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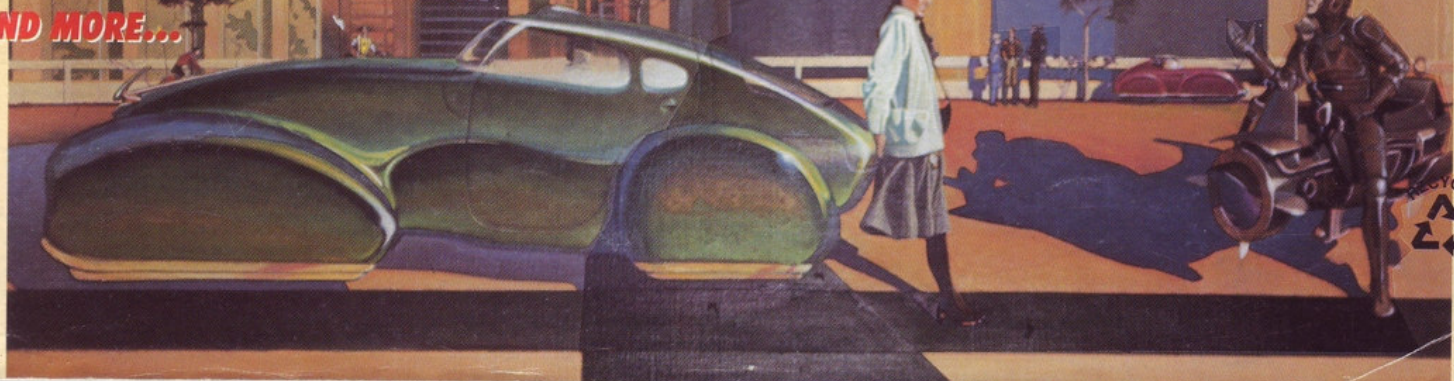
# VORTEXT

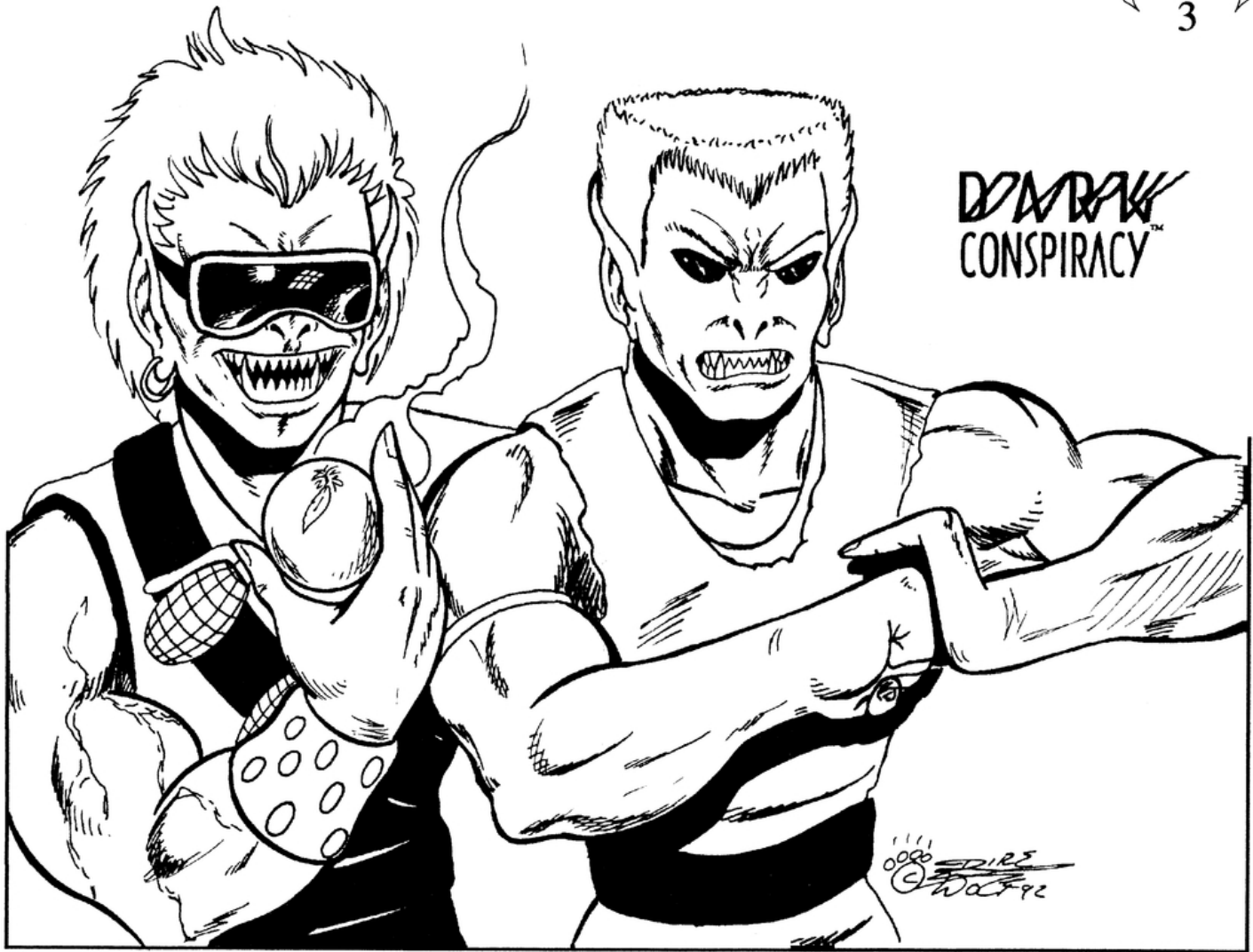
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ISSUE

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AND MORE...





# On a Dark Desert Highway

Highway encounters for  
GDW's *Dark Conspiracy*™

by Keith Craxton

**S**o I was cruising down the I-15 from Las Vegas, when suddenly this red, I mean red, Edsel comes out from behind the billboard and blocks the road. And the thing is, there's this huge, I mean huge, guy driving this car. He's so bu-mongous that the car had a hole at the top for him to stick his head through! No need for air conditioning, I guess.

This is a list of developed encounters for the *Dark Conspiracy*™ road-tripper. They are meant to spice up a long highway journey, making those long drives between cities a little more "interesting."

## Goblin Gridiron

Two goblins, who call themselves Spikey and Mikey, have made off with a Pontiac Penguin, a car which should be treated as having the same stats as the Chrysler LeBoeuf. They have since painted it dirty brown, and even spray painted (in red) the word "Worg" on both sides of the Penguin.

The goblins have fitted the car with a number of gadgets they salvaged from a deserted military outpost. There is a loudspeaker connected to a microphone at the steering wheel, through which Mikey will speak to his victims. A switch at the

side of the dashboard will drop a 20' stream of oil on the road. A shotgun has been affixed just outside the driver's window, which Mikey can use to fire at oncoming traffic. The engine has a nitrous oxide attachment for those times when more acceleration is required. Next to Spikey is a pull-rope which drops a canister of gas from the trunk. This can explodes into an 80 cubic foot yellow opaque cloud which can induce a coughing fit (use rules for tear gas). Finally, there is a sun roof, which allows Spikey to fire his assault rifle at other vehicles.

The goblins will approach the players' vehicle from behind, shoot bullets into their car and then try to overtake it, using the nitrous oxide if necessary. They will then dump the oil and use the gas canister in hopes of making the driver panic. After that, they will drive around their target, firing their guns, creating more oil slicks and generally trying to wear their opponent down.

Mikey will use the megaphone to make silly threats at the players. He will tell them that they are doomed, and that the Worg will bite them and chew them up (complete with demonic laugh at the end). He also has a Desert Eagle pistol with one full load of ammunition and a fragmentation grenade, just in case he finds himself out of his car.

Spikey wears large goggles to keep out the dust the car kicks up. His G11 has two loads of ammunition, and he has two fragmentation grenades as well. He also has some rotten tomatoes which he will throw at opponents. Goblins:

**St: 4 Con: 3 Agil: 7 Int: 6**  
**Edu: 2 Cha: 6 Emp: 10**  
**Init: 5 Move: 3/10/20/35**  
**Skill/Dam: 7/4 Hits: 9/18**

Both the goblins also wear flak jackets.

### Skeleton Shift

A police car with its siren blaring suddenly appears and tries to chase down the players' vehicle. The driver and passenger are actually both skeletons, but they are still dressed in policemen's uniforms. They have been animated by some dark minions to terrorize other motorists.

The police car will sideswipe the players' vehicle(s) and try to force it into the path of an overturned sedan



that is located just past a curve or slope in the road. Instead, the referee may want to place this encounter on a cliffside road, with the skeletons trying to force the other vehicle off the edge of the precipice.

The skeleton driver is considered to have a Vehicle Handling skill of 5. Both carry loaded Colt M1911A1's, and there are a pair of still operational walkie-talkies on the back seat. Other stats are as per the *Dark Conspiracy* rulebook.

### Glider Grenades

The players hear a whirring sound above them, and look up to see a glider overhead. Suddenly it drops an object and the ground explodes in front of the players' car. The glider is dropping grenades!

The glider will fly in loops, dropping one grenade on the players' vehicle(s) with every pass it makes. It carries a payload of four grenades. The glider is so small and fast that it is considered to be one class harder to hit, and any roll indicating crewmember or passenger damage on the Hull Minor Aerospace Craft Damage chart is ignored.

The controller of the glider, which might be human or a dark minion at the referee's discretion, is considered to have a Piloting skill of 6 in flying the glider. It is remote controlled, so scrambling radio waves may have some effect on the glider. It has the wingspan of a man's arm, and is white with red stripes. The hull of the vehicle is cigar-shaped, with the grenades located beneath the wings.

### The Maneater

The driver sees in the rearview mirror that a figure is running towards the car. It is an emaciated man, dressed in ragged clothes and wielding a long, sharp knife. If the players try to outrun him, they will see him speed up. His feet spin in a blur, and he is actually gaining on the car.

The man is George Reynolds, an occultist who delved in the magic arts and accidentally attracted the attention of a group of dark elves. After submitting him to numerous punishments, they decided not to kill him straight off, but to torture him slowly with their magic.

George's body was made stronger and his bodily processes sped up,

which is why he can move so quickly. He is thin because of the speed at which his body consumes food. The elves have also used their magic to keep him alive, but he will suffer hunger and pain just like anyone else.

This gnawing hunger has driven George quite mad, and he constantly repeats, "So hungry. So hungry." It is pretty obvious what his intention of stopping the car is ...

If the players open fire on him, he will seek shelter or take a short cut to meet the car further down the road. As he gets closer to their vehicle, he will weave to and fro, and try to use his knife to puncture the tires of the car. He may also ram through the car windows and try to kill someone with his knife.

George has the following adjusted statistics:

**St: 7 Con: 10 Agil: 10**  
**Init: 10 Move: Special**  
**Knife Skill: 8 Hits: 14/28**

His whole body is covered with arcane symbols that the elves drew on him, but these symbols should be meaningless to the players.

## The Hitchhiker

A hitchhiker tries to thumb down the players' vehicle(s). He is dressed in a denim jacket and jeans, a Jimi Hendrix T-shirt and dark sunglasses. He introduces himself as John Polanius and says that he is a wandering documentary maker by trade. His luggage consists of a small, expensive video camera and a bag of clothes. He asks for a ride into the nearest town, wherever that may be.

John is a bit of a pain, and arrogant as well. He is chauvinistic, and likely to make passes at any females in the group. He thinks he is still good-looking, when in fact his hairline is receding and his breath smells like rotten vegetables. He will give endless suggestions on how the players should do everything, and gets frustrated if they do not listen to him.

When they do succeed with their own ideas, he will say, "Well, my plan would have been better." If they fail, he will rant and curse at them for not

paying attention to him ("You should listen to me!"). If the players try to drop John off on the road, he will get extremely violent and draw out his Colt Python. He will then start to whine, and demand that the players not leave him ("You're not leaving me out here! No way!").

The tape presently in the camera is a movie about killer tomatoes attacking Earth. At the film's end, there is a three minute long insert showing a group of grub-shaped aliens attacking and devouring a man. After he captured this on film, John went quite mad. He ran away before the aliens detected his presence, and had been wandering aimlessly for the previous couple of days before he saw the players' car.

John has an incomplete recollection of the event, but has a severe phobia of worms, maggots and other crawling things. If questioned about where he filmed it, he will say that he does not remember. He only recalls going into the desert in a jeep with Dave, the man who was eaten in the film, and then finding himself alone.

## The Urchins

The players are driving on the road at night, when suddenly a young boy jumps out twenty feet in front of their car and lies down on the road. The vehicle is going too fast for it to brake in time to avoid hitting the child, but at the very last moment before impact, the boy jumps up and sprays the fender of the car with a spray can he is holding. Various youthful voices can be heard proclaiming, "Well done! Good job! Hah-hah, Zim, that's five you got so far!" from the roadside.

The boy belongs to a group of fifteen young urchins who perform this daredevil stunt for every vehicle that passes by them on the road. At the present time, Zim has made the most sprays, and is thus their leader.

The urchins will run off if the players try to talk to them, hiding behind the wreckage of cars and whatever vegetation there is in the area. However, some of them can be attracted back by the lure of food or toy-like things.

The urchins are vagrants, orphans and abandoned children who now perform various wild feats for kicks. More than one of their members has died a horrible death. One was crushed to death by a truck, another was swept off the top of a train, and yet another was blown to shreds in a minefield. No matter what the fatalities, the urchins continue with their stunts.

They have a small lot half a mile from here where they keep chickens and grow potatoes. They also have a small power generator which they use for lighting and cooking purposes, and an old Winnebago trailer serves as their home and sleeping area.

The urchins will not want to go to the cities, but Zim will ask the players to take his "sister", Rena, and put her in a better place. He will try to bargain with the party good-humoredly in order to obtain something in return for her. Initially, he will ask for a gun, and will work his way down from there. He will settle for food as a last resort.

The other urchins can not be persuaded to leave with the party, and most will begin to lose interest in the whole situation. They will run off, even if someone in the party is talking to them.

Rena seems to be of mixed African-Latino blood. She has sad eyes, yellow-ribboned braided hair and a thin, reluctant smile. Dressed in a dirty green sweater and torn jeans, she holds on to a Raggedy Ann doll she calls Emma. Her only other possession is a silver Kennedy coin that Zim gave her for good luck.

She has no recollection of her parents, and is not even sure if Zim is truly her brother. Her first memories are of sleeping in the trailer with all the other urchins watching over her; she can not recollect anything previous to that. Remarkably intelligent for her age, she has the skill of Human Empathy at level 7, though she does not realize it.

