

# GANGBUSTERS™

1920'S ROLE-PLAYING ADVENTURE GAME

## B/X EDITION

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by Garnett "G-Man" Elliott



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Inspired by the original ideas of Rick Krebs

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## BIG LITTLE TOWN

by Garnett “G-Man” Elliott

Prohibition, followed hard by the Great Depression, hit the cozy burg of Cedar Creek with a one-two punch. When the town’s main employer, the Schottsheim brewery, had to close its doors, everybody thought the little community was a goner. But it wasn’t. Showing typical Midwestern gumption, Pops Schottsheim retooled his company to make ice cream, while his wife, Henrietta, turned their mansion into a boarding house, with the finest accommodations this side of Lakefront City. Just like that, Cedar Creek was on its feet again and swinging. Small-town America had pulled through.

Or so it seemed, anyways.

Because the truth is, Cedar Creek’s gone crooked. The whole town’s on the take. Pops Schottsheim moved his vats and barrels into the basement, where he brews bootleg lager at triple the profit from before. And Henrietta’s place caters to a unique clientele--crooks on the lam from big cities, looking for rustic comfort while they lay low. She’s got a private doc, too, to take care of gunshot wounds. And the services of pretty ‘washwomen’ from the ‘laundry’ nearby.

With the sheriff in his pocket, and a grateful populace on his side, woe be to any hotshot lawman or claim-jumping gangster looking to edge Pops out. He’ll do anything to keep his rackets secret. Up to and including murder, served cold as his ice cream.

## INTRODUCTION

*Big Little Town* is a location-based adventure for first to third level Gangbusters B/X characters. The nominal group size is four to six players, though the numbers and strength of the opposition can be scaled accordingly. For optimal results, at least one player should have a Street Smart character.

The adventure works with characters of all moral stripes; Dishonest, Law Abiding, or somewhere in between. NPCs include a Hungarian mobster who runs a roadhouse on the outskirts of town, a notorious killer-for-hire cooling his heels, crooked cops, a bevy of minor criminals, and a dead PI who got too close to Cedar Creek’s secrets for his own good. The module was inspired by Dashiell Hammett’s detective novel *Red Harvest*, as well as Akira Kurosawa’s oft-imitated film *Yojimbo* (which Sergio Leone appropriated for *A Fistful of Dollars*).

The town of Cedar Creek can be placed anywhere in the American Midwest, though its default location is roughly 100 miles east of Rock Junction, across state lines. The year is 1930; events can be set earlier, prior to the Great Depression, but not after the repeal of Prohibition in 1933.

## How to Use This Module

*Big Little Town* is divided into keyed locations with stats for major NPCs, followed by a number of potential encounters and an optional Random Adversaries table. 'Potential' is stressed, as the adventure favors an OSR sandbox rather than a railroad of scripted events. Cedar Creek's size makes this a very manageable sandbox, and the NPCs are low-powered enough that even beginning characters are a viable threat. Note, however, that the old adage of living by the sword (or gun) applies here as well. If combat is the player's *only* approach, they'll soon find themselves sleeping with the fishes!

Ideally, players should have plenty of opportunity to explore the town and interact with NPCs. In the course of doing this, they'll likely cook up their own story arc. The Judge can throw encounters at players if they're being passive or need some prodding to get past a lull in the action. Clever players who figure out the dynamics among NPCs (especially the conflict between Pops Schottsheim and rival gangster Sandor Kovacs) can play them off against each other, while keeping their personal risks low. This is the easiest way to 'win' the adventure.

If players are part of a Law Enforcement campaign, they can be sent to Cedar Creek to investigate rumors of an organized brewing and distribution ring operating in the area. This works especially well if players are Prohibition Agents. Alternately, federal officers might be dispatched to hunt for criminals who have been sighted around town, a trail that eventually leads to Henrietta's boarding house. In a Detective campaign, players might also have these goals, but with a twist; the client hiring the PI turns out to be a representative for the mob, who want the information for their own nefarious purposes!

In a Criminal campaign, players can be anything from small-time hoods looking to muscle in on Pops's territory, to spies sent by a large syndicate to recon the area. Crooks on the lam might head to the boarding house after a job gone wrong, all the while pursued by G-men, marshals, or worse, *other* criminals.

Players in a Reporter campaign are likely trying to get the scoop on Cedar Creek's dirty little secrets, though there is already one newshound who has beaten them to it (see Angie Atkins in **The Laundry**, pg. 10).

Finally, players may be simply traveling from Point A to Point B when their car breaks down, and end up at Gus Eastman's auto repair shop (see pg. 11), or take an unexpected train stopover and find themselves stranded in Cedar Creek for a few days. After a couple encounters, they'll soon figure out they've landed in a crooked town!

## BACKGROUND

Cedar Creek had its origins with the construction of a lumber mill in 1840, followed by a general store and post office to serve outlying dairy farms. Population began to dwindle two decades later as timber thinned out, but the town was saved when German immigrant Heinrich Schottsheim established a brewery in 1872. Shipments of Schottsheim lager began making the rounds to farming communities, and soon reached Rock Junction itself. When Prohibition passed in 1919, Heinrich's son, Hans, was forced to close up shop. Later, as the economic slowdown of the late 20's turned into the Great Depression, it looked like Cedar Creek had breathed its last.

But lean times also brought new opportunities. A hard-nosed businessman, Hans decided to embrace the bootlegging rackets as a way to make ends meet--and employ the families

depending on him for their survival. As a cover, he converted several of his vats to dairy processing, just as larger breweries in the big cities had, while moving his old equipment to the basement. Thus, Schottsheim Creamery was born. Deliveries of lager and ale still went out over established routes, but were kept hidden (and cool) by cartons of ice cream. Hans figured the remoteness of Cedar Creek, coupled with the close-knit community, would keep his racket secret.

And it did. From prohibition agents, at least. But where there's easy money, there's always crooks wanting their slice. Rival bootleggers, petty gangs, and mobsters from the big syndicates started showing up. Hans found himself resorting to violence to protect his stake. Over time, he became known as 'Pops' Schottsheim, as his hardboiled business instincts took over. Soon, he'd organized his own mob, with the likes of Studs Merkel and Finn Culloden as muscle. Company 'negotiations' were often conducted with a gat or shiv.

Meanwhile, Hans's wife, Hettie, was undergoing a transformation of her own. Encouraged to start a business, she turned the family mansion into a high-class boarding house, which she renamed the Balmoral. Pops's secret brewery brought a lot of unsavory types to town, and Hettie found that catering to their needs could be quite profitable. With the help of a local veterinarian skilled at treating gunshot wounds, she established the Balmoral as a comfortable place to lay low. Soon, well-heeled criminals from all over the state were checking in. Hettie began recruiting working girls from Rock Junction as part of the amenities, and used a nearby laundry as a front to hide their presence. Like her husband, she began to slide down a slippery moral slope, prompted by the needs of her burgeoning business. Their corruption has since spread to the entire town.

Recently, an opportunistic gangster named Sandor Kovacs has established a roadhouse on Cedar Creek's outskirts. As Pops doesn't own a competing business, he tolerates Kovacs's presence--but makes him buy all his beer from the creamery at inflated prices. Kovacs was supposed to buy liquor through his contacts with the Purple Gang, and the squeeze is killing him. Tensions are sure to erupt. Throw assorted player characters into the mix, and the Judge has a surefire recipe for trouble in a Big Little Town!

Cedar Creek has a population of roughly one thousand. Some of this comes from outlying farms, with most of the townies being connected with either Pops's or Hettie's operations. The local sheriff, Don Nichols, is already deep in Schottsheim's pocket.

**KEYED LOCATIONS** (see Cedar Creek map, pg. 24)

### 1) SCHOTTSHEIM CREAMERY

This two-story red brick building has a sign reading "SCHOTTSHEIM 'GOOD TIME' CREAMERY," though it's clear from the repainted letters "creamery" used to read "brewery." There is a front business façade and a ramp for delivery vehicles in the rear. Just past the main doors lies a waiting area, where Pops's secretary, Brigit Shand, greets visitors with a warm smile. To her left is a small ice cream parlor, complete with chrome counter and stools. Behind her is a time clock next to a pair of double doors that leads to the creamery floor proper. To her right, a set of narrow stairs leads up to the second floor and Pops Schottsheim's office.

Brigit runs interference for the boss. She tells any unscheduled visitors they need an

appointment to see him, but she would be happy to take a message, and if time permits, arrange for a brief tour of the creamery. She has a buzzer under her desk to warn Pops if it looks like hostile or suspicious types have entered the building.

A tour of the creamery takes only fifteen minutes. Brigit leads visitors around the creamery floor, where listless workers stir vats with wooden paddles, check temperatures, and service the clanking machinery. Schottsheim's office overlooks the floor, so it's possible to catch a glimpse of him and his bodyguards through the windows. The tour ends at the parlor, where guests are treated to a single scoop of the only flavor Schottsheim makes: vanilla. Discerning palettes will notice the ice cream isn't particularly good. Kind of runny, in fact. Dust covers the parlor stools and fancy chrome counter.

The door to Pops's second story office is reinforced (1 in 6 chance to force open), and can be barred from the other side. It has a brass mail slot conveniently large enough to poke a shotgun or tommy gun barrel out of and spray lead down the stairwell, which is a tactical option if a bunch of goons come storming up. Pops is usually in his office, smoking cigars and playing pool with Studs Merkel and Finn Culloden, while they make plans to expand their operations. The men are normally here from 7 AM to 7 PM. Pops will occasionally take Brigit out for an early dinner at The Spinning Wheel around 5 PM, always with Studs and Finn in tow.

Pops's office has an intercom that connects to the basement brewery; he can call down to alert his workers in the event of a raid, or summon them topside if he needs extra muscle. A large picture of the Balmoral behind his desk hides a wall safe, where he keeps a minimum of \$2000 in cash along with all his account books.

There is a secret entrance to the basement at the back of a walk-in freezer off the creamery floor. Locating the sliding metal panel requires and Observation saving through as the door is always kept closed, though scuff marks around the area and other signs of traffic grants a +2 bonus to the roll. The door can be locked from the other side. Steps lead down at a steep angle to the basement, where several copper vats are busy brewing Schottsheim lager and special dark ale. This area is much more lively than the creamery above; at any given time a dozen of Pops's men are checking the vats, bottling beer, cleaning oak barrels, etc. Treat these as Moonshiners with one Hooligan as shift leader (GB, pg. 51), though half are heeled with .38 revolvers instead of shotguns. As Pops encourages drinking on the job, all the men are happily lit.

The rear of the building serves as a garage with space for two delivery trucks, as well as a stockpile of dry ice and sawdust to keep the product cool. During the day one or both trucks may be out on their routes.

Anyone poking around the alley between the creamery and neighboring building will run into Rod Watkins, the local drunk. He cadges the occasional bottle of beer from the brewery workers in return for small errands like getting the paper, bringing lunch from The Spinning Wheel, etc. Rod is always scrounging for money, so if players seem suspicious of the creamery or the Schottsheims in general, he drops broad hints "something funny" is going on. If bribed, he gives clues directing players to the **Ice Cream Dump** encounter (pg. 16). However, he won't admit outright about the basement operation unless thoroughly intimidated (treat as Police rather than Civilian on the Roughen up and Threatening table, GB pg. 33). He fears the wrath of Pops much more than he fears the players!

**Hans 'Pops' Schottsheim**-businessman/gang leader [Assimilated, 48 yrs. old]

**AC:** 4 **HD:** 3+2 **hp:** 14 **MV:** 120' **#AT:** 2  
**D:** 1d6

**Save:** Brute 3 **ML:** 10 **AL:** Deceitful

**Skills:** Brewing, Accounting **Favorite Wpn:** Revolver

**Description:** beer-gut, suspenders, jovial; wears a rumpled shirt with rolled-up sleeves and loose bowtie.

**Record:** None

**Carries:** gold wedding ring (\$25), carries \$100 in wallet

Years in the bootlegging racket have hardened Pops. The businessman's amiable face and soft-bodied frame belie a ruthless streak long as a country mile. What had once been a desire to save his community has warped into insatiable greed; he now plans to expand his rackets to outlying farm towns, opening more faux creameries until he can start moving in on the big cities. Though not normally a killer himself, he turns cold-blooded when his self-preservation is at stake.

Pops is carrying on a torrid affair with his secretary, Brigit. Hettie doesn't care, as long as he doesn't bring her to the house or the Balmoral, so players won't have any luck trying to blackmail him.

**Studs Merkel**-bodyguard [Assimilated, 31 yrs. old]

**AC:** 2 **HD:** 3+2 **hp:** 17 **MV:** 120' **#AT:** 1  
**D:** 1d8

**Save:** Brute 4 **ML:** 10 **AL:** Deceitful

**Skills:** Rabble Rousing **Favorite Wpn:** Shotgun

**Description:** tall and rail-thin, liquor on his breath; wears a fedora cocked forward

**Record:** Arrested for disturbing the peace (March 1923), served three weeks in county.

**Carries:** \$25 in money clip

Studs is a formal labor union organizer, who had his ideals shattered while relatively young. Disillusioned, he turned to booze and then crime, working his way up the extortion rackets before leaving Rock Junction to throw in with Pops. He handles the stress of his job by staying drunk most of the time, and has the alcohol tolerance of a draft horse as a result.

Studs keeps a sawed-off (barrel and stock) shotgun on a loop around his right arm, concealed under a coat for fast access. Like Finn, he is seldom farther than ten feet away from Pops at all times.

**Finn Culloden**-bodyguard [Irish, 27 yrs. old]

**AC:** 2 **HD:** 3+2 **hp:** 19 **MV:** 120' **#AT:** 1  
**D:** 1d8

**Save:** Brute 4 **ML:** 10 **AL:** Deceitful

**Skills:** Boxing **Favorite Wpn:** Tommy gun

**Description:** short, glass eye, messy reddish-brown hair; always has a cigarette behind ear

**Record:** Assault (February 1912), Armed Robbery (April 1916), served two years total in the state penn.

**Carries:** \$15 in wallet

Finn is a tough Irish hood from Lakefront City's South Side. He lost his right eye during a stint as a bare-knuckle boxer, and now wears a glass replacement. Though a head shorter than Studs, Finn is definitely the meaner of the pair. He uses a Thompson SMG like a marksman, despite his handicap.

**Brigit Shand**-secretary [Assimilated, 21 yrs. old]

**AC:** 9 **HD:** 1 **hp:** 4 **MV:** 120' **#AT:** 1 **D:** 1d4

**Save:** Brute 1 **ML:** 6 **AL:** Deceitful

**Skills:** Bookkeeping **Favorite Wpn:** Small pistol

**Description:** slender brunette, sharp eyes; wears a cloche hat and heels

**Record:** None

**Carries:** \$12 in purse

Like a lot of people in Cedar Creek, Brigit's taste of the good life has corrupted her. Rapidly dissatisfied with her station, she has begun scheming up ways for Hettie Schottsheim to meet with an untimely death, so she can take her place. Brigit might even approach a shady player with a proposition . . .

**Rod Watkins**-local drunk [Assimilated, 51]

**AC:** 9 **HD:** 1 **hp:** 3 **MV:** 120' **#AT:** 1 **D:** 1d4

**Save:** Brute 1 **ML:** 6 **AL:** Neutral

**Skills:** None **Favorite Wpn:** Knife

**Description:** stooped, unkempt beard, smells like a brewery; patched clothes

**Record:** Numerous charges for Vagrancy and Public Drunkenness

**Carries:** 15 cents in pocket

Rod's potential as a loose-lipped informant has been noted by Pops. If he's spotted giving information to players, his corpse will wash up on the shore of the creek two days later. Sheriff Nichols will announce his death as "drowning," despite the clear ligature bruises around his neck.

When not in the alley next to the creamery, Rod can often be found "sleeping it off" in one of Cedar Creek's two jail cells--see **SHERRIF'S OFFICE**, page 12.

## 2) THE BALMORAL

This is the former Schottsheim family mansion, converted into a twenty-room boarding house. Built in Southern Gothic style, it has a columned front porch and an extensive garden in the back

yard. Several luxury cars are parked out front (a Vauxhall, Rolls Royce Phantom, Mercedes Benz Roadster, etc.). Second-story rooms along the back of the house have balconies overlooking the gardens. Rates here are steep: \$20 a night or \$100 a week, payable in advance. The cost covers fine quality meals, however, and the lobby is discretely stocked with liquor.

Hettie herself mans the front desk. If players inquire about rooms and don't look well-heeled, she will explain (with a slight sneer) they might have better luck at the Page hotel, just across the commons. "It's much more economical, darling." On the other hand, if players flash a lot of money she immediately becomes fawning, and may hint at the 'special' services available from the laundry next door.

Hettie's assistant, the lumbering Donal Quinn, plays piano in the lobby nearby, while guests relax on nicely-appointed settees or wander the grounds. Players with knowledge of the criminal underworld may notice an infamous felon peering at them over the edge of a newspaper. The Judge can call for an Observation saving throw; on a success, players think they recognize one of the NPC guests. "*I could swear that's Cam Hansen over there, one of the stickup men from the Wichita heist about a month ago.*" They will not, however, spot Icepick Slim in this manner, as he keeps to his room and has his meals sent up.

Permissive as she is, Hettie claims to run a respectful place. Her 'washwomen' are always discrete. Guests looking for a more raucous nightlife will be directed to the roadhouse on the outskirts of town.

**Henrietta** "Hettie" **Schottsheim**-proprietor/criminal [Assimilated, 43 yrs. old]

**AC:** 6 **HD:** 2+1 **hp:** 8 **MV:** 120' **#AT:** 1 **D:** 1d4

**Save:** Brute 2 **ML:** 8 **AL:** Deceitful

**Skills:** Accounting, Public Relations **Favorite Wpn:** Small pistol

**Description:** matronly, with graying red hair; wears fur stole and pearls

**Record:** None

**Carries:** Fox fur stole \$80, personal jewelry amounting to \$200, \$250 in purse

Hettie's family is originally of Scottish descent. Avaricious by nature, her bitterness about having to work is lessened somewhat by all the cold, hard cash the Balmoral brings in. She won't normally be suspicious of players, as she's learned the look the other way when dealing with her clientele. However, if asked a lot of questions, especially about the creamery, she'll call Pops directly to give him a heads up. Pops, in turn, will notify Sheriff Nichols about the newcomers, and from that point on players will be under surveillance (see **The Night Has a Thousand Eyes** encounter, pg.17).

Any attempts to threaten or otherwise intimidate Hettie will bring Donal running.

**Donal Quinn**-assistant/bodyguard [Scottish, 42 yrs. old]

**AC:** 2 **HD:** 3+2 **hp:** 16 **MV:** 120' **#AT:** 1 **D:** 1d8

**Save:** Brute 4 **ML:** 10 **AL:** Deceitful

**Skills:** Musician **Favorite Wpn:** Brass knuckles

**Description:** barrel-chested, bald, tenor voice; wears a white suitcoat

**Record:** None

**Carries:** \$6 in wallet

Donal affects the appearance of a slow-witted heavy, but is actually much more cunning than he lets on. In addition to his piano playing skills, he also has a surprisingly dulcet singing voice. The big lug has a crush on Vonda Sykes, along with half the males in the boarding house. He is fanatically loyal to Hettie.

**Tobias Eliot, AKA Icepick Slim**-assassin [Assimilated, 31 yrs. old]

**AC:** 0 **HD:** 3+1 **hp:** 19 **MV:** 120' **#AT:** 2 **D:** 1d8

**Save:** Brute 4 **ML:** 11 **AL:** Deceitful

**Skills:** Slip Out/Slip In, Trickery, Poison

**Favorite Wpn:** Icepick

**Description:** lithe, poker-faced; wears a bowler and spats

**Record:** Numerous charges, but no actual arrests

**Carries:** \$25 in wallet, pair of diamond cufflinks worth \$100

Slim is a tall African-American with deep set eyes and an expressionless face. He favors spats and pinstripes, with a pair of diamond cufflinks. Strictly big league, he fled to Cedar Creek all the way from New York City after punching the ticket of a prominent Sicilian gangster. He is therefore much more wary of other criminals than lawmen.

Slim has been keeping to his quarters on the second floor, while he sips expensive Canadian whiskey and loses sleep. As a result of his extravagance, he's running low on funds--and loathe to hock his diamonds. He'll need more green, and soon, before he tries to slip over the Mexican border into Tijuana, after some of the heat has died down.

Slim's weapon of choice is his titular icepick, which he always keeps handy. He has nickel-plated .44 as well, should noisy guns become necessary. So far, he's only had to leave the Balmoral once--to kill the private eye Joe Marchand, whom he was convinced had made him (see **THE PAGE HOTEL**, pg. 13).

Slim's finances are such that he may entertain a contract killing in Cedar Creek. If players prove

annoying enough to Pops Schottsheim, and his own men fail to remove the threat, he may approach Slim and offer a cool grand to rub the newcomers out. However, Slim will also hear any offer the players might have to smoke Pops! His loyalty goes to the highest bidder.

**Vonda Sykes**-grifter [Assimilated, 24 yrs. old]

**AC:** 6 **HD:** 2+1 **hp:** 7 **MV:** 120' **#AT:** 1 **D:** 1d4

**Save:** Thief **ML:** 10 **AL:** Neutral

**Skills:** Seduction, Pickpocketing **Favorite Wpn:** Stiletto

**Description:** dyed red hair, green eyes; wears a green evening dress with shawl

**Record:** Arrested for Prostitution, September 1926, no time served

**Carries:** personal jewelry amounting to \$100, \$50 in purse

An attractive redhead (by way of a bottle), Vonda is an experienced grifter from Rock Junction, hiding out after her latest scam. She accepted a platinum engagement ring from her fiancé, a wealthy socialite named Edward Dahl, only to stiff him at the altar. Now she's waiting long enough for Sal Mercado to track down a good buyer, before she heads for Galveston. She's heard there are a lot of gullible oil men down there!

**Barton "Doc" Shaw**-veterinarian [Assimilated, 51 yrs. old]

**AC:** 9 **HD:** 1 **hp:** 4 **MV:** 120' **#AT:** 1 **D:** 1d4

**Save:** Brute 1 **ML:** 6 **AL:** Deceitful

**Skills:** Medicine **Favorite Wpn:** Scalpel

**Description:**

**Record:** None

**Carries:** \$50 in wallet

Doc Shaw maintains a small office in the Balmoral. Because his diploma identifies him as a veterinarian rather than an MD, he keeps it in a darkened corner of his bookshelf. Shaw is usually out at his farmhouse where he runs his regular practice, but can be summoned by Hettie if one of her guests needs medical attention. Shaw gruffly asks for his fees up front--usually \$50 to \$100 to patch someone up, depending on how wealthy they look. He asks no questions while he works, and keeps the chit-chat to a minimum.

Shaw keeps several patent medicines loaded with opium in a locked cabinet, for occasional use by guests who are going through heroin withdrawal.

**Sal Mercado**-fence [Assimilated, 36 yrs. old]

**AC:** 5 **HD:** 2 **hp:** 7 **MV:** 120' **#AT:** 1 **D:** 1d6

**Save:** Brute 2 **ML:** 8 **AL:** Neutral

**Skills:** Art Expertise, Finding Smuggled Goods

**Favorite Wpn:** Revolver

**Description:** pencil-thin moustache, slicked back hair; wears a tweed suit

**Record:** Possession of Stolen Goods, February 1924. Served 6 months in jail

**Carries:** \$100 in wallet

Sal owns a pawn shop in Rock Junction, but his second career as a fence is far more lucrative. He's not actually on the run from anyone, but taking a 'working vacation' at the Balmoral while he lines up buyers for other guests' ill-gotten loot. He'll offer to help players, too, charging a 30% cut on all deals.

**Cam and Stu Hanson**-bank robbers [Assimilated, 25 yrs. old]

**AC:** 6 **HD:** 2+1 **hp:** 11, currently at 6 due to wounds **MV:** 120' **#AT:** 1 **D:** 1d6

**Save:** Brute 2 **ML:** 9 **AL:** Deceitful

**Skills:** Safecracking **Favorite Wpn:** Automatic pistol

**Description:** Identical twins, strapping, friendly; wearing cheap suits and caps

**Record:** Wanted for Armed Robbery and Murder in Kansas, no arrests

**Carries:** \$25 apiece in wallets

The Hanson brothers are twin farm boys who decided to become bank robbers for the hell of it. Though they made a decent haul knocking over the First National Bank of Wichita, both were shot by security guards while making their getaway. Luckily, Doc Shaw's ministrations are helping them pull through. Cam is heavily bandaged on his left shoulder and Stu on his right forearm. Both are friendly enough in a down-homey sort of way, but will turn vicious if someone tries to haul them in.

They've already spent most of their take, but have a strongbox under the bed with \$175 left.

### 3) LAUNDRY

This house next to the Balmoral serves primarily as cover for a small prostitution ring run by Hettie. Two harried older women do the actual drudge work of scrubbing, while a trio of prostitutes hangs out in the back yard, smoking cigarettes and cussing like sailors. Hettie maintains a still in the basement next to the furnace, and one of washing tubs is used to make gin.

Recently, there's been a new arrival at the laundry. Angie Atkins, an undercover reporter from the Rock Junction Argos, is posing as a working girl. While being groomed for her job, she's been investigating rumors about the Balmoral's true nature, waiting to get a picture of some big-time hood on the lam. So far, she's

not been asked to actually 'entertain' a client--when that happens, she plans to skip out, big story or no.

**Angie Atkins**-reporter [Assimilated, 26 yrs. old]

**AC:** 6 **HD:** 1+1 **hp:** 5 **MV:** 120' **#AT:** 1  
**D:** 1d6

**Save:** Brute 2 **ML:** 7 **AL:** Neutral

**Skills:** Photography **Favorite Wpn:** None

**Description:** bobbed hair, narrow face with knowing smirk; wearing a low-cut gown

**Record:** None

**Carries:** \$5 in purse

Angie is an up-and-coming crime reporter for the Argos, yet to score a real scoop. Tired of just printing information from the police blotter, she volunteered for this dangerous assignment in hopes of a career boost. Protective of 'her' story, she will be suspicious of rival newshounds, but may be willing to partner with a friendly PI to get the full dirt on the Balmoral. She's already stolen a passkey that opens all the doors in the boardinghouse.

### 4) SCHOTTSHEIM RESIDENCE

This bungalow, hidden from casual view behind the Balmoral, was formally the mansion's garage. It boasts three bedrooms, a tiny kitchen, and front parlor, all tastefully furnished. Hettie and Pops have separate beds; Studs and Finn sleep in the two guestrooms.

The Schottsheims retire here at night, after their work is finished. The doors and windows are always kept locked, the shades pulled, and a pet bulldog, Rocko, allowed to roam the interior. Both Schottsheims keep loaded shotguns under their beds in case of nocturnal visitors.

**Rocko the Bulldog**

**AC:** 7 **HD:** 1 **hp:** 4 **MV:** 180' **#AT:** 1 **D:** 1d6

**Save:** Brute 1 **ML:** 7 **AL:** Neutral

Rocko's keen hearing makes any task roll of sneaking into the bungalow Hard (-4 to roll). On a failure, he barks loudly, alerting everyone inside.

**5) EHRLICH'S GENERAL STORE**

This is a combination grocers, drugstore, and general mercantile, run by Johnathan and Mary Ehrlich. Johnathan reassures customers anything he doesn't stock can be shipped from the Sears Roebuck Company. A pharmacist, he regularly compounds drugs for Doc Shaw.

The Ehrlich's use the stats for Common Citizens, GB pg. 49. They are generally Law Abiding, and choose to pretend Cedar Creek is just a quiet little town.

**6) EASTMAN'S AUTO REPAIRS**

This garage is run by Gus Eastman, a one-legged mechanic and veteran of The Great War. Dour and grumpy, Gus is one of the few locals unimpressed by Pops Schottsheim. In fact, he worries about the town's moral decline. Part of his ire stems from the change in clientele; he dislikes working on fancy foreign cars, which requires stocking obscure parts. Worse, hoods are always accusing him of trying to chisel them, or skipping out without paying their bills. Therefore, Gus is wary if approached by players.

However, he is also a treasure trove of information. Players who are law-enforcement types or fellow veterans cause Gus to drop his guard (+4 on reaction rolls). He's been *waiting*

for someone to start cleaning up the town, regardless of the economic consequences. If befriended, Gus will clue players to check out the creamery--though he does not know about the freezer's secret door or where, exactly, the brewery equipment is located. He also notes some of the nasty rumors surrounding the abandoned sawmill and Pops Schottsheim (see **OLD SAWMILL**, pg. 14). Finally, he can share his suspicion that a private dick was in town, probably on business, but hasn't been seen or heard from for a couple days.

**Gus Eastman**-mechanic [Assimilated, 44 yrs. old]

**AC:** 5 **HD:** 2 **hp:** 8 **MV:** 60' **#AT:** 1 **D:** 1d6

**Save:** Brute 4 **ML:** 10 **AL:** Law Abiding

**Skills:** Auto Mechanics, Auto Body Work

**Favorite Wpn:** .45 pistol

**Description:** heavy beard, amputee, uses crutches; wears oil-stained uniform and scowls a lot

**Record:** None. Gus was awarded a Purple Heart for his injury.

**Carries:** \$8 in wallet

Gus lost his left leg to a bullet from the Kaiser, after the wound grew infected and his limb had to be amputated above the knee. A skilled mechanic, he charges fair rates and never gouges his customers. He can usually be found at The Spinning Wheel every morning for breakfast.

**7) THE SPINNING WHEEL**

This is Cedar Creek's much beloved cafe, named after the antique of the same name displayed in the front window. Inside are a dozen tables and a small counter with stools and register. Run my Margaret "Ma" O'Sullivan, the cafe serves

breakfast, lunch, and dinner, though closes promptly at 6 PM and all day Sunday. Ma turns a blind eye to the town's illegal activities, but won't allow drinking in her joint, a proviso even Pops honors. A teetotaler, Ma serves Postum along with coffee, as she's convinced caffeine is unhealthy.

Gus Eastman can regularly be found here, sipping java in the morning. Sheriff Nichols and Deputy Cox usually get lunch and late afternoon pie, and Pops will occasionally show up for an early dinner with his secretary, Brigit.

Ma uses the stats for Common Citizens, GB pg. 49. She is Law Abiding.

## 8) SHERIFF'S OFFICE

This is a cramped little building with a prowler car parked out front, a combination office/booking room, and two jail cells. There is a locked cabinet behind the desk with two shotguns, two rifles, and boxes of shells.

Sheriff Dan Nichols and his faithful deputy, Mike Cox, hold court here. They are both deeply in the pocket of Pops Schottsheim and act on his behalf. Most of the time they can be found with their feet up on the desks, having pie at the Spinning Wheel, or drinking at the roadhouse in the evening. Occasionally, they will lock up Rod Watkins on a vagrancy charge, only to release him the next morning before he can vomit all over his cell. An older volunteer named Patty Duncan comes in to answer the phone when Nichols and Cox are out.

The sheriff normally ignores players, assuming them to be out of town hoods like so many other visitors to Cedar Creek. If they present credentials as agents of law enforcement (e.g. a Prohibition Agent), Nichols will go through the

motions of co-operating with them, then secretly inform Pops of the threat. He is openly hostile to PI's, calling them "amateurs" and warning them there's "nothing to find" in "his" town. If players somehow incur Pops's wrath, Nichols will keep them under near-constant surveillance (see **The Night Has a Thousand Eyes** encounter, pg. 17).

'Guests' in the cells get excellent meals from The Spinning Wheel, so there's that.

If necessary, Nichols can use his authority to gather up a 'posse' of a dozen able-bodied townsfolk--use the stats for Angry Mob on GB pg. 49.

**Dan Nichols**-crooked sheriff [Assimilated, 38 yrs. old]

**AC:** 2 **HD:** 4+1 **hp:** 21 **MV:** 120' **#AT:** 2  
**D:** 1d6

**Save:** Brute 4 **ML:** 10 **AL:** Deceitful

**Skills:** Shadowing **Favorite Wpn:** Revolver

**Description:** freckles, blond hair, stern demeanor, wears a tan uniform and hat when under arms

**Record:** Dishonorable discharge from Army

**Carries:** \$18 in wallet

Nichols was discharged from the Army after he was caught trying to smuggle stolen objects d'art out of France. Only his previous courage on the battlefield saved him from a court martial. Bitter, he returned to his hometown to find it on the skids, until Pops Schottsheim stepped up and saved Cedar Creek. Nichols is loyal to him out of gratitude-- and the generous stipend he receives each month for making sure the law sees things Pops's way. Nichols carries on a heated personal rivalry with Gus Eastman.

**Mike Cox**-crooked deputy [Assimilated, 29 yrs. old]

**AC:** 4 **HD:** 2 **hp:** 8 **MV:** 120' **#AT:** 1 **D:** 1d6

**Save:** Brute 2 **ML:** 9 **AL:** Deceitful

**Skills:** None **Favorite Wpn:** Revolver

**Description:** Dark hair, moustache, chews on a toothpick

**Record:** None

**Carries:** \$6 in wallet

Nichols's unimaginative deputy. Like the sheriff, he's corrupt as the day is long. Cox makes almost no decisions without checking with Nichols, first.

## 9) FARMER'S BANK

Safely tucked next to the sheriff's office is the First Farmer's Bank of Cedar Creek, run by Miles Langley and his daughter, Laura. Hit hard by the Depression, they mainly issue low-interest rate loans to locals. The safe at the back has only \$80 in cash, and \$200 in savings bonds. Deputy Cox carries a torch for Laura, and can sometimes be found pitching woo here while she tries to work.

Miles and Laura use the stats for Common Citizens on GB pg. 49. They are Law Abiding.

## 10) PAGE HOTEL

The Page is a two-story brick building, slightly rundown, that serves as affordable accommodations in Cedar Creek. Run by the married couple of Lou and Beverly Page, the hotel offers shabby furniture but clean rooms, with quick access to the Spinning Wheel close by. The Pages make no attempt to compete with the Balmoral; if a well-heeled customer comes in flashing a lot of dough, Beverly Page will suggest they might find the boardinghouse more to their tastes.

Bev is an inveterate snoop, who happily spies for the Schottsheims. She will listen outside the door of any suspicious lodgers, as well as listen in on phone calls made from the lobby. Any information gleaned is promptly reported to Hettie.

The other hotel guests are nondescript, with one exception. A PI named Joe Marchand rented a room on the second floor, with a good view of the Balmoral across the commons. Joe gave his name as "John Smith" in the hotel register, and paid for a week. The door to his room is locked. He won't answer any knocks, because he's been dead for twenty-four hours. Beverly has a room key behind her desk; otherwise the door will have to be picked or forced. An off-smell lingers inside, which will only get worse as time passes. Joe is sitting in a chair by the window, with his back to players. If jostled, he slumps to the floor. A thorough examination of his corpse reveals a small hole at the base of the neck, already scabbed over.

Icepick Slim killed Joe with his titular weapon, concerned the PI may have tumbled his presence. The room has been expertly turned over, though Joe's clothes, valise, and wallet with his detective's license are still here, as well as a snub-nosed .38 pistol and six rounds. His little black book with all his notes, however, has been burned. As it turns out, Slim's concerns were well-founded; Marchand was hired by the Black Hand gang to keep tabs on the Balmoral's occupants, and would've certainly been interested to know the killer of a prominent Sicilian gangster was holed up there.

Any PI character with a background from Rock Junction can make an Intelligence check at +2, to recall that Joe Marchand was a PI known for hiring out his services to the mob.

**Lou Page**-proprietor [Assimilated, 39 yrs. old]

**AC:** 9 **HD:** 1 **hp:** 2 **MV:** 120' **#AT:** 1 **D:** 1d4

**Save:** Brute 1 **ML:** 5 **AL:** Law Abiding

**Skills:** None **Favorite Wpn:** None

**Description:** Meek, pigeon-chested, wears eyeglasses

**Record:** None

**Carries:** \$4 in wallet

Lou is the stereotypical henpecked husband. He just wants to be left alone so he can pursue his singular passion of building a ship in a bottle. He defers to Bev in all matters.

**Beverly Page**-proprietor [Assimilated, 34 yrs. old]

**AC:** 9 **HD:** 1 **hp:** 3 **MV:** 120' **#AT:** 1 **D:** 1d4

**Save:** Brute 1 **ML:** 6 **AL:** Neutral

**Skills:** Stealth **Favorite Wpn:** None

**Description:** furtive, wears hair up in a bun, sharp nose

**Record:** None

**Carries:** \$5 in purse

Beverly sees herself as an important member of the community, keeping tabs on suspicious types for the Schottsheim family. When not spying on her guests she keeps a wary eye out the hotel's front window, alert for malfeasance.

## 11) OLD SAWMILL

This venerable structure, long abandoned, is leaning badly on its frame, with several holes in the sagging roof. In fact, it looks like a good impact with a truck might bring the whole building down.

The sawmill is generally avoided by locals, as it has acquired a reputation for being haunted.

Many workers died accidentally here, and their ghosts are believed to still linger. Taking advantages of these rumors, Pops uses the mill to interrogate prisoners or just dispose of a couple stiff. The old sawblade attached to the conveyor belt has a shiny new one attached; though the device no longer functions, its sinister appearance greatly enhances the interrogation process. Unfortunate players captured by Pops may discover this firsthand!

A supply shed holds two large drums of lye. In the lightly wooded area just behind the building, buried under mounds of rotting sawdust, are eight unmarked graves with bodies in advanced states of decomposition. These belong to rival crooks who crossed Pops.

Gus Eastman might direct law enforcement players here looking for evidence of Pops's ill-doings (see **EASTMAN'S AUTO REPAIRS**, pg. 11).

## 12) ROADHOUSE

This establishment, also known as the Blue Barn Dancehall, is a large renovated barn and covered back patio, overlooking a scenic duck pond. It opens for business around 4 PM, and the gravel front lot soon fills to capacity with trucks, tractors, hot rods, and cars of all makes, as the roadhouse is the only night life for miles around. Inside are a plank bar, dance floor, and tables covered in checkerboard cloth. The décor is decidedly rustic, with a hard-packed dirt floor and antique plowshares hanging from the ceiling--even the restrooms are labeled 'Pointers' and 'Setters.' Musicians play everything from jazz to polka on the bandstand. The kitchen specializes in ribeye steaks and fresh, pan-fired trout.

Managing all this action is Sandor Kovacs, a Hungarian mobster late of Rock Junction.

Though he opened the roadhouse as his own stake, he has connections with the Purple Gang, who had originally agreed to supply him with hooch. Therein lies his dilemma; Pops has been muscling Kovacs to buy his lager at inflated prices, as the cost of doing business on his turf. This has seriously cut both Kovacs profits and his ability to buy from the Purple Gang. Though he has repeatedly asked for assistance from the syndicate, Kovacs has been told to tough it out, all the while being ridiculed for taking guff from “a bunch of hicks.” He recently decided to stop buying from Pops, and retaliation will soon be forthcoming (see the **Roadhouse Warning** encounter, pg. 18).

Kovacs’s heavy is a big slab of Slavic beef named Victor Mroczek. His overworked waiters, six in number, double as muscle when circumstances dictate (use the stats for Thugs on GB pg. 53). Kovacs is unusually charming for a gangster, however, and will attempt to quell trouble with free drinks rather than violence. Though the law (in the persons of Sheriff Nichols and Deputy Cox) are frequent customers, they won’t lift a finger to stop any trouble, as a show of loyalty to Pops.

Kovacs will spill to any sympathetic fellow criminals about his plight. If befriended, he may even offer employment in his gang for help against Pops. Doing so, however, puts the players squarely in the confrontation about to boil over between Kovacs and Pops (see the **Hot Time in the Old Town Tonight** encounter, pg. 19).

**Alexander ‘Sandor’ Kovacs**-proprietor/gangster [Hungarian, 41 yrs. old]

**AC:** 4 **HD:** 3+2 **hp:** 14 **MV:** 120’ **#AT:** 2  
**D:** 1d6

**Save:** Brute 4 **ML:** 10 **AL:** Neutral

**Skills:** Accounting **Favorite Wpn:** Revolver

**Description:** stocky, gray eyes and genial features; wears a dinner jacket

**Record:** Possession of stolen goods, charged August 1923, no time served

**Carries:** Gold watch and fob worth \$60, \$100 in wallet

Kovacs originally owned a furniture store back in Rock Junction, before investing his life savings in the Blue Barn Dancehall. Fighting between the Black Hand and Purple Gang had made running a big city business difficult. However, he now finds himself out of the proverbial frying pan and in the fire.

Kovacs would just as soon turn straight and run a peaceful business, but is realist enough to know that isn’t damn likely. He intends to ride out the rough times and protect his investment, until Pops Schottshiem can be put in his place. Little does he know his Purple Gang connections will soon come through in a big, big way.

**Victor ‘Vic’ Mroczek**-bodyguard [Slovakian, 37 yrs. old]

**AC:** 2 **HD:** 3+2 **hp:** 20 **MV:** 120’ **#AT:** 1  
**D:** 1d8

**Save:** Brute 4 **ML:** 10 **AL:** Deceitful

**Skills:** None **Favorite Wpn:** Lead pipe

**Description:** broad shouldered, brooding, prominent cheekbones; wears a black overcoat in all weather

**Record:** Assault with a deadly weapon, March 1918, 8 months in Cuyahoga County

**Carries:** \$12 in wallet

Mroczek is originally a Slovakian who emigrated to Cleveland for a job in the steel mills, but soon found his size and physical strength was better suited as a mob enforcer. He prefers to settle differences with a length of lead pipe. However, wise to the tactical limitations of bringing a club

to a firefight, he carries a pair of .45's he'll use two-gun style if a shootout develops.

## **ENCOUNTERS**

As noted earlier, these encounters serve primarily to move events along, or as logical consequences to the player's actions. Encounters that have more permanent effects on NPCs and the town of Cedar Creek are presented towards the end of the list. The Players Information section gives specific events/actions as to what will 'trigger' the encounter's occurrence.

### **The Ice Cream Dump**

#### **Encounter XP**

200 each

#### **Location**

The creek, in a lightly wooded area just outside town. This encounter takes place late at night.

#### **The Scenario**

Three of Pop's thugs are disposing of ice cream by dumping it into the creek; there's too much of the stuff in the company's freezer, as it doesn't sell much.

#### **Player's Information**

Players are tipped off to the dump by Rod Watkins. Alternately, if they have the Schottsheim Creamery under surveillance, they will notice a delivery truck leaving at a suspicious hour (around midnight). Players with a vehicle can discretely follow out to the creek, where they will witness the dumping.

#### **The Action**

The thugs will sharply warn anyone off if they become aware of being watched. One is armed with a shotgun; the other two only have knives.

They will fight if necessary, suspecting players as being members of a rival mob.

#### **Judge Prep**

Use the stats for Moonshiners, GB pg. 51. Naturally, killing the men potentially causes bigger problems for the players--they receive XP for successfully neutralizing the threat (e.g. knocking the men out, intimidating them, etc.).

#### **For Services Rendered**

#### **Encounter XP**

250 if Gus is befriended each

#### **Location**

Gus's auto repair shop. This encounter takes place during the day.

#### **The Scenario**

One of Gus's hood customers is trying to get out of paying the repair bill for his fancy-schmancy foreign car. Gus isn't having it.

#### **Player's Information**

Players might be talking to Gus about repairs, coming out of the Spinning Wheel after lunch, or just walking down the street when they hear shouts coming from the open garage of the repair shop. Alternatively, this encounter could serve as the beginning of the adventure when players first arrive in town, as the radiator of their car blows or some other mechanical problem occurs (see **How to Use This Module**, pg. 3).

#### **The Action**

The customer will go so far as to slap Gus and make fun of his war injury, hopefully goading players into action. Note that the hood can be shamed, intimidated, paid off, etc. versus actually killing him or knocking him unconscious--which makes things easier for Gus.

### **Judge Prep**

The criminal has stats as per thug, GB pg. 53. Players who help out Gus get a +4 on his reaction roll towards them, on top of the bonus he already has towards law enforcement characters. Befriending Gus makes him a valuable ally; see his description on page 11.

### **Balmoral Blitz!**

#### **Encounter XP**

400 each

#### **Location**

The Balmoral's main lobby. This encounter takes place in the evening or night.

#### **The Scenario**

Hettie generously gives her guests a free round of gin after supper. Feeling especially festive, both Sal Mercado and Cam Hanson declare their affection for the attractive Vonda Sykes. Sal and Cam resort to fisticuffs (clumsily), and a jealous Donal Quinn decides to wade in on both of them instead of breaking up the fight. A large-scale brawl erupts!

#### **Player's Information**

Players might be guests at the Balmoral, snooping around (perhaps with Angie Atkin's help), or just walking by when they hear the fight breaking out.

#### **The Action**

Sal, Cam, Donal, and Stu are involved in the brawl, swinging their fists and picking up various objects (chairs, service trays, vases, etc.) as improvised weapons. Players are, of course, free to jump in as they see fit. Donal will eventually knock the NPCs cold, after sustaining a fair amount of damage himself. No one draws a gun or a knife; this isn't that kind of a dispute.

The melee serves as an excellent diversion for any other kind of activity in the house, such as sneaking around with Angie's passkey or talking to Icepick Slim. All attention will be focused on the main lobby.

### **Judge Prep**

Use the Non-Lethal Combat and Unarmed Attack rules on GB pg. 57. After the brawl is over, Sheriff Nichols and Deputy Cox show up. They get a tongue-lashing from Hettie for the tardiness of their response, but no charges are pressed.

### **The Night Has a Thousand Eyes**

#### **Encounter XP**

200 each if arrested

#### **Location**

Anywhere within town, especially on the street or in places of business.

#### **The Scenario**

Thanks to their suspicious actions, the players are now on the radar. Citizens are keeping tabs on their movements and whereabouts. Sheriff Nichols and Deputy Cox have made surveilling the players a priority.

#### **Player's Information**

Players will notice people staring in their direction and whispering to each other, wherever they go. If interacting with locals, they seem especially wary.

#### **The Action**

Players can make an Observation saving throw; on a success, they notice they are being shadowed by someone at a discrete distance. If

confronted, the mystery person turns out to be Sheriff Nichols!

If players act suspiciously during the course of their surveillance, things escalate. The sheriff and deputy ask harassing questions, and attempt to charge the players with various infractions--loitering and vagrancy are a favorite ('vagrancy' is sometimes legally defined as having less than \$20 in cash on hand). This will result in fines levied at the sheriff's office. If players don't comply, they will be charged with resisting arrest and spend d6 days in the jail cells, before being released. Nichols and Cox then drive them out to the edge of town and drop them off with a warning not to return.

If necessary, Nichols will gather an Angry Mob to help subdue players.

#### **Judge Prep**

Stats for an Angry Mob are on GB pg. 49. Though they're armed with revolvers, Nichols and Cox won't go reaching for their guns unless players do. A group of players subdued by an Angry Mob won't die if their hit points are reduced to 0, just knocked unconscious. See Non-Lethal combat on page GB 57.

#### **Roadhouse Warning**

#### **Encounter XP**

150 each

#### **Location**

The Blue Barn Dancehall, on the outskirts of town. The encounter takes place at evening or night.

#### **The Scenario**

In retaliation for Kovacs's refusal to buy his beer, Pops sends out Studs Merkel and Finn

Culloden to shoot up the Blue Barn. They're not trying to kill anyone, just send a warning.

#### **Player's Information**

Players are visiting the roadhouse for their own reasons; maybe to check the place out, or just have a meal or drink to blow off steam. None of the prominent NPCs from town will be among the crowd, or any guests from the Balmoral (they've been warned off by Pops or Hettie).

#### **The Action**

Sounds of a car pulling up sharply in the gravel lot can be heard outside. Suddenly, the chatter of automatic fire erupts as the front windows shatter under a hail of slugs! Guests scream and hunt cover under tables. Both Kovacs and Vic Mroczek pull guns and begin to work their way towards the front, but less than a minute later it's all over. The car goes roaring off. Kovacs doesn't bother to call the police, and tries to prevent anyone from doing so (Nichols and Cox won't show in any event).

No one seems to be hurt--at first. But a freak ricochet and spraying glass has injured one of the younger waiters, Milo Farkas, badly. Farkas just happens to be the nephew of a prominent member of the Purple Gang, and when word gets back to *him*, vengeance is declared! See the **Hot Time in the Old Town Tonight** encounter, pg. 19.

#### **Judge Prep**

See Studs and Finn's stats on pg. 6. If either or both have been previously dispatched, use the stats for Moonshiners on GB pg. 51. One of the gunmen is firing a Thompson SMG, the other an automatic pistol. However, they're angling the guns upwards in an attempt to not hit anyone. After a round of firing they drive off, so a shootout with players isn't likely.

The gunmen are driving a Ford Model T (GB pg. 46), just in case someone wants to try and chase them back to Pops's place.

After the attack, Milo Farkas is reduced to 1 hp and lying on the floor, bleeding and moaning. A player who successfully treats him will earn an additional 150 xp and gain the gratitude of a prominent member of the Purple Gang.

### Hot Time in the Old Town Tonight

**Note:** Because this encounter is a potential climax to events in Cedar Creek, and will change the town permanently, it is strongly recommended to be run *last* in sequence.

#### Encounter XP

800 each

#### Location

Just outside the Schottsheim Creamery. This encounter takes place at night.

#### The Scenario

Pops has finally gone too far. After Milo Farkas, the nephew of a high-ranking member of the Purple Gang was injured (see the **Roadhouse Warning** encounter, previous) Sandor Kovacs's requests for help are finally answered--with a vengeance. A team of four experienced hitters are dispatched from Rock Junction. All are World War I combat veterans, familiar with advanced tactics. The hitters arrive in a panel truck, pick up Vic Mroczek at the roadhouse, and head out to Pops's creamery at midnight. Pops and company just happen to be there, getting ready to make a late delivery run.

#### Player's Information

Players can be drawn into this encounter several ways. First, they may hear the explosion

and sounds of gunshots as the attack begins, prompting them to investigate.

Alternately, they may have thrown in their lot with Kovacs, and be tipped off something is about to happen, or even be invited to join the assault. If players are spying on Pops or become affiliated with his operations, this encounter occurs when they are outside the creamery at night.

#### The Action

The assault begins with two of the hitters circling around to the rear of the creamery, where they set up a light machinegun from a place of concealment, overlooking the back garage. The two other hitters, along with Vic Mroczek, take up tactical positions in the commons area, just in front of the building. One of them hurls a firebomb through the creamery's front window. Moments later, a muffled explosion shatters the night, as the waiting area goes up in flames. Smoke wafts into Pops's second floor office.

Pops, Studs, and Finn knock out the glass in the front windows and start shooting down into the street. The hitter squad obliges them with return fire. Meanwhile, the brewery workers panic and come rushing up through the secret door, trying to escape the building via the back garage. The hitter with the LMG opens, killing roughly a third in his first spray. The rest dive for cover and start shooting back, but are severely hampered by suppression fire.

Though the hitters are successful at first, Sheriff Nichols and Deputy Cox hear the carnage and grab rifles. They come running up the street, attempting to flank the team out front. The fighting reaches a stalemate, with everyone shooting carefully from cover. Meanwhile, the fire spreads through the creamery, and smoke billows thicker and thicker . . .

Players are the key to resolving the stalemate. Wherever they show up, they will likely tip the battle one way or the other. Pops is loath to surrender his hard-won turf, and the hitters aren't going back to their bosses in defeat.

The longer the fight goes on, the more the fire spreads. Eventually, the smoke gets so bad Pops and company have to make a break for it, perhaps jumping from the second floor interior windows to the creamery floor below (1d6 damage), before trying to escape through the rear. The front of the building has become a conflagration.

What began as a proverbial firefight will end as one--the flames, left unattended, jump to adjoining buildings. If not put out through an organized effort, fire eventually consumes all the buildings along the eastern edge of the commons, including the creamery. Smoking debris collapses down into Pops's secret basement, ending his illicit operations once and for all.

### Judge Prep

The hitters are named Casimir 'Cas' Dombrowski, Joe Milosevic, Nathan O'Leary, and Bobby Nowak. Use the stats for Victor Mroczek (maximum hit points), except Milosevic has the Demolitions skill and Dombrowski has Heavy Weapons. All are armed with Thompson SMGs, except for Bobby, the team sniper, who has a Lee-Enfield with a scope (treat as a combat rifle). The LMG is a Maxim and does damage as per machine gun; the firebomb does damage as a grenade, plus an additional 1d4 damage per round until a Quickness or Toughness saving throw is passed. For weapon stats, see GB pg. 17.

Pops and his enforcers on the second floor have the benefit of three-quarters cover (+3 AC) and High Ground (see GB, pg. 56). The hitters, as well as Pops' men at the rear garage, all have half cover (+2). Needless to say, their higher ACs make for a prolonged shootout.

Players who help put out fires and/or rescue people from burning buildings will have to make a Quickness or Toughness save to avoid 1d6 damage from the flames and smoke inhalation. However, this heroic action will net them an additional 500 XP, as well as the goodwill of the townsfolk.

### WRAPPING UP

Whether the Judge runs the **Hot Time in the Old Town Tonight** encounter or lets players create their own climax to events, the adventure is effectively over once Pops Schottsheim has been neutralized. Note this doesn't *have* to involve a shootout; if a law enforcement player gathers enough hard evidence on Pops's operations, and thinks to inform superiors, state police and G-men can launch a devastating raid to shut the brewery down. Similarly, if a newspaper reporter gets solid dirt on Pops or Hettie, the story will make front page news with the Rock Junction Argos and Daily Star, ensuring a federal investigation. Either way, the Schottsheim's reign is history. Sheriff Nichols and Deputy Cox, if they survived, will soon be breaking big rocks into little ones . . .

Criminal players can take advantage of the power vacuum to establish operations in Cedar Creek. The loss of a major supplier means a lot of thirsty customers will be looking for a new bootlegger. Sandor Kovacs, if still around, might be willing to form an alliance with a fledgling gang, as long as his business is allowed to thrive.

And what of Cedar Creek itself? With the town's golden goose out of the picture, how will it survive? The economic prosperity of post-war America is years away. Maybe the Public Works Administration will step in to start a local project, or a new, legitimate, business will appear.

Only the Judge knows for sure.

### **(OPTION) WANDERING ADVERSARIES**

Whenever players spend a significant amount of time between areas, or just to liven things up, the Judge can roll for wandering adversaries (1 in 6 chance on a 1d6, check every 2 turns). Note that some of the 'adversaries' in small-town America are not necessarily dangerous!

#### **D10 Roll**

**1** 1d4 local farmhands plastered on Pops's lager. Use the stats for Hooligans, GB pg. 51. Roll a die; on an even result they're happy drunks (+2 on reaction rolls), on an odd mean (-2 reaction rolls). The yokels are armed only with their fists, and have the Slow-Witted feature due to intoxication.

**2** A traveling salesman. Use the stats for Common Citizen, GB pg. 49. The salesman has an assortment of brushes in his valise, which he will attempt to push on players at ridiculous prices. He carries \$5 in his pocket.

**3** 1d4 dogs have gotten loose from a farmhouse. These are full-grown German Shepherds, and could be dangerous; make a reaction roll without modifiers. Use the stats for dogs on GB pg. 49.

**4** One of Hettie's working girls is out for a stroll from the laundry. She'll ask players for a spare cigarette or a light.

**5** Bev Page, from the Page Hotel, is snooping around, looking for juicy gossip. She may decide to shadow players.

**6** Rod Watkins is lying under a tree, on a park bench, slumped in an alley, etc. He can be awakened after repeated attempts, and may offer information in exchange for money (see **SCHOTTSHEIM CREAMERY**, pg. 4).

**7** 1d4 of Pops's gang are looking to blow off steam after a long shift at the brewery. Use the stats for Moonshiners, GB pg. 51. Though rough and ready types, they aren't unusually hostile, and could be befriended if treated well.

**8** 1d6 local kids, armed with slingshots and sticks on an impromptu 'hunting' expedition. They scamper off if accosted.

**9** A skunk (2 hit points) approaches from some nearby bushes. Unless players immediately freeze, it startles and releases its defensive spray. A Quickness saving throw is required to avoid being drenched. Targets struck give off an offensive odor that causes -2 on reaction rolls and makes sneaking up on anyone very difficult (-4 on check). The stench lasts for 2d3 days and any clothing worn is ruined. Contrary to popular belief, bathing in tomato juice does not remove the smell.

**10** A cheap hood wearing a flashy suit, recently checked into the Balmoral, is taking a stroll around town, hoping to leer at women and make fun of "hayseeds." Nothing short of a punch to the snoot or thorough intimidation (see Roughen up and Threatening, GB pg. 33), will drive him off. Use the stats for a Thug on GB pg. 53.

**APPENDIX A: PRE-GENERATED CHARACTERS****Stanislaus “Stan” Mazur, Prohibition Agent****Str-14 Int-11 Wis-13 Dex-9 Con-14 Cha-10****Alignment:** Law Abiding **Class:** Brutish  
**Level:** 2**AC:** 5 **Hit**  
**Points:** 14**Special Skills:** Rough and Ready, Imposing, Scrapper **Languages:** Common**Equipment:** Typical clothing, double barrel shotgun, club, badge

Stan is an Army Signal Corps veteran and up-and-coming federal agent. He’s been known to pose for a picture or two while knocking over stills with his trademark club. Stan has recently been charged to investigate Cedar Creek following rumors of an extensive bootlegging operation there.

**Gina Antonucci, Society Dame****Str-8 Int-13 Wis-9 Dex-11 Con-10 Cha-17****Alignment:** Neutral **Class:**  
Connected **Level:** 2**AC:** 3 **Hit**  
**Points:** 7**Special Skills:** Who’s Who (Society), You Owe Me **Languages:** Common, Italian**Equipment:** Luxury clothing, derringer

Gina uses her considerable charm to get fellow society-types out of jams. She’s headed to Cedar Creek on behalf of her friend Edward Dahl, an impressionable mush who got taken by a grifter named Vonda Sykes. Word has it

Vonda’s hiding out somewhere in town, and Dahl wants his engagement ring back.

**Louis Himes, Newspaper Reporter****Str-11 Int-15 Wis-11 Dex-13 Con-9 Cha-14****Alignment:** Law Abiding **Class:**  
Educated **Level:** 2**AC:** 4 **Hit**  
**Points:** 9**Special Skills:** Writing, Photography, Forensic Analysis **Languages:** Common, French, Hungarian**Equipment:** Typical clothing, brass knuckles, camera, writing pad

Louis studied journalism at the Sorbonne, in Paris. Life as a black newshound hasn’t been easy; he writes under the pseudonym Montgomery Cliff for the Rock Junction Daily Star, but dreams of the day he can put his real name on the byline. A hot tip has led him to Cedar Creek.

**Seamus O’Shaughnessy, Hood****Str-9 Int-10 Wis-8 Dex-17 Con-13 Cha-8****Alignment:** Deceitful **Class:**  
Street Smart **Level:** 2**AC:** 3 **Hit**  
**Points:** 8**Special Skills:** NF, MS, Hide, WOTS, Knife Throwing **Languages:** Common**Equipment:** Typical clothing, shivs (3), blackjack

Things got too hot for Seamus in Rock Junction, so he’s taking the opportunity to explore the “quiet life” in rural America. And maybe knock

over a bank or two. Seamus's expertise with throwing knives allows him to add his Dexterity bonus (+2) to damage rolls if within 10' of a target.

**"Lucky" Lucy Dowd, Private Investigator**

**Str-12 Int-12 Wis-14 Dex-16 Con-10 Cha-9**

**Alignment:** Neutral

Street Smart

**Class:**

**Level:** 3

**AC:** 3 **Hit Points:** 9

**Special Skills:** NF, MS, Hide, WOTS

**Languages:** Common

**Equipment:** Typical clothing, automatic pistol, flashlight, camera

Lucy "The Lady Dick" ran a detective firm with her husband, Vernon, in Rock Junction--until Vern got offed by an angry mobster. Now she takes care of business by herself. Recently, a mysterious client gave her a hefty advance to scout out Cedar Creek, but never explained why.

**Gil McAllister, Drifter**

**Str-16 Int-9 Wis-8 Dex-13 Con-13 Cha-11**

**Alignment:** Neutral **Class:** Brutish

**Level:** 3

**AC:** 5 **Hit Points:** 19

**Special Skills:** Rough and Ready, Imposing, Scrapper  
**Languages:** Common

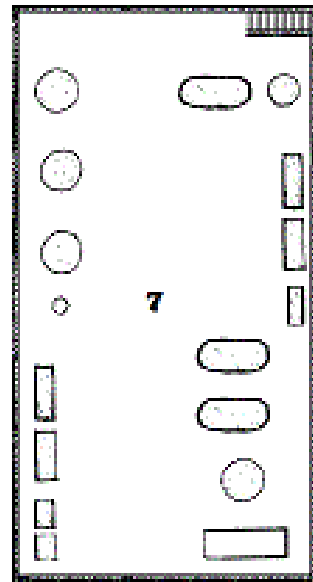
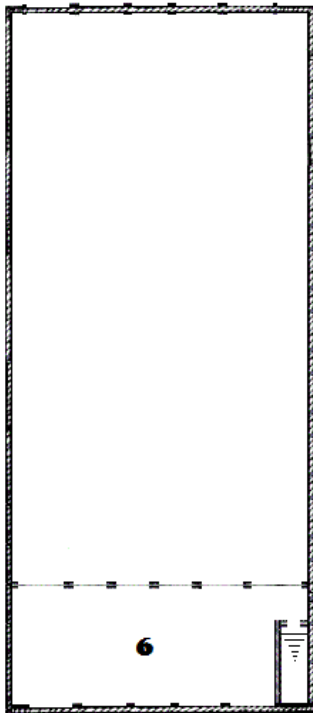
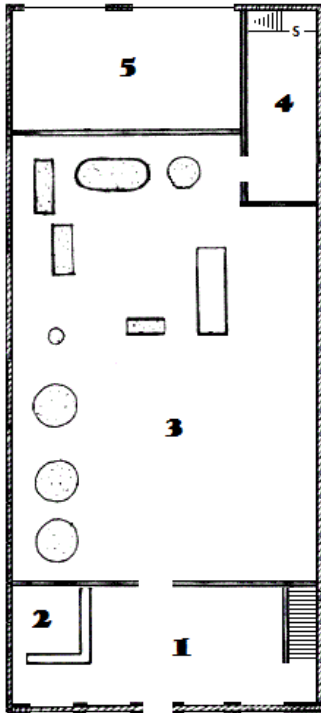
**Equipment:** Poor clothing, 'lucky' hat (+1 AC), revolver, knife

Once upon a time Gil was a police sergeant in Lakefront City. But the bottle, and a failed marriage, nixed all that. Now he wanders the rails, a forgotten man. Fate has just dumped him off in a seemingly quiet little town . . . but Gil's old street smarts warn him otherwise.



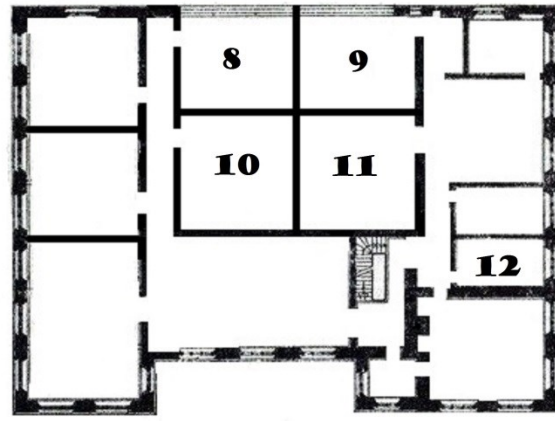
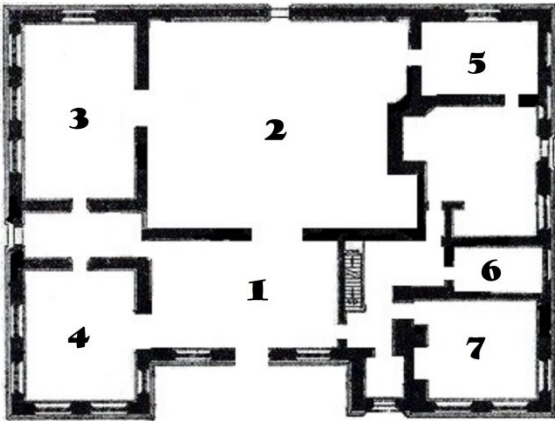
- 1) Schottsheim's Creamery
- 7) The Spinning Wheel
- 2) The Balmoral
- 8) Sheriff's Office
- 3) Laundry
- 9) Farmer's Bank
- 4) Schottsheim Residence
- 10) Page Hotel

- 5) Ehrlich's General Store
- 11) Old Sawmill
- 6) Eastman's Auto Repairs
- 12) Roadhouse



### Schotttsheim Creamery Building

- 1) Waiting Area
- 2) Ice Cream
- Parlor
- 3) Creamery
- Floor
- 4) Walk-In
- Freezer
- 5) Garage
- 6) Main Office
- (Second Floor)
- 7) Brewery
- (Basement)



## **THE BALMORAL**

- |                       |                    |
|-----------------------|--------------------|
| 1) Front Desk Area    | 7) Hettie's Office |
| 2) Main Lobby         | 8) Icepick's Room  |
| 3) Dining Room        | 9) Vonda's Room    |
| 4) Study              | 10) The            |
| Hanson Brothers' Room |                    |
|                       | 5) Kitchen         |
|                       | 11) Sal Mercado's  |
|                       | Room               |
|                       | 6) Pantry          |
| 12) Doc Shaw's Office |                    |

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