is screened from the neighbouring highways by a mix of mature vegetation.

2. Access Road

A short spur off the main road that connects the Oakley housing estate with the highway.

3. Fencing

Ten foot high chain link fencing fixed to concrete posts and topped with three strands of barbed wire. Requires a Climb roll to navigate without injury. Sneak rolls might also be appropriate to avoid attracting the attention of the security guard (see 5 below).

4. Gate

A ten foot high double gate constructed from metal sheeting and chain link. Usually kept padlocked.

5. Security Office

A portakabin similar to the one at the bomb site but smaller. There is always a CSS guard/cultist on duty here, or patrolling the premises. The office is equipped desk, office chair, telephone and basic cooking facilities. Keys to the gate and main building (see 7 below) are kept in the top drawer of the desk.

6. Car Park

A flat expanse of tarmac with parking bays marked out in faded white paint.

7. Building Entrance

The main building has had its entrances and emergency exits boarded up. The boarding at the front has a door built into it which is usually kept locked.

8. Building Interior

This bowl was gutted by its former owners. Fittings such as carpets, seating and internal partitions have all been removed leaving an empty shell which provides plenty of room

for the covortings of the Y'golonac cultists. A basic lighting system has been installed around the interior walls: Bare bulbs situated at irregular intervals provide enough light for the cultists to see what they are doing.

9. Inner Sanctum

Divided off from the main interior by a low wall made of bricks, similar to the one in the long barrow. The concrete floor in this area is heavily stained.

The sanctum contains the idol stolen from the museum by Carswell in 2000. The idol can be used to grant an additional 10% chance of success in casting the spell Contact Y'golonac. The cult have little need of it as they have their own avatar of the Great Old One close at hand. It is kept in the sanctum purely for ornamental purposes.

10. Video Camera

A high end camera mounted on a tripod with a stack of blank video cassettes stacked beside it ready for use. Carswell generally operates the camera.



(Spear from page 57)

On Foster: "A yuppie about ten years past his sell by date. Seems to think he's working for a big city commercial firm."

On Carswell: "Acted for him a few times when I was duty solicitor. Not my favourite client. Vicious little bastard, and he had a way of looking at women that made me pretty uncomfortable."

Charles Mitchell

Can be found with a simple search in the telephone directory. Although in his eighties the former fireman is in good health and vividly recalls the bombing in the war. He believes the Luftwaffe were aiming for Redgrove's spring factories or possibly mistook the town for Coventry which was bombed the same night.

If questioned about the idol Mitchell says, he "hated the look of the thing. The way it was fat and the proportions all wrong. Who'd want to make something that ugly?"

With regard to the slab at the bottom of the crater Mitchell claims, "that it had this big star carved on it. For some reason I had this funny idea that the slab was a door not so much to keep people out, but to keep something in."

CONCLUSIONS AND SAN AWARDS

If the investigators stop Dickinson from recovering the spear they receive 1D10 SAN. If Dickinson obtains the spear but the investigators subsequently manage to wrest it away from him the award is 1D8 SAN. Breaking up the cult is worth another 1D10 SAN.

If the investigators have discovered the existence of the bookshop in Brichester they may want to investigate this next. This shop, sometimes referred to as "American Books Bought & Sold", is home to another avatar of Y'golonac, and is also the centre of a Gloucestershire based cult. Y'golonac is using the shop as a vehicle to spread his worship around the UK and possibly beyond. "American Books..." advertises in several adult magazines selling pornographic books, magazines, videos and DVDs. Those who place orders are also sent a catalogue which contains a far more extensive range of material than in the magazine ads. Repeat customers are screened by Y'golonac for recruitment into his cult. Persons with aberrant sexual interests are sent a copy of Volume 12 of the Revelations of Glaaki. Many people throw the poor quality photocopied booklet in the bin or give up after trying to decipher the first few sentences. Some, like Dickinson, manage to read it all the way through and are visited by Y'golonac.

The Brichester cult is more established than the Redgrove one, having been founded in the early 1970s, and should be a much tougher proposition. As a mature organisation it includes people who could make life difficult for the investigators without resorting to supernatural means e.g. local politicians, powerful businessmen and police officers.



CULT THUGS

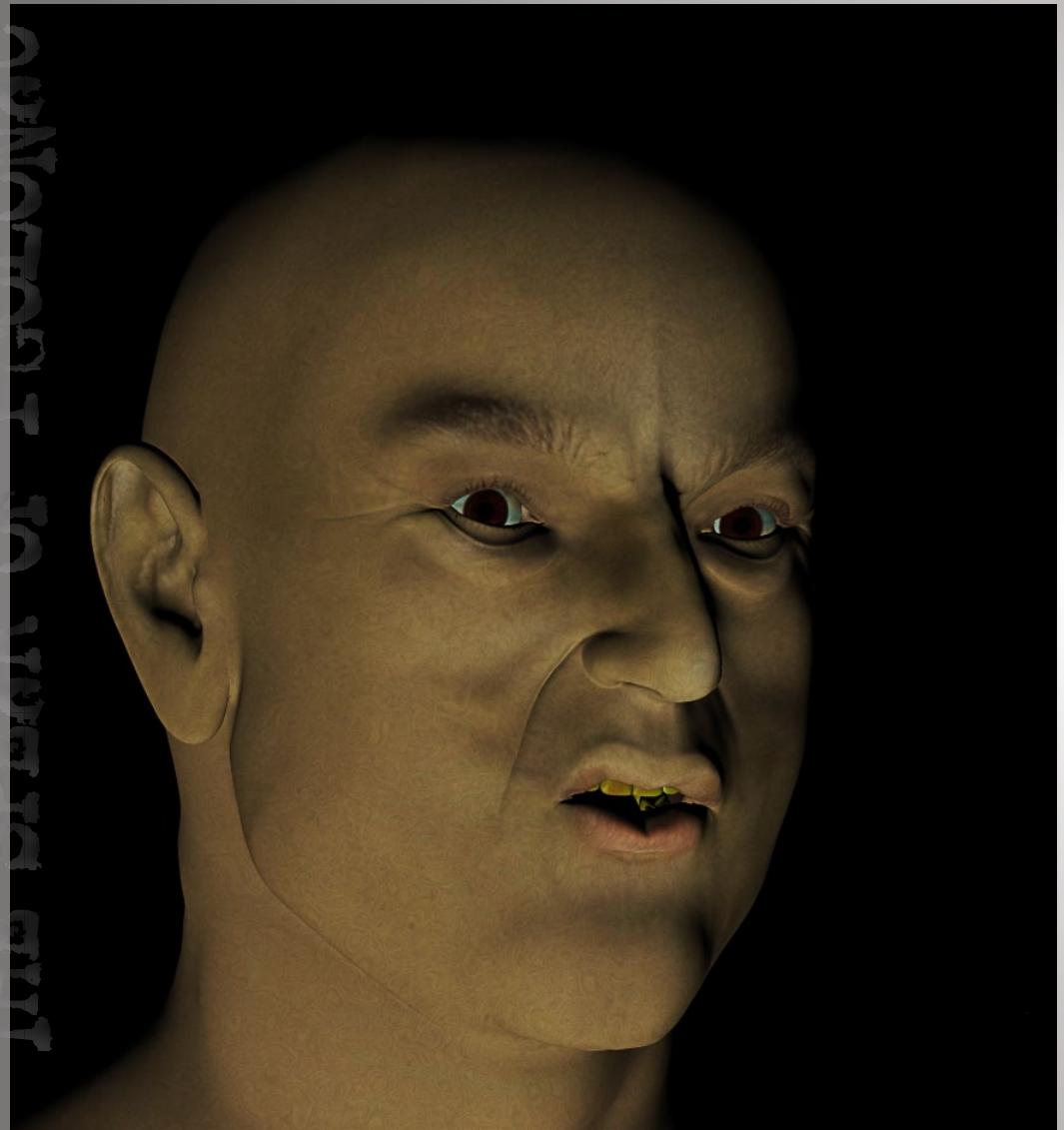
Name:	Cult Thugs				
Occupation:	Cultist				
Colleges, Degrees:	Secondary School				
Birthplace:	Various				
Mental Disorders:	Sadistic Psychopath, others at Keeper's discretion				
Sex:	M				
STR:	16	DEX:	16	INT:	10
CON:	14	APP:	9	POW:	11
SIZ:	16	SAN:	55	EDU:	10
Damage Bonus:	+1D4				
Age:	25-30				
Luck:	55				
Know:	50				

Skills: Dodge 40%, Drive Auto 50%, Sneak 40%, Spot Hidden 60%, Fist/Punch 65%, Head Butt 30%, Kick 40%, Grapple 40%, Large Club 60%

Notes: These are all CSS employees. There are eight of them. As noted previously they all have criminal backgrounds. Like Carswell they enjoy worshipping Y'golonac for the opportunity it gives them to indulge in sadistic debauchery. None of them will think twice about killing the investigators. They are often equipped with baseball bats, pick axe handles and knives.



KEN DICKINSON



Name: Ken Dickinson
Occupation: Politician/Cultist
Colleges, Degrees: Secondary School
Birthplace: Redgrove, UK
Mental Disorders: Psychopath, Satyriasis

Sex:	M	Age:	58
STR:	15	DEX:	12
CON:	14	APP:	14
SIZ:	14	SAN:	0
		INT:	16
		POW:	16
		EDU:	13
		Luck:	80
		Idea:	80
		Know:	65

Damage Bonus: +1D4

Spells: Call Forth the Black Horde, Contact Y'golonac, Dominate

Skills: Accounting 30%, Bargain 50%, Computer Use 30%, Credit Rating 50% Cthulhu Mythos 15%, Drive Auto 40%, Fast Talk 70%, Fist/Punch 60%, Head Butt 20%, Hide 30%, Law 20%, Mechanical Repair 40%, Operate Hvy. Machine 40%, Persuade 70%, Psychology 30%, Sneak 20%

Notes: Dickinson left school at fifteen to become a builder's labourer. Although lacking formal education he was intelligent, as well as energetic and ambitious. Within ten years he had built up a successful building firm with his old school friend Gavin Saunders. Newtown Building Services Ltd prospered during Redgrove's expansion into a new town, winning numerous construction contracts. Dickinson and Saunders both became wealthy as a result. Dickinson found that wealth enabled him to fully indulge his sexual proclivities which combined sadism with a near insatiable appetite: When not hiring the services of sadomasochistic prostitutes Dickinson spent his leisure hours reading or watching pornography often in the company of Saunders. In 1999 Dickinson ordered

several videos from a shop in Brixton that had advertised in a BDSM magazine. When the videos arrived they were accompanied by a photocopied booklet. The text seemed to be gibberish but was also strangely appealing in the way it hinted at the use and mastery of supernatural powers. Dickinson showed the booklet to Saunders who was equally baffled by its contents. Y'golonac attacked and possessed Saunders shortly afterwards. The Great Old One then contacted Dickinson and offered him the choice of entering its priesthood or a painful death. Dickinson readily agreed to the former, entranced by the vistas of power and depravity laid out by Y'golonac. Since his conversion Dickinson has built up a small cult in Redgrave.

Despite his insanity Dickinson is adept at projecting a bluff, sociable, salt-of-the-earth image. He is well liked and respected by his constituents, the local business community and colleagues on the council.

Dickinson is of stocky build. He is balding and his remaining hair is cut short. He often wears a sheepskin coat of the type favoured by football managers and small time villains in 1970s UK cop shows.

SIMON CARSWELL



Name: Simon Carswell
Occupation: Criminal/Cultist
Colleges, Degrees: Secondary School
Birthplace: Redgrove, UK
Mental Disorders: Sadistic, Psychopath
Sex: M **Age:** 30
STR: 16 **DEX:** 14 **INT:** 12 **Idea:** 60
CON: 15 **APP:** 11 **POW:** 13 **Luck:** 65
SIZ: 16 **SAN:** 65 **EDU:** 14 **Know:** 70
Damage Bonus: +1D4

Skills: Bargain 40%, Cthulhu Mythos 4%, Drive Auto 60%, Fast Talk 50%, Handgun 40%, Hide 40%, Jump 30%, Listen 40%, Locksmith 30%, Martial Arts 30%, Operate Hvy. Machine 30%, Sneak 50%, Spot Hidden 50%, Throw 40%, Fist/Punch 70%, Kick 40%, Grapple 30%

Notes: Carswell is a violent thug who enjoys inflicting pain on others. He first came to Dickinson's notice when working as a labourer on an NBS building site. The two men found they had much in common and Carswell became a frequent guest at Dickinson's house and often accompanied him on his visits to prostitutes. When Dickinson set up CSS he made Carswell his partner. He believed the younger man's capacity for violence would be useful in dealing with aggressive competitors and recalcitrant employees. Carswell was also Dickinson's first recruit into the cult and acts as its chief enforcer and procurer of sacrificial victims. He enjoys this role as it allows him free rein to indulge his natural cruelty. Carswell is squat and heavily muscled. He has a shaven head which combined with his pale blue eyes give him a decidedly psychotic look. He is usually dressed in "chav" gear: Dark blue tracksuit worn with gold chains and sovereign rings.





LIVING IN SIN

All-Grown-Up Fiction
by Peyton Bisailon

LUST

Alice Curtis sat at the bar taking a sip of her drink, scanning the area for the next victim to become her new lover for the night. So many young males to choose from, but sadly she could only choose one for now. Her lips pressed against her glass leaving a red lipstick outline on it. She then stood up walking over to a male at the pool table. He looked lonely and desperate enough to seduce, and she knew right away that he would give in to her in a second. As Alice walked across the bar her long hair swayed back and forth across her bare skin. After all, she was only wearing a corset, a black mini skirt, fish net leggings and gloves; and black high heel boots.

Men watched her as she went past them, wishing that she was going to them instead of the guy at the pool table. Alice smirked, knowing that they would have their turn some other time, the smell of her perfume dancing around the air making for them all to take a whiff. It was lavender mixed with roses, with a hint of vanilla. After a couple more steps she placed her drink on the side of the pool table and sat on the edge, making him look up at her. Crossing her legs, the female motioned with one finger telling the male to come closer.

Dropping the pool cue onto the floor, the male walked towards her with a smile on his face. He took the bait and as soon as he got close, Alice kissed his cheek quickly causing him to move much closer. Kissing his neck now, Alice looked up into

(Sins from page 62)

his eyes and she smiled once again, kissing his forehead this time. The man rested his hand on her thigh, and she smirked once more. Grabbing the back of his head she lifted it up to face her.

"Don't be so naughty," Alice said letting him go and jumping off the pool table. She looked back at the male and knew he would follow as she walked towards the door that led outside. Opening the door the female watched as the prey followed right behind her. As they walked down the street, she wondered where to drop off the body when she was finished. Looking around she led him into a back alley. How romantic...not really, she went in first and he followed. Then grabbing his hand Alice pulled him close and kissed his lips.

He kissed back and as they kissed, out of her back pocket she pulled a red rose. It was her trademark when she finished with a body. After several minutes the body fell to the floor bleeding all over the place. Alice licked her lips and placed the rose down on the body; she sighed since he wasn't as strong as the others before him. They had lasted an hour or two, he only lasted five minutes and that bothered her. Leaving the alley way she thought she might as well

move on to another and hope for the best, that the next lasted longer.

As Alice Curtis headed back to the bar singing her tune, she made sure she was all set to seduce another man. The wind blew her long hair against her back and then she looked back to the alley way area, to see the male's clothes blowing in the wind. That meant Gluttony had found the body and had already eaten it to the bones which made her smile. At least she helped fill up Gluttony's hunger, that one would eat anything. She had to admit this victim did have very tasteful energy about him, and his lips were so full of a burning passion. Too bad he won't be able to use them any more since he is dead.

Opening the door she walked back towards the bar, past all the future victims that would follow her like a poor puppy trying to find it's home. Sitting down she ordered a beer in a glass, and waiting for it Alice Curtis, aka Lust, scanned the area for her next victim.

GLUTTONY

Josh Thomson wiped his face off with his very own coat sleeve, leaving blood all over it. Standing up he looked around to no one on the streets. That was good for him,





(Sins from page 63)

he would have to thank Lust later for his dinner or should he say late night snack. He kicked the bones as his stomach growled some more, that one body didn't begin to sate his hunger. Making his way through the alley Josh wondered where else he could go to get something to eat. Looking around, no stores were open so he thought of the park, since Lust wouldn't be done anytime soon.

What amazed the Sins about Gluttony was that he never gained any weight for eating all of the time. He ate everything from trash to animals, even people! As disturbing as that sounds, yes people! Gluttony's Sin was that all he did was eat and eat, never full and always hungry. If he didn't get what he wanted he would have eaten the other sins already but they were good to feed him their victims.

Josh walked across the street to the nearest park he knew around this area. Now with his luck he would have to walk several streets since this was the main street with all the businesses everywhere. He wished Envy or Greed would leave their victims for him but they were usually still living. Heck! He would go for it; he was so hungry and needed something to eat. The sounds of moving cats, raccoons

and birds taunted him which in turn made him angry. He walked past a garbage can and rummaged through it. He found a half-eaten hamburger and some left over moldy salad. Forcing it into his mouth, Josh clenched his teeth, he was still hungry.

Nothing moldy bothered him or made him sick since his stomach was a huge black hole. Rummaging through another garbage can, Josh found some left over bitten french fries and a hotdog. The park had more trash cans to go through and, of course, better options to choose from.

The guy himself looked homeless, with his torn up clothes and coat, but that's what he wanted to dress like. Josh thought it got him more food and it usually did. Josh's stomach growled at the thought causing him to rub it as if to calm a wild beast.

He smiled as he saw the park right across the street now; he could eat all he wanted. Running across in a hurry, Josh jumped for the nearest can full of ice cream cones, suckers, sandwiches, fries, chocolate. He stopped to the scent of a dead animal nearby as well: the scent smelled really good and he followed it to where it originated. In his hurry he knocked over the can for other small animals to help themselves to, though all the good stuff was gone because of him.



(Sins from page 64)

Walking along the pathway of the park he stopped to see a dead bird, a couple in fact. He smiled as he sat right down and ate them all. Wolfing them down like they were a piece of cake, letting out a loud burp, Josh looked around to see the sun coming up over the park. He then stood up and made his way out, since people would be out and about soon and for sure they didn't need to see him. They didn't really need to see him with blood all over him, so he thought he might as well head home and eat what he had there.

Plus he would always look forward to see what Wrath would drop off for him later on in the day since Wrath did a lot of killing. Gluttony took the back route to his home in an old run down warehouse. He had several things there to keep himself busy while he waited for a meal to come to him.

Opening the door he smiled and jumped up and down, Wrath had already paid him a visit. Several bodies were laying there. Josh closed the door behind him and made his way to the feast that awaited him.

GREED

Kara Kingston sat in her office counting all the money she had made in the past week; it was a lot but not enough for her. Her gold bracelet hit the desk as she sighed and looked

at the time, trying to think of a good way to get more money. Opening up her desk she pulled out her gold wallet and stood up, it was time to hit the bank and demand what she wanted so badly. She told everyone she was going on break since it was boring being in an office all day not counting enough money. Walking over to her coat rack she grabbed her fancy coat and put it on.

As she made her way to her car she made sure no one else was in the parking lot. She opened the trunk and pulled out two guns, loaded them and then brought them up front in the car with her. Pulling out of the parking lot Kara listened to what was on the radio. Driving her favorite yellow Camaro out onto the streets she smiled as she drove by many fancy stores. She noticed Envy walking along all by herself. Kara didn't bother with her since she knew the young female will end up enjoying her day later on.

Finding the bank she wanted to invade, Kara tucked her two guns in their holsters underneath her long business skirt. Putting on her golden sunglasses and putting her hair up in a fedora, she made her way inside the bank. It was pretty on the inside, all nice and shiny; she could tell that this bank had loads of cash. She had robbed many other banks and she

(Sins from page 65)

would have to move soon to another city to rob their banks.

Greed was the Sin that wanted everything and if she couldn't get it she would find a way to steal it.

Greed had many ways of getting what she wanted from stealing to robbing or buying it all out, but that only came when needed be. She only cared about the riches from gold to money to fancy clothes to rich cars. But mess with any of those and she would do some serious damage to you, either putting a bullet in your head or choking you with her own very hands.

Walking up to the counter she looked at the lady and smiled, though before the lady could ask her anything Kara pulled out her gun and pointed it at the woman's head and simply smiled a small smile.

"Withdrawal please, everything you have." Kara said nicely with her hand on the trigger though sadly the alarm went off, and she coldly shot the lady in the head. Frowning she jumped over the counter and hid for a minute. "Looks like I'm going to have to help myself." was all she said, standing up and shooting a guard in the head. More guards would come in a matter

of minutes but that gave enough time to make her way to the safe.

Walking gracefully Kara opened up the safe full of loads of money; it was odd that the bank didn't have any guards back here or a proper security system either. Oh well, made her job easier now, and though she couldn't take everything, she got most of it. Filling her bag with wads of cash, Kara smiled and noticed several guards shooting at her. Smirking she stepped out of the safe and started firing back at them. Shooting one in the head and causing the others to shoot themselves in the head with a good old mind trick of hers, dropping her bracelet, she made her way out of the bank.

As she got in her car and drove away she looked behind her and saw the building explode. "My bad," was all she said with a laugh. Her bracelet was a bomb that went off thirty seconds after it hit the floor. Driving away from everything, she now knew that she needed to move on to another city and start all over again. That was fine with her; after all she did have all the money in the world now, or would soon.

SLOTH

Riley Richards lay on his couch watching the news; it appeared Greed had done it



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(Sins from page 66)

again. He could care less about anything going on with the Sins. Moving over to his side he drifted off to sleep once again. That's all he ever did was sleep, getting up once in a while though very slowly since he was too lazy to do anything around the house.

After all Riley was the Sin of Sloth, and all Sloth ever did was be a lazy ass..... some people wondered why he was even a Sin to begin with? Well Riley never had the answers; he was too lazy to go look for some. Riley barely ever saw the other Sins except for Envy and Pride who tried their best to get him off his ass. But still there he was, laying there on the couch sleeping without a damn in the world.

Riley even dreamed about sleeping. Nothing in his dreams ever really happened there either. Thinking about dreaming took too much thinking, and thinking involved doing things he didn't want to do. So Riley did nothing, not even thinking. His apartment was a mess. Bags, boxes, candy, clothes and books were everywhere. The only thing he did right was clean himself but that took hours upon hours to do since he moved so slow. Riley didn't want to turn out like gluttony, living in an old warehouse.

Abstinence from sins is better than seeking help afterwards.

-Ali ibn Abi Talib

He mumbled and grunted once he heard the bell from downstairs ringing, over and over and over again. That bothered him so much but he had to answer it because if he didn't it would just keep on going on and on. Rolling off the couch and crawling on the floor until he reached the machine, the lazy tired bed-head had to use a chair to help himself up and he spoke into it.

"What?" Riley asked waiting for an answer on the other end and he cringed once he heard their voice.

"Hey it's me, your sister, you remember don't you? I wanted to know if you were coming to the family BBQ?" She asked him in the nicest way possible, but Riley replied right back in an instant with. "Hell no," and he turned off the machine and went back to his couch to sleep. He had not seen his family in a long while and he wasn't going to start seeing them now. The last time he saw them was like three years ago and he fell asleep during his cousin's wedding. His father hated him for it and they have never really talked ever since.

Riley mumbled as he made his way back to the couch, but before he laid down he changed the channel on the TV. It was showing an episode of a comedy or something; dropping the remote Riley laid

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back down falling asleep once again. All that was left was the sound of the television echoing all through the house while he fell asleep. The young male went back to dreaming of sleeping once again, not caring what everyone else was up to.

There slept Sloth in a deep sleep, not even the other others Sins could move him because once he was in a deep trance no one could snap him out of it. He could sleep for days on end; Heck, one time he even slept for a whole month. He was like a bear hibernating through the winter, though he slept in any season at any time. Riley would move every once in a while though, because he needed to change the side he was sleeping on.

Sloth does have some good things about him, if the others ever wanted peace and quiet they could always go to his place to get it. Although, wake him up from a deep sleep and the people wouldn't be seen again....

PRIDE

Darrien Anderson sat in the school writing down the lesson that was given to him. Sitting in the back looking out the window, he smirked as he looked at the other students in the class. He was better



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then all of them, or so he thought. He even thought that he was better than his family as well, always forcing the maids to get him something and forcing his parents to do things for him because he was up there. Finishing the lesson early, the well dressed male stood from his seat and walked out of the classroom gracefully. Closing the door behind him he smiled as if he would do something fun today. Skipping school was fine for him since he had already finished all his classes.

Pride was the Sin that was in power all the time, feeling better than everyone else and making everyone around them feel terrible. Pride was a deadly Sin as well, if anyone came along and proved that they were better than him, they would simply feel the power of Pride and die in a matter of seconds. The only Sin that would beat him was Wrath but that was because Wrath was the worst of them all.

Darrien made his way outside and down the street, walking past Gluttony's warehouse: he didn't bother talking with the ever-hungry male. As he walked down the street some more he noticed some of the rich kids in a parking lot, talking. Going on about how they were rich and better than everyone. Darrien had decided to ignore

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them, but stopped once he heard his name mentioned.

"Isn't that the Darrien kid?" one male asked.

"Yea it is," another replied.

"Thinks he's so much better then the rest of us," the third one said with a laugh.

"Sadly we're so much richer and better then he is, he should just give up on the whole act," the fourth one said and the rest of them all started to laugh.

A few seconds later one of the guys went down to the ground with a piece of glass buried in his head, Darrien had smashed a window and was now holding a bunch of glass in his hands. Fire built up in his eyes and he was ready to take these guys down.

Walking over to the three of them he grabbed one of their arms and tore it clean off, stabbing a piece of glass into his victim's head. Throwing the arm, he hit another guy in the head, Darrien finished that one off quickly with another piece of glass. Looking over to the fourth guy who had made that last comment, he shoved the rest of the shards into his face knocking him over. Darrien then kicked his head snapping his neck. Darrien stood over the

bodies and looked around: no one in sight at all which was a good thing. Now Gluttony had a snack since the hungry male would soon smell the scent of bodies.

"Better than me.....right..." Darrien said jumping off the body and heading down the street. He smiled: he hadn't that much fun in a long while, maybe he should do that again but with different people of course. Putting his bloody hands in his pockets, the young male made his way to find another group of people to piss him right off so he could go after them.

Pride was the Sin who was known to be better then everyone. It was with his pride that he walked gracefully down the streets of the city, full of himself.

ENVY

Naomi Summers walked around the streets of the city looking for something to do. She had seen the bank that got blown up by Greed and she saw Lust go into some bar to seduce another guy. Sighing, the female walked around some more. There was nothing to do at all, not even a single girl out and about to make her jealous just yet. She wanted to bash someone's face in, but no one to her liking was around. She would have gone and bothered Sloth, but



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he was sleeping and she didn't want to die today.

Naomi decided to go shopping in one of the stores, or at least try to go shopping and have a good time. Walking into one of her favorite stores, Naomi wandered around looking for some new shoes. Her sneakers were wearing out so she needed something new and nice to wear on her feet. As she looked around she came across a pair of Converse that looked perfect. They were a dark green with a light green rim and lime green laces. As she walked over to them, someone dashed in front of her and took the last pair.

Naomi's eyes were full of anger and she followed the other girl to the counter, now she was going to get her wish after all. She walked over and tapped the girl on the shoulder and spoke

"Excuse me," Naomi said with a soft smile.

As soon as she turned around, Naomi punched her in the face. Grabbing the girl's hair she then kicked her in the stomach, then tossed her to the floor and kicked her again several times all over the place. She then picked up the cash register and threw it on the weak girl. The worker behind the

desk called for help right away since she was afraid to fight Naomi.

Envy was the Sin that was jealous, if she didn't get anything she wanted or if someone was much prettier than her she would simply beat them up. Envy always ended up jealous until she got something and once it was done she would go back to her normal self once again. In a way Envy was like Greed but worse, it could be anything to set her off.

Naomi picked up the girl and threw her out the window causing it to shatter and the young girl landed on the ground. All cut and bruised, Naomi took the shoes from her and kicked her once more to make sure she got what she deserved. The sirens were coming from the distance; Naomi took off her old crappy shoes and threw them on the beaten girl. She put on the new ones and skipped down the street, knowing they wouldn't find her because she changes everyday.

"Stupid girl," Naomi said as she took the alleyway and fire escape onto the roof top to see what was going on.

The girl was on the ground crying as the police looked up and about trying to figure out where Naomi went. After spitting from

the roof down onto the girl's face Naomi got up and jumped from roof top to roof top. She was going to go home and show off her new shoes to Greed, oh how her older sister would be proud.

Envy was the Sin of jealousy. Take something from her; she would for sure take it back from you even if it meant tearing the victims to pieces.

WRATH

Always save the best for last, right? Jayson Grimm was at a club watching all the people dance around on the floor, having a good time. Might as well let them have the time of their lives before he killed them all. The music was loud and bodies were dancing, laughing, singing, chatting and just having fun. He got up from his seat and made his way to the DJ who was playing the music. Smiling he pushed his way through the crowd and finally made it to the decks.

Wrath was the worst Sin of them all, always killing people for no reason at all... well, just to have a good time. He was always covered in red from head to toe and loved the sounds of screams and pain coming from the people he hurt so much.

(Sins from page 70)

He loved doing his job and nothing at all could stop him from doing it.

Jayson walked up to the DJ and stood beside him. He grabbed his shoulder and yanked him away from the decks. No one seemed to notice at all since the music was still playing and they were all having a good time.

"Show time," was all Jayson said as he put on the headphones and stood mixing with the music. The music got faster and faster and people went on with the beat. Mixing the songs he started with the back of the room, causing their bodies to hit the floor. No one noticed at first, they were all dancing away, more bodies started to hit the floor now, causing blood to fly everywhere even on some people. Some people started to notice when.....

"AHHHHHHH!" a girl screamed, pointing to falling bodies.

As people started to run to the doors, Jayson picked up the pace and more bodies started falling. He made some heads explode and others fall to pieces. As the people continued dying off and hitting the floor, Jayson just went on singing and playing the best he could to kill every one off bit by bit. Of course he had locked the

doors, if people hadn't noticed the doors were locked on them. People in a panic made him love his job even more.

Once all the bodies were finished Jayson stopped playing music and dropped the headphones on the dead body behind him. Jumping off the stage he took the back exit and then opened the doors looking at what he did. Over a hundred people were at this club and he had killed them all...legs, arms, heads, pieces everywhere. Oh well they all deserved it anyway, he thought. Licking the blood off his lips, Jayson made his way out of the club and headed somewhere else to have some fun.

"Now, how about I go to a hotel? Yeah... that sounds fun." he said, and then walked off into the streets with not a care in the world.

Wrath was a vengeful god and nothing could stop him from doing what he was doing. Even the others feared him a bit.....

Envy , Wrath, Sloth, Greed, Pride, Gluttony, Lust

The Seven Sins live among us and yet no one can stop them.

fin

MAGNUS ARMS AS-500

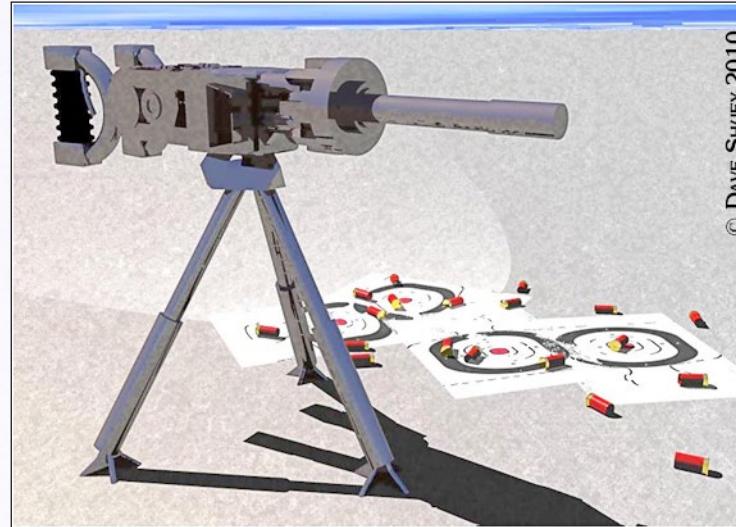
BLG GUNS

A Bigger Freakin' Gun

by Dave Schuey
for **Dark Conspiracy®** 1/2 ed

Magnus Arms AS-500 High Capacity Full Auto Tripod Mounted Shotgun

German weapons manufacturer *Magnus Arms, Limited* designed the **AS-500** as a hard-point weapon used in high security prisons. The weapon proved too expensive and far too destructive for this purpose. However, various military units across the globe found the weapon to be just what they needed when in combat with 'unspecified' and 'classified' opponents. It is rumored these incursions typically come from within demongrounds. The **AS-500** can fire between 30 and 90 rounds per combat turn, and utilizes advanced recoil suppression. Even so, a fixed tripod mount is required, and typically a second crewman handling the belt fed ammo is used.



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Magnus Arms AS-500 (Automatic Shotgun)

---Recoil---

	ROF	DAM	Pen	Blk	Mag	SS	Brst	Range
12-gauge slug	5	4	3-4-Nil	9	Belt	4	12	50
12-gauge buckshot (short range)	5	9	Nil					
12-gauge buckshot (medium range)	5x10	1	Nil					

See Shotguns on pg. 91 of 1st ed. rulebook.

Ammo: 12 gauge
Wt: 60 kg (tripod 20 kg)
Mag: Belt (ammo can carries 250 rds)
Price: \$10,000 (-/R)



This week we are going content-driven down here. Here is an unused submission originally written for another magazine I may have had a hand in...

PARANORMAL ARMED RESPONSE AGENCY (PARA)

PARA's mission is to investigate incidents and phenomena that are of a supernatural or extraterrestrial nature. Where such incidents are a threat to human life or UK interests, PARA is authorised to contain and neutralise the threat using any force necessary.

As an agency that deals primarily in the supernatural, secrecy is of paramount concern to PARA. Should the public ever know of the depth of supernatural and extraterrestrial influence and corruption, all faith would be lost in public institutions. Because of this when on an investigation PARA provides agents with a cover identity. This cover is usually related to either law-enforcement or the media. Agents are instructed to do everything to maintain their cover at all times.

PARA is currently recruiting anyone it can find. Traditionally, PARA only recruited from government, military, law enforcement or scientific personnel. Basically anyone with skills that PARA deems useful or experience with the supernatural or extraterrestrial may be recruited. Regardless of where an agent is recruited from, he or she must meet a number of rigorous requirements.

- ✖ UK or British Dependency citizenship. In certain cases, an exception will be made for those individuals from friendly nations.

- ✖ Between the ages of 22 and 37.
- ✖ Ability to attain Top-Secret clearance. PARA has been known to grant such clearance on a case-by-case basis for individuals whose backgrounds would normally prohibit.
- ✖ Uncorrected vision not worse than 20/200, correctable to 20/20 in one eye and 20/40 in the other, and adequate colour and night vision.
- ✖ Valid driver's license.
- ✖ Good physical condition with no defects that would interfere in firearm use or defensive tactics.

Field agents are subject to annual medical and psychiatric evaluations and performance testing. Examinations are strongly recommended after any assignment that results in violent contact with a hazardous entity, technology or manifestation and may be mandatory at the discretion of the agent's supervisor.

Upon joining the agency, every agent is assigned several pieces of equipment that help the agent in his investigations.

As a side-arm, the agent is assigned an FN Five Seven pistol. The FN 57 is a semi-automatic pistol that uses Fabriquè National's proprietary 5.7mm round. This round, although small, packs the same stopping power as a 9mm parabellum round. This weapon was chosen as the agency's standard firearm due to its reliability, safety and increased ammunition capacity. The FN57 has an ammo magazine capacity of 20 rounds, compared to the 9-15 of many pistols of its

(Shadows from page 73)

class. Mounting slots for a laser sight and silencer/suppressor are found on the weapon but these items are not assigned to the agent as standard.

All agents are also assigned an almost completely secure phone. An integrated digital camera is included, capable of capturing both video and still images. The unit, which is "i-dentical" to a certain brand of mobile phone, is connected to PARA-Net, a private network operated by the agency. The network features state of the art encryption and wireless network access.

Agents are also assigned a vehicle should they not own one when they join. This is usually a standard, middle of the road car. The agency sometimes supplies motorcycles instead of cars if the agent's preferences are in that direction. Regardless of which vehicle is assigned to them, it is under the explicit understanding that said vehicle is returned to the agency if the agent ever leaves its employ.

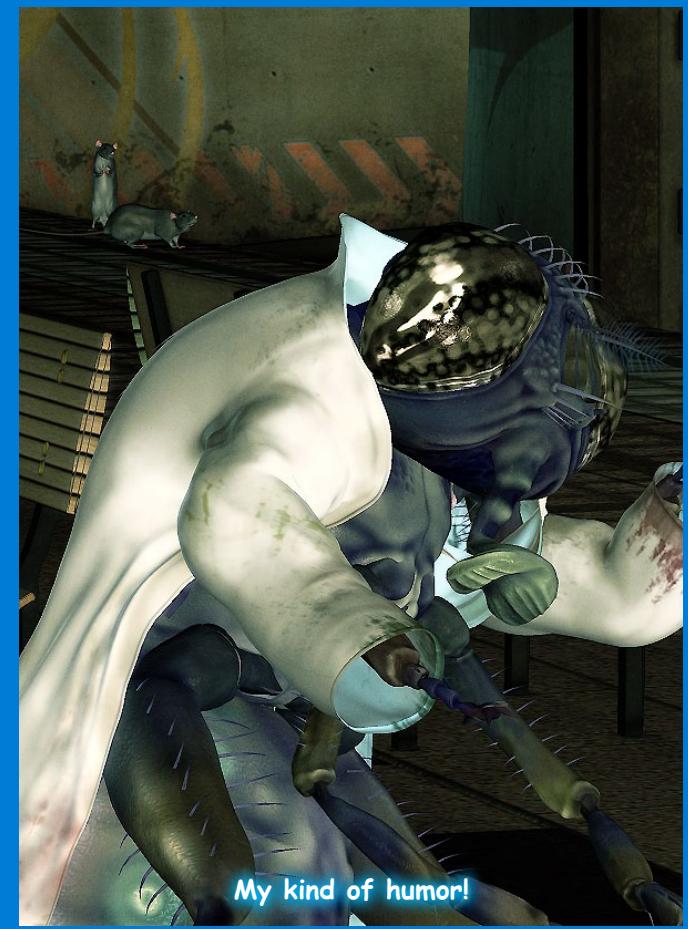
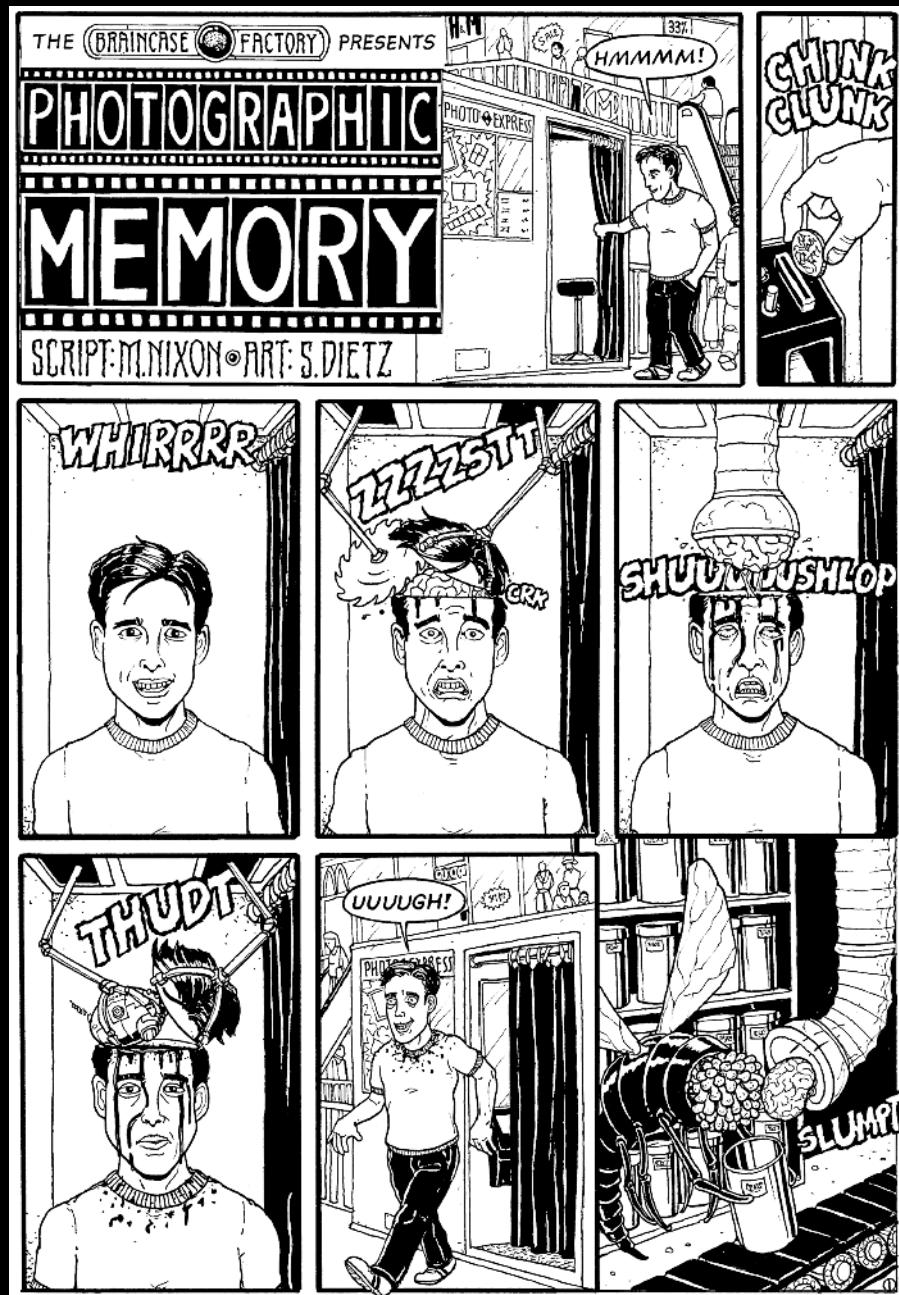
PARA currently has no jurisdiction beyond the borders of UK territory. In fact, the United States has expressly forbidden PARA from operating inside US borders or interfering with US interests and investigations.

Hope you enjoy!



Cheers!
Lee





*I saw a creature, naked, bestial,
Who, squatting upon the ground,
Held his heart in his hands,
And ate of it.*

*I said: "Is it good, friend?"
"It is bitter-bitter," he answered;
"But I like it
Because it is bitter,
And because it is my heart."*

*Steven Crane
In the Desert*

