

DEMONGROUND

The Electronic Fanzine of Dark Conspiracy

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VOL 3

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Dawn Patrol

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Pines & Sunshine

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Dark Britain

Milieu by Lee Williams

Ten Things Every Minion Hunter Should Have

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One Referee's Guide to Campaigns

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The Mercenary Philosopher, New Dark Races,
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1999 - A (Not So) Dark Year

by Geoff Skellams

DEMONGROUND Associate Editor and Minister of Layout

Welcome to Issue 3 of **DEMONGROUND: The Electronic Fanzine of Dark Conspiracy**! It's great to be back doing this all again in the New Year. This year, 1999, promises to be a *very* good year for *Dark Conspiracy* fans.

When we (Marcus, Mike and I) had the idea of forming a fanzine for *Dark Conspiracy* back in June of last year, we had no real idea what we were letting ourselves in for. It has been a lot of hard work for all of us to bring out the issues so far and this one has been no exception.

This issue is the first one created using the Adobe Pagemaker package. DEMONGROUND 1 and 2 were both created in Word 97, and although they turned out OK, they pushed the boundaries of not only the software, but also the patience and sanity of the editorial staff. I'm hoping that the move to Pagemaker will make it not only easier for me to create each issue of the magazine, it will also help to reduce the size of the PDF files and also allow me a lot more flexibility. I guess we shall have to wait and see.

For the rest of 1999, issues of DEMONGROUND will be coming out in the third week of the month. We feel that this will give us a little more flexibility, and the slip also allows us to bring you a timely post-GENCON issue with several of the adventures that will be running at this year's game fair, without having to wait two months for it.

This brings me to the reasons why 1999 will be a very good year for *Dark Conspiracy* fans.

Firstly, GENCON 99 will have a greatly increased number of *Dark Conspiracy* games. I have written an RPGA sanctioned DC 2nd Edition game, titled "Thoughts Run Wild...", which I believe is only the second *Dark Conspiracy* game to ever be sanctioned by the RPGA. Mike Marchi, Rob Beck, Ms Georgie and Lester

Smith are also planning on running at least one *Dark Conspiracy* game each. There could be still more DC games yet to be announced, so we will let you know when we know for certain.

If you can't make it this year's GENCON, then don't despair, there's still something for you. 1999 sees the release of the first all-new published material for *Dark Conspiracy* since 1994. Ken Whitman announced on the Dynasty Presentations' homepage that there will be a series of six new adventure/sourcebooks to be published over the course of the year. They will be set in the fictional "New Centennial City", or "Sin City" as some of its residents call it. The Sin City setting is being designed to allow a referee to place it in any country and any landscape that they so desire. The new books are only going to be available for purchase through the DPI website, so don't look for them in your local gaming store.

Finally, I'd like to take a bit of time to thank a few people.

Firstly, to Chris Carpenter and his cohorts for coming up with the first cover art specifically created for DEMONGROUND. When it came in, it saved us a few nights sleep, because we were wondering what we were going to put on the cover. We're really pleased with it and are looking forward to seeing what else Chris and his friends can come up with.

I'd also like to thank Ken Whitman for his continued support of DEMONGROUND. Having Ken on our side has been really handy for us and we look forward to continuing the relationship we already have.

I have to thank my co-editors, Marcus Bone and Mike Marchi for the support and patience they have shown me since we started. They have had to put up with a fair amount of grumbling and sometimes abuse from me when the deadline for a DEMONGROUND issue is coming up fast

and I have had to make yet another change to the PDF files. Here's hoping that Pagemaker will at least make my life easier, so I'll be less likely to take my frustrations out on them.

Last but not least, I'd like to thank my wife, Sue, who doesn't get to see much of me when I am trying to get each fanzine finished on time. Thanks for putting up with me, hon.

Well, that's enough of my rambling. I'll get out of your way and let you get on with enjoying the rest of this issue. Have fun!

DC ICQ Chatroom

Each week, fans of *Dark Conspiracy* come to the ICQ *Dark Conspiracy* chat room to talk about the game.

If you have ICQ installed on your computer, just search ICQ by id# (for 12565688) or nickname (&Dark Conspiracy) and add it to your ICQ contact list.

If you don't have ICQ installed on your computer, you can download it for free from the ICQ home page at <http://www.icq.com/>

For more details about the *Dark Conspiracy* chatroom and chat sessions, see the Discussions page on the Dynasty Presentations website.

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

If you have any questions about *Dark Conspiracy*, come along. We look forward to seeing you.



One Referee's Guide to Campaigns

by Paul L. Emerson (aka Mark Hunter)

This is my diatribe on building campaigns for your gaming group, from the campaign basics down. This article is not meant to slander anyone or reflect badly on the ways referees do things for their gaming group. On the contrary, for the older referees it is meant to give you ideas you might follow and for the younger ones, it is meant to aid you in getting away from plain set adventures and give your games a focus.

There are many parts normally attributed to running a good role-playing game, such as *Dark Conspiracy*, and making certain that your players know where they stand. Obviously, if your gaming group is the hunter/killer combat monster type, then you will want to ignore this article altogether. On the other hand, for those of you requiring meaning in your gaming, even if your players do not get it, then this article is for you. And, following this article, your players will get more enjoyment because they'll know you're a referee who's trying to get something accomplished and show them a story. It's all that much more rewarding *when* your players do get it.

The first part attributed to good gaming is the **Campaign**. Normally, this means that you will be running a connected (albeit sometimes dubiously) line of adventures which will eventually result in the destruction of one of the Dark Lords. These are fine, but normally do not present the players with any clear-cut direction to go in with their characters. The puzzles which they solve to get their "doggy biscuit" often leave them more mystified than when they started the campaign. Unfortunately, this normally leads to a great deal of frustration with both player and referee and eventually boredom as the players stop solving puzzles and simply start blowing away the Dark Minions.

The second and final part attributed to good gaming, is the **Adventure**. Although pre-published adventures are fine, they usually do not fit how the group thinks as a whole and do not fit their needs. This, on

top of the fact that the adventure will not be a means to the end the players are attempting to achieve, makes them that much more cryptic. Eventually, once more, you get the bored players who simply wish to blow things away to accomplish their means.

There are, of course, many other components which are used in the game: props, characters, dice, referees material, etc., but they really do not aid the referee or the players in accomplishing the tasks necessary, except as their individual component pieces. All they become is necessary evils that clutter the table until needed.

This article is expressly written to make certain *all* your component parts may be fitted together in one setting and not be seen as useless or necessary evils. Hopefully I will fulfill that one promise to you.

The Campaign

As I explained, a campaign is normally a series of adventures strung together (and usually haphazardly at that). Campaigns should not be so; they should be so much more. Normally, you have to have a basis for ending the campaign; a reason the characters are where they're at. One overall profound reason must exist for a campaign to work right and normally it has to be something Earth-shattering. "Hellsgate" would actually have been an extremely good campaign ending; in fact we'll use that as the basis for this article.

For those who do not know, Hellsgate is the portal the aliens opened with their plasma drills in the *Dark Conspiracy* history. The characters job is to find out what happened, or what is happening, basically the Dark Conspiracy, and defeat the machinations of the evil powers involved. Pretty straight-forward, right? Well, let's complicate things.

Legs

It's got l-l-e-e-e-g-g-g-g-s-s-s-s, it knows how to kill you with them!

Okay, campaigns may be a series of adventures stuck together, but it is a good idea to have stopping and/or turning points in the overall campaign. These points help to break up the campaign, allowing your group to take a short respite before you continue playing on the next leg. It also allows the referee to end a short night, go home and over the next week, review their notes for the next leg. Not that referees do not do that anyway, but it allows them to write their campaigns leg by leg and set the next legs aside until it is time to bring them out again.

Each of these legs is supposed to be a miniature campaign in and of itself, leading each to the final conclusion of the overall campaign. Therefore, a focus is required to bring the leg to a close; one that makes sense as a stepping stone to end of the campaign. In the case of Hellsgate, the first leg could end with the information that the characters are facing the challenge of closing Hellsgate itself. They have found out the basic history of how the Dark Conspiracy began and now they have the necessity of finding out what they need to finish the campaign and close Hellsgate.

The second leg deals with getting that information, and the misadventures that will entail. PLOT: They made one of the other Minion Lords *very* mad and it is sending Dark Minions to deal with the player characters.

Like how I slipped that in there?

In finding this information, and fighting the Dark Minions off while doing it, the players find out their characters will have to find an Empath capable of the kind of sorcery that was required to close the Hellsgate centuries ago. They also find that they will be going to the moon of Io where their final battle will be and where they will have to find, block, and magically seal the gateway. That was leg two, easy huh?

Leg three will be finding the sorcerer, getting to Io, and doing the deed. The very last one or two adventure sessions will be



involved with an extremely heavy combat and the dramatic resolution and close of the Hellsgate.

These three legs could run anywhere from nine months to three years of real time, depending on how elaborate the referee desires to make the campaign.

Another way this campaign could be played is as a series of artifact finding missions. Perhaps the artifacts all connect to one another for two or three main pieces necessary to complete each of the legs of the campaign and eventually comprise an "empathic machine" necessary to end the entire thing. If the Dark Ones themselves know of the artifacts Earth holds for their destruction, or for their rule, they could be hunting for them as well. This would make for an extremely deadly campaign for the characters, and something to make the players think their way through - instead of blasting everything in sight.

There are, as far as legs go, hundreds of possibilities to keep your campaign alive and flowing smoothly. When your players get to the end of a leg, and if you run it right, they'll know. They will be reluctant, but happy, to take a short hiatus knowing they've accomplished something pretty big.

Adventures

Now comes the basic part of the campaign, the adventure. This is where your player's characters actually earn their money, so to speak. Adventures are supposed to be a series of events planned together and/or in succession to bring trials and tribulations to a group of player characters. The players have to figure out a puzzle to get a clue or have to destroy the opposition to advance the story. The most important thing the playing group can do is to advance the story. The faster an adventure is played and the more adept the referee and their players are, the better the adventure plays and the more the players will get from adventuring. However, an adventure played too fast by the referee may very well leave the players in the dust, without clues or a proper way to advance the story.

Unfortunately, there isn't very much which can actually be done to improve an adventure, but there are a few things. For one, referees should be ready, willing, able, and capable of reading the adventure through. There are clues hidden throughout the adventure modules that are required to

complete parts of the adventure logically, and which lead into the next part of the adventure. Once you have read the adventure book once or twice, go through it again and jot down the most important points of the adventure, to include any clues that are relevant to the story. Photocopy any props that you need from the book so you won't need to disrupt the adventure to go digging through books looking for things. Now put the adventure book away.

Adventures can be run off the cuff, so to speak, which is normally the best way to run something. If you take my advice from above and then you put your notes away for a particularly long amount of time, you can always review the book again just prior to the game. "The best laid plans..." has been the catch phrase for me ever since I started running games several years ago, and will continue to be true throughout my gaming career. The best written adventures, of which Hellsgate just happens to be one of my all time favorites (although I've never had the pleasure of running it), will turn foul on you in the face of your resourceful players. Your not-so-resourceful players, who may have read the adventure and know what's supposed to happen, will be sitting there not knowing what to do if your resourceful players throw a monkey wrench in the works. But, if you pull adventures "from your butt" so to speak, then your resourceful and non resourceful players will all be on the edges of their kitchen chairs and even you won't know what's going to happen next. It all depends on the players, after all, right?

So much for my advice on running adventures. Now, on to what this all has to do with this article. Just like the legs all have to connect to bring both the leg to a close and lead in to another leg, so to do your adventures have to close and lead into the next adventure. You can rewrite the ending to any adventure, if you're using published adventures, to reflect what is happening in this leg of your campaign, or in the campaign itself. This could take as little as a paragraph worth of description up to an entire section rewrite depending on the written adventure and how much plausible deniability you desire to leave your players





with. If you write all your own adventures, even if they're just impromptu notes, you can always change the ending to suit.

When writing your own adventures, keep in mind what your player group desires to see in their gaming. If they are combat monsters, by all means give them something to kill every thirty minutes. On the other hand, cerebral gamers (people that like to think their way through situations before trying the failed diplomacy angle) will desire more puzzles, mazes, enigmatic creatures, that sort of thing. All adventures can be tuned to a group with little or no work.

Some role-playing games use things such as scenes, acts, developments, cliff-hangers, etc., to break their gaming down even further. Each one of those step-downs from the adventure do, in turn, present their own clues, trials, tribulations, leads, and exits to the very next scene, act, and finally the end of the adventure. In the adventures which are broken down even further, I've found that it is easier to present more information to the players.

Unfortunately, those kinds of adventures also do not tell the referee what will happen for all contingencies the players will dream up. Hence, we come back to "The best laid plans..."

Plots

Ah, yes, one of my two most favorite parts. This and the next section on *Subplots* are the entire reason behind this article. However, I felt it necessary to break down this entire sequence and give you my personal perspective on how role-playing games should be run. If you've read this far, thank you, and let us continue on.

Plots are everywhere, ***absolutely everywhere!*** Everyone ***is*** plotting against everyone else, or at least your characters, and hopefully your players believe that. Human beings are plotting against other human beings, particularly politicians and assassins. Men are plotting against women. Dogs are plotting against cats. Russia is plotting against the United States who is, in turn, plotting against absolutely everyone else. Minion underlings are plotting against other minion underlings as well as humans, dogs,

cats, lions, tigers, bears and everything else. Dark Lords, using every bit of their aspects, are plotting against other Dark Lords! Yep, that's right, there is some hope for the Earth after all. Minion Hunter groups and Empathic Cells are plotting against others of their own ilk because they can. Everything living on Earth plots against everything else under the sun in the universe.

I've just given you enough plots in this last paragraph to fill your adventures by themselves for a whole year. I know, I've done it.

In a world as vast as *Dark Conspira-*



cy's Earth and all her connected Proto-dimensions, there are so many plots going on from day-to-day that new meaning has been given to the word paranoia.

Paranoia: The state in which an individual believes they are being plotted against, watched, etc.

Seriously, you can see plots in absolutely everything out there, without end. Develop, for yourselves, several Dark Lords, with no statistics, just basic description. Now, add an aspect. What Dark Minions do they have in their service? What do those Dark Minions feed off of the most from humanity and possibly other Dark Minions? Is there a racial leader for these aliens who acts as their Dark Lord and holds all the power of that race, or is there some intelligence alien to even their race who is their Dark Lord? Start to examine what you like the

best out of the *Dark Conspiracy* role-playing game. Do you like the idea behind DarkTek the most? The monsters? The supernatural, non-sentients, that have come to Earth because it's a new hunting ground? The fear, loathing, hate, disgust, and general dread the world is in right now? What aspect of the game do you personally like the most? If you have no favorite, what do your players prefer? What would they like to see you take a more active part in the game with?

Now you have the answer, so why not develop it as far up the ladder, from subplots to the top of the Campaign food chain, as a Dark Lord and their plotting. Does your Dark Lord have to be on a quest to take over the Earth? NO! It makes things more interesting if they are trying to, because then you could add opposition in the form of other Dark Lords opposing them on top of what your Minion Hunters are doing to either of the Dark Lords at the time. Haters triangle... don't ya just love it?

The point is that you can make plots and subplots out of anything!

If your Dark Lord's aspect and all their aspirations does not include the take over of Earth, how do the other Dark Lords feel about this? Do they feel that this Dark Lord is an abomination to their way of life, or is it just another joe out for coffee. Of course, that coffee is *the blood from a human female virgin who is beautiful beyond compare!!!*

Just consider that the Dark Lords, being of alien origin themselves, may have feelings, a past, a family (at one time anyway). The point is that you can make the Dark Lords and their minions as real as you want to make them. The more real you make a thing, the more everything else under the sun wants to destroy that thing. Therefore, you have plots.

There's one last element to this whole development scheme, which makes things more complex and puts the squeeze on your players to figure things out, or die trying, and that is the.....

Subplot

Yes, yes, yes, too much to have to fill



into one campaign! If you don't take it all in stride you'll have a very dull adventure campaign which follows all of the natural precepts attributed to modern role-playing.

A subplot is nothing more than a plot which is running inside a plot. But wait, there's more: Subplots *can* run within the plotting and scheming of several Dark Lords or a set of Dark Lords and Minion Hunters *and* Empathic Cells, *and* everyone else the referee sees the subplot falling to. The player characters perform a particular event, closing off the Hellsgate for instance, which angers a Dark Lord to no end. That Dark Lord was going to use the Great Dark One to curry political favor so that a particular minion race would come to its aid, being pulled away from another Dark Lord, so that it would have an even greater chance of taking hold of the Earth. Unfortunately, being unable to get to its master, the Dark Lord goes into a murderous rage and tells its minions to collect all the fear and hatred they can, for it knows it shall never see the light of day. See, in order to get up in the ranks of any social structure, you must step on the heads of those around and the opposing Dark Lords can't see past their own rage against this idiot Dark Lord. Therefore, before dawn is seen on Earth the next morning, the Dark Lord has been banished or murdered.

Adds a whole new element to *Dark Conspiracy*, doesn't it? After all, serfs have always plotted ways to get ahead in life, and usually it requires stepping on someones head to do it, including the heads of those who are their closest friends or even those they love. All of these elements can be *very* powerful when they work together in an adventure.

What's really cool is when your players figure out which plots and subplots are currently working in their favor and against them. Eventually, with a really awesome gaming crew, they will begin to use plots and subplots against you in order to lure the Darklings to their demise.

For myself, the ultimate goal to be had in a role-playing game, is for my players to work for what they get throughout the game, to figure out the mind-f**ks I give them to muddle through. If I have an intricate puzzle (and believe me, this has happened to me more than a couple of times) for my players to solve and they either have to be "given" the answer to the puzzle, they solve it only marginally and do NOT see the effect it has had on the story, or they do not think of the possible consequences of their actions, then I am dissatisfied and disheartened. Whenever I design a puzzling situation for my players to solve, I do not make

it impossible, nor do I make it extraordinarily obvious for them. If they solve it, oftentimes they will see the reasoning behind it.

The point here is that you need to get your players into a thinking mode where they are not, in my definition, paranoid and instead are able to see what your world is developing into and what the ramifications of their actions may cause. Then they will, eventually, begin to attempt to manipulate things in their favor so they can use the Darklings against one another and, eventually, force race after race, off the Earth for good.

Conclusion

I hope you have enjoyed my exasperated and hard-fought article on building campaigns in the Dark Conspiracy universe. If you have any questions of me, comments, queries, quibbles, quips, moans, complaints, etcetra, please email me at

kay_wolf@peakconnections.com

Happy gaming, folks. And, watch your backs, but don't crick your necks doing so. If something's going to happen in the Dark Conspiracy game, it will happen from *any* direction and from any power-hungry imp looking to make a name with his Dark Lord.

"We have a fighting chance. Anyone who thinks we that deserve more is probably a socialist. Nice philosophy - wrong century"

- Zena Marley
(Early 21st-century mercenary philosopher)



Motivations

by Michael Marchi

As is our custom, my gaming group convened on the designated evening to play *Dark Conspiracy*. This particular night was special, as we had two new PC's to introduce into the storyline.

We had a heck of a time getting the new players into the game. Most of the party seemed willing to accept a superficial reason for the new additions, but there was one player who insisted on knowing why the group should even consider talking to these strangers – and furthermore, why would the new PC's even consider staying with this group.

From a roleplaying standpoint, it was a valid point. We tried to come up with something on the spur of the moment, but the answers failed to satisfy the player. I think this is a fairly common question that many of us face when trying to put together a campaign.

What brought this group of disparate

individuals together? Why do they stay together?

So there I was, watching Buffy the Vampire Slayer (and if you don't watch it, you're really missing something!), and two of the characters are having a discussion about what they do (fighting demons). It went something like this:

ANGEL: "Buffy, you know I'm still figuring things out; there's a lot I don't understand ... but ... I do know it is important to keep fighting. I learned that from you."

BUFFY: "But we never..."

ANGEL: "...never win."

BUFFY: "Not completely."

ANGEL: "...Never will. That's not why we fight. We do it 'cause there's things worth fighting for. Those kids; their parents..."

And I realized - that was the answer. It was simple as that. The PC's are involved in opposing the Dark because there are some things worth fighting for. It doesn't need to be more concrete than that. The characters recognize something in each other - a common sense of purpose. Something that sets them apart from the mainstream person in the DC world who plods along without a clue that the world is threatened. And even if the new character has not yet seen any evidence of the Dark, they might still possess that certain spark that gives them the potential to be a great Minion Hunter.

And let's face it. You Minion Hunters need all the help you can get! It's a Dark World out there!





Pines and Sunshine

by Dr. Michael C. LaBossiere

Introduction

This adventure takes place in New England, with a brief journey to Florida. The adventure is part of a series of adventures that are suitable for a campaign. The adventure is fairly challenging and is best undertaken by PCs who are at least moderately experienced.

Getting the PCs Involved

It is assumed that the majority of the PCs already know each other and that they form at least a loose group. If this is not the case, the Game Master should arrange a brief session to bring the PCs together.

The most experienced PC in the group will receive a letter, fax or email from Dr. Karl West:

Dear X,

I apologize for contacting you out of the blue like this, but I have stumbled across a matter of grave concern. When I contacted a mutual friend about this matter, he suggested that I contact you because of your talents and experience in dealing with certain "unusual" matters.

I hope I am not out of line in asking for your help, but I cannot think of anyone else to turn to at this time. I assure you that the situation is worthy of your attention and could well pose a danger to a significant portion of the human race.

In hopes that you and your companions would be willing to listen to what I have to say, I have taken the liberty of arranging transportation for you and your friends to Portland, Maine.

Sincerely,

Dr. Karl West

The mutual friend who recommended the PC should be an NPC the PC knows and trusts. If the PC contacts his/her friend, the NPC will vouch for West and will support West's claim that which he has stumbled onto

is critically important.

If the PCs decide to check on West's background, they will find that he graduated second in his class from the Ohio State University medical school, that he has an impeccable record as a doctor and that he is currently involved in a research project in Portland, Maine.

If the PCs decide to contact West, he will be pleased to hear from them. He will answer questions about the "unusual" matters only in fairly vague terms and will subtly suggest that such topics are best not spoken of over an unsecured line. In their conversation, West will come across as a sincere and worried man who is carrying a great burden.

If the PCs accept his invitation, they will find that West has arranged suitable passage for up to four PCs. He will be willing to provide transportation for more, should the PCs ask.

Events

The following events detail key occurrences that take place during the course of the adventure. The Referee needs to ensure that each event takes place.

Events: Maine

The following events take place in Maine. Even in the time of *Dark Conspiracy*, Maine is a heavily wooded, lightly populated state. The largest city in the state is Portland, which is located in southern Maine, on the coast. Portland has an airport and the capital, Bangor (which is about a two and a half hour drive from Portland) has an international airport.

Unless the Referee has special plans, the journey to Maine should be fairly uneventful.

Meeting Dr. West

Dr. West works at the Cohen Medical

Research Center (CMRC) in Portland. The research center does cutting edge work in medical research and is staffed by some of the finest researchers. The CMRC is also involved in the resistance against the dark conspiracy that threatens humanity and it has ties to NightWatch (see *NightSider*).

Dr. West will arrange for the PCs to have passes that will allow them into the CMRC. The building is modern, attractive and obviously well designed from a security standpoint. Polite, unobtrusive, but well armed personal make sure that only welcome guests have an enjoyable stay.

Dr. West will give the PCs a brief tour of the public areas of the CMRC and then take the PCs to his office. After offering coffee and soft drinks, Dr. West will begin his story:

What I am about to say might seem a bit, well, crazy. However, as you will see, I have the scientific evidence needed to back up all my claims. It is my opinion that the human race might well cease to exist within the next fifty years. However, I am getting ahead of myself and I will start at the beginning.

Exactly ten years ago, when I was working as a general practitioner, I had the misfortune of delivering still-born baby. I know that this happens sometimes, but this child was deformed in ways I had never seen...never even heard of. There were what appeared to be pseudopods or tentacles extending from the body and what appeared to be some sort of mouth in the middle of the abdomen. I would have chalked this up to one of Nature's cruel jokes, but a morbid curiosity lead me to investigate further.

I contacted other doctors and even began checking various web pages and tabloids for similar occurrences. What I found shocked me. I was able to gather hard evidence that showed that a statistically significant number of babies were being de-



formed in similar ways. Some of these babies survived, but only for a relatively short time.

Eventually, I decided to step up my investigation and began acquiring genetic samples from these mysterious babies. What I found was a bit of a shock: in each case there were bits of genetic code that were identical. It was clear to me that there had to be some common cause.

After sharing some of this information with a colleague, she suggested that the genetic material might be recessive in some cases, resulting in normal births. I decided to check up on this and learned, to my horror, that a small percentage of the people I tested had this genetic material in their DNA.

Further examination of the material, conducted when I took a position here at the Center, revealed that the genetic material does not appear to be a natural mutation. In fact, one of the genetic experts suggested that the evidence points to genetic tampering.

I naturally assumed that the tampering was recent, but as I tried to track down when it started, I learned something that startled me: signs of the genetic material are present in samples that are quite old. In fact, some of this material was found in the remains of an Egyptian mummy that is thousands of years old.

My most disturbing find, based on a comparison of the old information and the new, is that the genetic material seems to be becoming active, almost as if it is on a timer.

Based on this evidence, it appears that another species is emerging from the human race, one that might have been caused by some sort of ancient intervention on the part of someone or something.

It is my opinion that this genetic material might pose a serious threat to the existence of the human race. As such, I believe that it is imperative that we find out just what is going on.

Dr. West does have extensive evidence, including tissue samples to back up his claims. Dr. West is, of course, telling the

truth. The still-born fetuses were non-viable hybrids and the genetic material he has isolated consists of Terceki and Vorceki genetic material.

If the PCs ask for more information about the genetic material, Dr. West will say the following:

As near as we can tell, the genetic material alters the physical and mental characteristics of the human being. We are not certain, but the material seems to contain coding for another form of life. Further, one researcher noted that the material seems similar in many respects to work she is doing in using genetic material to store "memories" or programmed behavior.

The material can be detected by a relatively simple test. I have found it in people who are otherwise perfectly normal. Of course, not everyone with this material is normal. In fact, there is a person I would very much like you to meet.

At this point, Dr. West will handle any other questions the PCs might have and he will provide them with his evidence. Dr. West does not, of course, know what is really going on and he has no idea at all about the gate.

After the PCs are satisfied, Dr. West will say *"As I mentioned, there is someone I think you should meet. His name is David Beck. His case is...somewhat unique."* If asked about this person, Dr. West will insist that the PCs need to see him *"so he can tell his own story."*

A Visit from Dr. Lansing

As the PCs and Dr. West are getting ready to leave, one of the security personnel will knock on the door and then speak with Dr. West in a whisper. Dr. West will nod his head to the guard. A short time later, Dr. Blake Lansing will come into the room. After introducing himself, he will say the following:

It is good to meet you Dr. West. Your associates have spoken highly of you. Since you are clearly in a hurry, I will be brief.

It has come to my attention that you

have found some sort of "alien" DNA in certain human beings. After I learned of this, I decided, on a whim, to have myself tested. It turns out that I have this material in my DNA. As you might imagine, I am very concerned about this. I have been informed that you are involved in a project aimed at getting to the heart of this matter. I wish to be involved.

Dr. Lansing is a very persuasive man and will not take "no" for an answer. Dr. West knows of Dr. Lansing and will consider him someone who can be trusted. This is because Dr. Lansing has done some "sensitive" work in the past for an organization affiliated with the CMRC. Dr. West will quickly be able to verify Dr. Lansing's claim about his genetic material. Dr. West will be willing to bring Dr. Lansing into the project and will encourage the PCs to accept him as well.

If Dr. Lansing thinks that the PCs are trustworthy, he will confide that he has been having unusual dreams. Dreams that involve some sort of hole in space and time. He cannot be more specific, but he will say that he suspects that the genetic material might have a role in these dreams.

Meeting David Beck

David Beck lives in a camp in Norway, Maine. Norway is a rather small town and has a lake (Norway lake) with excellent bass fishing. Norway is about an hour from Portland by car.

If the PCs talk to some of the locals about Beck, the general consensus is that Beck is an odd fellow, but pleasant (although he keeps mostly to himself). The locals will also note that he often seems sad and that he always wears a heavy coat, even in the summer.

Beck's camp is in the woods. The camp is quite isolated and the PCs will have to walk about half a mile from Beck's "drive-way." The camp itself is a sturdy structure, with two rooms on the lower floor and an attic. Although it has power and water, it still has an outhouse.

When the PCs and West arrive, Beck will be chopping wood with a rather sharp



axe. Beck is of average height and build and has brown hair. As the locals remarked, he is wearing a heavy coat. He is also wearing a baseball hat and gloves. For a moment, a look of mindless rage will come across his face when he sees Dr. Lansing, then his features will settle back to look of resigned sadness. If asked about this, he will say that he must have had an "episode." In actuality, Beck subconsciously sensed that Dr. Lansing is a Terceki hybrid and Beck's genetic programming was momentarily triggered.

Beck will greet Dr. West warmly and invite everyone inside for some coffee. The interior of the cabin is packed with documents, books, computer equipment and other items. The walls are covered in medical charts, star maps, and maps of the earth with strange markings on them.

Beck will tell the PCs that he has known Dr. West for some time and that they first got in contact when they were both doing research in genetics. When he learns that the PCs know about the genetic material, Beck will say that his DNA contains the material and that it appears to be quite active. As Beck talks, he will appear increasingly agitated and the PCs will notice odd movements under his jacket, as if snakes were writhing in there. What is happening is that Dr. Lansing's presence is affecting Beck, triggering the programming in his genes.

Beck will say that he has been working with Dr. West for some time, trying to determine the source of the material. Beck will also say that he has been plagued with dreams about some sort of structure that open a hole in space. He will say that he believes that his dreams might be genetic memories and that he thinks he knows the location of at least one part of this structure.

Before Beck can finish, Dr. Lansing will reach out and touch Beck's arm, saying "I think I have the same dreams..." At this point, Beck will let out an inhuman howl and his coat will ripple, like snakes are fighting beneath it. A ripping noise will be heard and Beck will stagger back, blood spilling out from under his coat. His eyes will be blank and his face will be contorted in mindless rage. He will tear at his coat, revealing his

altered body. His flesh is mottled and grayish under the coat and several thick tentacles extend from his flesh at odd points. The most horrible part is that there is a gaping mouth in the center of his abdomen, leaking blood and filled with savage teeth. With a horrible noise, Beck will hurl himself at Dr. Lansing and try to tear him apart.

Beck should do some damage to Dr. Lansing and any PCs that try to help him. However, Beck should be defeated by the PCs. If the PCs are losing, Beck could regain control of himself long enough for the PCs to make an effective attack.

David Beck, Hybrid

Strength: 10

Constitution: 10

Agility: 5

Intelligence: 8

Education: 8

Charisma: 3

Empathy: 7

Initiative: 2

Hits: 25/50

Move: As human

Skill/Dam: 6/1D8

Aftermath

After Beck is defeated, he will die (even if the damage did not seem severe enough to kill him). However, with his dying breath he will say "...location...map.. Deep spring there..mastodon bones...find detector...use disk seven for more..." and then die.

The map he is pointing to is of Florida. If the PCs check disk seven, they will find that it contains very complex mathematical data and equations which, according to Lansing, seem to be some sort of coordinate system.

If the PCs check on the clues Beck gave, they will find that the only place in Florida that involves deep springs and mastodon bones is Wakulla Springs in Florida. Both Dr. West and Dr. Lansing will insist that the group journey to Florida to follow the lead.

Events: Florida

The following events take place in

Florida.

The Journey

Wakulla Springs is approximately 2,000 miles from Maine. Dr. West will be willing to arrange air transportation for the group.

Unless the Referee wishes to cause the PCs additional trouble, the journey should be uneventful. The PCs will fly into the Tallahassee airport. Tallahassee is the capital of Florida and also contains two universities, Florida State University and Florida A&M University. Wakulla springs is about a thirty minute drive from Tallahassee.

Wakulla Springs

Wakulla Springs is a state park, It is best known for the spring, which is very deep and leads into a rather large underground cave system. Mastodon bones were found in the sink and are on display in the Tallahassee Museum. There are also boat rides that go down the river that comes from the spring. A variety of Florida wildlife, including alligators, the common moor hen, egrets and turtles can be seen in abundance. Some Tarzan films, the Creature from the Black Lagoon and an Airport film were all shot here. There is also a 50K and a 50 mile foot race at the springs every December, put on by the Gulf Winds Track Club.

The PCs will be able to stay at the lodge, which is quite nice and has its own restaurant.

There numerous sinks in the Wakulla area, some of which lead to flooded caves that are large enough to hold six story buildings.

After the group arrives in Wakulla, they can look at the spring and check out the area. At first, no one will be sure of what to do. However, Dr. Lansing will have a "feeling" that they should send divers into the spring as far as possible, using a detection device that he will make. Dr. Lansing is, of course, being manipulated by his genetic material. The idea for the device is from Beck's notes. Dr. Lansing will spend two days constructing the detector, using a variety of exotic parts. During this time, Dr. West will be using the influence of his associates at the CMRC and in NightWatch to get permission to send divers into the sink.



After a few days, Dr. West will get permission and a deep dive team will be sent. If any of the PCs have dive experience, they will be able to participate.

The search will be slow and dangerous. Even with the advanced diving gear available, the water is very deep and cave diving is inherently dangerous. However, after a few days the divers will detect something and arrange to bring it to the surface. The object they bring up will be encrusted with minerals and will take some time to clean. After it is cleaned, it will be revealed as a tablet shaped item, made of the same material that the gate components are made of. Of course, the PCs won't know this; it will just look very odd.

The device is the Gate Component Locator. Dr. Lansing will immediately start working with it, trying to figure out how it operates.

Meeting Major Reed

The odd components that Dr. Lansing ordered and the activities in Wakulla Springs will not go unnoticed. The US Military has, for its own reasons, been keeping a tab on Dr. West's research. When military intelligence learned that Dr. West's group was sending divers into the Springs, they sent Major Reed to observe the activities.

Reed will be content to watch the PCs until she learns that they have recovered some sort of device. She will contact her superiors who will order her to detain the group and confiscate the device. Since the PCs are probably well armed, Reed will call in some support to make sure things go peacefully.

Her support will consist of twelve Veteran military NPCs, plus an addition team member for every PC, armed with MP7s and M9s. They will arrive by helicopter. The official story will be that it is a training mission. The soldiers will be very polite and friendly to the lodge guests, but they will effectively detain the PCs. The PCs should be encouraged to avoid a fire fight, which would probably result in needless deaths.

Major Reed will handle the interrogation of the group. She will be polite, but forceful, and ask intelligent questions. If the

PCs play it smart, they will be detained for a few days at a naval base in Pensacola, Florida and then released with a warning to "stay out of trouble and talk to no one." If the PCs decide to play it stupid, Reed will have them "vanished." The military will keep the Locator-although not for long; Reed has her own plans for the device.

After their release, the PCs will probably be depressed about losing the locator. However, Dr. Lansing will have some good news. He will inform the group that he had access to the locator long enough to get data from it. This data, combined with the information in Beck's files, has enabled him to calculate the location of the object Beck spoke of. Ironically, the coordinates are almost exactly where Beck's cabin is located. Dr. Lansing will suggest that the group give the military the impression that they have decided to give up. Dr. Lansing will suggest that they go to some interesting places in Florida until things cool down a bit, and then secretly meet in Norway, Maine.

Events: Maine Back to Maine

If the PCs agree to Dr. Lansing's plan, they will notice that they are being watched for a while. Eventually, the military will be satisfied that the group has been "taught a lesson" and they will drop back their surveillance. At this point, Dr. Lansing will contact everyone and arrange to meet in Norway, Maine.

Dr. Lansing will use his own money (so as to avoid any undue attention) to buy chainsaws and rent some excavation equipment he will then spend some time learning how to use it. His plan is to cut down enough trees so they can drive the equipment to the cabin site and dig for the object. Since Maine has fairly shallow top-soil (a glacier gave it a good scrapping in the last ice age), Dr. Lansing thinks it won't take too long to find the object.

The Return of Reed

Dr. Lansing will prove to be too optimistic. The group will spend several days digging to no avail. As Dr. Lansing is con-

sidering admitting defeat, Major Reed will arrive. She will be alone, but well armed. She will tell the group that she thinks she is somehow connected to whatever it is that is going on. She will also admit that she had her genes tested and that they contain the material.

Major Reed will negotiate with the group and offer them the use of the locator in exchange for her participation. She will say that she can cover for their activities using her connections. If the PCs agree, she will drive to where she has hidden the locator and bring it back. If they do not agree, she will leave and it will take months for the PCs to find the component. If the PCs decide to attack her, she will fight back and call in her situation. Help will probably not be able to arrive in time, but the US military will be after the PCs if anything happens to Major Reed.

The Gate Component

Eventually the PCs will unearth the gate component. The component they find is the very top of the gate. When the component is unearthed, everyone with an Empathy score higher than 2 will feel a sense of purpose and power exuding from the object. Dr. Lansing and Major Reed will stand transfixed by its presence.

Conclusion

At the end of the adventure, the PCs should have secured the gate component and the Locator. Both Dr. Lansing and Major Reed will argue that the component should not be turned over to the government. Dr. West will reluctantly agree, given his last experience with the military.

The PCs and the NPCs will need to work out what they will actually do with the component.

This adventure is the first in a series of adventures, so the action continues from here.



Key NPCs

The following are major NPCs. They should be kept alive if at all possible, since they are intended to play critical roles in the action.

Dr. Karl West

Strength: 4

Constitution: 6

Agility: 4

Intelligence: 8

Education: 8

Charisma: 6

Empathy: 3

Initiative: 1

Skills: Climbing 1, Horsemanship 1, Vessel Use (Boat) 1, Vehicle Use (Wheeled Vehicle) 2, Willpower 2, Biology 7, Chemistry 7, Computer Operation 2, Medical 8, Physics 1, Instruction 2, Luck 4

Dr. West is forty nine years old. He is five feet, eight inches tall. He has thinning brown hair, a moustache and a beard. He is in reasonable good shape.

Dr. West is a normal human being. He received his M.D. from Ohio State University. Early in his career West had the misfortune of delivering a still-born baby that was a horribly flawed hybrid. Horrified, yet curious, Dr. West decided to investigate further. To his horror, he found that there was an increasing number of such births.

Dr. West is a very compassionate and concerned man. He is dedicated to finding out what is going on and protecting humanity from what he fears is a great threat.

Dr. Blake Lansing

Strength: 8

Constitution: 9

Agility: 8

Intelligence: 10

Education: 10

Charisma: 9

Empathy: 9

Initiative: 3

Skills: Swimming 2, Electronics 4, Vehicle Use (Wheeled Vehicle) 2, Willpower 6, Computer Operation 5, Engineer

5, Physics 10, Leadership, 5, Luck 7, Persuasion 2, Empathetic Healing 1, Human Empathy 4, Foreboding 3

Dr. Lansing is thirty six years old. He is six feet tall and weighs 190 pounds. He has jet black hair and intense blue eyes. He is in excellent physical condition, handsome and has a deep, commanding voice.

Dr. Lansing is a Terceki-human hybrid. Fortunately for Dr. Lansing, the DNA combination is stable and has served only to enhance his physical and mental capacities.

Dr. Lansing earned his doctorate in physics at M.I.T. at the age of 18. After that, he worked in corporate research for five years and then took a teaching position at M.I.T. Throughout his life he was plagued by strange dreams. As he grew older, his dreams took on greater clarity. They revealed, in part, some of the truth of his situation.

At the start of the adventure, Dr. Lansing will be a brilliant scientist who is concerned with finding out more of what lies behind his dreams. However, his heritage will begin to affect him. Eventually he will become obsessed with finding the gate components and will be willing to destroy anyone who stands in his way.

Major Janice Reed

Strength: 7

Constitution: 8

Agility: 8

Intelligence: 7

Education: 8

Charisma: 8

Empathy: 7

Initiative: 4

Skills: Heavy Weapons 2, Mechanic 1, Melee Combat (Unarmed) 5, Melee Combat (Armed) 5, Small Arms (Pistol) 6, Small Arms (Rifle) 5, Thrown Weapon 2, Stealth 5, Willpower 6, Computer Operation 4, Medical 1, Instruction 2, Leadership 6, Human Empathy 2, Project Emotion 2

Major Reed is thirty three years old. She is five feet, eight inches tall. She has

brown hair and brown eyes. Major Reed is in excellent physical shape and is good looking in a rough sort of way.

Major Reed is a Vorceki-human hybrid. Her genetic material is stable and gives her excellent physical and mental capabilities.

Major Reed was born to a poor family in the inner city. A athletic scholarship supplemented with an ROTC scholarship gave her a ticket from her humble origins. She excelled in school, but had trouble with her temper and was arrested several times for fighting. After graduation she entered active military service and eventually ended up in a special forces team.

Major Reed has intense dreams that have revealed to her that she is meant for a higher purpose. Her dreams have also inspired her to do extensive research using her contacts in the intelligence community.

Technology

Gate Component Locator

The GCL looks like a tablet about the size of a coffee table book. It is made of the same material as the gate components and was manufactured by the Vorceki. The device is actually a sophisticated computer, but the only use that will be accessible to humans is the function it was last programmed for, namely locating gate components.

Using the device requires and Empathy of at least 4. Using it effectively requires a Difficult task roll using the Computer Operations skill. If used successfully, the user will receive a complex string of data and formulas that indicate the location of the nearest gate component. Interpreting the information into longitude and latitude is a Difficult task using Intelligence.

If the locator is within 10Km of a gate component, it will create a "pull" in the mind of the user, enabling him to find the component. Think of it as sort of an alien dowsing rod.

Weight: 3kg

Price: N/A



Referee's Information

The following information is provided for the Referee. Some of this information might be brought to light by the PCs, but at the start of the adventure they will be ignorant of what is actually behind the events they will be facing.

The Vorceki

Three and a half million years ago the Vorceki ("The People") emerged as the dominant life form on their watery homeworld. A curious and intelligent species, the Vorceki eventually achieved space-flight and had the good fortune of finding the ruins of an ancient city on the fourth planet in their star system.

In less than one century, the Vorceki learned how to use the ancient gates left behind on the world and began their own exploration. At first, they were disappointed to find that each world they visited was a desolate and blasted ruin, with crumbling spires and decaying hulks that were once pinnacles of architecture. Finally, almost on the verge of giving up their searching, a gate opened onto a small blue planet, rich with a bewildering variety of life.

The Vorceki, having grown lonely in their search for another intelligent race, decided to create one by spurring on evolution. Using their advanced genetic techniques, the Vorceki kindled the fire of reason in otherwise unremarkable ape-like crea-

tures.

For nearly ten thousand years the Vorceki expanded outward via their gates, sometimes finding dead worlds and sometimes encountering worlds that still lived. On these worlds, they encouraged the development of intelligent life.

Finally, the Vorceki came across the greatest gate they had ever encountered. Even with their advanced sciences and experience, it took them nearly fifty years to discern its workings. This gate, it was found, led to not merely another planet, but into another realm entirely.

A band of explorers, well equipped to face anything, set out through the gate. They returned, but were not the same. These Vorceki turned against their fellows and brought them through the gate. These victims were changed as well, adding to the swelling army.

Taken entirely by surprise (the Vorceki had not known war in centuries), the world after world fell before these changed Vorceki, now known as the Terceki ("Ghosts"). Eventually awakening to the danger, the Vorceki counterattacked and were able to hold off the Terceki long enough to come up with a plan. The elders of the Vorceki decided to sacrifice themselves to spare the worlds they had seeded. Deliberately, they destroyed all their gates and cities, leaving behind only ruins and bones.

On Earth, a few Vorceki and Terceki survived the destruction of the gate. Realizing they would not be able to survive on the earth as the food supplies ran out and their equipment fell apart, both sides sought desperately for a way to survive and defeat the other.

The Terceki tampered with the genes of some of the proto-humans and embedded their DNA into the genetic code of these creatures. When these beings eventually evolved into intelligent life forms, the genetic codes would become active, triggering genetic "memories" and "programming."

The surviving Vorceki learned of this plan when they finally defeated the last of the Terceki on earth. The Vorceki, weak and dying, could not find and destroy all the infected proto-humans, so they decided to counter by creating hybrids of their own. These proto-humans would bear in their genes the "memories" they would need to continue the fight.

Now, millions of years later, the tampering of the Terceki and Vorceki have borne fruit. Some humans, infected with now active Terceki DNA, have set out to find the parts of the ancient gate and reactivate it. Of course, this yearning on their part is subconscious, but is growing stronger. The descendants of those altered by the Vorceki are also being manipulated by their genes.

"It's so easy to blame the Dark Lords for the mess the human race is in now.

"The truth is that we were heading that way anyway. The Dark Lords just added some momentum.

"Human beings don't need to be influenced by some evil creature. They can be big enough bastards all by themselves."

- Zena Marley

(Early 21st-century mercenary philosopher)



The Gate

The complete gate consists of six main components, as shown in the picture below. The gate components are composed of a material best described as “super dense matter.” The molecules that make up the components have been artificially “compressed,” allowing rapid energy transfer and a relatively small size.

To offset the incredible density of the matter, each gate component generates an artificial gravity field. These fields prevent the components from simply plunging into the earth. This field also stabilizes the matter, preventing it from collapsing further (which could result in a nuclear reaction).

The gate’s components are oddly colored and are best described as a “silvery black.” Almost paradoxically, the gate com-

ponents seem to “drink” light, while at the same time the components almost seem to sparkle.

The material of the components is impervious to almost all forms of violence, short of the application of nuclear weapons or other forms of energy strong enough to either destroy the material or to cause the gravitic field to collapse.

The smallest components of the gate, the two end pieces, are five meters tall and five meters wide. Thus, the gate is a fairly sizable construct, although it is fairly small relative to other Vorceki gates.

The gate components have no apparent instrumentation, although their surfaces are not smooth. The surfaces are marked with various orderly and precise lines, circles and raised surfaces. The gates are op-

erated by direct mental contact and are equipped so that even beings with relatively weak empathy can utilize them. In game terms, that means any intelligent creature that has an Empathy score of at least 4.

When all the pieces are within 500 meters of each other and they are sent the combination signal, they will rise up and form the gateway. The entire structure will seem to emit a faint, but powerful, hum. The hum is purely mental and will not be recorded by sound recording devices.

When the gate receives an initialization signal it will power up and present the user with a mental list of possible destinations. After that, the user can cause the gate to open to any viable destination. When active, the destination appears as a “hole” in space time, located between the main pylons.





Combat House Rules

by Michael H. Wittek

SNIPER DETECTION

This is one way to handle a sniper attack on players and NPCs alike. Referees are warned of the effectiveness of a sniper with these rules; use a sniper sparingly.

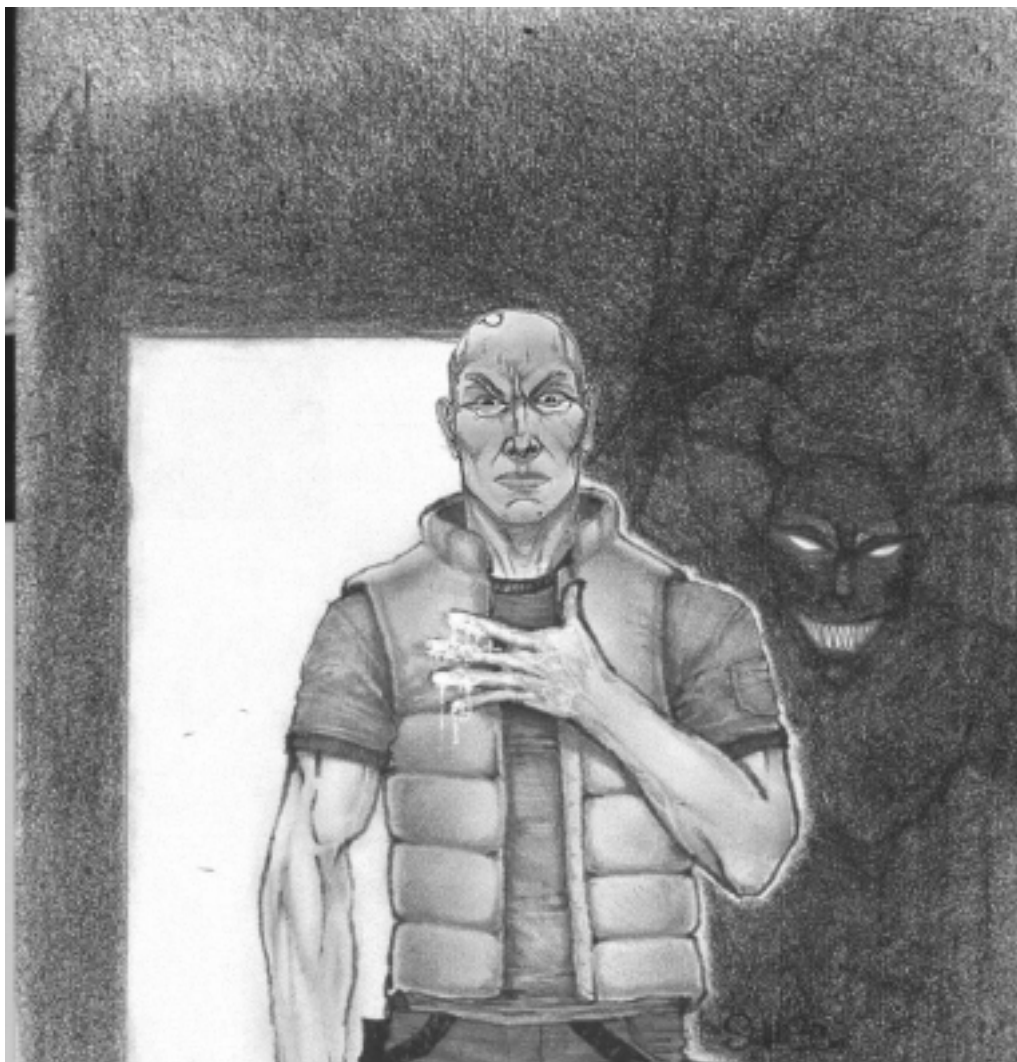
If a sniper takes any effort to conceal his position for a long range shot (not weapons but GM decided), no normal detection (via **Observation**) of a sniper is possible after the first shot from the sniper's weapon. For every consecutive shot after the first, the player or GM makes an **Observation** check. These checks start at *Impossible*, and the difficulty levels continue downward un-

til it hits a lower limit set by the Referee (e.g. 1st shot, no detection possible; 2nd shot, Impossible difficulty; 3rd shot, Formidable difficulty; 4th shot, Difficult difficulty, and so on).

Generally, the lower limit is set at Difficult or Average difficulty level, but consider the circumstances. This detection assumes that the sniper has not made a major position change after his first shot. The sniper will receive the benefit of non-detection again if he can stealthily move to another position conspicuously away from the most recently fired shot.

SHORT RANGE AUTO-FIRE

This rule is meant to be simple and to the point in the *Dark Conspiracy* tradition, so not to slow game play down with charts and burdensome calculations. Add a +3 to hit on the individual's modified asset for auto-fire. For example, If the player's asset is 10 in **Small Arms**, and auto-fire requires an Impossible difficulty level check at 2, the total would be 5 at short range (e.g. $10 \times 0.25 + 3 = 5$, round down fractions). This bonus is only applicable to the weapon's short range and to the primary target. All other rules apply as normal.





Dark Britain

by Lee Williams

"Hell is a city, much like London" - William Blake, poet and artist 1757-1827

Britain in the early years of the Third Millennium does not appear on the surface to have succumbed to Darkling influences to the same degree as the USA. However, it is true that life itself has become very different since the Millennium. Some of the changes that have occurred to the social, political and physical position of the new British Republic are detailed herein. Welcome to the future.

Politics, Law & Order

Since the New Labour period, the dismantling of the welfare state and the return of rampant capitalism, Britain has suffered a great deal during the Greater Recession. The inconclusive elections of 2006 coupled with the economic crisis led to the formation of a coalition government led by former Home Office minister Dorothy Tyler. Apparently the right person for the job, Tyler turned out to be a rabid left winger, having been a member of the Socialist Peoples Party (SPP) whilst at university. As one of her

first acts, she re-instated the death penalty for extreme crimes as part of the SPP plan to re-organise the police and the justice system.

General dissatisfaction with what now became a far-left SPP government turned to civil unrest within three years. Public concern over the re-introduction of capital punishment, as well as many other dictatorial laws, soon led to illegal demonstrations and finally the all-out gang wars in the major city areas. Many ordinary citizens eventually joined in with these riots. The SPP alleged that extremist political groups sensing a chance to topple what they saw as "the system" agitated these demonstrations. This however was never proven, though there are persistent rumours of secret corporate influence. One senior BBC reporter said that he "had not seen anything this violent since the division of Yugoslavia some years ago". Finally the SPP called upon the few remaining non-allied MPs to decide which side of the fence they were on. In fear, they joined

and re-formed the coalition government with the SPP. The SPP then became much more totalitarian than it had been. In fact, the autonomous Scottish Assembly in Edinburgh was so vehemently against the SPP's political philosophies that they declared their complete independence from the London government, a state that still exists today.

The efforts to stop the street battles almost bankrupted the resources of the new restructured Southern Region Police Commission. The Regional Police Commissions replaced the old area constabularies with a more military-styled force, all members of which were to carry firearms openly. This was intended as the end of the old-fashioned boys in blue image, but it was not popular with the majority of police. Indeed, as the trouble worsened, many police joined with the people, as they refused to be used as the tools of the most hated government in British history. Police stations in some towns were used as area headquarters for the local anti-SPP movements. Things were badly out of control for several weeks.

Eventually only the intervention of the armed forces, who came in on the side of the populace against the coalition government, stopped full scale civil warfare breaking out in England and Wales. All known SPP members were arrested and questioned, some later being placed on their own Death Row without trial for alleged capital crimes. The Prime Minister, who had been about to declare herself President and deport the entire Royal family, was placed under house arrest at Number 10 Downing Street, to await trial by the law lords at the Old Bailey.

Then, on the evening before the trial, Downing Street was rocked by a huge explosion of unknown origin. Three of the most famous political addresses in Europe were completely destroyed. The rumours still persist that the new authorities did a deal





with the former PM and the explosion was designed to cover this up. Another rumour suggests that Tyler was there during a genuine attack, but that she survived and slipped away during the chaos. Whatever the truth, life in the British Republic will never be quite the same for the majority of the people.

The Monarchy in the Republic of Britain

What happened to the House of Windsor during the upheaval of the early 21st century? Sensing a growing feeling that the public was unwilling to keep paying for what many saw as an anachronism, the governments preceding the SPP cut back on Royal expenses. The amount given to the Civil List was cut drastically, at first with the approval of the late Queen but later with the minimum of consultation.

Then came the SPP. When Prime Minister Tyler revealed her true colours, the Royal Protection Squad was ordered to place the Royals under house arrest at Sandringham in Norfolk. In fact, the only member of the Squad who was a Tyler supporter was the newly appointed chief, Detective Superintendent Bishop.

Bishop was himself incarcerated by the other loyal policemen as soon as the Royal convoy arrived at Sandringham. His advisers, royalist to a man, had in fact persuaded him to choose Sandringham as it would be relatively easy to defend. They were, however, thinking of defending the Royal family against Bishop's compatriots rather than the public mobs that were roaming the countryside. Bishop, who had been given sole responsibility for the Royals, was made to give daily reports directly to Tyler saying that all was well and his charges were kept healthy.

Reports uncovered after the Recovery hinted that far from exile, Tyler had been thinking of trying the Royals for dereliction of their oath to serve the citizenry of the UK. This would have been a great propaganda coup for the SPP. Secret arrangements were hurriedly being made to transport the Royals to safety, probably to the US or Canada.

Then, after the weeks of public rioting

and the eventual collapse of the SPP government, the Recovery administration came to Sandringham to try and sell their ideas to the Royals. After several days of conferences and personal debates, a deal was struck. Basically, the Royals were welcome to stay, as the majority of the populace still loved them. However, the King was to sign away all remaining political powers forever, in return for which the government would resume the Civil List, albeit at a much lower rate than even the SPP had paid before their attempt at a communist coup.

This effectively meant that the Royal family was just figureheads from then on. As things had been slowly going that way for years, His Majesty agreed. Both the Recovery administration and the House of Windsor knew that still having the Royals where they could be seen and heard would be a boost to the people, especially as it separated the Recovery government from the extremist ideas of the SPP. The idea actually turned out rather well and the Royals are seen at all top social and political events. As they no longer have any real power whatsoever, they are now free to express their own personal opinions with no fear of public backlash.

The Royals have come to enjoy this new degree of freedom, previously unknown to them, and are very relaxed and happy nowadays. Don't forget, for some reason the public still love 'em.

The Corporations

During the all-out fighting, the government looked to the corps for financial and material support. After the State of Emergency was over, the corps apparently offered the new emergency government a deal; the corps wrote off the previous government's debts in return for a certain amount of political leverage. Since then, several new laws have been passed which seem to favour the corporations, especially financially.

The most controversial of these has been the Voting Proxy and Private Welfare Act. This is an American style law (as detailed in *Dark Conspiracy*), where the destitute and desperate can give up their voting entitlement to a corporation in return for

basic accommodation, including subsistence level food and drink, plus free cable TV. The corps can then use these voting proxies to vote however they like in any local or national elections. The provisions of the Act also usually require the person to relocate to a housing complex built on corporate property and patrolled either by the corps own security guards or a specialized security company. Many of these complexes have curfews, although this is not unusual as most cities and towns have official police curfews of one sort or another, often to stop youth crime. Sometimes they even work.

The new government also has their own containment zones, or "conzones" as they are called, which are usually inhabited by the unemployed and poor who still wish to retain their voting rights. These areas were originally set aside by the SPP as dumping grounds for "social misfits and undesirables" and the inhabitants now wear this reputation as a sort of badge of dishonour, even though the SPP are long gone. Several zones have reputations as breeding grounds for petty criminals, street gangs and political activists. Oddly enough, it was in these places that the anti-SPP civil unrest was precipitated by people who the New British government now seem to have little time for.

Conzones are patrolled by the Regional Police, usually on an irregular basis and are under an all-night curfew, although they are not usually allowed to prevent free movement inside the Conzone areas. The curfew is there to try and keep the residents inside where the RPC can keep an eye on them. If somebody leaves a government Conzone without the correct authorisation and then cannot be located by RPC, or if they commit a serious crime and go on the run, then the authorities may hire one of the small number of professional bounty hunters. They tend to be ex-servicemen, most of whom were used as undercover agents after the fall of the SPP to track down the party officials who had gone to ground. They are nicknamed Breakers, and they are the only civilians normally allowed to carry firearms in the whole of Britain.



The Countryside

Many things have happened to the British countryside since the Millennium. The combined pressures of continued food scares, road building programs, population expansion, civil unrest, global warming and lack of European Community subsidy have all but killed off the 20th century farming culture. Many farmers did go bust in the Greater Recession, selling their land to property developers or corporations concerned with American-style intensive farming.

Just as in Medieval times, a number of towns and villages were deserted completely when the money and jobs ran out. It is also true that some people were worried about the increasing number of chemicals used by the corps and any possible effects on children. Therefore, they moved to the more violent but hopefully less polluted cities. Indeed, after the major riots were over and the SPP coalition government was replaced with a properly elected parliament, a number of measures were implemented to start cleaning up the cities. It seems that the reason for this was to make the new government look good, as about 80 % of the population at the time lived in major urban areas. Meantime, the corps bought vast tracts of government land as well as bankrupt farms, started intensive factory farming and all but ignored previous environmental laws.

The rising sea levels and violent weather patterns caused most of the fens of East Anglia to become inundated once more. This led to a general evacuation of the area, swelling even further the populations of towns and cities. In time, the remaining local farmers took to growing water-based crops such as seaweed and also set up fisheries. This activity began to bring back some of the former residents and eventually revived the local economy.

Now, with a combination of recovery grants from the new government and corporate investment, the town of Peterborough is to become an inland seaport. As the town is about forty kilometers from the old coastline, this involves creating a new harbour and cutting a new course for the River Nene straight to The Wash. It is hoped that Peter-

borough will eventually be Britain's main port for northern European trade. Its location also offers shelter from the increasingly unpredictable North Sea storms.

It also appears that unusual phenomena are becoming much more frequent in rural areas and several groups who specialise in "paranormal investigation" have become more active outside the major cities.

In a nutshell then, most cities are becoming cleaner but more overpopulated whilst the countryside becomes dirtier and more deserted. However, ecological activist groups are starting to get busy, so there may be some chance for the land after all.



The Capital

Yet, throughout all the unrest and upheaval, London remained the centre of new Britain. The destruction of Downing Street meant that the leaders of the Recovery government conducted their business from Chequers, the Prime Minister's country residence, for several months. When a leading industrialist suggested building exact replicas on the original site, the public took the idea to their hearts, and the Recovery programme got a huge boost as a result. The damage to the Palace of Westminster and the government buildings surrounding it was also made good.

Hyde Park has become a shantytown where those who are apart from the system can escape, at least until a random police sweep. In fact, the park is where the divisions in New British society are most ap-

parent. Luxury cars sweep along between the potholes of Park Lane and Knightsbridge whilst beggars look on in hatred or pity for those who still live for money. It is not usually advisable to frequent the Park after nightfall.

The rising sea levels also had an impact on London. Emergency crews work around the clock permanently to keep the Underground dry and working, but even so several stations are evacuated on a regular basis. Much low-lying land has flooded, ruining some of the business and tourism potential of Britain's most popular and profitable city. The Thames Barrier, when raised at high tide, is now little more than a weir.

Away from the central areas, things were also rather grim. Over the previous two decades, the major routes into London had been expanded dramatically. Eight lane expressways with overhead commuter monorails had been built straight through residential areas, often displacing people and dividing communities. The infamous M25 orbital motorway was also widened, and then became gridlocked again within 18 months. The SPP anti-private transport policy had allowed these new roads to fall into ruin almost as soon as they came into power. Lack of government funds at the start of the Recovery gave the larger corporations the chance to buy into the transport infrastructure, repairing roads and installing toll gates. Some parts of the suburbs and the old commuter belt remain untouched however.

Other Places of Interest

The Scottish Declaration of Independence was mentioned earlier. The basis for this was laid down with the formation of the Scottish Assembly during the new Labour period in the 1990s. The extremist policies of the SPP forced the Assembly to declare complete unilateral independence from London. The SPP's trouble in trying to establish its authority and its lack of funds meant they could do nothing to stop the Scottish secession.

The Assembly immediately set up a full international border, complete with searches and identity checks, which lasted as long as the SPP government. After the Recovery



government took over, the border was downgraded to a European-style open boundary, with stop-and-search only occurring after major crimes. The customs officers do occasionally carry out random searches, as they like to keep up a public presence.

As things went, the new Scottish nation did quite well. Not having to pay taxes to the London government (which had long been a bone of contention) meant that Scotland's money stayed in Scotland. The influx of genuine refugees from England, many of whom had useful skills, enabled Scotland to begin running its own affairs quite smoothly. What helped the process was a general feeling amongst the population that this was what they had waited for since the twelfth century. They were determined to show the English what they could do, and they did. As it turned out, Scotland was able to gain independence on its own terms.

Meanwhile, back in England, the new generation of super-large passenger airliners had forced the expansion of most airports. Despite many years of objections by local residents, the Birmingham International airport in the Midlands had the main runway extended by several hundred meters. This made it necessary to cut a tunnel for the A45 road linking the city of Birmingham with the airport and motorway. The British Aviation Authority gave the contract for the expansion to the lowest bidder, mainly because of lack of interest from the SPP.

Two years later, a Boeing 797 Super Max, carrying 553 passengers, crash-land-

ed, hitting the runway at the point where it crossed the tunnel. The plane skidded safely to a halt, but the tunnel collapsed. It was during the evening rush hour and many cars and buses were crushed flat. 71 people were killed, with another 200 or so injured. The road was later rebuilt, but the runway was re-shortened and the superlarge aircraft no longer land at BHX, though it is still a major cargo hub. The now unused A45 spur road on the city side of the airport is cur-

a thriving trade at these times in bottled water and also purification filters and chemicals.

The Economy

As arranged by the New Labour government of the 1990s, Britain became a full member of the European Monetary Union. After the mass civil disturbances (which also occurred to a certain extent in Europe) the National Debt increased to an incredible level. As in the Russian economic scares of the 1990s, many people withdrew all their cash from the financial institutions, thus worsening the situation. Eventually people on the fringes of society started using barter and dropped cash altogether. After the panic was over and the SPP coalition government finally removed from power, the EMU was reformed as well as it could be given the circumstances.

By this time, the black markets of Europe had started using their own currency. Though technically illegal, this currency was popular amongst those whose dealings were not suited to electronic credit transfer. Indeed, anybody at all who needs something immediately will now use the black market scrip. In the

New British Republic, the popular slang term for this form of currency is "Quid", which refers back to the nickname of the pre-EMU pound Sterling. Even the most respectable people carry a few new Quid on them, just in case.

The Flag

With the final separation of Scotland, the Union Jack obviously needed to be changed. The simple removal of the cross



rently an open air street market, said to be a good source of both information and black market equipment. There are also rumoured to be ghosts wandering on the crash site.

Birmingham also suffers from occasional water shortages, usually due to collapses of the pipelines bringing fresh water from the Welsh dams that supply much of the area. Sometimes the collapses are due to poor maintenance but occasionally they are caused by Welsh eco-terrorists. There is



of St. Andrew would not suffice. Many top designers from all trades and areas were asked to submit their ideas and five were finally chosen for public scrutiny. As several Welsh nationalist organisations had mild objections to adopting what they saw as a new English insignia, no dragons or daffodils were accepted on the entries.

The choice favoured by the Recovery government was a cross of St George with the House of Commons insignia in the centre and the coat of arms of Oliver Cromwell in the top left corner. This was to signify that the royal family no longer had any political power whatsoever. This design was unpopular with the public, as they felt it to be too reminiscent of the SPP and its violently anti-royalist stance. The Royals still held their special place in the affections of the British. The final choice was the emblem of Britannia overlaid on the Cross of St. George with a royal blue border.

The Military

After the military refused to support the SPP during the London Riots, the following government was unsure just what the

armed forces would be capable of in future.

This concern turned out to be unfounded as the Chiefs of the Defence Staff offered to resign because technically they had violated their oaths of service, because the Prime Minister is the commander in chief. Indeed, the anti-SPP coup staged by the military was a very British thing to do. Where else in the world would the military overthrow the government and then NOT take control?

As things turned out for the services, some of them later probably wished that they had resigned. In order to maintain good relations with the corps, the current government allows the use of servicemen in testing corporate products. These are sometimes of little use to the armed forces, but it is certainly cheaper for the corps because the military personnel concerned have already been paid. They are also not necessarily eligible for compensation in the event of accidents whilst they are on active service.

It should be noted however that the current British Armed Forces are issued with top line weapons and equipment. The prime example of this is the Future Infantry Sol-

dier Technology programme. The FIST programme was started in the late 1990s and was designed to allow each individual soldier instant access to satellite communications and tactical & navigation data. After the recovery from the anti-SPP riots the programme was restarted, and the first usable smart weapon was developed as part of it.

Credits

Full and frank credit should be given to all those who have provided inspiration and ideas. The authors freely admit to poaching from several sources, and these ideas are used here without permission but with our sincere apologies.

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"Saying that democracy is the best form of government is nearly as great an understatement as saying that the Pacific Ocean holds more water than any tin cup you've ever seen. The issues are so clear, the truth so solidly anchored, that I have no patience with people who think that there's even anything to argue about.

"Someone once said to me, 'Sometimes the people are lazy and stupid, and make poor decisions. It sometimes takes a strong leader to protect them and choose the right course.'

"So a nation of stupid and lazy people, because of a strong, intelligent leader is saved from its own sloth and folly? Where is the justice in that?

"Democracy isn't just the best form of government; it's the only one even remotely worth a damn. Only democracy guarantees people get what they deserve."

- Zena Marley
(Early 21st-century mercenary philosopher)



New Dark Races and Other Critters

by Lee Williams

Morthr'ai

Strength: 10

Constitution: 10

Agility: 3

Intelligence: 4

Education: 3

Charisma: 1

Empathy: 0 (see text)

Initiative: 3

Hits: 15/30 (see text)

Move: 2/8/15/30

Skill/Damage: 6/10

Appearing: 3 or multiples thereof

Like several other extraterrestrial races, the Morthr'ai are from Earth's own dimension. They are quite alien in appearance though, being slightly shorter than humans but much more bulky. They are bipedal and have dark green skin, one tri-partite eye and three arms, each of which has three clawlike fingers. The thick rubbery skin gives them 1 point of armor value. Their internal structure makes them very flexible, so they can change shape to a certain degree. They are very strong physically.

Friendly ETs have told their contacts on Earth that the Morthr'ai left their homeworld many centuries ago after depleting all of its natural resources in the construction of a fleet of war machines and spaceships. They have lived ever since by conquering other worlds, draining most of their resources and then moving on again. They seem to have no capacity for inter-dimensional travel. It also seems that the species has no natural capability whatsoever in the theory or practice of empathic abilities.

The Leaders of Morthr'ai are particularly annoyed with Earth for several reasons, mainly that two previous invasions in 1898 and 1953 failed. The few Morthr'ai who survived the last invasion are now further developing techniques to allow them to withstand the common bacteria which are deadly to them. If a Morthr'ai takes more than six points of penetrating damage in a single impact, bacteria are forced into the wound and

the body will liquefy within seconds. There are protective suits that filter the air (they breathe through their skin) and also a method of taking over a human body. This involves reshaping their bodies and then entering a host body at the exact moment of death. The Morthr'ai then dissolves the internal organs of the host and is "locked" into human form. After a while however, the host skin starts to lose its integrity and the occupant must either seek out a new host or go into stasis. The stasis process used by the Morthr'ai requires high levels of radioactivity.

It is believed that the US government has several Morthr'ai war machines hidden in secret locations. If true, these machines must surely be the prime objective of any future action by the Leaders. The remaining Morthr'ai are stuck on Earth unless they can recapture these machines, and use them to force the world's industrial nations to construct a vessel for them. This seems unlikely at the moment.

Inspired by War of the Worlds, especially the TV series.

MORTHRAI

From a classified report given to the UN Security Council by Dr. Harrison Blackwood, October 10, 2006.

They are thought to be related to the tentacular ETs, although they are not amphibians. They are friendly to the tentaculars, although not usually allied with them. Their purposes appear to coincide as well, with conquest at the top of their agenda. They appear not to be as technically advanced as their tentacled cousins and seem to prefer using stealth as their main asset.

Morthr'ai are able to take over human bodies, an awful ability which is generally fatal to the new host. They will use force when they feel it is necessary, but avoid physical confrontation unless they have the upper hand. They are very few in number at the moment, having lost many lives during two failed invasion attempts in 1898 and 1953. There are also traces of their pres-

ence on scouting missions to Earth throughout recorded history. These can be found in verbal stories, texts and even sculptures in various different cultures worldwide. Fortunately, if they cannot occupy a fresh host body every so often they will revert to their original forms, which are extremely vulnerable to Earth bacteria. Without special equipment they soon die and their bodies liquefy, although it may be possible for them to enter a state of hibernation for an unknown amount of time.

We believe that they currently have a base somewhere in the deserts of the American west, possibly in the old nuclear testing grounds, but recon missions by Colonel Ironhorses' Omega Force have so far failed to determine the location. Reports of their activities are also increasing in our major urban areas.

"Quinn"

Strength: 10

Constitution: 10

Agility: 5

Intelligence: 8

Education: 8

Charisma: 6

Empathy: 0

Initiative: 4

Hits: 15/30

Move: 2/8/15/30

Skill/Damage: 6/1d10

Skills: Bargain 4, Business 4, Computer Ops 4, Disguise 6, Electronics 6, Forgery 4, Melee Combat Unarmed 4, Stealth 4.

Special: Fine Arts 6

Quinn has to be one of the most sought after artists in the world. His light sculptures using hologrammatic shapes and multi-coloured light beams are all unique. They convey to most people the true depth and wonder of space and time, giving a glimpse into the cosmos.

Quinn is also a psychopathic mutant,



created accidentally during the attempted Morthr'ai invasion of Earth in 1953. After using a now abandoned method of taking over a host body, a Morthr'ai warrior's body was merged with the body of Edward Quinn, an artist from New York. However, Quinn was not yet dead at the time of merging, causing this unique situation. The minds of the two beings were also combined into one, warping both of the personalities. The new individual was outwardly human, but had none of the problems associated with deterioration of the host body. He had full access to the memories of both human and Morthr'ai and the physical strength of an alien warrior. He soon vanished from sight when it became clear that the Morthr'ai wanted to dissect him to discover his genetic secrets.

Realising that he needed money in order to survive in human society, he turned to avant-garde light sculptures. Originally using spotlights and prismatic effects, the advance of laser hologram technology soon brought him the cashflow to begin forming his twisted plans of revenge. Staying a recluse for over 60 years also meant that nobody ever noticed his lack of ageing. In fact, one would expect the discovery of a "new" Quinn to be a fake, as surely he couldn't still be working after so many years. The fact that handwritten and dated letters of proof always accompanies his works merely adds to his mystique.

Quinn's plans are simple. He wishes to destroy the remaining Morthr'ai and to take over the Earth and rule as a dictator. Carrying out this plan may be more difficult though.

Inspired by the War of the Worlds TV series.

Allghoi Khorkhoi

The legendary Deathworm of the Gobi Desert, subject of ancient Mongolian myths. They are actually native to a proto-dimension that is subject to extreme sandstorms and high temperatures. Some of them were inadvertently brought through a Gate during the fight to stop the Dark One known as Fiddleback. These modern Deathworms arrived on Earth in the deserts of the south-

western United States. There seems to have been very little activity from them so far, though there have been reports that the destruction of a small desert township is due to their actions.

Strength: 50
Constitution: 50
Agility: 3
Initiative: 3
Move: 10/40
Skill/Damage: 8/1d100
Hits: 200/400
Appearing: 1d4
Attack: 50%

Deathworms are about 12 metres long and have a thick skin covering the whole body save the head. The skin gives an armor value of 2. The mouth is ringed with tentacles that grasp any live beings the worm comes across and attempts to throw them straight into its mouth. The Deathworms travel along under the ground using spines along their sides that they can move in a fast oscillating motion. Their high hits rating is due to their almost complete inability to feel pain, as they tend to keep moving until they literally fall apart. Due to the way they capture prey, they have been nicknamed "graboids" by those few who have been fortunate enough to survive an attack.

Inspired by Fortean TV and the movie "Tremors".

Smother Snake

Darkling interference on Earth has caused mutations of several species. The so-called "Smother Snake" is an arboreal relative of the constrictor family which has developed the ability to glide short distances, using extended lateral membranes to "steer".

It hides in trees to wait for prey to pass underneath, then drops onto the creature's head and attempts to either suffocate the prey or crush its skull. Smothers will not usually attack things too large to swallow, but will attack anything smaller that disturbs their home tree.

Note that Strength increases to 6 if the snake succeeds in its crushing attack and Movement is 30 when gliding.

Strength: 2
Constitution: 2

Agility: 7
Initiative: 4
Move: 5/15 (see text)
Skill/Damage: 7/2
Hits: 4/8
Appearing: 1
Attack: 30% (see text)

Triffids (Tripodiae Ambulans)

Surely there is no need to explain what Triffids are. After all, there is a classic book, a terrible B movie and an excellent BBC television series about them.

Strength: 6
Constitution: 10
Agility: 2
Initiative: 2
Move: 2/4
Skill/Damage: 6/2D6
Hits: 18/36
Appear: 4D10
Attack: 60%

When triffids attack, they will do so with their stinger. This is a whip-like attachment that strikes its target with a blow capable of killing small animals and even rendering a human being unconscious. The stinger's tip also has small poison sacs containing venom that causes temporary blindness in humans and again can kill small prey such as rodents.

After a kill, the triffid will take root nearby and feed on the nutrients that the decomposing prey releases into the soil. Triffids can grow almost anywhere except in the most extreme climates. In fact, some poorer countries cultivate triffids which have the stings removed and sell the vitamin-rich oils from the plant.

From Day of the Triffids by John Wyndham.

James Spector

Originally a normal human, James Spector ran a small public accountancy firm. Due to the Greater Recession, the firm went bust and Spector suffered severe mental depression.

Eventually, he was found wandering the streets of New York metropolis by darklings who were collecting humans for empathic



virus testing. They infected him with a mutating strain of virus which killed him almost immediately, so the darklings dumped him in an alley. A passing paramedic team noticed the body. As he was still warm, they tried to revive him using a new method.

This involved a new drug that was actually developed by the government using friendly ET technology. This technique worked on James Spector, but there was a hideous side effect brought about by the two alien viruses fighting in his system.

Spector spent almost six months in a padded cell screaming, until the doctors found a drug cocktail to calm him down enough to speak coherently. However, that very night, before he could be questioned he escaped from the secure wing, killing a guard on the way out. The corpse was found without any discernable cause of death.

Spector has developed a singular and most awful talent, namely the ability to kill by simply looking into the eyes of his victims and concentrating. The theory is that Spector remembers his own death with full clarity and by using a unique combination of Project Thought and Project Emotion can cause others to experience his death agonies, therefore killing them also. The second alien virus has also given him the ability to heal wounds at a vastly accelerated speed.

James Spector a.k.a. Demise

Strength: 5

Constitution: 6

Agility: 4

Intelligence: 4

Education: 5

Charisma: 3

Empathy: 6 (see text)

Initiative: 4

Hits: 15/30

Move: 2/8/15/30

Skill/Damage: 6/4

Skills: Streetwise 4, Bargain 3, Act/Bluff 4, Observation 3, Pickpocket 4, Small Arms Pistol 2, Vehicle Use Wheeled 2.

Special: Project Death 10, Empathic Healing 10

Taken from the "Wildcards" series edited by George RR Martin.

Fating'Ho and Wokolo

These creatures are semi-spiritual entities whose origins lie in West African folklore. It is possible that they may both be the same race, but from different areas.

Both varieties are said to be the size of a two-year-old human child. They are covered with a dense coat of black fur and their heads are large in proportion to the body. The eyes of the Wokolo are described as being yellow, while those of the Fating'Ho are red. The Wokolo is sometimes said to have a long pointed beard, red or black in color. Both creatures' feet are apparently reversed, though the reason for this is not clear.

Both of them are hunters, the Wokolo hunting in and along the sides of watercourses and the Fating'Ho preferring to wait in ambush alongside jungle trails. Their prey seems to be small mammals, though the Wokolo also enjoy fish. They hunt using archery, the arrows being tipped with magic potions and blessed with incantations to ensure a rapid death to the prey. Whether in spite or self-defense, they do shoot at humans travelling in the forests. The arrows are said to be part physical and part spiritual and the only sign that a human has been hit is the later appearance of horrible ulcerating wounds that refuse to heal. Both Fating'Ho and Wokolo can disappear and reappear at will and even when visible can camouflage themselves well enough as to be practically invisible to the eye.

Legend states that they may enter settlements at night searching for food that has been left uncovered, but the peculiar drumming of their reversed feet will alert the inhabitants. In some places the children are escorted everywhere after nightfall. If they are encountered in the forest, there are said to be two options. If the creature is unarmed, a person can attempt to beat it unconscious, though they must take care not to let the creature count the number of blows or it will be able to cast a spell on its assailant in the future. This magic is in fact the use of Human Empathy to cause depression or nightmares. If they are already armed, then greeting them in the most polite terms possible is sometimes enough to placate them.

Wokolo/Fating'Ho

Strength: 2

Constitution: 3

Agility: 6

Intelligence: 4

Education: 2

Charisma: 4

Empathy: 6

Initiative: 6

Hits: 10/20

Move: 2/8/15/30

Skill/Damage: 6/3

#Appearing: 1D6

Special: move silently at all speeds except 30

Gnema

Gnema are spirits that occur almost everywhere in the world. Like humans, they have the capacity for both good and evil. Some Gnema live on footpaths or trails and especially at crossroads, where in some parts of the world food is left or sacrifices made in order to gain their favor. This legend has been passed down through the centuries via voodoo and eventually into 20th century blues music. People have been said to enter pacts with Gnema in order to gain the fame and riches they desire. These people have usually died in tragic circumstances that they have brought upon themselves.

These entities can take on many forms and can even transform themselves into whirlwinds which can enter buildings through open doors and windows. They can also vanish into trees, where they are said to rest. Some bad Gnema even cause food poisoning by spitting venom into containers which have been left open accidentally. Gnema are completely non-physical and are self-sustaining Empathic entities much like the Tulpa (1st edition Dark Races Volume 1, page 96 or Dark Conspiracy 2nd Edition Referee's Guide P146). Their origins are not known.

Gnema

No physical stats

Empathy: 1D6 plus 4

Initiative: 4

#Appearing: 1



Witch Woman

by Ms Georgie

Non Player Characters (NPCs) play an important part in your game. Some NPCs are created strictly for one game to create havoc for your players. Others are created for your players to get attached to, then they are killed off to get your players going in the right direction. Once that campaign is over, the NPCs are either dead or forgotten.

Alternatively, there is the NPC that you create and enjoy using for more than one campaign, because you have put a great deal of time and energy to develop it.

These types of NPCs can be harmful or helpful. They may have the key the player characters need to unlock the door they are trying to get through. The NPCs may also have information to send the characters in the right or wrong direction, depending on their motivation. They could also be the “savior” your players need when they have stepped in over their heads and you just don’t

have the heart to kill them off yet.

One of my personal favorites is a “Witch Woman”, like the one played by Ester Williams in the movie “Mighty Quinn” (at least I think it was Ester Williams).

The house she lives in will be a hovel surrounded by lush vegetation. The grounds will have a lot of animals, although most are only stray cats and dogs.

Whenever the characters encounter her, she will always be sitting on her porch in a rocking chair. This will happen regardless of the time the characters arrive. It doesn’t matter how often they go visit her, she will always be on the porch.

Remember she is a “Witch Woman” and is all-knowing and all-seeing. She knows of the evil invading the land and is willing to help the fight against it. She may have advice or an item the player characters need. However she will also gladly send the PCs on a wild goose chase or send them to their

death. The “Witch Woman” can also be used as an empathic contact.

The Witch Woman

Str: 4	Con: 5	Agi: 4
Int: 7	Edu: 3	Cha: 5
Emp: 6		

Her studies include herb lore, chemistry and physics, while her empathy skills are to do with animals and humans.

The Witch Woman appears as an elderly lady in her 60’s with a heavysset build. She will always be found in her rocking chair; the player characters will never see her walk. If the characters get close enough, they will find she reeks of spices and herbs. Her voice is gravelly and she has a Caribbean accent. Sometimes when she talks she speaks in riddles.

Animal Empathy

by Ms Georgie

Animals are another good form of NPC. The referee can use them to help or hinder the players, depending on his or her whim.

In theory, anyone or anything can communicate with Empathy. For example a man who speaks Russian can communicate with someone who doesn’t speak the language.

Now, if you take Empathy one step further, who is to say that an animal and a human can’t do the same thing? Think about it. Have you ever had a dog sit staring at you and after a minute you pick up a ball or stick and toss it for the dog to chase? What was the dog thinking and why did you pick up that ball or stick?

Any animal can be empathically trained to communicate. Most animals will only be able to communicate in feelings like fear, contentment, and hunger. Depending on the

animal’s intelligence and empathy, more details may be given; the higher the intelligence, the more information may be transferred. For example, an animal might be able to communicate “there are two humans behind door”. Of course, it also depends on the empathy ratings of both the animal and the character.

I give all my animals NPCs empathy and intelligence ratings.

Lady Kate

Str: 8 (upper body mainly)	Con: 4
Agi: 4	Int: 7
Cha: 8	Edu: 6
	Emp: 5

Lady Kate is a tall woman with striking features. Despite being in a wheelchair, she dresses like a business woman. Kate has her own Private Investigation com-

pany and frequently finances groups to do out of the ordinary jobs. Kate has been known to financially back minion hunters.

When the characters encounter Lady Kate, she will have a black jaguar named Ghengis with her. He looks docile enough and behaves as a large house cat. For the most part, he sits next to Lady Kate.

Ghengis was given to Lady Kate when he was a small cub and has been raised by her. Since he has been with her since infancy the two have bonded and have an Empathic bond from the closeness.

Since animals can sense danger naturally if there is any ill intent toward Lady Kate she will know who has the thought unless they are using a mind shield. Lady Kate is fluent in Russian all verbal commands to Ghengis are in Russian.

Continued on next page



Street Kid

by Lee Williams

“The Kid” is the kind of person who everyone knows by sight, but few, if any, know his name. He can often be seen in the London area, though he has been known to turn up almost anywhere in the world. He is usually to be seen at nightclubs and bars, especially the slightly run-down ones.

The Kid is known as a source of reliable information and a good fixer. He can usually find somebody who can do exactly what you need doing, and quickly. What the Kid actually does himself is open to speculation. One rumour says that he was a bored rich kid who tried a taste of the street life and liked it so much that he stayed there. Another says that the government possibly killed his family in mysterious circumstances during the riots of 2008. What ever the truth, the fact is the Kid is a useful contact for any party of minion hunters.

In appearance, he looks like a hundred other young people. His apparent age is around 20ish. He has straight blonde hair just long enough to touch his shoulders. The Kid is always clean-shaven and usually wears the same clothing, a red or blue hooded sweatshirt with a pocket on the front and

olive green or black combat trousers. His preferred footwear is hi-top lightweight combat sneakers such as HiTec Magnums and he wears Serengeti Vermilion shades with chrome and black frames. He has been seen carrying a gun, said to be a large automatic pistol. Given the Kid’s chosen place in the scheme of things, it is assumed by those who deal with him that he wears some form of body armour.

Motivation

Who can say? The Kid is a complete mystery to one and all. He does however know something about the struggle against the Darkness. If you really must know, his motivation cards are **10 of Hearts** (he can talk to anybody) and **6 of Clubs** (he’s not afraid of fighting if it is necessary).

Skills

The Kid is an Experienced level NPC with the following skills: Act/Bluff 4, Bargain 4, Melee Combat (Armed) 4, Observation 3, Persuasion 4, Streetwise 6, Small Arms (Pistol) 4.

Equipment

The Kid carries a mobile phone, a palmtop computer, a Royal Marines combat knife and a LAR Grizzly semi-automatic pistol in .45 Winchester Magnum calibre. He wears a kevlar vest under his sweatshirt and sometimes a Polycarbon Camosuit under that.

Usage

The Kid is best used as a mysterious benefactor, although I have used him as a red herring to mislead the PCs that they were being stalked by Darklings. Every time they went out to a club or bar the Kid was there. Great for boosting paranoia levels in the party!

If you use him, bear in mind that he has his own agenda. He will set up meetings for the PCs and will fight with them if caught in any kind of a trap, but he will not allow the PCs to use him as a tool for their own ends. What he knows about the plots of the Dark Ones is up to you, but he is not a fount of all wisdom for the party. He will expect the party to answer his questions in return for him answering theirs.



Animal Empathy

Continued from Previous Page

Ghengis is also in the habit of eavesdropping on conversations and listening to the thoughts of humans. Ghengis is also picky on if he allows someone to pet him.

Ghengis

Str: 10	Con: 10	Agi: 8
Int: 4	Move: 10/30/60	Emp: 4
Initiative: 6		



Dave the Cabbie

by Lee Williams

“You see the Spurs game Sat’dy then mate? Cor bleedin’ell, I could play better’n that.”

Dave the cabbie (or Tottenham Dave as he is known to some) is the NPC that I use for scenarios set in Britain, especially in the London area. He is the driver of a black London taxicab, a job that he takes pride in. I tend to use him both as a source of rumors and as an emergency escape route if things go badly wrong for the PCs.

In appearance, Dave is a slightly overweight man in his early to middle forties. He has black hair that is receding from the front, and he wears cheap spectacles with black plastic frames.

In his manner, he is the archetypal London taxi driver, meaning he loves to talk. He will quite happily talk about any and every subject under the sun, and if he knows nothing about it he will start on about soccer (or “the footy” as he calls it). His voice is the typical East London high speed Cockney dialect, though he will slow down for foreigners on occasion. Indeed, Dave is one of the few Black Cab drivers who has no apparent racial bias. This puts him in a minority, as anybody who travels round London often will know.

He used to be in the army, a fact that becomes painfully obvious to any passenger who stays in the cab for more than five minutes. Many of these stories are even true, particularly the one about how he saved the life of William Vincent, the discount store magnate, during an artillery bombardment in Bosnia in the 1990s.

His other favourite subject is the frequent flooding of several Underground stations due to global warming. This unfortunate disruption of London’s transport system causes Dave great amusement, as his takings tend to rise tenfold at these times. In actual fact, Dave’s constant easy-going patter is ideal for drawing information out

of his clients, thus making him a good (although not entirely reliable) source of information.

Motivation

Jack of Hearts: Dave has been around enough to become wise in the ways of the world. Those he chooses as his friends can rely him on, and he chooses very carefully.

Four of Spades: though not overly ambitious, one day he would like to have his own small fleet of cabs and limos.

Skills

Dave was a sergeant in the Royal Logistics Corps and is a veteran NPC. His skills include Bargain 2, Mechanic 4, Melee Combat (Unarmed) 3, Observation 3, Persuasion 2, Small Arms (Rifle) 3, Streetwise 4, Wheeled Vehicle 4.

Equipment

Dave owns his own black cab, which he has nicknamed Harry after the Shakespearean character Harry Hotspur (this is due to his favourite soccer team being, of course, Tottenham Hotspur). He also owns a full mechanical toolkit. Dave carries a mobile phone, a taser, a heavy flashlight with a built-in pepper spray and he wears a kevlar vest when operating in dubious areas. “You gotta be careful, me old son” is his catchphrase, though he is certainly no coward.

Dave’s Taxicab

The current model of the Metrocab, the F6 is a true workhorse. Hundreds can be seen in and around London.

<i>Price:</i>	40,000 euro
<i>Fuel Type:</i>	D,A
<i>Load:</i>	200 kilos
<i>Weight:</i>	1.1 tonnes
<i>Crew:</i>	1+ 5
<i>Night Vision:</i>	Headlights

<i>Cruise Speed:</i>	90/15
<i>Combat Move:</i>	50/10
<i>Fuel Capacity:</i>	90
<i>Fuel Consumption:</i>	5

Combat Statistics:

Config: Stnd	HF: 1
Susp: W (3)	HS: 1
	HR: 1





Underground Railroad

by Rob Beck

Goals: Liberators, Information Brokers

Methods: Pencil Commandos, Shadows

Empathic Philosophy: Mixed

Organization: Electoral Leader

Assets: Quality Resources-Members contribute to budget (over \$500,000 annually)

Size: 18 members

Level of Activity: Highly Dedicated

Relations with ET's: Sees ET's as victims, but still cautious. Will help if possible.

Relations with Other Cells: Attempt to network and assist, but occasionally try to dominate goals of other cells.

Headquarters: New Boswash

The Underground Railroad has its origins among a handful of psychiatrists, clergy and parapsychists who networked over the years. They developed a means to spirit away alleged abductees, who otherwise would have fallen prey to Dark Minions or minion-friendly organizations, and people who had been abused in psychic test labs or government and corporate experiments. Their influence can be felt in abductee support groups, mission shelters and mental hospitals over much of New England. Although their numbers are small, they have developed a vast network of contacts sympathetic to their cause and work with them to offer safe havens and escape for empathically aware individuals and their families.

Through funds donated by members of the organization, small safe havens have been erected in Vermont and New Hampshire. These two fledgling communities support a few dozen families each at present and are lightly guarded, mostly by members of the community. The Railroad is always on the lookout for cells that might be willing to provide protection for their charges.

The largest source of information on the Dark Minion invasion is currently in the possession of one of the group's founding members, Arthur Chamberlain. He owns a well-guarded mansion on Montauk Point at

the eastern end of Long Island, NY. Arthur was at one time a dedicated minion hunter, and is still a noted and active parapsychist. His contacts in the empathic underground reach far and wide. He is able to command vast resources, through both his personal fortune and his strong network of contacts and friends.

Over the years, through his own research and communication with others, Chamberlain has compiled a massive library of texts, newspaper articles, electronic information, photos, and video. This data stockpile offers a strong chronology of what is commonly known of the course of the invasion to date and several lesser-known and more carefully concealed tidbits.

Chamberlain is very careful about whom he shares this information with, but he has been known to use it as currency from time to time. In fact, many of the hunter groups that work for the Underground Railroad get paid in information from the library. Information on known Minion activity, possible ET sightings, historical encounters, and empathic research, among other things, can be offered up to those who would help the organization.

Most recently, the Underground Railroad has taken steps to increase its responsibilities and resources. Firstly, members of the group contacted a humanoid ET, with the help of a small mystic cell who are currently shielding him. He has offered to help the Railroad in any way he can, including providing what he knows of ET technology and what information he has regarding the Minions and their masters. The relationship has proved very beneficial to date, giving him a place of refuge and giving the Underground Railroad access to ET and Darkling technology on a scale unknown to them only a year ago.

Members of the Underground Railroad have also recently begun a search for a protodimension untouched and isolated from the Dark Ones. There they hope to establish

a more permanent safe haven and a strong base from which to operate. (Note to GM's: a proto-dimension like Delta Seven would be ideally suited to the Underground Railroad's purposes and the potential conflicts with Echo Wisdom could make for an interesting side adventure-see below).

The members of the Underground Railroad are not warriors. They are scholars, theologians and scientists. Their aims and goals are altruistic enough, but even with the donations, their resources aren't limitless. They can't afford to hire full-time military forces and probably wouldn't trust them if they could. Therefore, they exist on the goodwill of more militaristic cells, who provide troubleshooters, escorts and bodyguards, in exchange for the vast amount of information on Darkling activities the Railroad acquires.

The Railroad can be an excellent source of employment for any active Minion Hunter group, in a variety of assignments. A group could be asked to shepherd a new group of escapees to a safe haven, or to offer active protection in the form of eliminating potential threats to either the safe havens or individual members. They could also be asked to retrieve information from Darkling computers or perhaps the whole computer system for study and review by members of the Railroad. The Railroad might offer leads on areas of possible Darkling incursions and provide more solid leads than the local tabloids, or might help to confirm what the PC's have already seen in the tabloids.

One of the two most important missions that strongly trusted Minion Hunters would be given would be the shepherding of the Humanoid ET, Crusoe, and his mystic empath guardians to new safe houses or possibly to the new protodimension base, when and if it is discovered and constructed. This is perhaps the most dangerous mission any player group can undertake. Not only does the stress of travel make it harder for the mystics to shield Crusoe, but also his



hiding places are spots that naturally dampen empathic activity. When he is out in the open, he is more vulnerable and at these times, the Dark Lords throw everything they have in the area at the tiny convoy to try and stop them. This can turn into a frantic running gun battle, a game of cat and mouse, or a confrontation with some major Minion or even a Dark Lord. Occasionally, luck could be with the group and few, if any, minions could attack at all. However, there might be human complications as the territory they travel through could be littered with bandits, gangs or subject to corporate patrols. Even wild animals can pose a threat to the convoy, if the players aren't careful.

Lastly, there is the mission to find a suitable proto-dimension for the Underground Railroad's charges. Groups that have earned the full trust of the Railroad could be asked to search among the splinterlands for a suitable site, either with their own empaths or empaths provided by the Rail-

road. This could be a chance for the GM to just have fun and allow the players to explore the true diversity and bizarre nature of other proto-dimensions. For the more malevolent GM's, it could be a chance to allow the group to run into some of the nastier proto-dimensions like *Mechanica*, or possibly even home dimensions of some of the Darkling races. These offer up whole new areas of adventure possibilities, and also require considerable planning on the part of the GM, detailing a large portion of a new world and the "culture" whatever that may be, of the Darkling inhabitants.

Then there is *Delta Seven*, a splinterland perfectly suited to the Underground Railroad's needs. Of course, it is inhabited, and by less than willing humans. This could offer the GM a chance to expose his players to *Echo Wisdom (EW)*, even if it is a less than unfriendly exposure. A chance for negotiations and some form of agreement are also in the cards, if the group is

eloquent or resourceful enough to convince *EW* that it can be done safely. This could lead to a whole string of adventures as the players' group attempts to gain the trust of *EW* or possibly attempts to dodge them, if they made a less than stellar impression on their first visit. *EW* characters could also be brought in through this method, as an agent might be attached as a liaison or as an evaluator, to test the group's abilities and trustworthiness.

The Underground Railroad offers a strong and well-entrenched organization for players' seeking a patron or just direction to a wayward or unfocused minion hunter group. Its resources are readily apparent, but its vulnerabilities are just as recognizable. By making itself accessible, but not strongly protected, the Railroad is a target for the minions, and a resource to be protected. Their existence in a campaign setting can provide a new ally and new challenge for any group to fight against the Dark.





Ten Things Every Minion Hunter Should Have

by Chris Carpenter

Sewers. Swamps. Demonground. Strange Protodimensions. As a minion hunter, your locale changes from day to day. How can you prepare yourself for life's little challenges without having to hire a Prole to port around all your worldly possessions? It's easy if you know what and how to pack.

Let there be light!

What could be more important in a tight situation than light? You could be armed for bear, with 3 points of armor on every hit location and still be found dead in the morning because you panicked in the dark or missed a vital clue. Flashlights are cheap and generally dependable. The ever-popular MagLite comes in a variety of sizes and colored lenses are an inexpensive add-on. The two smallest sizes are about 4" and 6" and can easily be secreted in a pocket, put in a belt case, or onto a gun with an add-on clip or just a piece of 100 MPH tape (see below). The AA model has a spare bulb in the bottom, and the top can be taken off to make a small lantern. Cost: \$12.00 (comes with 2 AA batteries.)

Bigger lights are available, but they aren't really very convenient to carry around. Chemical lights are a relatively cheap and disposable alternative, but don't shed much light and can't be "focused".

Stay Sharp!

Your next most important tool is the knife. Not necessarily a Rambo special with a compass, fishing line, hooks, etc. (although this is a nice knife), but just a plain, ordinary folding lockblade, about 4" long when closed. Usually comes with a nice case to put on your belt, but can just as easily be pocketed. Cutting is their primary function, but I can't tell you how many doors I've opened, screws I've loosened, wires I've stripped, etc. A better version can be had for more money; the Leatherman has a pair of pliers, wire cutter, knife, screwdriver, file, can opener, and leather punch. This beats

the Swiss Army style knife only in sheer durability. Besides, you don't really need a magnifying glass or a fork on your knife anyway. Cost: \$45.00

Tenacious Tape!

Somewhere on your person, or between three persons, you should find room for a roll of 100 Mile per Hour tape. This is basically duct, cloth or gaffer tape, but it's flat green or black, about 60 yards per roll, very strong and sticky and can be used for lots of stuff. Got a leak? Something coming loose? Need two reasonably small or medium things attached together? No handcuffs around? Hole in your shoe/glove/space suit? At \$7.00 a roll, this tape has a million uses.

Hang Loose!

The elemental opposite of Duct Tape? WD-40! An extremely popular spray lubricant, available in small pocket sized cans as well as the standard sizes. Lubricates, loosens, disperses water, removes crayon and tar from surfaces, some say it helps them with their arthritis. A dangerous, but improvised flame-thrower can be made with a disposable lighter, useful for close combat or warming up frozen things (like pipes or hinges). Spray a little in a frozen car lock (sans flame) and watch the magic happen. Can also be used to make others tasks more difficult, like spraying onto the handles of levers or knobs. Cost: \$6.00.

String `em Along!

In Dungeons and Dragons, one guy always had 50' of rope coiled around his body. Well, in the real world, 50' of rope is heavy and cumbersome and draws unwanted attention. But, 50' of parachute cord (or 550 cord) is small, lightweight and can be wrapped around your waist like a belt or stuffed in a knapsack. Not only is the cord strong, inside the green nylon outer wrapping are a seven individual strands of white nylon string that can be separated and used

individually for heavy sewing and patchwork, setting boobytraps or making a tin can phone. Cost: \$6.00 for 100', \$50.00 for 1000'.

Get Lost!

Useful almost anywhere on Earth, the compass helped Columbus "discover" America and can help you find your way out of an abandoned subway system. It may act funny around electromagnetic equipment (like a MRI scanner), near lodestone (a rare occurrence) or on select protodimensions, but I'd rather have it than not. Cost: About \$10.00 to \$20.00 for a good one.

Do You See What I See?

A small monocular or binocular can be an immense aid, especially if on an impromptu recon mission. The key here is size and magnification. They should fit in a pocket or pouch without becoming a nuisance. They are handy, but aren't going to be used so much that they are worth the bother to lug around a full sized set. Cost: Most pocket-sized binocs are \$40.00 to \$100.00.

Make Some Noise!

Lost in the woods? Comrades can't find you? Yelling isn't going to cut it. Carry a small whistle with you and blast away. Can also be used to attract attention in urban locales, or to distract large creatures from their nefarious goals. An airhorn is good, too, but you can blow the whistle for free. Cost: \$2.00 - \$3.00. Some items, such as the compass, come with a whistle built in.

The Mark of a Man!

Whether you're hopelessly lost in a ventilation system or just trying to prevent it, carrying around a couple of magic markers can save you a lot of grief. Bring two thick permanent markers, such as red and black, and doodle away. Directions, notes, random graffiti, secret codes, whatever



comes to mind. Cost: \$3.00.

The Proofs in the Pudding!

Sometimes you need to record something for posterity or just some pending litigation. A disposable camera may be the ticket: small, cheap, and easy to use. If you are leery of having someone else develop your film, there is the “instant” camera, but these tend to be bigger. A junk or antique store may have an older collapsible model, but film will be impossible to find without a special source. Cost: Disposable camera and developing: \$10.00 to \$20.00. Instant (without film): \$35.00

Need a quick note? A little dictation? How about a micro cassette recorder? Cost: under \$150.00. A camcorder is the logical combination of video and audio, but pricy (\$500.00.) And who wants to work it when the minions come to play?

Odds `n` Ends

OK, you only have so many pouches, pockets, loops and holders, but there are other things you might want to consider bringing along, even if there is just one per team.

Screwdrivers and adjustable wrenches. Your Leatherman may do the job, or it may not be sturdy or large enough. An adjust-

able wrench can tear down a chain link fence without too much noise and a screwdriver can be used as a prybar, icepick, climbing piton, etc. Cost: about \$2.00.

Mirror on a stick. Better the mirror look first, in case of gun happy occupants. Can also see “under” doors and behind small areas in equipment. Cost: about \$2.00.

Extra glasses. How many episodes of Scooby Doo do you have to watch before you understand this basic fact: those of us who use glasses will one day lose them, and at the most inopportune time? Have a sturdy case too, to protect them from falls, hits, you know, minion hunter stuff. Cost: \$60.00 and up.

Lighter and matches. Sometimes you just need a little fire. Cost: Lighter: \$1.00. Matches: negligible. Steal them from a nightclub.

Pepper spray. Not a beautiful weapon, but a good close quarters defensive one. Made with hot peppers in a concentrated spray and an orange dye, its good to have a can around. Warning: may not work on all dogs, but people hate it. Cost: \$20.00. Note: spraying into the wind is BAD.

Caltrops. Running away? Drop some of these on the ground behind you. Your pursuers will be forced to slow or even stop if they step on one. Remember where you

left them; they could come back to haunt you. 10 caltrops (they are small) will cover a 2 meter x 2 meter area. Anyone entering the area must make a successful observation roll (with penalties to adjust for lighting, speed, etc) or step on 1-3 caltrops. Each caltrop does one point of damage to a random leg (foot.) One point of damage reduces character’s movement to one third normal (rounded up), 2 or more points stops the character completely so that they must pull the caltrops out of their feet and reduces character movement to 1/3 for 24 hours or until the wounds are healed. Cost: 10 in a leather pouch \$20.00.

Bug repellant. Scratching is annoying, can give away your position if you are trying to hide, and can encourage your game master to throw all sorts of penalties at you. Cost: \$3.00.

The Final Word

In the field, you have a lot of variables to deal with. Being prepared for the smallest of these can go a long way towards overcoming the impossible, and, if nothing else, hinder your game master from sprinkling your characters with “little dilemmas” that could sidetrack an otherwise enjoyable adventure.

Dimensional Stabilizer

by John McCleese Jr.

This device creates a bubble shaped dimensional shield up to a diameter of 1km, blocking out all effects (assimilation and/or damage) of the proto-dimension it is in. This makes it hospitable and protecting all beings within its area. While operating, the area of affect is transformed to match as close to Earth’s landscapes and textures as possible. For example, if it is set up in Pyro, the area will have a barren hardened magma landscape, and warm dry air.

The system itself is made up of a large

control cube (2m x 2m x 2m), which is placed in the center and ringed by 2m tall poles placed at 4m intervals, out to a maximum of ½ km. These devices are typical in appearance to most DarkTek, and are at a constant 98.6°F (37°C).

The cube feeds physically from a living source. A being, typically a human, is placed inside of the cube and it absorbs their life force. The sum of all attributes is the time in hours the machine will run. When the “fuel” is exhausted, the husk of the per-

son is removed and a fresh power supply is added. If a person is in the cube and has lost more than half of their attribute points, they will die as soon as they are removed. If they are removed sooner, all losses are permanent and there will be some serious psychological problems to deal with.

Wt: 150 kg + 5 kg per pole

Cost: your life



New Equipment Items

by Lee Williams

UV Videosight

The Videosight is an ingenious device that was originally designed to increase the combat capabilities of small arms in near or total darkness. It is a small boxlike device with a small folding viewscreen on top. However, it was later found that the VS was also very useful for minion hunters. Several Dark Races such as Bloodkin Vampires can disguise themselves through the use of Human Empathy. This ability has a 70% chance of being negated by using a Videosight. The Videosight can also be used to check whether something such as a fantastic vision is really there or if it is a projection of some kind. Please note that the VS does not prevent its user from being the target of a specific Empathic Projection. Its usefulness lies in its being able to see through general empathic "masking" by certain creatures. Also, there may be some Darklings whose forms just cannot be seen in our universe. A Videosight weighs 300 grams and may be fitted to any weapon with a Bulk of 1 or greater. Its battery pack gives 90 minutes

use. Use of a Videosight reduces Task Difficulty to hit by one level in near or total darkness. Maximum visibility range is 50 metres at night. Cost: \$1,800.

Inspired by the TV series UltraViolet

Nachtmacher Gas Canisters

A new and unique gas, Nachtmacher releases a field of particles into the air that produces a cloud of total darkness. This can only be relieved by the use of special goggles tuned to the single wavelength that the gas does not cancel out. The gas creates a cloud 30 metres in diameter in still air that lasts about 60 seconds. Cost: \$50 each

Inspired by Howard Chaykin's American Flagg comics

Virtual Light Glasses

Outwardly resembling a pair of high quality sunglasses, VL Glasses contain a tiny internal projector in the frames. This can be programmed using ROM chips with visual data that can be displayed directly onto the wearer's retina. The display is superimposed

over the actual field of vision, thus changing the wearer's viewpoint. In essence, they provide the advantages of an Eyeball Display but require no cybersurgery. They are popular with business people such as architects and also with detectives. However, VL Glasses are not cheap or easy to get hold of. Cost: \$8000

Inspired by Virtual Light by William Gibson

Polycarbon Camosuit

This is a one-piece head to toe cover-all made from a special fabric. Using a memory chip and a tiny power source, the wearer can change the visual output of the suit at will. In other words, it is almost impossible to see someone wearing a Camosuit if they are stationary and are using the current surroundings control setting. Camosuits are also popular Hi-fashion items, typically programmed with three-dimensional computer art shots. Both static and moving visuals may be thus used. Cost: \$7500

Inspired by Neuromancer by William Gibson





New Weapons and Ammunition

by Lee Williams

Advanced Ammunition, .50 Browning(12.7 x 99 mm)

The US Army Research team have improved the aging fifty-calibre round with the use of early 21st Century materials. This was done in order to improve the effectiveness of sniper rifles using this calibre, such as the Barrett M-82 and the RAI 500. The details of the advanced round are as follows:

Penetration	Recoil	Damage	Range
2-2-3	As weapon	11	+15m

Arm Scor Needle Gun

A high-velocity pneumatic weapon. The ammunition consists of hollow needles about 0.3mm in diameter and 15mm in length. The needles are usually filled with sedative drugs, but some security organizations are believed to use deadly toxins. The weapon can be recharged with compressed gas or pumped up by hand. Hand charging takes one combat round for each six shots, whilst one charge from a gas canister gives a full 36 rounds worth. Gas canisters give 10 refills.

Weapon	ROF	Dam	Pen	Blk	Mag	SS	Brst	Rng
Needle	SA	*	nil	0	36	1	-	4

* As per drug used

Arm Scor Stunshot

The latest generation battery technology allows a Taser style weapon with a high capacity storage cell. The weapon works on the standard electric stun principle.

As pistol

Weapon	ROF	Dam	Pen	Blk	Mag	SS	Brst	Rng
Stunshot	SA	#	nil	1	200	-	-	40

As melee weapon

Melee Range	Hit Modifier	Damage
Short	+1	#

When hit, the target must roll a Difficult Constitution test to remain conscious. If failure occurs this can be re-rolled at the start of each following turn to regain consciousness. Success still incurs a -2 penalty to

Agility and Initiative for the following turn. An Outstanding success roll reduces this penalty to minus 1.

M-118

A devastatingly effective military automatic shotgun built in Australia. It somewhat resembles a shrunken FN FAL rifle with a short barrel. A nightsight can be fitted if required.

Weapon	ROF	Dam	Pen	Blk	Mag	SS	Brst	Rng
M-118	3	4	3-4-nil	5	12	3	6	40

Notes:

- Close Range with buckshot: ROF 3, Damage 9, Penetration Nil.
- Medium Range with buckshot: ROF 5x10, Damage 1, Pen Nil.

A.S.P. 50

The Armas Sao Paolo 50 is a nasty sort of weapon. It is best described as a large calibre shotgun. The ammunition consists of tubes filled with plastic explosives and wrapped around with lengths of spun glass. When fired, the rounds can be detonated immediately or set to blow at longer ranges. The effects are similar to a small Claymore mine.

Direct Fire

Weapon	ROF	Dam	Pen	Blk	Mag	SS	Brst	Rng
ASP 50	SA	6	3-nil	5	10	5	-	10

As launcher:

Weapon	ROF	Dam	Pen	Blk	Mag	SS	Brst	IFR
ASP 50	SA	6	Nil	5	10	5	-	90

Ruger Netgun

A non-lethal capture weapon, developed in the 1990s for US police usage. The basis of the Netgun is a 7.62mm hunting rifle with a heavily modified front half. The firing of a blank cartridge launches four heavy rubber weights that have a light cap-

ture net strung between them.

Weapon	ROF	Dam	Pen	Blk	Mag	SS	Brst	Rng
Netgun	BA	#	#	5	11	4	-	40

Special : if target is hit it is incapacitated for 1d6 rounds. If the weapon's user rolls an outstanding success, the target is unable to free themselves. It is a Formidable level task to avoid getting caught in the net if the user is on target and a Catastrophic failure means that the person attempting the dodge has been hit by the rubber weights and suffers 1d6 damage to a randomly chosen Hit Location.

SIG M-590

A state of the art assault rifle, the M 590 is made by Switzerland's top small arms manufacturer. This weapon uses the latest caseless version of NATO ammunition and is a contender in US military trials as a possible replacement for the M-16A2. It is equipped with an electronic sight and an optional 40mm grenade launcher.

Weapon	ROF	Dam	Pen	Blk	Mag	SS	Brst	Rng
M590	5	3	2-nil	4	50	2	4	75

Smith & Wesson ISP-10

An almost completely silent handgun. ISP is the abbreviation for Integrally Suppressed Pistol. It uses special 10mm ammo and is fitted with a laser sight.

Weapon	ROF	Dam	Pen	Blk	Mag	SS	Brst	Rng
ISP-10	SA	2	1-nil	1	10	2	-	12

Smith & Wesson 408

The M 408 is a large calibre revolver specially designed for covert night operations. It has a non-reflective dark finish and has a pinpoint xenon flashlight mounted under the barrel. The light casts a 30cm circle at 40 meters range, but it is almost im-



possible to see the source. A sound suppresser is available. It comes in two calibres, .44 Magnum and .480 Winchester Magnum.

Weapon	ROF	Dam	Pen	Blk	Mag	-Recoil-		
						SS	Brst	Rng
.44 Mag	DAR	3	2-nil	1	6R	3	-	16
.480 WM	DAR	4	2-nil	1	6R	4	-	20

Smith & Wesson Reaper

An unusual hybrid weapon, the Reaper is a 10mm pistol combined with a small gauge shotgun. It is popular with those whose work takes them undercover amidst hostiles. Please note that it takes one combat round to change from pistol to shotgun and vice-versa.

As Pistol

Weapon	ROF	Dam	Pen	Blk	Mag	-Recoil-		
						SS	Brst	Rng
Reaper	SA	2	1-nil	2	10	2	-	14

As Shotgun

Weapon	ROF	Dam	Pen	Blk	Mag	-Recoil-		
						SS	Brst	Rng
Reaper	SA	3	2-nil	2	5	5	-	14

GR-14 Grenade Launcher

Another modern weapon, the GR-14 is a low recoil launcher which can fire a number of different rounds, including the so-called "splash shells". It is built in both 37mm and 40mm calibre and is fed from a drum magazine. It is manufactured in Russia and is a favourite weapon of the United Nations Orbital Security Patrol.

Weapon	ROF	Dam	Pen	Blk	Mag	-Recoil-		
						SS	Brst	Rng
Flechette	SA	1Dx10	1-nil	4	5	2	-	30
Canister	SA	9	Nil	4	5	2	-	*
HE	SA	C:2,B:9	Nil	4	5	2	-	30
Stun	SA	Special	Nil	4	5	2	-	10

Notes:

- Canister Rounds are similar to giant shotgun shells. They affect a conical area 40 meters long with a spread of 10 metres at its base. Beyond 40 metres the shot disperses rapidly.
- Indirect Firing Range with HE is 400 metres.
- Stun rounds are nylon bags filled with plastic beads. If the target is hit in the head or body, they are incapacitated for two rounds. If struck on the arm

any weapon is dropped unless a test of Constitution at Formidable level is passed. The round cannot penetrate armour but may cause Blunt Trauma damage. No damage is inflicted at ranges greater than twenty metres.

Chemical Burst Shells (Splash Shells)

These fire a blast of chemicals from the GR-14 which cause injuries at very short ranges (up to 5 metres) but then dissipate. They are used in enclosed environments such as spacecraft, in order to avoid the danger of hull breaches or major machinery damage. The corrosive elements can also penetrate light armour, or damage the integrity of a spacesuit. (Roll of 1 on D10 at point blank only)

Penetration	Recoil	Impact Dam	Danger Space
Nil	2	2	5x5m

Snowball Rounds

This ammunition was designed for large-scale riot control. When fired, the round produces a frozen globe of maximum strength Somnambutol sleep drug. This causes instant slumber in any living target if it touches the skin when still frozen, plus the melting Snowball fills the air with fumes which reduce Agility, Constitution and Initiative temporarily by one point if inhaled.

Penetration	Recoil	Range
Nil	2	15

Franchi SBR-1

Thought to be a unique weapon, the SBR-1 is a truly devastating small arms system. It can be best described as basically a 12 gauge three barrelled rotary shotgun. SBR is undergoing military trials with the US special forces, even though national armies are not permitted to use shotguns in so-called formal warfare.

Weapon	ROF	Dam	Pen	Blk	Mag	-Recoil-		
						SS	Brst	Rng
SBR-1	10	4	3-4-nil	7	200C	4	8	40

Notes:

- Close Range with buckshot: ROF 10, Damage 9, Penetration Nil
- Medium Range with buckshot: ROF 5x10, Damage 1, Penetration Nil.
- Special: At Medium Range on full automatic, ROF is 50 with Damage 1 and Penetration Nil.

Stun Shields

Manufactured by several corps, these are police style riot shields with electronic stunners built in. The front has a number of studs that are connected to a high-capacity battery pack. This contains enough power for 20 uses against human targets. When hit, a person must pass a difficult test of Constitution to remain conscious. If they fail, they can re-roll at the start of each new turn to regain consciousness. Characters remaining conscious suffer penalties of -2 to both Initiative and Agility for one turn. An Outstanding success roll reduces the penalties to -1.

Weapon	Melee Range	Hit Modifier	Damage
Stun Shield	Short	None	See Text

XM-22

A privately designed modern advanced weapon, the XM-22 is a competitor in trials to replace the ageing M-16 series in US service. It is a bullpup configuration weapon that fires a new combustible cased version of the NATO 5.56mm ammunition. XM-2 has a multi-purpose sight and is fitted with a single shot grenade launcher.

Weapon	ROF	Dam	Pen	Blk	Mag	-Recoil-		
						SS	Brst	Rng
XM-22	3	3	2-nil	5	30	2	4	75

Webley .444 Express

The last of the English tradition for handmade big game rifles. Also known as the Treble-four, these weapons are very rare and very expensive. Even so, there is no record of a Webley .444 failing to work in any combat situation. The ammunition is specialist made for this gun and also costs loads.

Weapon	ROF	Dam	Pen	Blk	Mag	-Recoil-		
						SS	Brst	Rng
.444 Expr	SA	9	2-3-4	9	5	4	-	120



YASHA Special

This machine pistol was specially designed to be almost undetectable by electronic sensors. Although a normal automatic weapon in operation, it is entirely constructed from heavy duty plastics. It uses the same caseless 5.7mm ammunition as the FN P-90 PDW.

						-Recoil-			
Weapon	ROF	Dam	Pen	Blk	Mag	SS	Brst	Rng	
Yasha	10	2	1-nil	3	40	2	5	20	

LAR Grizzly

A large calibre auto pistol, the LAR Grizzly resembles a large Colt M1911A1. However, it uses the .450 Winchester Magnum ammunition, making it much more powerful than the Colt.

						-Recoil-			
Weapon	ROF	Dam	Pen	Blk	Mag	SS	Brst	Rng	
Grizzly	SA	4	2-nil	1	8	4	-	15	

M-96 Assault Cannon

A Special Forces committee designed this as a heavy rifle for use in close combat, rather than as a sniper weapon. It is very powerful as it utilises the advanced 12.7 x 99mm Browning ammunition. It is used mostly to allow infantry a penetration capability against light armoured vehicles and buildings.

						-Recoil-			
Weapon	ROF	Dam	Pen	Blk	Mag	SS	Brst	Rng	
M-96	SA	11	2-2-3	6	5	6	-	50	
bipod	SA	11	2-2-3	6	5	2	-	90	

a piston approximately 18 inches in length with a tip of hard but slightly flexible plastic. When the activator switch is pressed the piston shoots out and returns within 82 milliseconds, inflicting Blunt Trauma damage of 2D6 to the target. The cylinder contains enough gas for 32 blows. The PowerStaf is basically a medieval mace set to automatic.

Weapon	Melee Range	Hit Modifier	Damage
PowerStaf	Long	+2	2D6

PowerStaf KA-1

A melee weapon using modern technology, the PowerStaf consists of a tube containing four components. These are a compressed air cylinder, a high-pressure valve system and





-Tabloid Articles

by Lee Williams and Chris Carpenter

BOOMTOWN RAT

A raging fire at a remote country cottage could have been caused by an exploding rat, according to insurance company experts. The fire destroyed the thatched roof and bedrooms, causing £60,000 worth of damage to the 450 year-old house in Puddledock, Norfolk. The experts believe a rat crawled into the thatch and died after eating a poison containing phosphorous. As the animal's body decomposed, the phosphorous came into contact with the air and ignited. The current occupant, who did not wish to be named, said "It is almost like something from Monty Python. Until they came up with this idea they thought the fire had been started by a bird carrying a lighted cigarette end."

Boomtown Rat

What has actually been going on here is that the current occupant, a parapsysics student, has been trying to communicate with the "little men" who according to local tradition live in the grounds of the house.

After several unsuccessful attempts, he managed to make contact with these beings. Unfortunately they turned out to be a lost clan of Torgol's Gremlins, who had dropped out of a Dimension Walk after interference from other unknown Dark forces. Setting upon the student's equipment with glee, the gremlins caused a short in the cottages main power supply and up went the roof thatch.

The student managed to salvage the remains of his equipment and escape. His cover story about a mystery fire was given credence by the discovery of the body of a large rat. These charred remains were in fact the body of a gremlin, burned beyond recognition. The other gremlins are still roaming the area, causing mischief. They will have to be dealt with sooner rather than later. Un-

BOY, 9, BURSTS INTO FLAMES - FOUR TIMES!

Fuzhou, China - Doctors here are puzzled by a 9-year-old boy who keeps bursting into flames. The boy, Wu Shen, was rushed to the hospital after smoke was found pouring from his trousers. Wu Shen's mother, Hara Shen, witnessed the unusual combustion.

"We had just returned from a conference at his school," she said, "when he just started smoldering and smoking. I thought a smoke bomb had gone off in his pants!"

Doctors are equally baffled. Dr Matsushita Eimi, a burn specialist from Tokyo, was brought into help diagnose Wu's condition. "This is a very unusual case, but not entirely unknown; we suspect he has a

strong electrical current in his body, perhaps he is not discharging static electricity normally, allowing it to build up to dangerous levels. If he isn't watched, he could blow up like an egg roll in a microwave. This seems to be a classic spontaneous-combustion scenario, and we're proceeding as such."

Others do not take such a clinical approach to Wu's situation. "(Wu) has angered the gods!" says a local religious leader, who chose to remain anonymous. "He represents the godlessness that has been growing in our country for the last century, and now the gods have chosen him as a symbol of their return! There is no cure for him, except a return to the old ways!"

Wu will be treated at the Fuzhou Regional Hospital until doctors feel it safe for him to return home.

-Tabloid Hooks

fortunately, only one person knows they are there and he's not telling.

Wu Shen

Wu is not suffering from any sort of electrical current buildup but is actually a very young and powerful empath (psionicist) with the ultra-rare empathic ability of natural pyrokinesis (pg. 61 of the *Empathic Sourcebook*). His abilities manifested at an early age and while potent, they are undisciplined and therefore dangerous.

Discovered in China by two competing empathic cells (White Shadow, a division of the American CIA, and Iron Lotus, a Beijing-based cell of liberators/trainers) Wu was targeted as a potential member. The CIA was able to grab Wu and move him to a covert psionic research facility in Boston, but not without taking personnel losses and leaving a trail for Iron Lotus to follow.

Iron Lotus, in an effort to head off the CIA, contacted their sister organization, Defenders of the Future (pg. 27 of the *Empathic*

Sourcebook) who took steps to find Wu, but now needs help extracting and relocating him.

This is where your characters come in. If your party is on good terms with the DotF, then they will be contacted through "normal" means (per your campaign). If your party does not know the DotF, they may contact you through a mutual associate, or by finding the tabloid article circled in red marker with a phone number written next to it.

The mission is straight forward, and can be used as a springboard for further adventures involving either the CIA, Iron Lotus, or DotF: get Wu out of the hospital, and bring him to the small town of Milton, MA, where there is a safehouse. The complications arise from Wu's unpredictable psionic talents, his inability to speak English, and the CIA's reluctance to let their "prize" escape.



Suggested NPCs:

Dawn Ming : An associate of both Iron Lotus and Defenders of the Future, she will assist your party in liberating Wu. She speaks fluent Chinese, and can calm Wu enough for travel.

Strength: 7

Constitution: 4

Agility: 9

Intelligence: 5

Education: 4

Charisma: 5

Empathy: 6

Age: 25

Weight: 57 kg

Height: 5'4"

Load: 33 kg

Occupation: Martial Artist

Unarmed Combat Damage: 2

Initiative: 3

Skills: Melee Combat (Unarmed) 3, Melee Combat (Armed) 2, Small Arms (Pistol) 1, Thrown Weapon 1, Stealth 2, Willpower 1, Language (English) 7, Persuasion 2, Foreboding 3, Human Empathy 5.

Equipment: High Standard .22 Pistol, 3 clips of ammunition, Small Concealed Holster, Knives (2), Sword (not usually worn), Passport, forged passport for Wu Shen

Wu Shen : Young empath sought after by various factions. For all purposes, he is just an ordinary kid under extraordinary circumstances. He is frightened and easily excitable under the current situation. Remember: he does not speak English.

Strength: 3

Constitution: 3

Agility: 7

Intelligence: 4

Education: 3

Charisma: 4

Empathy: 8

Age: 9

Height: 4'1"

Occupation: Empath / Kid

Initiative: 1

Skills: Stealth 1, Pyrokinesis (empathic talent) 4*

*special - this does not note a level of control, just potential. If Wu uses Pyrokinesis inadvertently, he attempts to reach a power level roughly equal to the stress he is under. He cannot use the talent willingly. Eventually, with training, he will reach this potential - and more.

White Shadow (CIA) : Faceless government, fanatical in their approach to their organization. For every 3 members encountered, one will have empathic abilities. They will do nothing to endanger the life of Wu, but will kill any who stand in their way. 10 to 12 of them will be dispatched to retrieve Wu.

Use the stats of the Government Agent NPC found on pg 176 of the 1st edition handbook. Empathic members will have either Computer Empathy 3, Human Empathy 3, or Willpower Drain 3. One special member may have Cryokinesis 3, but only one.

Equipment: 9mm pistols, M16 rifles, sedatives (strong , oral and injectable), restraints, cargo van.

"Darkness make the sunlight so bright that our eyes blur with tears. Challenges remind us that we are capable of great things. Misery sharpens the edges of our joy.

"Life is hard. It is supposed to be."

- Zena Marley
(Early 21st-century mercenary philosopher)



The Loose Ends

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Some Zena Marley quotes are from the Dark Conspiracy 1st Edition rulebook. Used with the kind permission of Ken Whitman.

New Zena Marley quote written by Geoff Skellams.

Submissions

Like all fanzines, we need articles by you, the fans of *Dark Conspiracy*, to keep this magazine alive.

We're looking for articles solely related to the *Dark Conspiracy* universe. Any material that would help a new referee or player would be ideal.

Use the departments from this issue as a rough guide to the areas of material we are looking for.

In particular, we need more

- Dark Races
- Equipment/DarkTek
- Dark Conspiracy Related Fiction
- Tabloid Articles
- House Rules
- NPCs

If you think you can help, then please send your submission to Marcus Bone (MARCUS.BONE@xtra.co.nz).

We would prefer all submissions to be in a format readable by Microsoft Word 97. Our main preference is a Word 97 file.

If you are sending in tables, please send them as a word processor table or a tab-delimited text file. Do not send HTML files.

Please keep the formatting in your submissions simple. We will be responsible for formatting your submission when the magazine is being laid out. Fancy formatting makes our job that much harder.

We reserve the right to edit your submission and to correct spelling and grammar if necessary. If you have a problem with us doing this, please contact us and we will see if we can come to some sort of arrangement.

We look forward to seeing your submissions. Your involvement is important, not only to the success of this fanzine, but also to the continued survival of *Dark Conspiracy*.

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