

THE **YELLOW**
④ **KING**
ROLEPLAYING GAME

AFTERMATH

QUICKSHOCK
GUMSHOE

Robin D. Laws



Pelgrane Press



BOOK THREE

AFTERMATH

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FROM THE ASHES

In the third sequence of *The Yellow King Roleplaying Game*, players portray former partisans who helped topple an authoritarian government backed by Carcosa.

In the present day, but in the same alternate timeline seen in *The Wars*, the totalitarian dynasty known as the Castaigne regime took over America in a 1920 coup. Aided by the King in Yellow, its kleptocratic Emperors suppressed dissent, spied on citizens and monopolized industry. Its protectionist cronyism enriched a small elite, slowing economic development and scientific innovation. As a result, post-Castaigne America looks like a brutalist 1950s with more or less 1980s technology.

After five years of accelerating protest and insurgency, culminating in outright civil war, the Castaignes were driven from power. The freedom fighters' final strikes shut down the gates allowing free traffic between worlds. The aliens who happened to be on this side when they blew are now trapped here, and anxious to return home. They may have lost their grip on covert power, but lingering occult energy and

a hidden population of unearthly creatures remain. Even as they fade from memory, their covert existence complicates the task of rebuilding America.

Though intent on taking part in this noble effort, the player characters soon discover they can't entirely set aside the skills they honed as anti-regime guerrillas. When the minions and monsters of the Yellow Sign stir, they investigate—often finding that what they learn aids them in their greater political objective.

Cases they encounter might include:

- murder at the People's Congress, committed by regime sorcerers intent on reopening the gates
- the disappearance of explosives from a rebel supply cache, pointing to a counter-revolutionary cell led by the ghost of a Carcosan noble
- someone knocking off munitions shipments headed for disposal facilities
- sabotage against damaged utilities
- an ally learns that a contract has been taken out on her life—and the assassin is the inhuman former interrogator who once tortured one of

- the PCs nearly to death
- people who knew the weird secrets of a genetic research facility start losing their memories
- people keep disappearing in a rubble-filled neighborhood and local kids swear that one of the condemned apartment structures has come to life, and grown hungry

Weirdness Level

When preparing your *Aftermath* game, choose the **Weirdness Level** that most appeals to you, and that you think will most appeal to your players. The Weirdness Level describes the extent to which the general population understands the existence of Carcosa and the supernatural, and its role in bringing about and sustaining the Castaigne regime.

Overt

Everyone knows about Carcosa, the Yellow King, and the existence of supernatural beings. People may want to forget, but they can't—in part because a population of monsters remains at large, still endangering the lives of ordinary folks. Sighting a shade or harbor master (see "Foes") is like running across an unexploded bomb: extremely distressing, but entirely within the bounds of accepted reality.

This choice lends your game an urban fantasy vibe in which abnormal powers and beings

become just another factor of ordinary life.

Fading

A mental fog surrounds the role of the supernatural in the world, especially in connection to the Castaigne regime. Only a few key insurgents, like the player characters, fully remember the presence of Carcosan entities in the world. Even they sometimes feel these events, which they directly experienced, fading from memory. Only when they confront the uncanny again do the full recollections come flooding back. External records of what happened are also vanishing: photos blur, electronic files corrupt themselves, paper documents go missing. Reality seems to be rewriting itself back to a normalcy free of Carcosan influence. Or is that effect itself a new trick on the part of the King and his court, an attempt to erase the evidence to let humanity lull itself once more into a vulnerable ignorance?

Covert

Only an unlucky few ever came to accept the existence of the supernatural. The Castaigne regime kept it its otherworldly secret weapons just that—secret. As key members of the resistance, the player characters learned about Carcosa and its creatures. Like the rest of the movement they took great pains to protect the general population from this mind-destroying knowledge. The

provisional government continues that policy today.

For the average person the sighting of a supernatural being profoundly shocks both the senses and one's assumptions about what can exist in the world. Once seen, a sphyx or shatterling can't be forgotten—but good luck convincing friends, family, or co-workers of what you saw. Most witnesses to such events keep it quiet, realizing that they'll

be treated as delusional if they come forward.

The difference between Fading and Covert lies in the expected response of the characters to knowledge of Carcosa. Here, both they and their enemies try to keep it concealed. In a game of Fading Weirdness, they're trying to preserve information before it vanishes, and may go so far as to attempt to awaken people to the truth of what happened.

CHARACTERS

As with each new setting, character creation for *Aftermath* adds a few wrinkles to the now-established pattern.

Start by introducing the premise to the players, paraphrasing the material from the introduction. Prior to your first game session, send them the “Welcome to the Aftermath” introductory handout (see “Appendices,” p. 159). Head to pelgranepress.com for our page of *YKRPC* resources: there you’ll find a PDF booklet version of the document including additional pages of art seen elsewhere in this book.

A Key Detail

A particular detail of this reality comes up during character creation: the Government Lethal Chambers. First installed in 1920 just before the Castaigne takeover, these suicide booths remain in service in city parks and other convenient locations throughout the USA.

One of the characters was a Government Lethal Chamber repair technician before the revolution and has (probably reluctantly) returned to the job in the months since the regime fell. When that fact comes up, your players will likely have many questions. This provides a device

that allows you to illuminate details of this horror-inflected reality in an interactive Q&A format.

When the questions break out, flip to p. 54, where a FAQ awaits.

Once they run out of questions about the world and their characters’ experiences, it’s time to start marking up those character sheets.

Investigative Kits

Investigative kits for this sequence are as follows, distinguished by each character’s civilian role or occupation.

When carrying on from *The Wars*, find the player whose previous character had the highest Mechanics ability. Resolve ties with a die roll if necessary. That player takes on the role of the Lethal Chamber Technician.

Assign the other roles according to the chart below.

Once those roles are assigned, give the remaining kit to the player who just played the Lieutenant. If more than one kit remains, have the player choose.

Start with the assumption that the characters held these occupations before the war and are now returning to them. Remain open to suggestions from players on what they might be doing now instead of their old jobs.

<i>The Wars</i>		<i>Aftermath</i>
Character with highest Mechanics ability (resolve ties with die roll)	→	Lethal Chamber Technician
Writer	→	Journalist
Merchant	→	Marketing Coordinator
Peasant	→	Waiter
Medical Student	→	Doctor
Photographer	→	Photographer
Sergeant	→	Security Guard

Lethal Chamber Technician

- Counterinsurgency
- Interrogation
- Leadership
- Technology

Doctor

- Forensics
- Medicine
- Science
- Reassurance

Journalist

- Bullshit Detector
- History
- Inspiration
- Research

Photographer

- Architecture
- Art History
- Flattery
- Photography

Marketing Coordinator

- Accounting
- Bureaucracy
- Psychology
- Negotiation

Security Guard

- Cop Talk
- Intimidation
- Law
- Streetwise

Waiter

- People Person
- Intuition
- Occultism
- Trivia



General Abilities

Each player gets 46 points to allocate to General ability pools in **Horror** mode, or 52 points in **Occult Adventure** mode. Abilities available in this sequence are:

- Athletics (Physical)
- Composure (Presence)
- Driving (Physical)
- Fighting (Physical)
- First Aid (Focus)
- Health (Physical)
- Insurgency (Focus)
- Mechanics (Focus)
- Morale (Presence)
- Network (Focus)
- Politics (Presence)
- Preparedness (Presence)
- Sense Trouble (Presence)
- Sneaking (Focus)

Players building characters for survival will want to invest 6–10 points apiece in Composure and Fighting.

Heritage and Identity

The Castaignes' America remained isolationist until the 1960s, when it reluctantly welcomed a wave of immigration from the rest of the world. Characters of any heritage or background can appear in the game as PCs, and will appear as GMCs.

As always players can assign the orientations and gender identities of their choice to their characters. While one could logically posit

that a regime like the Castaignes' would scapegoat LGBT people, you can either emphasize or ignore that point in your game, depending on your group's desire to bring emotionally challenging themes to the gaming table.

Drive

By default, the characters in this sequence all share the same Drive that sends them toward supernatural danger when most others would run the other way: Duty. As former partisans, they may have turned to civilian life, but still feel obligated to protect ordinary people from threats that can only be put down with the sorts of skills they learned during the struggle.

That said, it's more fun and varied if everyone treats that as a given and also chooses an additional Drive. Invite players to define their own Drives. Use the examples below to help them hone their ideas into pithy one- or two-word descriptors.

Danger Junkie: "I'm not supposed to feel this way, but life has been boring since the shooting stopped. This—well, this ain't boring."

Destiny: "I just feel like we're supposed to do this. Maybe do it over and over, until we get it right."

End the Cycle: "During the war I realized that we're somehow repeating a series of events set in

motion by others. Whatever this is, it's time to put an end to it, once and for all."

Nagging Visions: (appropriate to a Fading or Covert setting)
"This freaky situation brings back visions from the rebellion that I told myself couldn't be real. I gotta finally understand who or what has been messing with my head."

Political Cachet: "Public feats of heroism will earn us sway in the People's Congress."

Redemption: "When the war got hairy, I did something terrible. Protecting the people from weird threats helps me look myself in the mirror."

Scientific Inquiry: "Supposed occult powers must be studied and subjected to the rigorous analysis of science. I must know more."

Writing Fodder: "I'm a journalist, and this is a scoop."

Vendetta: "The Castaignites are behind this. And even though I killed a lot of Castaignites for what they did to my family, there's still more that need killing."

Parallels

Skip this step if your players haven't played a Wars sequence.

Tell the group that their characters discovered a book during the rebellion. All of them read it, found it strangely fascinating, and perhaps also found an idea or two to use against the regime. They stumbled across it while planning an operation. Published in

English by a small press called Editions Melotte, it was called *Recollections of The War Against Carcosa in the European Theater*. It was written by the Writer character from *The Wars*. (Assuming that makes sense—pick a substitute if needed. In playtest, our Writer bought it in the final session of *The Wars*, so I dangled the implication that he penned his memoir from beyond the grave.)

As their guerrilla activities accelerated, each PC found a weird Parallel between the events described in the book and what they were doing to fight the Castaignes.

Ask the players in turn to briefly describe this connection.

Worst Memory

Now, in a different order, ask each player to describe their Worst Memory of the rebellion, summarizing it in a few words on their character sheet.

Goal

This step applies to long-term Aftermath games. Skip it for one-shots and abbreviated series. Where the action depends on a group Goal, as it does in the Sleeping Dogs scenario at the end of this book, assign them the Goal "Banish the Supernatural." This fits well as a default, though of course you can substitute another Goal that happens to work for your particular purpose.

Explain to the players that

their characters will be using the connections and information they gather as unofficial investigators into Carcosan intrigue to pursue a political Goal.

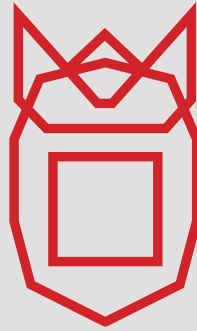
Review with them the political Goals, which they have seen already if you provided a copy of the “Welcome to the Aftermath” player setting introduction (p. 159); or grab a visually expanded version from us online) prior to the first session.

Quickly summarize the various Goals now, so they can keep them in the back of their minds as the initial session introduces them to the setting’s alternate history.

When the time comes, knowing the patience and focus level of your group, you might invite them to hash out their choice in person, as a prelude to the second scenario, or ahead of time, via the group collaboration platform you all work well on.

Goal cards include tags, describing the emotional or abstract impulses associated with an agenda. Tags interact with the text on certain Chit and Hit cards, as described starting on p. 43.

The **Likely Allies** and **Possible Adversaries** entries list political factions that may ally with or impede the players, respectively. Faction descriptions start on p. 41.



SHUT DOWN GOVERNMENT LETHAL CHAMBERS

Public, Order

For nearly a century the Castaignes used their public suicide boxes, installed in major parks in every city, to relieve social pressure that would otherwise threaten them. A decent society doesn’t encourage people to kill themselves—it helps them overcome their desperation.

Likely Allies: Guardians, Initiators

Possible Adversaries: Originalists, All-For-Ones

PRESERVE GOVERNMENT LETHAL CHAMBERS

Private, Freedom

The one good thing the Castaignes did was establish the machinery for humane self-euthanasia. Personal autonomy includes the right to end your life, when you have come to the sane and rational conclusion that you wish to do so. We need to give people other choices, too, but GLCs must remain an option.

Likely Allies: Originalists, All-For-Ones

Possible Adversaries: Commercial, Renouncers

TRUTH AND RECONCILIATION

Public, Trust

Under the Castaignes lots of people did terrible things. We must learn what happened, so it never happens again. But we will never truly heal our wounds unless we find a way to go on together. A Truth and Reconciliation Commission will do both, put the past where it belongs—behind us.

Likely Allies: Renouncers, All-For-Ones

Possible Adversaries: Guardians, Originalists

WAR CRIMES TRIALS

Private, Vigilance

The Castaignes might be gone, but many who abetted them in oppressing, torturing, and killing innocent people remain. To bring closure to those they harmed, they must be rooted out, interrogated, and made to face the people's justice. We must fight for war crimes trials. No punishment can reflect the enormity of what they did—but we sure can try.

Likely Allies: Guardians, Originalists

Possible Adversaries: Renouncers, All-For-Ones

PRESERVE ORDER

Public, Order

The period after a revolution can be as dangerous to the ordinary person as the time of tyranny that preceded it—if not more so. We didn't fight the Castaignes to see them replaced by criminals and corrupt oligarchs. We must write a constitution that gives the authorities the powers they need to make the streets safe, and keep coercion the sole preserve of the state.

Likely Allies: Guardians, Mercantilists

Possible Adversaries: All-For-Ones, Commercialists

REINSTATE FREEDOM

Private, Freedom

The Castaigne regime taught us to obey. Now we must learn how to live. We must write a constitution that protects the rights of individuals to earn a living, love who they want, worship in the manner of their choice, read whatever pleases them, and speak their minds without fear of official censorship.

Likely Allies: Commercialists, All-For-Ones

Possible Adversaries: Guardians, Mercantilists

BANISH THE SUPERNATURAL

Public, Vigilance

The Castaignes held onto power as long as they did because of the help they got from another realm. We can't let the monsters and aliens come back to rule us again. We must fight to find them out and banish them for once and all.

Likely Allies: Guardians, Commercialists

Possible Adversaries: Renouncers, Mercantilists

HARNESS THE SUPERNATURAL

Private, Freedom

The otherworldly beings who helped the Castaignes were evil. But the magic they wielded is just an alternate technology, neither good or bad in and of itself. In the right hands, it can heal, innovate, and bring prosperity to a devastated nation. We must ensure that qualified people like us retain the legal right to investigate, understand, and master the strange science of parageometry, for the benefit of all.

Likely Allies: Renouncers, Mercantilists

Possible Adversaries: Guardians, Commercialists

GET ELECTED**Public, Order**

Abstract arguments about government come and go. Enough of ideology! We had that with the Castaignes! If you leave government to people driven by fancy opinions, common sense goes out the window. During the rebellion, we learned to fix problems, preconceptions be damned. We need to bring that wisdom to public life and get one of our team elected.

Likely Allies: whoever you butter up

Possible Adversaries: whoever dislikes the people you butter up

BUILD A BUSINESS**Private, Freedom**

You know what people need now? Money. We sure do, and so do our families. Time to use our accumulated know-how to provide something people need. With the economy devastated, the best thing we can do for the people is employ some of them. Our only involvement with politics should be in making sure they don't turn over all the opportunities to sharpers and hacks, the way the Castaignes did.

Likely Allies: Commercial, Initiators

Possible Adversaries: Mercantilists, All-For-Ones

Player-Created Goals

Players may read these choices and instead suggest an alternative of their own. Provided that...

1. you can envision a series of varied, engaging obstacles to place between them and their Goal, and
2. it deals with the theme of reconstructing after tyranny ...encourage them to write it up in a similar fashion to the above.

Assign two tags to their Goal. These interact with the Chit and Hit cards that mark their progress in pursuing their chosen objective (p. 43.) The tags come in three pairs. Assign at most one tag from each pair.

Public or Private: *Public* Goals relate directly to the good of society as a whole. *Private* Goals take care of individuals first, figuring that this will wind up indirectly benefiting everyone eventually.

Trust or Vigilance: A Goal based on *Trust* sees hope, openness, and risk-taking as essential antidotes

to the oppressive paranoia of the Castaigne years. A Goal based on *Vigilance* looks at the evil still left in the world and says that what the people really need is to be protected from it, which requires strength, wariness, and caution.

Freedom or Order: A Goal in pursuit of *Freedom* wants to see people break from the stultification of the Castaigne regime in favor of life, liberty, and pleasure. A Goal that maintains *Order* fears that the country is ready to careen from cruel authority to an equally damaging chaos, in which only the strongest will prosper.

New Investigative Ability Descriptions**Bureaucracy (Interpersonal)**

Officialdom, from previous sequences, renamed. It pertains as much to the runaround you might get in a large corporate office as the chaotic halls of the transitional government.



Cop Talk (Interpersonal)

You know how to speak the lingo of police officers and make them feel confident and relaxed in your presence. They note the paramilitary swagger you brought forward from the rebellion and identify you as a kindred spirit. Cops might even mistake you for an off-duty officer, presumably from another precinct. You can:

- sense whether a cop's career dates back to the Castaigne era, or if you're dealing with a partisan turned officer
- in the first case, you can subtly intimidate them, as Castaigne cops fear having their pasts dug up and used against them
- coolly ply cops for confidential information

Spend a Cop Talk Push to get excused for minor infractions, or misdemeanors in which, by cop standards, the vic probably had it coming.

Counterinsurgency (Technical)

As a former insurgent yourself, you can now turn the tables and read scenes of sabotage and terrorism for clues leading to the perpetrators. That's helpful, because these days the rebels are Castaignite dead-enders who want to bring back the old dictatorship.

You can:

- identify the munitions or weaponry used to stage an attack
- tell whether a gun has been recently fired
- find hidden weapons and bombs

- spot the best places to lie in wait, with or without a sniper rifle
- look at a location, see how you would attack it, and describe both how the assault would go down and what you'd do to stop it
- spot supposedly casual onlookers who are in fact sizing up the area, just like you are

Spend a Counterinsurgency Push to get a favor from a fellow member of the movement.

Forensic Anthropology (Technical)

You perform autopsies on deceased subjects to determine their cause of death. In the case of death by foul play, your examination can identify:

- the nature of the weapon or weapons used
- the position of the victim relative to the attacker when injuries were inflicted
- the presence of intoxicants or other foreign substances in the bloodstream
- the contents of the victim's last meal
- a rough time of death (perhaps aided by an examination of the insects who have fed on and laid eggs in the corpse)

People Person (Interpersonal)

"Hey, I think my sister works with your aunt!"

You can make a new acquaintance from any walk of life feel like your new best friend.

You chat with folks, learn their stories, and file them in your ever-expanding memory vault. You foster a comfort level that leads them to talk without even realizing that they've let their guard down. You can:

- recall gossip and details about prominent but non-famous people, including details of their careers, romantic lives, and connections to the old regime or People's Congress
- deduce details of a person's biography from the way they speak, dress, and hold themselves
- reliably intuit whether an otherwise unknown individual you're meeting in person for the first time fought for or against the Castaignes, or sat the revolution out
- observe a group of people and see who hates who, who's sleeping with who, and who wishes they were sleeping with who
- divine the nature of a person's ambitions from innocuous small talk

Spend a People Person Push to get practical assistance, rather than information, from someone you just met.

Streetwise (Interpersonal)

This is the ability formerly known as Demimonde and then Low Life, renamed for a more modern world.

Technology (Technical)

You're familiar with mechanical and electronic devices, from phones and garbage disposal units to automobiles and Government Lethal Chambers. You can:

- identify the purpose of an unknown piece of machinery
- tell whether a breakdown can be attributed to normal wear or sabotage
- name the make and model of a vehicle from examining its tire tread
- reel off the rarity of a mechanical device, its approximate price on the secondary market, and the availability of its parts

Spend a Technology Push to add 4 points to your Mechanics pool.

Use as an Interpersonal ability when dealing with mechanics and engineers, establishing a kinship you can then utilize to get information out of them.

Absent Abilities

This timeline still runs on card files, paper documents, slide rules, and perhaps a sapient scroll or two. No computers yet. Thus no Computer Use.

The laws of the Castaigne regime have been suspended, and the new laws of the land are still being written. Instead of Law, use Bureaucracy to figure out the ad hoc procedures the confused administrators of America currently follow.

Investigative Ability Master List

Accounting (Academic)
 Architecture (Academic)
 Art History (Academic)
 Bullshit Detector (Interpersonal)
 Bureaucracy (Interpersonal)
 Cop Talk (Interpersonal)
 Counterinsurgency (Academic)
 Flattery (Interpersonal)
 Forensic Anthropology (Technical)
 History (Academic)
 Inspiration (Interpersonal)
 Intimidation (Interpersonal)
 Intuition (Technical)
 Leadership (Interpersonal)
 Medicine (Technical)
 Negotiation (Interpersonal)
 Occultism (Academic)
 People Person (Interpersonal)
 Photography (Technical)
 Psychology (Academic)
 Reassurance (Interpersonal)
 Research (Academic)
 Science (Academic)
 Streetwise (Interpersonal)
 Trivia (Academic)

New General Abilities

Aftermath brings three fresh new General abilities into your YKRPG game.

Insurgency (Focus)

This ability incorporates Traps and Bombs from *The Wars*, plus the following:

Before attacking human (or strongly human-like) targets in a location you have the opportunity to case in advance, you can devise the most efficient plan of attack, dealing maximum harm at minimum risk.

Make an Insurgency test with a Difficulty keyed to the location: 4 for most civilian targets, 5 for a secure military target, 6 for an ultra-secure installation.

On success with a margin of 2 or less, all combatants on your side get a +1 Fighting bonus. A higher margin nets a +2 bonus for all.

This also allows you to defend against attackers using guerrilla tactics against a position you have had time to hunker down in. Here the Difficulties flip: 6 for a civilian location, 5 for military, 4 for ultra-secure. When defending you can make a Counterinsurgency Push for a +4 bonus on your roll.

Insurgency tests take the place of extended planning sessions in which players manage the tactical details of an assault, just as Preparedness skips the part in a classic RPG experience where you dutifully note in advance every item you're carrying around with you.

After a successful Insurgency test, ask the player, abetted by anyone else in the group who likes to describe skirmishes in loving Tom Clancy-esque detail, to describe the clever plans they've laid for their soon-to-be-attacked targets. In the ensuing Fighting test, they can describe them working to superb effect (if the group wins), or the GM can describe them being countered by a victorious foe.

Network (Focus)

You know somebody, probably but not necessarily from your days in the resistance, who can help you with a tricky, but no more than moderately dangerous, logistical problem. Test this ability not to solve the main problem you currently face, but a secondary dilemma that would otherwise distract you from the main problem. They don't do things for you; they make it easier for you to do things.

With Network you might:

- tap a couple of experienced operators to protect a witness while you continue your investigation
- find a sniper to fire a well-timed round that will drive opponents into your ambush, (and then slip away, leaving you to risk your skin in the actual fight)

- know an absolutely discreet chop shop where you can get the vehicle you used in an operation quickly disassembled, no questions asked
- borrow restricted weapons
- gain access to a vault where you can stash the evidence you've collected
- get that priest who used to shelter dissidents to make his cathedral available as neutral ground for a secret meeting

Politics (Presence)

Politics tests allow you to win over allies and fend off rivals as you pursue the group Goal that runs as a subplot in parallel with your investigation into a scenario's central mystery. For more, see "Pursuing the Goal," p. 43.

RULES ADJUSTMENTS

A few tweaks to the rules give *Aftermath* its own distinct feel.

Relative Challenge Table

Used to skulking in the shadows as opportunistic hit-and-run fighters, *Aftermath* characters are better at escaping than their counterparts from other sequences.



Relative Challenge	Difficulty (Escape)	Difficulty (Other)	Difficulty (Kill)	Toll
Weak	1	3	3	0
Tough but Outmatched	2	3	4	0
Evenly Matched	2	4	5	0
Superior	2	5	6	1
Vastly Superior	3	6	7	2
Overwhelming	3	7	8	2
Too Awful to Contemplate	3	8	10	3

Post-Revolutionary Shocks

The violence and upheaval of civil war leave their mark in the form of the following new mental hazards. Shock cards appear in the back of the book.

Situation	Difficulty	Minor	Major
A Revolutionary Hero Turns Out to Be a Heel	4	Dammit, Man	Seriously, Dammit
You Interpret Something Innocuous as Extremely Alarming	4	False Alarm	The Yips
You Meet, But Can't Strike Against, a Foe from the Old Days	4	Forehead Vein	It Eats You Up
You Remember Being Tortured	5	Grim Flashback	You Know You Broke
You Ally with a War Criminal	5	Sullied	Expedience
You Remember Committing Torture	5	Spasm of Guilt	The Monster Inside
You Remember the Terrible Thing You Did	4	Twinge	Spasm of Guilt
You Use a Castagnite Weapon	4	Pang of Doubt	Lines Get Muddy



TWISTED HISTORY

The events your group played out in *Paris* and *The Wars* are history now—a buried history, which perhaps the new crop of PCs will uncover in their own investigations.

Also defining this alternate reality are the events of the Chambers story “The Repairer of Reputations.”

Sort of.

The story depicts an attempt on the part of its narrator, Hildred Castaigne, to become Emperor of America, spurred on by the grotesque eccentric Mr. Wilde. Wilde, the eponymous Repairer of the title, has amassed a secret army of sinister investigators and blackmail victims. United by the Yellow Sign, these will form the basis of a coup installing Castaigne, a literal descendant of the tattered King, as the first Emperor of America. The plot goes awry when one of Wilde’s unwilling pawns kills him rather than go through with an assassination attempt. Meanwhile, Castaigne has slit the throat of the doctor who committed him to an insane asylum for four years after a head injury sustained during a fall from a horse. The story, written in 1895, takes place in what was then the speculative

future of 1920, and now reads to us as an alternate reality, with government-sponsored public suicide chambers, a grand religious melding, a Haussmannesque remodeling of New York City, and off-kilter reconciliations with the nation’s black and native populations.

The ending heavily indicates that the story should be read as the protagonist’s delusional ravings. What level of reality underlies his account remains open to question. Did he kill his doctor, or imagine that he did? Did he really read *The King in Yellow*? Is he even writing in 1920, or is he having delusions of his future after injuring himself in 1895?

A reference to “the awful fate of young Castaigne” in another Chambers story, “The Yellow Sign,” supports the last possibility. Though set in New York, it never references the futuristic aspects from “Repairer.” It stars Jack Scott, who also appears as a secondary character in “The Mask,” which takes place in Belle Époque Paris. At one point he walks past the statue of Garibaldi in Washington Square Park—which in “Repairer” is said to have been replaced. In “Repairer” Hildred’s year of birth is given as 1877, which would

make him 43 in 1920—hardly a “young” man. Thus in the overall continuity of these stories, pretty much everything in “Repairer,” except for the fact that Hildred Castaigne read the play, should be interpreted as imaginary.

Except in the timeline of *The Wars* and *Aftermath*. Here, some of the events in “Repairer” literally took place. But instead of ending with the slaying of Mr. Wilde, and Castaigne’s death in a mental ward, Wilde and Castaigne somehow win.

During *Paris*, you may have followed a subplot suggestion (see “Setting Up *Aftermath*,” p. 81) establishing that the first set of PCs played a role in Castaigne’s reading a copy of the play. In *Aftermath* you might reveal that something they did created the rift in reality that made the difference between Castaigne imagining the alternate failed 1920 putsch, and his participating, while still a young man, in the successful 1920 coup.

With or without these connections to past game sessions, Hildred takes over the America of 1920 with its reconstructed New York. He and then his successors rule over it, buttressed by the power of the Yellow Sign, for nearly a century.

The Slip Before the Fall

Even before the Castaigne takeover, the America of this timeline diverges considerably from our own. By 1920 a seeming

utopia has emerged—one that promises peace, prosperity, and a new age of reason. Examined more closely, these assumptions reveal themselves as symptoms of a placid madness. Carcosa has been hard at work shaping the USA for about a generation—since the original eruption of Yellow Sign effects in the 1890s.

From 1912 to 1920, the Winthrop administration instituted a series of ambitious so-called reform measures, laying the groundwork for Castaignism:

- **Concentration of power in the executive:** The inexorable flow of power away from Congress and into the office of the President gets rolling much earlier in this timeline than in ours.
- **The closing of the economy:** Winthrop somehow manages a grand accord between labor and business, known as the Labor and Tariff Conference. Unions gain statutory rights. Business and government enact a protectionist trade policy.
- **Anti-immigrant measures** accompany the shift to a managed economy. Jews and non-Europeans face work and travel restrictions and cannot become naturalized citizens. This economically disastrous policy remains in force until the early ‘60s.
- The **National Academy of Design**, modeled on the Académie des Beaux-Arts, establishes acceptable

parameters for architecture and industrial design. It embarks on a training program to inculcate its methods and aesthetic principles in a new generation of practitioners. After a grandfathering process to admit existing designers, only graduates would be licensed to create plans for buildings, infrastructure, or consumer goods. A Ministry of Fine Art, considered unwise even at the time and soon to become a historical footnote, briefly opened its doors.

- **A Congress of Religions** promoted ecumenicism, putting an end to interfaith conflict.
- The **National Mounted Police**, nicknamed the Hussars and modeled on the Canadian RCMP, funneled upper-class young bravos of the recent German-American war into a glorious peacetime militia. Its officers solved crimes, battled evildoers, drank sherry, courted debutantes, and investigated early outbreaks of Carcosan weirdness. In the west, they were augmented by the **Indian Cavalry**, a byproduct of a general reconciliation with America's indigenous peoples. These gallant officers showed an equally grand fashion sense and eye for occult danger.
- **The rebuilding of Chicago:** In 1917, Chicago burns again, giving Winthrop a chance to order its rebuilding in a splendid neoclassical manner, eliminating

all those nasty meat-packing plants, breaking up the ethnic neighborhood structure that in our timeline would grant cohesion to organized crime outfits, and forever preventing the scourge of deep-dish pizza. Surely Carcosa took some role in the setting of that fire.

- **New York City's underground roadways:** Smoggy, dingy, and infested with rats and worse, this tunnel network takes the place of public subways from our NYC timeline. In a hint of things to come, the arched ceilings are lit with a twinkling recreation of the heavens, including the Hyades and Aldebaran.
- And, of course, you can't talk Winthrop administration achievements without mentioning the **Government Lethal Chambers**. These warrant their own section, starting on p. 54.

If a scenario delves back into the period between 1895 and 1920, the heroes' historical research may uncover the activities of the *Paris* characters after the events of your game, when they returned to America.

What did they bring back with them? Did it kickstart Winthropism and lead to Castaignism? An old mystery might lead investigators to some of those answers.

In my game, I broke in the middle of *Aftermath* for a one-shot featuring middle-aged versions of the *Paris* characters cracking



an occult mystery in Chicago as the 1917 influenza epidemic raged. Needless to say, the session concluded with the city on fire.

Those events then became clues PCs had to uncover in the following week's *Aftermath* scenario.

The Castaigne Dynasty

Hildred Castaigne reigned over an America comprising the eastern seaboard, midwest, and Pacific Northwest from his ascension in 1920 to his death from cerebral hemorrhage at age 73, in 1950.

His earless, variously deformed and mutilated chief advisor, Mr. Wilde, predeceased him. The official story has him succumbing to cancer in 1927. Persistent rumors say that he fell down the stairs at the White House, tripping over a cat.

Hildred I established the ideology, structures, and informal power relationships that defined Castaignism. He appeared in public only for ceremonial occasions, instead preferring to project a mythic, distant image through his propaganda machine.

The second Emperor, Hildred II, started his regime promising modernization, if not a retreat from official repression. After the New Jersey Incident, a brief uprising eighteen months after his accession, he stopped trying to be popular and increased the pervasiveness of secret police surveillance.

Hildred II died in 1964, after eating a toxic clam. His younger

brother Holt Castaigne took over the imperial throne, passing over Hildred's minor son. Holt broke with tradition by staging frequent media appearances, including a weekly television show in which he shared his folksy thoughts with the nation. He took a keen interest in government entertainment channels and propaganda, directly creating such cultural icons as the Castaigne Kids' Club. This scouting movement, promoted by a morning kids' show, groomed generations of youngsters as future informants. Even many staunch revolutionaries still feel a pang of affection for its mascot, the Dream Clown. In the Kids' Club continuity, he visited sleeping children to protect them from nightmares in exchange for information on their parents' subversive utterances.

In a bid to combat economic stagnation, Holt Castaigne reversed the anti-immigrant measures introduced in the Winthrop years. Officers of a newly enlarged Citizenship Ministry tested applicants for skills, wherewithal to invest in American businesses, and susceptibility to the Yellow Sign. Oddly, people came, scarcely deterred by the grimness of 1960s America. Many arrived with eyes already glassy, and a Yellow Sign already among their personal effects.

Strangely, Holt also died from eating ill-prepared seafood, in 1970. His daughter Hilda served as dowager empress for two years,

ceding the throne to her son Hannibal in 1972.

Hannibal ruled in a cautious, unsentimental manner, out-calculating many rivals. He died five years ago. By the time of his death, the cracks in his long-maintained stability had already opened up.

This timeline works as of our publication date, but if you're playing this long after 2018, you may need to slot in an additional Castaigne or two.

The last Emperor, indifferent and spoiled scion Hadrian Castaigne, took office as economic stagnation spread discontent beyond the longstanding underground to the man on the street.

Castaignism

Hildred's reign set the template for his successors, establishing an authoritarian surveillance state enforced by the Department of Internal Security, or DIS. Its first director, Mr. Wilde, formed the DIS around the institutional bones of the National Mounted Police, after purging its top leadership. Along with the Indian Cavalry, they had resisted the coup and were thereafter hunted down and secretly executed by the new DIS. Wilde filled the depleted ranks of the renamed force with his blackmailed army of Yellow Sign operatives, putting them in adapted versions of the dashing NMP uniforms. Wilde encouraged the public to use the beloved old nickname, Hussar, for his

secret policemen. As the DIS showed its repressive face, the name remained, but the meaning flipped from admiration to fear and contempt. Today's insurgents refer to former regime officials as Hussars, or "the Huss."

To live under Castaigne was to know that anyone could be spying on you, reporting your words and actions to the Hussars. Or falsely implicating you, if they wanted to take over your apartment or exact revenge for a slight.

Families connected to the Castaignes won lucrative monopolies and enjoyed enough pull to conduct themselves as they pleased—provided they kept sedition off their list of vices. State-licensed monopolies led to high prices, shortages, and crummy products. Post-Castaigne America's biggest import, for example, is beer, as the Castaigne brand lagers were famously foul. Right now, everyone has gone crazy for Belgian beers.

Castaignism promoted loyalty, order, honor, and love of the imperial crown. It celebrated the royal pedigree of its leaders without quite explaining where the bloodline originated. Its propaganda featured the Yellow Sign. Its mystical influence lulled people into quiescence. Without that supernatural boost the empty ideology of Castaignism would never have survived a century of half-competent rule.

Imperial Government

Hildred I abolished the House of Representatives and transformed the Senate into an appointed body, which he stacked with cronies and supplicants. Government ran by edict, as enforced by cabinet secretaries, appointed by the Emperor without the need for senatorial approval. Senators became privileged rubber-stampers who got to wear uniforms and periodically meet to hobnob and strike insider business deals.

The Emperor continued much of the existing federal government bureaucracy, leaving many agency names and structures in place.

Governors of states also served by imperial decree. They appointed their state legislatures, usually collapsing bicameral houses into one body. Like their federal counterparts, state senators strutted around in beribboned uniforms and smoked cigars in drawing rooms filled with fellow members of a useless elite. A wealthy family might purchase a state senatorship for a son (or, in recent decades, daughter) as a 21st birthday present.

Municipalities continued to elect mayors and councilors, but these could be replaced as needed by appointees selected by state governors.

Hildred Castaigne tore down the White House, replacing it with a gaudy golden neo-Baroque building called the Imperial Palace.

The Castaignes warped

Winthrop-era institutions to their own ends. The Department of the Arts morphed into an organ of censorship and propaganda. The National Academy of Design tightened its grip on architecture, initially mandating a gaudy, gilded style with eerie Carcosan filigrees.

As the years wore on and the economy stifled, the rules shifted to demand imposing, low-cost edifices of utilitarian concrete. These gray monstrosities rose across America's cities, throwing both the neoclassicalism of the Winthrop era and the alien Baroque of the '30s and '40s into shadow.

Principals of the Congress of Religions were suborned into the Interfaith Advisory Council. This federal agency broke through the wall between church and state to monitor the nation's churches and synagogues for signs of anti-government rhetoric. The Castaignes created their own faux-Christian denomination, led by the Imperial Chaplain, to cloak their public appearances in an incense cloud of theatrical sanctity. Only the private rituals of its inner circle incorporated masks and the worship of the yellow god.

Any federal agency worthy of a budget appropriation operated a secret office devoted to the exploitation of Carcosan energies. The Castaignes allowed this in a spirit of competition, believing that conflict between them would foster sorcerous innovation. Notable occult sub-agencies included the DIS's Department

of Parageometrical Inquiry and the standalone alien genetic research agency at the Bronx Park Zoo. Some were covertly headed or advised by actual Carcosan nobles. Others used the aliens' otherworldly science, dubbed parageometry, while keeping the mask-faced entities at arm's length.

The Struggle and the Overthrow

Your game is set in the present year, whatever that is when you start.

A decade ago, scattered dissident movements gained new strength. Centers of resistance sprang up in New York, Chicago, and the Pacific Northwest.

Government crackdowns fueled public outrage and dissent. The supernatural mojo ebbed.

Five years ago, the death of Hannibal Castaigne and his replacement by his much less competent son Hadrian upped the revolutionary ante. An armed democratic insurgency, to which the player characters belonged, kicked off a campaign of sabotage, assassination, and destabilization aimed at exposing the weakness of the regime and inspiring the populace at large to rise up and fight. They called this effort the Struggle.

Partisans both did and didn't understand the role of the supernatural in propping up the regime. Members of the

underground learned to recognize one another with a "fuck the Yellow Sign" hand signal indicating allegiance to the cause. But few directly encountered Carcosans or alien creatures from their world.

About a year and a half ago, the full Uprising began, with battles between rebel and government forces breaking out in and around major cities, mostly in the northeast.

Six months back, the final fight took place in Washington, with a battle royale occurring at the Imperial Palace itself. During this climactic engagement, called the Overthrow, rebels closed the gates between Earth and Carcosa. How they did this remains unknown even to many top insurgents.

The King, along with Cassilda and Camilla, can still move between worlds making their own gates as desired. But any other aliens still present in America when the Overthrow went down are now stranded here, and deeply unhappy about that.

Various mortal parageometrists and mad scientists have gone to ground, hiding out and looking for ways to reopen the gates. A single revanchist conspiracy could coalesce one day, just as many independent insurgent cells fused together when civil war broke out. For the moment, former members of the regime's competing occult sub-agencies operate in isolation.



Where Are They Now?

At some point the players will likely ask what happened to the Castaignes on and after O-Day. O-Day is of course the day they were driven from office, with the O standing for Overthrow.

The players might have already established this themselves, when they described what they were doing when the old regime fell; see p. 7.

If this remains an open question when it comes up, invite players to define the setting by choosing one of the following options:

1. **Hadrian Castaigne and all of his adult successors were killed.** Ask the players to describe the cause or causes of their deaths.
2. **Castaigne and his family vanished, but no one expects them to come out of hiding any time soon.**
 - (a) *Weirdness Level Overt:*
They escaped through a gateway into Carcosa, which then closed forever. Or so everyone hopes. Ask the players to decide if the appearance of the gateway caused an implosion in the Imperial Palace.
 - (b) *Weirdness Level Fading:*
Something odd happened, allowing them to escape. But don't worry, no one expects their return.
 - (c) *Weirdness Level Covert:*
The players may know that the Castaignes escaped with Carcosan

assistance. According to the official story, they fled to Switzerland.

3. **Castaigne was arrested alongside most of his top officials and awaits trial for crimes against humanity.**

Much to Rebuild

The People's Congress, convened to hammer out a new constitution, also serves as a provisional administration. They've taken down the Yellow Signs and the imperial flags. Senatorial uniforms and the ceremonial swords that go with them litter the surplus stores.

When the heroes deal with a federal or state agency, they encounter a mix of holdover officials who have yet to be accused of serious offenses, balanced by former dissidents and partisans inserted into supervisory roles.

One day the constitutional wrangling will conclude, followed by elections and a restructuring of all agencies to fit the new democratic order. Then will come the regulations and procedures on which all bureaucracy turns. Until then everyone's following the old rules that make sense and, when none of those fit a situation, inventing new ones.

Between revolutionary bombings, destruction of documents by soon-to-be-defeated Castaigne loyalists, and fires set during the final fighting, huge swathes of paperwork

from the bad old days have been lost. Sometimes the investigators will find that a file they need was squirreled away for a rainy day by a former pencil-pusher. At least as often they'll have to shrug their shoulders and accept that the piece of paper that would have cracked the case has been destroyed.

Next Door to America

Castaigne's Imperial America encompasses less territory than the USA you know.

California

For reasons he would never explain, Mr. Wilde regarded California as unsuitable ground for the spread of the Yellow Sign. It became a protectorate of the US, retaining democracy but unable to significantly buck the wishes of the empire. Pro-Castaigne coups in 1925, 1940, and 1956 taught the people not to exercise their franchise too freely.

When the revolution began, California existed as an illiberal pseudo-democracy run by an offshoot of the Castaigne family, the Richardsons. The day after the Castaignes fled the Imperial Palace, a bloodless coup in Sacramento ousted them. California's new government applied for readmittance to the United States, sending delegates and deputies to the People's Congress.

Suanee

In August of 1918, an

unprecedented, unnaturally inspired relocation occurred throughout the deep south, including Florida. Whites suddenly abandoned homes and property en masse. In vehicles or on foot, they clogged the roads feeding to the north, west, and midwest, silent and glassy-eyed. Reporters who asked migrants what they were doing either got no response or heard barely intelligible mutterings about the glory of the Sign and the promise of the Hyades.

The black Americans they left behind remember this inexplicable event as *The Night the White People Went*. In fact, the migration took place over several months, but the stunning first night of the migration is what the citizens of Suanee commemorate. Say "the Night" in Suanee and people know which one you're talking about.

This unprecedented act of self-exile impoverished both the departing southerners and the communities they swamped. This crisis threw the otherwise majestically confident Winthrop administration into confusion.

Meanwhile, the black citizens of the south seized the opportunity to reverse their historical disenfranchisement. Civil rights organizations and their church group allies quickly drew up articles of independent government to present to President Winthrop. Eager as always to promote his sense of mastery, Winthrop decided it would be wiser to take credit than to

expend nonexistent resources opposing the creation of this new sovereign nation. After a hasty negotiation of a treaty of alliance and mutual nonaggression, the Republic of Suanee was born, its borders encompassing the states of Florida, Georgia, South Carolina, Alabama, Mississippi, Arkansas, and Louisiana, an area somewhat smaller than that affected by the mass outward migration.

Students of parageometry have long debated the Suanee question. Why would the cruel and uncaring King in Yellow promote the creation of a majority black nation state on the American continent?

One theory holds that the Yellow Sign effect works most powerfully on the Anglo-European mind. The psychic vertigo induced by the play, and Carcosa in general, attacks the mental fragility of people who regard themselves as inheritors and upholders of eternal civilized values.

People accustomed to hearing so-called civilized values invoked to justify their bondage and oppression harbor no such illusions. They lack the naiveté the play's decadent, alien second act uses to crack open the minds of vulnerable readers.

The Carcosans behind Mr. Wilde may have regarded the life experiences of Suanee's future citizens as an immunizing factor against parageometrical influence. According to the theory, they engineered The Night the White People Went in order to

concentrate those most vulnerable to the Yellow Sign in one area of the continent.

Key framers of the Suanean constitution, concerned that the weird effect of the Night could be reversed by whatever uncanny force let it loose, sought a consultant versed in such matters: the Martiniquean master finder of lost persons, Julien Alerte. Aware of the machinations of Carcosa since his encounter with an unpredictable group of American art students in Paris in 1895, Alerte warned the early Suaneans of future danger. The King in Yellow had not engineered the Night to benefit them. If future generations weren't careful, they would be caught up in their own homegrown version of the hidebound thinking that makes minds vulnerable to Carcosa. Alerte convinced the framers to adopt an open-door policy, welcoming peoples from around the world to weave their cultures into the Suanean fabric. Taking a professorship at the University of New Orleans, Alerte taught multipolarism, a philosophy he developed to train the mind against rigid beliefs and assertions of inherent superiority. The framers emblazoned a favorite Alerte slogan, "A Free State, Not an Ethnostate," on the national seal. It appears on every denomination of Suanee's paper money. Alerte's portrait has occupied the hundred-dollar bill since 1956.

In its constitution, ratified in 1919, the framers proclaimed a Right of Diasporic Shelter. This doctrine encouraged black citizens of the US, California, and Canada to settle within their borders, where they were allocated a share of abandoned land and housing. By 1925 80% of the continent's black population called Suanee home.

In accordance with multipolar principles, Suanee took up America's discarded mantle as a haven for immigration. Today North America's largest Jewish, Japanese, and South Asian communities are found in Suanee.

Despite external pressures from Castaignite America, it held fast to democracy over the last century.

Its universities and technical institutes now number among the best in the world.

Its first generations of leadership devoted themselves to hunkering down and avoiding unwanted attention from Imperial America. As cracks began to show in Castaignite power, with historical memory of past injustice fading, a movement arose at the turn of our century proposing greater aid and outreach to democratic elements in America. Controversial volunteer brigades from Suanee crossed the border to assist the Struggle. Although most Suaneeans cheered the downfall of the Castaignes, older folks regard the prospect of closer ties to the new America with suspicion.

NOW WHAT?

In *Aftermath* scenarios, the ex-partisans embark on investigations along two intertwined paths.

As per usual in *YKRPC*, they uncover weird mysteries related to the lingering influence of Carcosa on the world.

Also, in this sequence's distinct pattern of play, they accumulate political capital to change the world, realizing the Goal they chose in the coda to their first mystery (p. 10.)

This chapter shows you how to create and run these political subplots.

America in Recovery

The Castaigne Regime fell six months ago. Since then, the characters have had time to recover from their wounds, relax back into the lives they led before they took up the gun, and take stock of their personal situations. Then they got bored or restless or

even altruistic and retrained to achieve their Goal.

During that time America has been slowly coming to life, as well.

The Interregnum Administration

In the hours and days after O-Day, victorious dissidents cobbled together a document striking down the most egregious Castaigne-era laws and outlining the structure of a provisional government. The Interregnum Administration, or IA, consists mostly of mid-level bureaucrats elevated to top roles, under the supervision of a committee of People's Congress members.

IA bureaucrats barely keep the machinery of everyday government going. Dealing with them requires epic patience, a tolerance for chaos, and of course the Bureaucracy ability. They're supposed to act as simple caretakers but since they actively control the levers of power, they can wield great unsanctioned influence.

The People's Congress

The real power will lie with the elected government—as soon as the newly installed, quasi-elected deputies of the People's Congress finalizes its shape. This body must arrive at a new constitution in time for a round of elections to replace the IA in nine months. Unless that deadline gets kicked down the road again.

Members of the Congress are called People's Deputies. The

Revolutionary Council, self-composed in the wake of the Overthrow by its chief insurgents and dissidents, voted to choose 56 deputies, from their own ranks and elsewhere. After protests from less populated areas where residual pro-regime sentiment still smolders, the deputies then approved 435 delegates, from a list chosen with geographical distribution in mind. Delegates can speak on the floor of the Congress, putting forward motions regarding the constitution, but can't vote or speak to matters of provisional administration.

Congress meets in New York City, in the bullet-sparkled marble confines of a structure now renamed the People's Hall. Located on 5th Avenue, where the Guggenheim Museum stands in our timeline, the hall was previously known as the Institute for Broader Understanding. Under this bland title Carcosan nobles oversaw the looting of American taxpayers and businesses on behalf of the King and his daughters. The charred remains of its gate to Carcosa can be found on Sub-Basement B, but you have to get past the security guards if you want to gawp at it.

The distinction between federal and state governments has gone by the wayside since the revolution. The Congress is expected to reinstate this, but agreement on how much power to divide between the two levels has proven elusive.

The New Cops

Every horror-mystery game grapples with the question of why the main characters choose to handle problems themselves instead of going to the police.

Like other GUMSHOE games, *YKRPG* uses Drives to put the answer in the players' hands. They specify why they head toward danger, including the risk of dealing with matters themselves without bringing in the authorities.

They may contact police officials to gain information or help them wrap up after the scenario's central problem has been squared away, but they don't step aside to let supporting characters fulfill their role in the story for them.

In this sequence, the setting provides an additional answer to the question: months after the overthrow of the Castaignes, with the People's Congress in session and the constitution up for grabs, the cops who do remain on duty occupy a disarrayed, provisional position.

The Changing Face of Internal Security

The arms of government most implicated in oppressing the populace were rigorously weeded-out. The Department of Internal Security has been disbanded. The first decree passed by the People's Congress replaced the Hussars with a skeleton bureau, called the Provisional Federal Police, or PFP. Unlike local police agencies it includes very few holdovers. Its

politics revolve not around who did what in the past, but who controls the future. Competing ex-partisans vie for turf in whatever the PFP will become once the government regularizes itself.

As far as the law goes, its special agents mostly make it up as they go along. Aside from bureaucratic infighting, the PFP tackles whatever major crimes its top brass decides to grab jurisdiction over. A few glory hogs might try to sweep in and try to muscle the PCs out of a case, making the job of finding out what's really going on harder.

Most prefer to let expendable freelancers like the PCs take the risks of getting mixed up with leftover Carcosan nonsense. When the smoke has cleared, they may take credit for whatever parts of the case can be placed in the public record. They might even admit that they owe the crew who really put their butts on the line a favor or two.

The PFP's best known division investigates, tracks, and arrests suspected war criminals. They work with the Tribunal, a civilian body chosen by the Revolutionary Council to process war crimes defendants. It can send defendants to trial; some of these get bail while the worst cool their heels in custody. The Tribunal may suspend a case without prejudice, meaning that the defendant is not charged with a crime but might be in the light of later evidence. Or it can clear suspects entirely,



allowing them freedom from future prosecution and granting them clearance to work in government.

A skeleton crew operation unimaginatively called Interregnum Administration Security protects the People's Congress and performs whatever counterintelligence work it can with next to no resources.

Civilian Police Agencies

Local police forces have been oriented away from political cases to crime-fighting and the enforcement of non-controversial infractions, like traffic offenses.

Most citizens suspect anyone in uniform of having wielded a truncheon in riot actions against the people. Establishing trust will take more than a few months.

The provisional government has left the names and structures of local police forces intact. The NYPD patrols the streets and investigates crimes in the city of New York. Outer boroughs may be under the jurisdiction of city or county police forces. State police patrol the highways.

Any police agency that still exists, from municipal police forces to county sheriff's departments, operates despite internal tension between longstanding officers and their recently installed overseers and colleagues.

Any cops serving prior to the Overthrow to some degree compromised themselves. Even the lowliest patrolman on occasion had to collar someone

on sedition charges or look the other way while the Hussars barged in and started roughing up a prisoner.

The most egregious dirty cops have been relieved of duty, if not imprisoned on war crimes charges. Still, plenty of commanders and officers who kept their heads down, quietly supporting the regime's law and order mantra without blotting their records too severely, remain in place. They fear the sweeping purges that will ensue should the retribution crowd triumph over the forces of reconciliation. Were a realistic chance of counter-revolution to present itself, some present cops would jump on it. But most figure they're going to have to lay low for at least a generation, until a spiral into disorder leaves the population begging for relief from their so-called liberators.

Meanwhile, former partisans have been parachuted into command roles. Experience as outlaw freedom fighters ill-prepares them to administer the departments they used to run from. Uncomfortable in the uniforms they once despised, they now must not only maintain order and investigate crimes but also root out the unreconstructed regime holdovers in their midst.

The schism between holdovers and ex-guerrillas allows plenty of latitude for freelancers to handle cases on their own. Situations involving the supernatural definitely fall in this category.

Career-minded officers who don't want occult crap clogging up their personnel evaluations steer the player characters in the right direction and maintain plausible deniability.

In any given scenario the cop the team deals with could be:

- A former partisan, happy to assist against regime elements but reluctant to move against revolutionaries gone bad.
- A rookie excited that it's his turn to stick his nose in the trough. He might protect the new criminal networks now springing up, planning on a long and fruitful relationship of bribe-taking.
- A poorly motivated chair-warmer, interested in doing the minimum possible in exchange for a paycheck. The economy hasn't really jump-started yet, so the promise of a steady job brings in plenty of people who would be better off in a less demanding line of work.
- A holdover and quiet Castaigne sympathizer, who throws them off track when they're investigating war criminals but gladly supplies evidence when partisans have been up to no good.
- A holdover with a get-along attitude, ready to act in accordance with the current political winds, if the risks seem small enough.

The Ex-Files

When the tide of revolution turned definitively against them, powerful regime figures made sure the most incriminating records of their crimes went up in smoke. Police captains with jurisdiction over sedition and state security destroyed evidence with frantic abandon. With many files and not much time, they also ordered the destruction of files and evidence boxes pertaining to a host of non-political crimes, from murder on down. As a result, many killers either went free, or will be released once their cases come up and the evidence can't be located. This also means that you can justify the nonexistence or existence of any police file older than six months, as your mystery requires.

Some files slated for destruction may have instead gone missing—either randomly diverted from the incinerator during the chaos of the Struggle, or squirreled away by honest cops eager to protect them for later use. Finding these may prove key to the heroes' latest case.

The Law

State and federal prosecutors' offices have been purged of Castaigne cronies. Their roles have been taken over by a mix of lawyers from civilian life, including many former defense attorneys, and a select few holdovers. This last group focused on criminal cases and left political prosecutions to the Hussars.

At present the sections of the Castaigne legal code pertaining to dissent and sedition have been declared null and void by the People's Congress. Yet it holds hundreds of Castaignite political prisoners on an off-the-cuff basis, with legislation holding them accountable for their past abuses still pending.

When the team suggests to a district attorney that someone ought to be arrested, they can expect tough words and a slow walk. DAs want evidence, and lots of it, before putting someone behind bars for crimes that haven't been written up yet.

Nor has jurisdiction between state and federal levels been cleared up. A DA wanting to get the team off her back might bounce them to a rival at the other level, who then looks to palm them off on yet another office.

That said, top prosecutors suspect that they'll soon have to get elected to remain in office. They like high-profile cases but hate any whiff of the supernatural. They either have personally come to disbelieve in it or understand that growing public amnesia will turn those cases into unproductive rabbit holes.

This provides another reason for the PCs to pursue political clout: it makes prosecutors more attentive. Allies of the Guardian faction can expect the best reception. Prosecutors may also sympathize with the Originalists, whose plan to revert to pre-Castaigne

law offers greater stability than a square-one rewrite of the criminal statutes. Since most law school graduates hail from moneyed backgrounds, many prosecutors have personal connections to the Mercantilist faction.

Factions and Issues

America has been a one-party state since 1920. Political scientists say that contending political parties could re-emerge soon. So far, the Congress consists only of informal factions, who ally with one another on certain issues and part company on others.

All-for-Ones

Agenda: A radical redistribution of wealth and the abolition of the old class system. Though loosely inspired by an obscure 19th century German called Karl Marx, they call for a decentralized system where the state does little but prevent the concentration of economic power. Favorite slogan: "The Castaigne regime was capitalism carried to its logical extreme!"

Composition: Students, ex-partisans, and labor.

Unflattering Nickname: In a timeline where no nation ever adopted Communism, they aren't called Commies or Reds or any familiar epithet. Instead their rivals call them Cloud Cuckoos, which shortens to Kooks.

Sympathies: Public, Trust.

Antipathies: Private, Vigilance.

Commercials

Agenda: The reinstatement of rights to engage in business activity, free from official meddling.

Composition: Ambitious would-be entrepreneurs shut out by the Castaignes' crony capitalism.

Unflattering Nickname: Merchers

Sympathies: Freedom, Private.

Antipathies: Vigilance, Public.

Guardians

Agenda: A strong security state to hunt down criminals of the old regime, and to establish a bulwark against a reactionary wave of Carcosan infiltration.

Composition: The cops, prosecutors, and military officials who turned on the Castaignes at the last minute tend to be heavy Guardians.

Unflattering Nickname: Coats (refers to the uniforms many of them wear, but also short for "turncoat").

Sympathies: Order, Vigilance.

Antipathies: Trust, Private.

Homelords

Agenda: To restrict the government's power to the public square only. No government agency may intrude into the affairs of people on their own property. Nothing a person does on property he owns or co-owns can be deemed illegal, unless it harms another co-owner of the property, or someone outside the property. In

the first case the civil suit is the only remedy.

Some Homelords also argue for a return to gold currency or the barter system.

One might think that with their aversion to all things governmental they would not show up to petition the People's Congress or attend other political events. But one would be spectacularly wrong, as their bullhorns, bullet-pointed presentations, and placards covered in microscopic hand-printing attest. Even so they are not so much political players as a wild card force, and sometimes a weapon of confusion one faction can steer over to mess with another.

Composition: A small number of loud but heavily armed hermits, recluses, and supernatural encounter survivors.

Unflattering Nickname: Coots.

Sympathies: Private, Vigilance.

Antipathies: Public, Trust.

Initiators

Agenda: "The old constitution failed. Only a novel democracy, rethought from the ground up, can respond to the demands of the 21st century."

Composition: Coming from a younger generation than the Originalists, they were able to take a more direct role in the Overthrow, because fewer of them were in prison. Disproportionately from the west coast.

Unflattering Nickname: Doos, short for Do-Over.
Sympathies: Freedom.
Antipathies: Order.

Mercantilists

Agenda: Maintain economic continuity by keeping the franchise system that ensures stability and justice for corporation and consumer alike.
Composition: Business people who succeeded under the Castaignes without getting their hands too obviously dirty, they represent themselves as having the know-how to get the economy running fast. Opponents call them would-be oligarchs who merely want to take over the franchises left open by the downfall of pro-Castaigne business leaders.
Unflattering Nickname: Garks (short for oligarch).
Sympathies: Order, Public.
Antipathies: Freedom, Private.

Originalists

Agenda: A return to the American constitution and governmental structure of 1919. Or possibly 1910, just to be safe.
Composition: Older academic dissidents from Washington, New York, and Chicago, some of whom spent decades as political prisoners.
Unflattering Nickname: Footnotes.
Sympathies: Order.
Antipathies: Trust.

Renouncers

Agenda: Restore civil society by the only means that will truly heal it: forgiveness and reconciliation. People are tired of being spied on. The strong security state others desire will inevitably turn into Castaignism with different buttons on its uniform.
Composition: College students, liberal clergy, and artists.
Unflattering Nickname: Flowers.
Sympathies: Trust.
Antipathies: Vigilance.

Interacting with Factions

The factions split on several grounds: constitutional (Originalists vs. Initiators), economic (Commercials vs. Mercantilists vs. All-For-Ones), and justice (Guardians vs. Renouncer). How a given politician feels about the constitution may or may not inform her stance on the economy or justice. Eventually these tendencies settle out into more-or-less stable coalitions, and then further harden into institutionalized parties. Some beliefs will die out, others will adapt themselves to fusion between power blocs. In retrospect that consolidation will seem inevitable. But right now, it's all up for grabs.

Each faction's description includes the Goal tags it sympathizes with and which it opposes. Player characters will find natural allies for its

SYMPATHIES		ANTIPATHIES	
MERCANTILISTS ALL-FOR-ONES	PUBLIC	COMMERCIALS HOMELORDS	
COMMERCIALS HOMELORDS	PRIVATE	COMMERCIALS ALL-FOR-ONES GUARDIANS	
INITIATORS COMMERCIALS	FREEDOM	MERCANTILISTS	
ORIGINALISTS MERCANTILISTS GUARDIANS	ORDER	INITIATORS	
GUARDIANS HOMELORDS	VIGILANCE	COMMERCIALS ALL-FOR-ONES RENOUNCERS	
ALL-FOR-ONES RENOUNCERS	TRUST	ORIGINALISTS GUARDIANS	

agenda among the factions who sympathize with their Goal tags.

The group pursues the Goal “Shut Down Government Lethal Chambers,” which carries the tags Public and Order. Looking at the Sympathies columns on the diagram above, we can see which factions are connected to those two tags. These will be the ones most amenable to this Goal. Connecting the dots, you invent reasons for these predispositions.

Mercantilists: Suicide chambers breed despair and are

thus bad for business!

All-For-Ones: The people must save each other from self-murdering despair!

Originalists: The installation of the GLCs in 1920 marked the shift from the true, free America to the Castaignes' hideous bastardization of it!

Guardians: Suicide isn't a victimless crime—it inflicts a terrible wound on the loved ones left behind. It must be banned, not celebrated.

Pursuing the Goal

Amid this ferment, the ex-rebels pursue their chosen Goal as civilians. To recap, from p. 11, this might be:

- Shut Down Government Lethal Chambers
 - Preserve Government Lethal Chambers
 - Truth and Reconciliation
 - War Crimes Trials
 - Preserve Order
 - Reinstate Freedom
 - Banish the Supernatural
 - Harness the Supernatural
 - Get Elected
 - Build a Business
 - A Goal created by the players
- When constructing scenarios,

you interweave two elements:

1. the mystery of the current scenario
2. scenes that further the overarching narrative in which the team moves toward, or is pushed back from, the achievement of their Goal

Ask your players to describe a milestone that will feel like a major victory in their pursuit. Depending on how many sessions you decide to run, this might be a stepping stone toward a bigger win, or a complete triumph that solves their problem for good.

In this last case, if they achieve final victory but want to keep going with this sequence, they would then choose a new Goal. It would probably be one they create, in which their conclusive success reveals their next objective.

For one-shot play, or a series intended to last for only a few weeks, drop the political empire-building angle. Ignore Chit and Hit cards. You may still want to run a mystery in which politics features as a subplot. If that plot requires that the characters have a particular Goal, assign it to them along with the pre-generated characters.

Goal Points

The group reaches its Goal, and either concludes the sequence or moves on to a new Goal, when it receives a predetermined number of Goal points. They gain Goal points by scoring political successes, represented by Chit cards. Less frequently, they may temporarily lose Goal points when they take on Hit cards, representing political setbacks.

For a series of around seven to nine scenarios, use a Goal point total of 7.

For a shorter series, use 5 or even 4.

For a somewhat longer series, bump it up to 8 or 9.

For an epic-length series just of *Aftermath* mysteries, keep the target at 7 and have them reset to a new Goal each time they reach it, until you hit the point where you want to wrap up.

Chits

As they investigate mysteries, the player characters get opportunities to advance their subplots. If they succeed or make the smart

choice, they gain a Chit—a card representing a favor or benefit they can later leverage toward their Goal.

They are never forced to choose between solving the mystery and gaining a Chit. Instead these elements dovetail—often by solving the mystery, they earn the gratitude of a person with clout, represented by the Chit.

Unlike Injuries and Shocks, Chits go to the entire group. The Chit provides a number of Goal points. The number of points a Chit provides may vary depending on their Goal's tags, or some other variable.

Chit cards look like this, with blank formatting on the left and a sample card on the right.



The **name** reminds the group of the event that gave them the card.

The label identifies the card as a **Chit**.

The **flavor text** provides a more detailed reminder of the card's story significance.

The **rules text** describes any mechanical effect the card exerts, in addition to the Goal points it awards. It may include a benefit that the group gains by discarding the card. Chits can be discarded only with unanimous agreement from all players present. When a card is discarded, the Goal points it awards go away.

The **value** tells you how many Goal points it awards: usually 1, never more than 2.

The rest of the Chit cards appear at the end of the book, starting on p. 140.



Hits

With competing ambitions, beliefs, and cold hard money on the line, politics presents a myriad of setbacks to its ever-shifting cast of activists and operators. Failures or unwise decisions made during a scenario's political subplot can saddle the group with Hit cards. Like Chits, they are held by the entire group. As you have already guessed, they reduce their Goal points total, and perhaps exert additional negative mechanical effects.

The value of a Hit is never more punitive than -1, but its rules text may specify a condition that imposes another -1 penalty, for a total possible penalty of -2.

Hit cards appear at the back of the book, after the Chit cards.

Who Rolls?

Some Chit and Hit cards call for the roll of a die. The GM decides which of the players rolls. Pick the one whose character feels most tightly connected to the situation at hand.

Hit Cards as Opening Challenges

While the characters receive Chit cards as a reward for successes, Hit cards might show up regardless of what they do. This fits the way things happen in the real world: problems can come out of nowhere, not because you screwed up or deserve to be punished, but because lots of other people are out there

following agendas of their own, with unpredictable results. And sometimes chaos just happens.

Make it clear to players that Hit cards are fair in the way life is fair, which is to say: not really.

You might start a scenario, or the first scene of its political subplot, by handing them a Hit card. This becomes an additional dilemma they have to deal with alongside the central mystery. The actions they take to counter it may lead them to the mystery. By solving it, they then get to discard the Hit card.

You decide that the Soft Man, a serial killer (and former secret policeman) the group caught and turned over to the cops in a previous episode, should return for a sequel. You give the group the card "Shocking New Evidence" and describe them receiving the news that he's been set free on bail. Castagnites hidden inside the judiciary have conspired to let him go, using Carcosan magic to destroy key evidence. The group can discard the card by investigating and exposing the Soft Man's covert allies.

Along the way the group might find some completely unrelated way of getting rid of the card. Reward their creativity by letting them do that.

Use this as only one of several ways to introduce a scenario.

Set up the scenario so that the group has a chance to pick up 1 or 2 Chits, as well as the opportunity to dispose of the Hit card.

Avoid a one-step forward, two-steps back rhythm where any progress toward 7 Goal points feels illusory.

Narrating Cards

The titles and flavor text entries on the cards provided here are kept general. This allows each of them to fit a range of different story situations.

Just as you narrate the situation in which you give a player a Shock or Injury card, you describe what's happened in the game world to justify why the group got a Hit or Chit.

The group blows up a research facility without investigating far enough to realize that its lower level contains a menagerie of hostile Carcosan life forms. Now freed, they rampage across the area. You mark the setback for the group by giving them the "Havoc Unleashed" Hit card. "Over the next few days, you see the streets empty, and read newspaper articles in which terrified citizens say they're afraid to leave the house," you say, elaborating in response to player actions and questions.

Likewise, see to it that the players understand what's going on in the story when they discard one of these cards. Often the game's fictional events make the reasons behind the loss of an advantage or the overcoming of a disadvantage perfectly evident. Now and then you may have to

furrow your brow a bit to account for the shift.

After they round up the most destructive of the freed creatures, you figure the team has earned themselves a Chit—"Never Complacent." According to the rules text of "Havoc Unleashed," they can discard it when they take a risk that makes up for a lapse in vigilance. Making this register in the story, you describe a scene in which neighborhood residents once again feel safe enough to gather outside.

Reskinning Cards

Make a stronger impression on players by rewriting titles and text for Hit and Chit cards. Here you tailor a card to the specifics of the scenario, while leaving the rules text as is. This makes the events they're tied to easier for players to remember.

Designing New Cards

When creating cards with new mechanical effects, follow these principles:

- Most Chit cards have a Goal points value of 1.
- Some may provide a bonus of +1 Goal points under a restricted condition that reflects a choice by the players, either one they have already made, or one they must make in the future.
- Chit cards with a value of 2 include a tempting benefit that the group can gain by discarding the card. Deciding whether to keep the points or

CASTAIGNE KID'S CLUB PLEDGE

I love my Emperor.

I love my America.

I love my friends.

I love my family.

I love the Dream Clown.

**And the Dream Clown
loves me.**

**I will protect my Emperor,
my America, my friends,
my family, and the Dream Clown.**

By reporting what I see.



cash in the benefit should be a tough decision. The choice can become a no-brainer, which is undesirable, if the benefit is either too weak to bother with or so strong the loss of the Goal points doesn't hurt.

- Create cool but not earth-shaking positive benefits for a Chit with a value of 1.
- Alternately you can create a strong benefit with a downside risk.
- Hit cards carry a value of -1, with perhaps an additional penalty under conditions the characters can avoid by making reasonable choices.
- Additional negative effects should bite just enough to add flavor and distinctiveness to the situation. Avoid wildly punitive effects.
- Discard conditions of Hit cards should impel characters to take risks, expend resources, tackle difficult obstacles, or otherwise enter into memorable and entertaining conflicts within the story.

What If My Players Hate Politics?

Aftermath makes politics accessible to players who like to plan and build. The card collection mechanism turns the process into a measurable, resource-collecting exercise, amping up its gamer appeal. The setting removes the annoyances of real-world partisanship by presenting the ideologies and issues of

an alternate world. Finally, the political angle helps set *Aftermath* apart from the other sequences.

Even with all that, you may be certain that this bit won't work for your particular group.

It's modular, so you can drop it without disrupting any other element of the sequence.

If you want to have politics still crop up from time to time in your mysteries, without the running subplot in which they pursue a concrete objective within the system, leave the rules as they are.

To completely eliminate all political interaction, drop the Politics General ability and reduce the number of General build points each player spends during character creation by 3.

Scenario Elements

A default *Aftermath* scenario contains the following elements:

Crisis: The group gets wind of a problem that suits its set of ex-partisan skills, and a lead or leads that get them started investigating it.

Alien Truth: Behind the obvious problem lies a sinister secret tied to Carcosa, the King, or the Yellow Sign.

Opportunity: Along the way they discover a connection, direct or tangential, allowing them the chance to gain Chit cards taking them closer to realizing their Goal.

Risks: As the series develops, political problems rear their heads, threatening the group with Hit cards that imperil their

Goal. These may arise from the investigation or pop up to interfere with it.

Antagonist Reactions: Along with the usual countermeasures and aggressive actions undertaken by antagonists connected to the central mystery, the squad must sometimes break from the main action to deal with moves against their Goal by political rivals. They might wind up having a direct connection to the central mystery. Alternately, they might invoke its theme while being unrelated on a literal level.

Wheeling and Dealing

While the other three components of a scenario carry over from previous sequences, Opportunities and Risks drop in as a new distinguishing feature lending *Aftermath* its distinctive flavor. Here's how you prepare them and bring them into play.

Preparing Opportunities

The system assumes that the players gain 1 Chit card per scenario. You might create a scenario to:

- grant one specific Chit
- allow the players to gain one of several Chits, as determined by the choices they make

Theoretically you could withhold a Chit from the group if they spectacularly fail to solve the mystery or botch the opportunity arising from it. That's a rare occurrence in a GUMSHOE game, which instead assumes

that the protagonists eventually crack the case, though sometimes at a cost. When things go badly you'll see that it basically always makes more sense to award a Chit, but also saddle the group with a countervailing Hit.

For early scenarios, choose or create Chit cards that suggest the ex-partisans are paying dues and laying groundwork for later alliances.

"Your First Patron" is tailor-made for any introductory scenario, and appears as such in the adventure supplied on p. 95.

Other Hits particularly suited for early scenarios include the ones that mark allegiance to a faction or leader: "Commercial Alliance," "Mercantilist Alliance," "Originalist Alliance," "Renouncer Alliance," "Guardian Alliance," "Initiator Alliance," "Friends in the Ramirez Camp," or "Friends in the Palmer Camp." Alliance cards allow the players to match the tags on their Goal card to a faction with the same affinity. Friends cards might be gained by solving a case in a way that benefits one of the two likely presidential candidates. ("Homelord Alliance" is an oddball case that can pop up whenever and does not establish much of a political base.)

Once the heroes have a stake in the maneuvering at the People's Congress, you can start to either:

1. choose Chits that fit the theme of the mystery
2. use Chits to find a premise for the mystery

Examples of the first technique:

- **Mystery:** A dissident finds a skeleton buried on his property. The heroes will discover that the dissident has been replaced by a dupe (p. 82), and the remains are that of the real person he replaced. **Fitting Cards:** The case requires investigation into the DIS, so might yield “Window Into the Hussars.” Figuring out what to do about the dupe and the Hussar who had him made requires finesse that might be rewarded by “Reputation for Efficiency.”
- **Mystery:** The group looks into weird manifestations in a cemetery containing the graves of early Castaigne supporters. **Fitting Cards:** The landlords of nearby tenements may show their thanks for ending the haunting with the “Housing Ties” card. Word of the team’s help to the working-class people who live there can be represented by “Champion of the Underdog.” Examples of the second:
- **Inspiring Card:** “Mob Ties” gets you thinking of a case where the team encounters former colleagues who have decided to use their training to establish themselves as gangsters. **Mystery:** Old-line criminals have been using a Carcosan wetworker (p. 80) to take out their new ex-revolutionary rivals. The team gets involved when they look into the death of an erroneously targeted bystander. The colleagues-turned-crooks offer covert political support

as a reward for dealing with this menace: if the players say yes, they get the card.

- **Inspiring Card:** “Scapegoats Exonerated” suggests a plotline in which the group clears someone wrongly accused.

Mystery: You put an *Aftermath* spin on this familiar story seed by making the accused members of a support group for former political prisoners, the victims the ex-Hussars who tormented them, and the real perpetrator a vengeful spirit.

Building Risks

After the heroes have started to build a network of allies and have something to lose as they move toward their Goal, you can start introducing political obstacles in the form of Risks.

Risks fall into two categories, those that arise:

- from the current mystery and the team’s choices as they deal with it
- as arbitrary, unrelated threats to their allies and resources

In the first case, you can build them into your scenarios as you would Chit cards. You can either start with the mystery and find the Hit that fits it or use the Hit as inspiration for the mystery. In this last case, you would then build in the available Chit(s) by finding cards that best fit the scenario premise.

- **Mystery:** A nephew of a People’s Deputy the group has been lobbying is found in the sewer system, raving in an

alien tongue and covered in a rash shaped like the Yellow Sign. **Fitting Card:** While looking into the case, the group uncovers financial irregularities connected to the pol they hope to bring on board. If they fail to deal with these delicately, he becomes an enemy instead of an ally, marked by the card "Wrong Foot to Tread On."

- **Inspiring Card:** "Body Count" suggests a mass killing. **Mystery:** The team investigates what caused the previously peaceful perpetrator to rampage. They find a copy of *The King in Yellow* in her apartment. But who put it there, and why?

In the second case, develop an already established political subplot in a way that might lead to a Hit card. Or just pick a Hit at random: politics is, after all, mostly about handling the sudden eruption of revelations, scandals, and catastrophes.

The group has been pursuing its "Banish the Supernatural" Goal by arguing for the creation of a specialized agency that fights Carcosan influence. Last session they offended the head of the NYPD police union. This time he moves against them by lobbying allies at the People's Congress to keep such investigations within police jurisdiction.

You randomly pick "Silly Season" to be this week's possible Hit card. Checking your social media feed, you find the

dumbest political controversy currently in progress. Adapting it to the alternate reality of Aftermath, you explain that fascination with that nonsense has caused massive no-shows at a press conference the group has called to advance its agenda.

Hit cards don't necessarily require prep, especially if your group has a way of messing things up without you throwing additional obstacles at them. Wait for them to embark on an iffy course of action and fail. Then find the Hit card that best represents the consequences. You'll note several Hit cards are tuned to familiar roleplaying cock-ups.

Zara decides to deal with a former Hussar agent by planting a bomb in his garage. When her player, Noelle, fails her Insurgency test, you decide that the explosion takes out every window on a nearby commercial street. "Bull in a China Shop" seems like a fine choice for a Hit card if they fail the Politics test to smooth this all out.

Hit cards are meant to feel like setbacks but shouldn't completely stall the group's progress toward the Goal. The threat of a Hit, or a Hit which is gained and then efficiently disposed of, is just as emotionally effective as one that hangs around forever. In my test game, the group fended off many Hits, gaining only 1 for any length of time.

Bringing in Opportunities

When the team fulfills the conditions in the storyline to acquire a Chit card, they simply get it, no tests required.

Bringing in Risks

When confronted by a Risk, again narrate the specific situation and ask the players how they're going to counter the problem.

Based on the apparent challenge of executing their plan, and the magnitude of the dilemma, set a Difficulty and call for a Politics test. They take the Hit only if they fail.

Returning to the example of a street's worth of shop windows being blown out by an ill-judged explosive, you decide that this is a crisis of manageable proportions. No one was killed, and the retailers just want the damages covered. You set the Difficulty of the Politics test at 4. The player of the group's smooth talker describes her chatting with the shop owners, spends 2 Politics, rolls a 2, and succeeds, keeping the Hit card out of the group's collective possession.

Sweet Victory

When the group has collected Chit cards giving them 7 Goal points (or the adjusted target you have chosen) the present scenario concludes with a special coda. Lead the players in describing exactly how they achieve their Goal. Encourage them

to incorporate the story points represented by their Chit cards into their narration—with the Chit that takes them over the top playing a pivotal role.

Example: The group pursues the Goal “Shut Down Government Lethal Chambers,” which carries the tags Public and Healing.

As they begin a new scenario, in which they investigate disappearances along a lonely stretch of highway, they have 6 Chits already in hand, each of which confers 1 Goal point: “Heroic Coverage,” “In Good with the Cops,” “Respected Across the Aisle,” “Revanchists Exposed,” and “Grace Under Pressure.”

They've managed to mostly rid themselves of prior Hit cards, with only one, “Havoc Unleashed,” still in hand. Its -1 value places the group's current Goal points at 5.

At first the group attributes the disappearances to a pack of riot dogs they encounter near the road. Investigating further, they begin to wonder if the Monument Alley Irregulars, a partisan group they remember coordinating with during the rebellion, are somehow involved. Looking for the scoop on their current activities, they seek out a recurring supporting character, Desirae Oaks. Oaks, a deputy to the People's Congress who speaks for many ex-partisans, urges them to tread lightly—any revelation calling any partisan group into disrepute could lose her allies in the Congress.

The team discovers the Irregulars have indeed succumbed to evil. They force kidnapped prisoners to battle one another in a fight club run for the benefit of voyeuristic Carcosans. Their clients reward them by excreting gold dust from their bodies.

In your exciting climax, the team frees the prisoners, who turn on their tormentors, leaving no bad guys left alive.

If the group decides to help themselves to the gold dust, you give them the “Sometimes Money is Its Own Reward” card. That takes them to 6 points.

But their Hit card has a reasonably easy discard condition: they just have to spend a Reassurance Push on a reluctant ally. Doing so would bring them to 7 Goal points.

Fortunately, Gianni, whose character Grant has the Reassurance ability, has kept a Push in reserve for just this moment. Gianni goes to Desirae Oaks; in a dialogue exchange

between Grant and you, as Desirae, he assures her that any potentially damaging evidence will go to the grave alongside the late, unlamented members of the Monument Street Irregulars. He spends the Push, fulfilling the discard conditions of the “Bull in a China Shop” Hit card. That brings the group’s Goal points total to 7.

Still in character as Desirae, you inform the group that the final vote to declare Lethal Chambers unconstitutional is about to come before the Congress. She’s counted the votes, and she’s sure she can push it over the top.

You describe the group watching the vote in the Congress hall, then flash forward to another scene in which they stand by for the dismantling of New York’s Lethal Chamber.

Then you decide whether that marks a transition into *This Is Normal Now*, or if they’ll stick around in this setting for a while, picking a new Goal to pursue as the next scenario commences.

TECHNOLOGY

Advances we take for granted in our present have been systematically stifled in this one. In matters of dress, manners, technology and the arts, the *Aftermath* world resembles a blend of the mid-1970s underpinned by a supernatural twist on Orwell's 1984.

Except for the tools of war and repression, technology in this world lags behind our own by a couple of generations.

People have been to Carcosa, but not to the moon.

When an item of technology is not specified here, and it post-dates the 1970s in our world, it probably doesn't yet exist in this one. (Unless you need it to, because you're the boss.)

The groundwork for a technology may languish somewhere in the dusty notebooks of some disregarded engineer, with no one to develop it or bring it to market.

On the bright side, decreased social freedom prevented certain epidemics. The '80s in Castaigne land might have been crawling with alien freaks, but nobody knows what AIDS is, or has figured out how to treat cocaine to make it affordable for all.

The business history of this world also differs from ours. Brands that died off in our timeline may still be cranking out products today. In this reality, Studebaker remains a major auto maker, manufacturing '70s- and '80s-looking sedans, compacts, and utility vehicles.

Government Lethal Chamber FAQ

When they hear about Government Lethal Chambers, which probably happens during character generation, your players will likely have questions. Answer them by paraphrasing the following.

This is not an in-world document, but a series of answers a person familiar with the issue might give to someone who has gone through life without thinking much about it.

How long have these existed?

Government Lethal Chambers were instituted in 1920, under the administration of the last democratically elected president, Harold Winthrop.

Why haven't these horrible devices been decommissioned yet?

The right to an efficient and painless suicide remains

Fields	Exists	Doesn't Exist
Communications	Television, radio, film, microfiche, vinyl records, 8-track tapes, early mobile phones (mid-1908s equivalent)	Consumer video, the Internet, commercial satellites, cassette tapes, CDs, digital music, portable music players
Forensics	Ballistics, gunshot residue testing, fingerprinting by visual inspection, voiceprinting	DNA identification, automated fingerprint searching, automated footwear searches, facial recognition
Computing	Large mainframes, punched card coding, paper records	Miniaturization, bar codes, scanners, personal computing, smartphones, tablets, digital documents
Transportation	Blocky cars, trains, monorails, commercial air travel	Aerodynamic ground vehicle design, space travel, electric cars
Medicine	Vaccines, organ transplants, beta blockers, artificial hearts, cochlear implants, insulin pumps, liposuction	Laser eye surgery, MRI scanners, statins, animal cloning (non-supernatural), stem cell therapy, telesurgery, lab-grown organs
Weapons and armor	Kevlar	Laser-guided targeting
Recreational drugs	Heroin, powder cocaine, amphetamines, LSD, marijuana	Crack, bath salts, ecstasy, MDMA
Food	Steak, potatoes, iceberg lettuce salad, shrimp cocktail, baked Alaska	GMOs, molecular gastronomy, fusion cuisine, organic food movement

deeply ingrained in the public consciousness. Although a growing movement wants to see them shut down, at least half of the population takes them for granted as a key amenity of a free society. Many of your fellow revolutionaries agree with that. If GLCs were a Castaigne innovation, it would be easier to organize against them.

How do they work?

The customer simply approaches the machine. A dial device on the door, like those seen on some washroom stalls, tells you whether it's available or occupied. The machines sometimes break down, as the Lethal Chamber Technician can attest. If so, it probably has an Out of Service sign on it—likely put there by the PC.

Assuming the unit is open and working, you walk in, stand on a footprint applique on the floor, and reach out to touch a large black button about four feet off the ground on a central brass column. Then a complex network of blades scythes out of the column to instantly reduce you to—

What? Wait a minute, blades? Shouldn't it be gas or something?

This is a popular misconception that the authorities, both in the Winthrop day and now, make little effort to dispel. Poison gas would pose an enormous risk to bystanders in the event of malfunction. Be assured, each blade device was exquisitely engineered and assembled to guarantee the fastest possible demise.

Isn't that unspeakably messy?

Not if everything works properly. An automated self-cleaning system and drainage gate are supposed to clear away the remains entirely, leaving nothing untoward for the next customer to see.

I think that answer had some qualifiers in it.

Well, clearly marked signage warns people with metal pins or artificial bones or breast implants not to use the device. Those break or clog the blades, requiring a visit from the service technician. Each booth contains an automated alert system triggering a phone call to the technician on duty.

Is clean-up as awful as I'm imagining?

Yes. The worst part is the tooth tray, which is hidden in the wall and needs to be periodically emptied even when no one has damaged the machine.

Surely the ready presence of the machine must increase the suicide rate.

The official answer has always been that the machines very slightly decrease the rate of suicide. Suicide by other methods has been vanishingly rare for a hundred years. Troubled people meaning to send only the proverbial cry for help are less likely to accidentally kill themselves with a GLC than with pills or a razor blade.

Way more people approach the machine and then back away than actually open its door and step in. The prospect of punching a button

to absolutely guarantee instant death has a way of reviving one's survival instinct.

**That's the official answer.
What's the unofficial one?**

Nobody knows for sure, because so many functions of government have been suspended since the revolution, but people who live near GLCs will swear that the rate has gone way up in the last six months. Everybody claims this, nobody has any proof, and no two witnesses offer the same theory. Are former regime agents opting for suicide instead of execution or a life sentence? Are ordinary people who turned informant killing themselves before the humiliating facts come out? Or has a malaise struck those who hoped the Overthrow would change everything but still aren't happy? It's all rumor and speculation right now.

Is there a way to find out for sure?

The regime either never kept records of how often the machines were used or disposed of them when they burned plenty of other sensitive documents.

Aren't people afraid that families will pressure old or sick relatives they no longer want to support into using the machines?

That is a common fear, but of course if people do this they don't broadcast it.

For its many grievous flaws, the regime took relatively good care of old people, its most vociferous supporters and informants. Should the welfare state fail

to rematerialize, you might be looking at a worse problem.

Did the regime use the machines to cover for political killings?

Yes, which would explain why they possibly destroyed records. Thousands of families were told that their missing dissident loved ones suddenly and willingly decided to step into a GLC.

Could the machines be automated to keep a record of how many times they're turned on?

That's a solvable technical problem. But until the People's Congress decides whether to keep or decommission them, there's no one to fund or institute such a project. And there would be no historical data to compare it to. The Castaignes were not big on polling or social science research.

With so many other government services on hold, why didn't the People's Congress temporarily take the machines offline while debating whether to keep them?

They voted down a motion to that effect, with some objecting on procedural grounds and others arguing that this was no time to deprive citizens of a key service so many still desire.

Which political factions openly argue for the machines' continuance?

Support for the machines crosses ideological boundaries—or splits nearly every faction, to look at it the other way around. As radical individualists, almost all Homelords argue for the continuance of GLCs—

though some say they should be privatized. Originalists are more likely to support GLCs than Initiators; Mercantilists more than All-For-Ones, Guardians more than Renouncers. But you can never predict a deputy's position on this from faction allegiance alone.

Then what's the best way to guess without asking?

The biggest indicator is whether someone in a deputy's family used the machine. If yes, that person is probably against it.

How easy are they to sabotage?

You can't turn on the mechanism from the outside, but a skilled mechanic could find a way to take a unit offline until the technician comes. When the saboteur is the mechanic, the device might remain inoperable for weeks before a superior at the public works department gets a complaint about it and calls up demanding action.

Is it easy to find parts?

The factory that manufactured them was bombed eighteen months ago. A technician without parts in stock can hand-tool replacements, but that takes time.

Do you find them only in big cities?

Any town with a population of 10,000 or more has one in its central square or in a large park. A machine in a less densely populated area is more likely to be out of order. A technician might serve as many as eight or ten towns, all a good distance from the others.

How are GLCs connected to Carcosa and the Yellow Sign?

The movement to create them coalesced just as Mr. Wilde's conspiracy was ramping up. This might mean that the ambient influence of the Sign influenced their creation. Or it could be pure coincidence.

Can the Yellow Sign be found anywhere on the machine or its parts?

No.

Do other countries employ Government Lethal Chambers?

No, it's strictly an American thing. Even Canada, our friendly neighbors to the north who still live under a Castaigne-installed dictatorship, don't use them.

Did the Yellow King or others maybe feed on the misery and terror of the machine's victims?

With magic, or alien technology, or whatever it was, anything could be possible. But do we really believe in that stuff anymore?

Weapons of the Old Regime

Technologies of repression developed during the Castaigne years litter post-revolutionary America. In public, everyone says that they should be gathered up and melted down. In private, some former rebels turned security officers argue that they might be needed when diehard Castaignites make their inevitable move to restore the regime.

When the weird weapons of *Aftermath* first appear in your game, ask the players to describe their characters' attitudes toward them. Are they:

- tools like any other, useful when deployed in the name of order and justice?
- inherently corrupting implements of tyranny?

Characters openly wielding these weapons may face pushback ranging from withdrawn witness cooperation to stones and garbage pelted their way by furious bystanders.

Needler

Needle guns fire glass darts containing a potent cocktail of neurotoxins. Though classed as nonlethal, a direct hit on a major vein or artery from a needler may cause a fatal heart attack. They grant +1 to PCs who are fighting to Render Helpless.

Needlers come in pistol, rifle, and scattergun configurations. No one manufactures the ammunition any more. Even the stashes of ammo held by the provisional government predate the uprising. Eventually some risk-taking company will, one assumes, step forward to propose limited manufacture, but that hasn't happened yet. As with any rare and desirable black-market item, prices for needs, as the glass bullets are known on the street, have skyrocketed.

Minor/Major Injuries: Grazed by a Needler; Shot by a Needler

Mangler

Mangler guns fire neurotoxic rounds that explode on impact. When characters die as the result of a mangler hit (by taking a final Injury card), that means the toxin has immediately and fatally shut down their nervous systems. A nonlethal dose causes a range of neurological and psychological symptoms depending on the health of the victim and the location of the bullet wound. These include nausea, paranoia, anxiety, and auditory hallucinations.

Mangler rounds can be fired by large, unwieldy handguns or a long gun that looks like a shotgun. Like needler rounds they are no longer manufactured and command a high price on the black market.

Minor/Major Injuries: Grazed by a Mangler; Shot by a Mangler

Pain Baton

Routinely issued to the riot troops of the old regime, this hand-to-hand weapon delivers a debilitating shock. A grazing hit sends most opponents into instinctive, unthinking flight. A full-on strike buckles the knees, then drives the fallen target into the fetal position.

The Interregnum Administration has forbidden the use of this hated weapon by today's police. Only licensed users may own them, and the government isn't issuing any licenses quite yet. Though most await destruction, a few remain

in covert circulation. Player characters can happen to have one on a Difficulty 6 Preparedness success, but will also be aware of the criminal penalties for openly carrying or using it.

They grant a +2 to Fighting when the objective is Drive Away, +1 on Render Helpless or Gain Surrender, and -2 on Kill.

Pain batons only work on foes with the Human tag.

Minor/Major Injuries: Pain Baton Tap; Pain Baton Hit

Cambuk

This hard resin whip was used by riot police to command obedience. About a yard long, it contains a metal coil which generates a neuro-disruptive jolt powered by a battery in the handle.

America remains littered with cambuks. Police no longer use them. Anyone openly carrying one risks being spat on in the street, or worse.

It only works on foes with the Human tag and grants +1 Fighting when the objective is Render Helpless or Gain Surrender, and -2 to all other objectives.

Characters may make free Intimidation or Interrogation Pushes on people they've hit with a cambuk.

Minor/Major Injuries: Cambuk Zap; Cambuk Slash

Brainstopper

This modified grenade emits energy waves that deal a disruptive neural shock. Castagnite riot

troops could be immunized from its effects by intense mental training. This allowed them to wade through hostile crowds dropping grenades that had no effect on them.

Like other weapons of the old regime, these are illegal and expensive black-market items now.

Post-regime officials have yet to fully crack the secrets of the anti-brainstopper training. They do know that it involved heavy meditation on the form and meaning of the Yellow Sign, so maybe it can't be taught to anyone you don't intend to turn into a psychopath.

Minor/Major Injuries: Knocked Out; Neural Hemorrhage

Forget-Me-Do

The specialized toxin known as Forget-Me-Do can be delivered via a needler dart or in capsule form. When slipping it someone's drink, the user typically opens the capsule and lets it dissolve. It works best in a sweetened drink, as the powder has a strong, cloying taste.

As the name suggests, Forget-Me-Do floods the brain's memory centers, rooting out and destroying recently formed recollections.

Acronym-fanciers among the DIS preferred to call them FMDs.

Unusually, they test Composure (Difficulty 4) but result in an Injury.

Minor/Major Injuries: Forget-Me-Do; Forced Amnesia



Aversion Bracelet

Looking like a single handcuff, this device, when locked onto a wrist, alters the subject's behavior. It induces a dizzying anxiety whenever the wearer sees a Yellow Sign. A reliable blindfold counters the effects of an aversion bracelet, which is fine in situations where you don't need to see. Aversion bracelets do not work on the visually impaired.

Unusually, they test Health (Difficulty 4) but result in an Injury.

Minor/Major Injuries: Aversion Bracelet I; Aversion Bracelet II

Loyalty Chip

As the name suggests, the regime used this device to compel obedience from its operatives. A chip implantation device installs a penny-sized yellow ceramic version of the Yellow Sign in the subject's fatty tissues. It sometimes breaks apart, leaving fragments that can take multiple attempts to fully extract.

This device can only be administered on a willing, restrained, or helpless victim.

Unusually, they test Health (Difficulty 4) to avoid a Shock.

Minor/Major Injuries: Loyalty Chip (Broken); Loyalty Chip (Intact)

Goodbye Bomb

This explosive device consists of a clay-like material, triggered by an electrical impulse delivered by a battery and a pair of lead wires. It sits inside a housing that falls apart on detonation,

dispersing the active material as it transforms from solid to gas. Any organic being fully enveloped by the gas dissolves into an organic goo. Partial contact results in disintegration of affected areas. The gas dissipates quickly, creating a very small area of total impact. Its range is about the same as a letter bomb: it might kill the one target in an office, wound the person sitting at the next desk, and do nothing to anyone further away. Partially exposed victims may survive for a while, impaired but alive, but then later dissolve when the gas, now in a liquid state, accumulates in the liver.

The organic goo evaporates over a period of days but leaves behind a greasy residue identifiable with Science and a lab test.

Receiving either of the cards below as a final Injury card means that the character liquefies on the spot.

In *Aftermath*, investigators avoid injury from any bomb with an Insurgency test (Difficulty 4 by default) to spot it before it goes off and disarm it.

Minor/Major Injuries: Goodbye Gas Exposure; Goodbye Gas Contact

Witnessing a death by goodbye bomb calls for a Difficulty 4 Composure test: **Minor Shock:** The Shudders; **Major:** Shaken.

Readball

The spherical, levitating readball is about the size of a fist. Bright yellow in color, it appears to bear a black Yellow Sign when viewed from any angle.

To operate a readball, one must maintain a Carcosan mental state by reciting key excerpts from the second act of *The King in Yellow* at least once a week.

The operator removes it from its stainless steel carrying case while forming a mental image of a person he has met face-to-face within the last three days. The readball then travels through the air at a speed of 65 kph and maximum altitude of 75 m, navigating ably around obstacles until it unerringly locates the chosen target. Once within 30 m, it spits out fibrous, thumb-sized projectiles that look and feel like yellow spheres sculpted from coconut husks. The projectiles strike with the force of bullets. The readball records the short-term memories of any victim struck by a readball bullet, transmitting them instantly to the operator via a telepathic link. The user gains total recall of the last six hours of a GMC victim's memories, including sensory input and internal monologue. It provides no additional context beyond those specific thoughts and sensations.

Player characters make Athletics tests to avoid being hit by readball fire. When the combined margins of all successes exceeds 4, invite one of the successful players to describe how they destroy the readball.

On failures, the operator gains one hour's worth of memories for each point of margin.

Minor/Major Injuries: Readball Graze; Readball Hit

Awareness of readballs varies by Weirdness Level:

- **Overt:** Everyone remembers and fears these supernatural weapons. They regularly appear in peoples' nightmares.
- **Fading:** They show up in bad dreams, but folks mostly regard them as an urban legend spread as propaganda by the regime.
- **Covert:** Only a few dissidents ever saw them in use. Regime parageometrists know they existed but aren't talking about them.

Tuner

During the final years of the insurgency, Castaigne scientists invented the tuner as a way to turn raw recruits into effective hand-to-hand fighters. It consists of set of brass knuckles that harmonizes with a large black plastic earpiece powered by a watch battery. In close combat, the tuner takes over the user's voluntary muscle system, puppeting their bodies through a sequence of moves that reacts to and anticipates an opponent's blows and feints. A tuner user moves in an obviously awkward, jerky fashion but nonetheless lands surprisingly effective kicks and punches. The often-surprised expression of the user provides a further tip-off to the tuner's presence. Any experienced partisan will know what the brass knuckles and earpiece combo portends, even if they've never

directly seen them in action.

Tuners upgrade any humanoid foe from Weak or Tough but Outmatched to Evenly Matched. Substitute these Injuries for the ones they'd normally deal in combat.

Minor/Major Injuries: Enhanced Punch; Ultra-Beatdown

A player character with a Fighting rating of less than 8 can refresh Fighting at the beginning of a combat by donning a tuner

and the accompanying earpiece.

At the end of the fight they must test Composure against a Difficulty equal to $4 + 2$ for each time they've used the tuner in a previous fight. On a failure,

Minor/Major Shocks are: Tuner Dislocation; Tuner Habit.

PEOPLE

This chapter presents supporting characters to incorporate into your scenarios. Adapt them as needed to fit your mystery and/or the ongoing political subplot.

Political Leaders

Factions aren't formal political parties. Not yet, anyhow. As such, they have no official heads. The following characters can either be presumed future leaders or prominent members of their respective factions.

Rumpled, irascible legal historian **Clarence Ponder** stomps around the People's Hall, allergic to its mold infestation and perpetually blowing his nose. Pig-headed as only a man who knows more about his subject than any other person alive can be, Clarence fulminates for the Originalist cause. With Castagnite stooges thrown out of their posts at the University of Chicago, he has regained his professorship there.

Thin, androgynous campus radical **Sanda Mancini** makes impassioned speeches for the Initiators. Famous for an image in which she stands on the Seattle barricades lighting a gasoline bomb, she escalates arguments

quickly and rarely backs down. Sanda divides her time between politics and music, fronting a band that shocks even avid hotjazz fans with its use of electric guitars.

Heavyset **Christia Latham** favors pinstriped suit jackets, big cigars, old whiskey, and free market solutions. She runs Mystic Oil, a once-marginal energy company that never found favor with the Castaignes. Christia represents the Commercial faction with a blunt humor calculated to put you on the defensive.

Gaunt, white-haired **Lane Cushing** runs the massive accounting and computing firm Echo Inc. People assume his corporation's prosperity during the Castaigne years had to be tied to corruption. So far no one has dug up conclusive evidence against him. Patrician and composed, Cushing pours on the old-school charm on behalf of the Mercantilists.

Ex-guerrilla **Rhiannon Zeller** is still getting used to the expensive suits her fellow All-For-Ones want her to wear, to attract respect from other delegates. She distractedly fidgets as if expecting to have to throw a grenade at any moment. Though you'd think she'd consider Sanda Mancini a natural ally,

Zeller regards her as a poseur who talked big but never had to kill.

Blake Ness listens to others talk with a dead-eyed, unmoving air of indifference. If Hadrian Castaigne died during the Overthrow, it was Ness, former head of his security detail, who gunned him down. Without Blake's help, the regime might not have fallen. Some remain unforgiving about his career before the turn. Ness regards the qualms of others with contemptuous indifference. He carries his burly physique with all the hardness you'd expect from the leading light of the law-and-order Guardians.

Anglican minister **Markita Elliot** wants you to think she's a nice older lady, until she pulls the dossier out of her quilted purse and reveals that she has the goods on you. She didn't survive decades as a political prisoner in the women's wing of the notorious, Castaigne-expanded Sing Sing prison by folding under pressure. As patron saint of the Renouncers, she's more than willing to leverage her moral authority to win concessions. If her suffering is to mean anything, she says, it must bring about reconciliation.

Homelords are too antisocial to become delegates or deputies. The one you're most likely to encounter is inveterate protester **Myrtice Poe**, who dresses either in combat fatigues or a bloody butcher smock and patrols the building's steps with her ever-present placard. If your Weirdness

Level is Covert or Fading, she knows more about Carcosans and the Yellow King than any fully sane person. In an Overt Weirdness Level, she nurses some other weird theory about them: she might consider them UFO aliens, angels who fell from a corrupted heaven, or a mass hallucination caused by food adulterants.

The two most popular delegates hold themselves above the haggling of the factions. They owe their followings not to their policy positions but to heroics as top leaders of the rebellion. They're seen as the most likely candidates for the presidency. (Assuming that's what the Congress winds up calling the executive branch.) Former comrades who now only speak through intermediaries, they can doom a resolution before the Congress merely by spreading discreet word of their disapproval.

Of the two, **Stephanie Ramirez** most convincingly portrays herself as disinterested in high office after the Congress finishes its job. She led the east coast partisan network. When the fight shifted from guerrilla tactics to open rebellion, she mobilized the people with inspiring rhetoric. During the storming of the Imperial Palace she lost her right leg and has suffered from health complications ever since. Rivals whisper that she plays up her injury to cloak herself in an aura of virtue. Many patriots would punch you in the face for saying that about her.

Jack Palmer led the insurgency in the Pacific Northwest. He rose to prominence fast with a series of hard-hitting strikes that took no great care to avoid civilian casualties. Palmer's tough persona, enhanced by the shrapnel scarring across the right side of his face, appeals to those who expect trouble in the new America. Supporters admire him as someone willing to exert the ruthlessness needed to protect its hard-won freedoms.

The Press

Reporters can assist the investigators by trading info for the promise of a scoop. Or they might become obstacles by sniffing out scandals that threaten the group or its Goal.

When she speaks, *New York Times* reporter **Roselyn O'Leary** emphasizes points by waving around her prosthetic hand. The regime's security police cut off the original. Roselyn has had a hole drilled in the plastic forefinger to hold her ever-present cigarette. (This timeline isn't so big on cancer awareness.)

Washington Post columnist **Ivana Beals** hustles to establish the same chummy rapport with People's Deputies she once enjoyed with cabinet secretaries of the old regime. Give her a couple of vodkas and she might hint that the Castaignes had some good ideas. Despite the disdain many revolutionaries hold her in, she's accumulated an inventory of

potent behind-the-scenes gossip. Rumors accuse her of hoarding dirt from old secret police files she has squirreled away somewhere.

Burly, fearless photojournalist **Fred Colby** misses the days of open street fighting. His nose for visually compelling trouble takes him far from the corridors of power, out into the twilight spaces where the Yellow Sign still holds sway. Where weirdness is not openly acknowledged, he complains that editors refuse to run his best photos. You know, the ones with the masked-faced men and shimmering night creatures.

In a Covert or Fading Weirdness Level, handsome, fast-talking **Raymond Willis** publishes *Fate Magazine*, a once-censored, now-revived digest-sized periodical devoted to the paranormal. He prints the real scoop on Carcosa, to the disbelief and disdain of all but a few. Willis may show up as a snoop who complicates the squad's investigations, a source of occult truths few are ready to handle, or both. In an Overt Weirdness Level, his fearless investigative reporting for ABC News earns him high ratings, a penthouse apartment, and a closet full of expensive suits.

Peers

Other ex-partisans may appear in your storylines as sources of information, victims in need of assistance, or once-heroic figures gone bad.

Gray-haired, cleft-chinned **Nathan Mason** was fighting the regime a generation before the characters were born, a comparison he drops at the slightest opportunity. Crusty and cynical, he just got diagnosed with pancreatic cancer. “Which means I ain’t got nothin’ to lose.” Other ex-insurgents acclaim him as a master planner of raids and extractions.

Crystal Fields never let the horrors of war overwhelm her midwestern positivity. Now she wants nothing more than to return to Madison, Wisconsin to marry her childhood sweetheart and raise a passel of kids. Yet one last obligation—perhaps a role as a deputy to the Congress—keeps her in the big city. She respects the player characters but politely refuses to be sucked back into their world, especially if that means coming to terms with the supernatural. During the war she showed a knack for identifying double agents and turning them back against their Hussar handlers.

Bald, bull-headed **Cesar Valdez** nurses a grievance from the struggle, possibly tied to a PC’s Worst Memory. He cares more about settling this personal score than about rebuilding the country he helped to save from tyranny. Cesar won fame as a relentless fighter with both gun and knife.

Unlikely rebel **Maurice Wheeler** aided the cause with jury-rigged technical solutions. His owlish glasses, checked shirts, and ever-

present slide rule identify him as a perfectly harmless fellow, not at all the sort of person who knows six different ways to blow up your house. Focused on the electrical engineering firm he recently founded, he’s reluctant to engage with anything eerie or violent. Still, he might find a sufficiently tantalizing scientific mystery too tempting to ignore.

Tami Akana pursues her duties as a deputy to the Congress with fiery dedication. She has already announced plans to run for office when the first election happens. A favorite of her fellow ex-rebels, she promises to stand up for their rights. She may seek a political favor from the group or point them toward the next person they need to win over to achieve their own agenda.

Criminals

The Castaignes secretly sanctioned certain criminal gangs in exchange for a percentage of the spoils. Since the fall of their regime those crooks have expanded their operations. For legacy gangsters, the current lawless environment cuts both ways. It gives them wider latitude to act, but also opens up the world of crime to new competitors, including former insurgents looking for new and profitable uses for their deadly skills.

The investigators may deal with underworld denizens as secondary threats, hired muscle

for unscrupulous rival political factions, shady sources of funding for their own agenda, or as informants who know more than they'd ever tell the cops.

Down-on-her-luck socialite **Gladys Ford** used to supply elite Castaigne cronies with their drugs of choice, mostly heroin and amphetamines. With her clients in jail, on the run, or pretending to be upstanding citizens, she now has to hustle for every dime. Her little black book contains all sorts of incriminating info on war criminals and their pals.

Felipe Daniel could pass for a male model in a dimly lit nightclub. A gigolo and small-time swindler under the Castaignes, he has moved quickly to assemble a network of ambitious crooks looking to rule the city's underworld. Legend has it that he chainsawed a regime torturer during the rebellion. In truth the victim was a rival would-be crime boss.

Not yet entirely out of the picture is pro-Castaigne crime boss **Ivan Nichols**, a once-vigorous man shrunk by stress and old age. Half-Russian, half-cockney, he still speaks with a trace of his childhood London accent. Nichols knows where several top Castaignites are hiding out, because he helped them get away. He hopes to parlay that information into a deal with the federal police, trading their whereabouts for the right to keep operating—squealing on his rivals all the way.

Hit man **Floyd Cooper** used to work with Nichols but suspects that he's planning to flip and has gone into supposed retirement. A bland-faced man who looks more like a shoe salesman than a prolific murderer, he might be lured back into the game for the right fee. In the meantime, he keeps his ear to the ground, and may reveal scuttlebutt about open contracts to investigators he trusts.

Insurgent leader **Curt Moran** went blood simple during the revolution. Peacetime already bores him. He and his equally war-hardened crew aim to cash in, and not with their people skills. The team may encounter Curt when he acts as freelance enforcer to a scenario's human antagonists. Leg-breaking gigs are only a stepping stone to Curt; he's looking for a vulnerable criminal gang to take over and then expand. Play him as sullen, laconic, and smarter than he lets on.

Club owner **Courtney Harrison** barely counts as a crook herself but needs to stay connected to both gangsters and bent cops to maintain her nightlife empire. With the yoke of the old regime lifted from them, plenty of people want to party hard, and Courtney wants to keep that spirit going as long as she can. She supports politicians willing to stand up for personal freedom and against busybody government. Rumors that she keeps tapes of influential folks misbehaving on

Parageometry Aptitude Test

9. Check the boxes you find meaningful.

- | | | |
|---|--------------------------------------|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1763 | <input type="checkbox"/> Defiance | <input type="checkbox"/> Obedience |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1847 | <input type="checkbox"/> Denial | <input type="checkbox"/> Princes |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1895 | <input type="checkbox"/> Faces | <input type="checkbox"/> Princesses |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1920 | <input type="checkbox"/> Masks | <input type="checkbox"/> Rosicrucianism |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1947 | <input type="checkbox"/> Firebrands | <input type="checkbox"/> Screaming animals |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Aldebaran | <input type="checkbox"/> Fungibility | <input type="checkbox"/> Squires |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Alpha Centauri | <input type="checkbox"/> Green skies | <input type="checkbox"/> The color green |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Appetite | <input type="checkbox"/> Hermeticism | <input type="checkbox"/> The color yellow |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Black stars | <input type="checkbox"/> Kings | <input type="checkbox"/> White skies |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Concreteness | <input type="checkbox"/> Mathematics | <input type="checkbox"/> Yellow stars |

10. When you watch a carnivorous tree eat a bird, do you consider it:

☐ natural ☐ conditional ☐ yes

11. In 100 words or less, explain the Fibonacci sequence.



12. In 50 words or less, if you could replace the Fibonacci sequence, what would you replace it with?

State Security Notice (§9PZ71):
Revelation of the contents of this test is punishable by imprisonment or death.

her premises might be just that. Or not. A character with Streetwise knows that she doesn't like to be reminded of her days as a teen pop star, or her single chart hit, "Black Car, White Sky."

Cops

Acting Director of the Provisional Federal Police **Reginald Greer** fought in the insurgency. Before that he served as a local cop until he was fired for refusing to arrest political prisoners. Greer hopes the next government will keep him in place, as he trusts no one else to take a hard line against Carcosan re-infiltration. Even in a Covert Weirdness Level Greer knows full well what agents of the Yellow Sign did and could do again. Once plainspoken, he has learned fresh caution, presenting himself as a safe compromise figure at a time of shifting power. This requires him to speak in hints and platitudes, especially about the unnatural.

For an everyday contact within the federal police, the team might contact **Janice Rodriguez**. A single mother of two who worked Homicide before the revolution, she has been cleared by the IA of any known involvement in political repression. Now she reluctantly hunts fugitive regime leaders, complaining to whoever will listen that she'd rather be back solving honest murders. As apolitical as ever, she shows zero interest in the group's activist

agenda. She may swap info, however, if it might lead to an arrest for her. Janice carries around a paper bag full of marshmallow banana candies, offering them to friends and perps alike.

Rookie city beat cop **Dominic Park** feels like he missed out when he failed to see any violent action during the rebellion. Star-struck by true partisans, he'll blatantly trade info for war stories.

Gravel-voiced veteran homicide detective **Paula Cummings** doesn't like it when civilian busybodies complicate her cases. No matter how many times the squad proves their usefulness to her, they'll have to win her over anew each time. She also snorts derisively at politicians, reporters, so-called war heroes, and pet owners.

Business Interests

Characters like this come into play when a corporation figures in the primary mystery, or the team's Goal poses either threat or opportunity to moneyed interests.

Cam Ragan's square, big-jawed head looks like he's spent a lifetime breaking his opponent's hands by encouraging them to punch his face. Pugnacious and blunt, he describes himself as "a bit of a cowboy." He came up from nowhere to make a killing in an industry relevant to your storyline—no easy feat in the crony capitalist Castaigne years.

Surprisingly young for a business heavy-hitter, **Michaela Guarnieri**

was a nobody a year ago and has cornered a large slice of a burgeoning market in the months since the Overthrow. Pick the type of business your story needs or make her an importer of beer and liquor from newly accessible foreign suppliers. Michaela speaks in an alluring whispery quaver, flattering people by pretending they're as clever and determined as she is.

Alma Salgueiro carries herself with the no-nonsense attitude of a woman who raised six high-spirited sons and prevented all but one of them from dying in the war. The remaining five work alongside her in the family business. All but the overconfident eldest, Pete, visibly deflate in her presence. She built her business with Castaigne blessing but jumped to the rebel side at a key moment. Rumor has it that Pete pushed her into it and now won't let her hear the end of it. If your story doesn't care what business she's in, she runs a trucking empire.

Her hair bleached blond by her West Texas home, **Lizzie Moss** conducts business at the thoroughbred stables she owns, discomfiting rivals by shoveling the stalls as she negotiates. She loves nothing more than a folksy saying cutely describing city dwellers as idiots. Public records contain no evidence of her claimed participation in the rebellion. Depending on your needs, she might be a media tycoon, entertainment mogul, or retail titan.

Spiky-haired and sneeringly good-looking, 27-year-old **Boyd Upham** has taken over as corporation CEO from his father Barney. As Upham senior, currently under house arrest, prepares for trial on charges of collusion with the old regime, Boyd prepares a variety of contingency plans. He's intent on shielding company assets from his father's legal troubles. In confidence, he might admit to the investigators that his father ought to get what's coming to him. By default, he's in the insurance business.

Regular Folks

Assign occupations and roles in your mystery to these civilians as needed. They might be witnesses, bureaucrats, or imminent victims. Many of these entries suggest a side narrative, which you can leave unspoken if your session doesn't have time for subplots. At the very least dealings with these characters can reveal particular small details that separate this 2017 from ours.

Middle-aged **Nate Seldon** looks like a divorced dad who forgot to shave the last two mornings. One of his azure blue eyes doesn't move. Intuition suggests that this happened when he saw something damn peculiar years ago. He has suppressed all memory of this event, which might be a red herring or an old incident tied to the present case.

Jaded teen **Dani Phelps** rolls her eyes and impatiently answers

any questions posed to her as if they're the stupidest things anyone ever said. Attempt to pressure her, and she informs the team that her father is a delegate to the People's Congress.

Adwin Warner lost his left foot in the war and is hoping to earn enough money for a prosthesis before moving back to Suane, where he was born. A look at his stump with Forensics suggests that the foot was bitten off, but Adwin remembers no such thing.

Shawn Whitmer can't help but laugh maniacally at any unnerving statement. Though this makes him look as sketchy as hell, Assess Honesty shows that he's nothing more than an utterly freaked-out bystander.

Sullen, round-faced ten-year-old **Norton Lindsey** says he saw everything and will tell the team all about it for a hundred bucks. He may seem like a foul-mouthed jerk until he casually mentions that he saw both of his parents shot down in the street for publishing an anti-regime pamphlet.

Kenny Olson has a bushy white beard that puts Santa Claus' facial hair to shame. He lives on the street now, but claims to have once been a mathematics professor. He promises to cooperate if the team will find someone to help him regain his lost department chairmanship. As they did to other dissidents, the secret police punished Olson by removing all records of his existence from the system,

rendering him an unemployable non-person. Or maybe he's just delusional.

Inanna Fowler is late for a modeling audition and doesn't have time for whatever the team wants. Her perfect cheekbones and dazzling azure eyes make her a natural for her chosen career. She mentions that she's interviewing at the Walker Agency, which the character with Cop Talk knows to be shady in the extreme.

Curly-haired **Raffaella Curtis** is relentlessly jovial, except when she's yelling at her girlfriend Viola, who's fussing with something annoying in the background, Raffaella talks the team's ears off, filling her answers to their questions with irrelevant detail.

Amanda Barker has clearly had recent facial reconstruction surgery. She explains if asked: the secret police mistook her for an activist named Mandy Baker and, in the process of torturing her, splashed acid in her face. She says this is ironic, as she had until that point been an unquestioning supporter of the Castaigne government.

Megan Holland, a young blond who dresses like a cowhand, carries a pistol in a shoulder holster. She says her father gave it to her during the rebellion and told her she should keep it on her until he told her otherwise. Her dad, Elijah, disappeared during the fighting. One day, he'll be back, she's sure of it, but until then, the gun stays right where it is.

The team remembers snaggle-

toothed, squeaky-voiced **Clint Arnold** from before the uprising, when they suspect he informed on them to the secret police. Clint protests that, to the contrary, he gave the pigs misleading information, to keep them safe. They didn't get arrested, did they?

Something about gray-haired, weather-beaten **Eric Lancing** screams "sleaze." Maybe it's that weird, smug expression that stays on his face no matter where the conversation goes. He acts like he knows something unpleasant that affects the team but isn't about to spill it.

Beefy and bleary-eyed **Stephen Leight** clearly used to be a formidable hunk of manhood in his day. Now he has a life of heavy drinking and probably other age-accelerating habits written all over his face. He's the kind of smarmy guy who puts his arm around you when he talks. If the investigator dealing with him treats him like he's charming, Leight offers them a greasy opportunity. This might range from a toot of cocaine to a chance to pick up a few bucks performing an errand of uncertain legality.

Big-boned **Misti Brooks** talks loud and laughs louder, keeping at bay the people who would treat her unkindly on account of her weight. She's aggressively flirtatious until someone seems ready to take her up on it, at which point she beats a hasty retreat. The one partner she let past her defenses disappeared during the fighting.

Elderly and beaten down by worries, **Guillermo Serna** blames whatever scary thing the investigators are asking him about on the chaos of the revolution. "I used to hate the Castaignes, but at least they kept the streets safe, if you kept your head down and didn't make trouble." If the squad hasn't mentioned anything frightening, he tells them that ghosts come out of his furnace at night to steal his things.

Tousle-haired trumpet player **Elvis Tanner** has heard of the characters' work as insurgents and wants to swap war stories. His bragging about his own revolutionary exploits sets off the Bullshit Detector ability. He seems only slightly embarrassed if called on it, suggesting a narcissistic ability to let unhappy truths bounce right off him.

Antar Singh, Public Works middle manager in charge of underground highway maintenance, won rapid promotion after a bombing killed most of his superiors. He maintains a veil of snark between him and his survivor's guilt. Antar wanted the regime gone, but not at the cost of his colleagues' lives. Whenever he succeeds at work, he remembers that his path was cleared by tragedy. Like any practicing Sikh, Antar wears a turban and carries a kirpan (ceremonial dagger).

Like many middle-aged men in a world where John F. Kennedy's fashion choices never held sway,

Moe Negley would not dream of being seen outdoors in public without a hat. However, like the rest of him, it is now badly rumpled and smells strongly of cheap scotch. When the PCs meet him, he is completely drunk and doing his unsubtle best to pretend otherwise. In better days, he was the top Bible salesman in the state. But that was before the Castaignes confiscated the firm he worked for and put it under the control of idiots who ran it into the ground.

Harried middle manager **Cassie Mana** doesn't have time to answer questions and says whatever she thinks will let her get away from the investigators and move on with her day. She pulls out and threatens to use a canister of mace on the investigators if pushed too far.

Rush Newman's most notable physical feature is his large, unlined, shiny forehead. He agrees to answer whatever questions the characters have for him but keeps diverting his answers to the need for comprehensive life insurance, especially for those who sacrificed

key income-earning years to the revolution. He considers it a deep failure to leave any new acquaintance without forcing one of his business cards upon them.

Society matron **Dorothy Williams** just wants everything to be calm and normal so she can successfully host a big fundraiser scheduled for tomorrow night. Her hospital charity was needed under the Castaignes and is still needed now. The mere presence of the investigators visibly flusters her, as she begins to imagine a link between their connections and potential disaster for her event.

Mousy, bow-tied **Carleton Chapman** used the chaos of the uprising to commit a serious crime. Maybe he stole a shipment of cash. Perhaps he keeps cement-encased corpses in his basement. Whatever it is, he fears that the investigators are onto him. Unless their questions tell him that their inquiries have nothing to do with his terrible secret, he'll try to steer them into some convenient danger he happens to know about.

PEAK FUEL  FOR THE

GENERATION OF THE NEW CHOICE



Justice is Remembrance
WAR CRIMES TRIALS NOW



FOES

This chapter presents adversaries, human and not so human, of the *Aftermath* setting.

Tags

Some game effects apply to creatures bearing particular identifiers, or tags. In *Aftermath* these are:

Carcosan: The being hails from Carcosa, either directly or by descent.

Warspawn: A supernatural creature that came into being on Earth during the Castaigne years. Though it relied on the malign background energy of Carcosa to manifest, it is not native to that alien world.

Hybrid: An artificial being created on Earth, but with the aid of Carcosan magical technology. Most hybrids originated in the secret corridors of the Bronx Park Zoological Society. During the utopian years of the Winthrop Administration this scholarly institute-slash-tourist attraction organized a series of expeditions to scour the earth for cryptozoological specimens.

They disguised these secret activities in part by arranging for the publication of a series of

whimsical stories. In these tedious tales, buffoonish fictional explorer Percy Smith makes a fool of himself hunting frozen mammoths and giant minnows, and losing romantic rivalries to younger, handsomer men.

When the Castaignes took power, the good scientists of the BPZS were ordered to launch a breeding program to produce creatures, some of them sapient, to serve the regime.

During the fighting, revolutionaries attacked the Bronx Park Zoo, thinking it an armory. This released the most viable hybrids into the wild, with repercussions the team may well find itself investigating.

Human: Your basic off-the-rack homo sapiens.

Relict: A cryptozoological creature, perhaps held at the Bronx Park Zoological Society, in its original, non-hybrid state.

Veteran: A person or sapient entity that fought during the uprising or in another armed conflict.



Foe Profiles

Foe	Difficulty	Minor Injury	Major Injury
Argus	Escape 2, Other 3, Kill 4	Roughed Up	Stab Wound
Cancer Bag	Escape 1, Other 3, Kill 3	Spore Exposure	The Yips
Carcosan Wetworker	Escape 2, Other 5, Kill 6	Shattering Hand Strike	Razor Hand Strike
Carrier	Escape 2, Other 3, Kill 4	Zapped	High Voltage
Dupe	Escape 2, Other 4, Kill 5	Wrenched Neck	Dupe Bite
Explosionist	Escape 1, Other 4, Kill 4	Scratched	Ticking Time Bomb
Harbor Master	Escape 1, Other 3, Kill 3	Fin Scratch	Jostled
Lawn Folk	Escape 2, Other 4, Kill 5	Knife Slash	Deep Stab
Reanimate	Escape 2, Other 5, Kill 6	Throat Squeeze	Breastbone-Piercing Punch
Revanchist, Elite Insurgents	Escape 2, Other 5, Kill 6	Grazed by a Mangler	Shot by a Mangler
Revanchist, Goons	Escape 2, Other 3, Kill 4	Knock to the Head	Gunshot Wound
Revanchist, Insurgents	Escape 2, Other 4, Kill 5	Grazed by a Needler	Shot by a Needler
Riot Dog	Escape 2, Other 3, Kill 3	Riot Dog Bite	Riot Dog Mauling
Shade	Escape 2, Other 5, Kill 6	Soul Shook	Commandment from the Grave
Shatterling	Escape 2, Other 4, Kill 5	Neuropathic Swipe	Neuropathic Disequilibrium
Sleeper	Escape 2, Other 5, Kill 6	Superhuman Blow	Superhuman Smash
Sphyx	Escape 3, Other 6, Kill 7	Surprise Kidney Stab	Surprise Throat Slash

Foe	Difficulty	Minor Injury	Major Injury
Thermosaur	Escape 3, Other 7, Kill 8	Dinosaur Wound	Dinosaur Bite
Ux	Escape 2, Other 5, Kill 6	Puncturing Beak	Rending Beak

Argus

Named after the many-eyed giant of Greek myth, the argus (plural: argus) is a variant human species, *homo enamati*, that survived to the modern day in the Florida Everglades. Deviations from modern human morphology include coarse, long body hair, a greasy skin secretion that grants buoyancy underwater, and powerful lungs that allow it to survive for more than an hour on a single full gulp of air. Most dramatically, the argus has a single eye in the back of its skull.

Provided an argus keeps this extra eye hidden under its coarse mop of hair, it can pass for an odd-looking ordinary person, but will still provoke an instinctive revulsion. Argus are fully capable of speech, complex learning, and abstract reasoning.

Argus posing as ordinary people may give themselves away by yielding to instinctive hunting behavior. In the wild, argus dine chiefly on wild birds. They may be unable to resist pouncing on and immediately devouring a tempting-looking pigeon, crow, or duck.

Unless she wears a helmet or some other item preventing use of her extra eye, the Difficulty of Sneaking up on an argus is never less than 6.

Though strong and agile, argus are scarcely superhuman. Change up their Injury cards to reflect whatever weapons you want them to wield.

Argus are held, bred, and experimented upon by the Bronx Park Zoological Society and bear an understandable grudge against their captors. Most extend their loathing to humanity in general. Having fled the facility in the fighting, they may appear in your scenarios as:

- vengeance-seeking killers
- furtive figures who kill to keep their secret
- innocent victims pursued by former zoo officials
- Some percentage of Bigfoot sightings, especially those of Florida's skunk ape, may in fact be argus encounters.

Numbers: 1

Difficulty: Tough but Outmatched (Escape 2, Other 3, Kill 4)

Difficulty Adjustments: +1

if the group has suddenly and unexpectedly realized the presence of the argus' third eye; -1 if the group knows it has a third eye; +2 if the group failed a Sneaking attempt against the argus

Toll: 0

Tags: Relict

Injuries, Minor and Major:

Roughed Up/Stab Wound

Cancer Bag

This genetically modified Carcosan carnivore resembles a burlap sack capable of locomotion. Adult specimens reach the size of a large dog. Ropy fibers inside its outer sac allow it to move with surprising speed. Its tissues look and smell like rotting mushrooms. The cancer bag's alien DNA matches nothing from our planet.

The creatures sweat highly carcinogenic, spore-like micro-nodules. Regularly exposed victims contract exotic, fast-acting cancers within a few months of initial contact.

Cancer bags can't do much but move from place to place, attack small prey animals, and defend themselves from threats. Castaigne scientists altered them so that they obey the mental commands of individuals who concentrate heavily on them while in visual range and holding a Yellow Sign emblem. DIS officials used them as delayed-reaction, hard-to-detect murder weapons. Simply impel a cancer bag to hide in a dissident's home, and by the time you next file a quarterly report, you've taken care of your subject.

A mystery involving a cancer bag probably has the investigators seeking the perpetrator who sent one to infest a victim's home or office. The investigators could solve the case by learning the truth about cancer bags, learning who has access to them, and tracking them down. In the process they might want to discover the antidote that shielded their users from the creatures' cancer-causing effects.

Numbers: 1

Difficulty: Weak (Escape 1, Other 3, Kill 3)

Difficulty Adjustments: -1 if characters wear protective masks; +2 if fighting in hazmat suits

Toll: 0

Tags: Warspawn

Injuries, Minor and Major:

Spore Exposure/Precancerous

Carcosan Wetworker

Certain courtiers of the Yellow King preferred the powers they enjoyed as covert political officials on Earth to the ennui of life as nobles in his grim castle. Left on this side of reality when the gates blew up, they scheme to sabotage the new government and lay the groundwork for counter-revolution.

Numbers: 1

Difficulty: Superior (Escape 2, Other 5, Kill 6)

Toll: 1

Tags: Carcosan

Injuries, Minor and Major:

Shattering Hand Strike/Razor Hand Strike



Carrier

Persons infected by a Carcosan parasite that takes control of consciousness and motor function become carriers. While bearing the parasite, the carrier performs covert actions targeting either the new regime or former rebels who have entered civilian life. These can include assassination, kidnapping, espionage, or sabotage. The parasite houses the intelligence and recollections of a specific dead Carcosan, making its carrier as capable of these actions as a well-trained security officer. This includes the ability to change plans in response to new conditions and to act opportunistically to further the counter-revolution.

The parasite can move from one host to another after as few as ten seconds of skin contact. The transmission doesn't always take, depending heavily on the new host's mental and physical conditioning. For this reason, the parasite prefers to enter the bodies of the vulnerable: the sick, the old, the homeless.

Given no better option, a parasite may attempt to take over a player character. This will fail, because losing all control of your PC always sucks, but at a possible cost. Treat this as a Difficulty 6 Composure mental hazard. **Minor/Major Shocks:** Mental Probe; It Licked Your Mind.

In combat the parasite grants the carrier the ability to generate an electrical shock. In low light

conditions a light blue aura can be seen around the host.

Once the carrier is rendered helpless the parasite can be found and removed (Difficulty 6 First Aid test). The wise medic remembers to wear rubber gloves, avoiding attempted parasitization.

Isolated from the host's tissue, the parasite consists of a mass of fibrous muscle in the shape of the Yellow Sign, about the size of a dime.

Carriers remember what they did while infected by the parasite but cannot explain the reasons for their actions. They often suffer long-term trauma and may later attempt suicide.

Numbers: 1

Difficulty: Tough but Outmatched (Escape 2, Other 3, Kill 4)

Toll: 0

Tags: Human

Injuries, Minor and Major: Zapped/High Voltage

Dupe

After executing political prisoners, the DIS had a range of disposal options to choose from. They could allow the body to be discovered, dispose of the corpse secretly, or cruelly deliver the remains to the victim's family.

In some cases, they instead commissioned the lab to create a sapient, artificial substitute for the prisoner, to be returned to unsuspecting family and friends. By replacing a dissident with a defeated, compliant duplicate, or dupe, they could slow and confuse

the anti-regime movement.

Those close to the victim always noticed a change: dupes are invariably slower, duller, less motivated, and more forgetful than the originals. However, the effect was never so pronounced that anyone suspected the real truth. Some families believed a persistent rumor that the secret police injected prisoners with a drug causing long-term senility. Most attributed the newfound grayness of freed dissidents to the rigors of their imprisonment, interrogation, and torture.

The duplication process infused the dupes with the memories of the copied victims. Though they feel these less intensely than a real person would, as if recalling their pasts as a series of faded home movies, they remember enough to convince not only others but themselves that they're the real thing.

That's the brilliance of the deception: the dupes truly believe. Most go to their graves thinking they're the originals. Testing doesn't help. Take a tissue sample from a dupe, evaluate it using any forensic technique available in this reality, and it comes up as a match for the copied murder victim.

Certain traumatic events can awaken a dupe's buried memories of being built, bone by bone, muscle layer by muscle layer, in a laboratory full of weird Carcosan equipment. This shock drives them to a mania they can only suppress by engaging in acts of murder. A

quarter of them go on maniacal killing sprees, intending to be gunned down by cops. The rest continue to live in their copied identities, but become methodical serial killers.

They might attack their victims using conventional weaponry or using their newly discovered inhuman ability. An awakened dupe can cause its facial musculature to detach from the skull, transforming into dozens of elastic appendages. In the creature's classic attack, these burst forth, grab the victim's head, and pull it toward the dupe's mouth. With super-hard, unobtrusively sharpened teeth, the dupe tears out the victim's throat.

Murders alleviate a dupe's profound identity anxiety. The dupe does not entirely forget its inhuman nature but after a satisfying bout of slaughter can push that horrifying thought into the emotional background. It can then go on as normal for weeks or months before jonesing for another killing. This interval shortens when the dupe undergoes stress. Knowing that investigators are going to find out that you're a monster can be very stressful.

As your sequence starts, the existence of the dupe program remains an undiscovered secret of the old regime. When the squad finds out about it, thorny questions arise:

- How much will it hurt public morale to learn that certain former dissidents are

arcane duplicates of people slain by the Castaignes?

- If knowledge of dupes goes public, will more of them realize who they are, triggering a serial murder epidemic?

When describing an attack resulting in the Wrenched Neck attack, narrate the dupe grabbing the victim with its facial muscle appendages and twisting the neck.

Numbers: 1

Difficulty: Evenly Matched (Escape 2, Other 4, Kill 5)

Difficulty Adjustments: +1 if using its inhuman attack against a character who thought it was human

Toll: 0

Tags: Hybrid

Injuries, Minor and Major: Wrenched Neck/Dupe Bite

Explosionist

This Carcosan scientist looks like a tall, gaunt human wearing a surgical mask. On close inspection, the mask turns out to be a fibrous tissue covering its mouthless face. The tip of each of its index fingers retracts to reveal a modified fingernail with a needle-like tip. When it jabs a human, a toxin held in a reservoir in the explosionist's finger bone enters the victim's bloodstream.

Over a twenty-four-hour period the victim's body chemistry alters. The brain reshapes itself to obey the explosionist's mental commands. At the end of this time, impelled by the explosionist, the victim finds a public place full of people and wanders into its center.

The victim then explodes with a force strong enough to kill dozens of innocents.

When the explosionist is killed, or becomes separated from the victim by a hundred miles or more, the victim regains control of his actions. The subject, now suffering an intense fever, may not know what is about to happen to him. If he does, he can choose to find a remote location in which to explode before the clock runs out.

Overt Weirdness: More likely he seeks medical attention. The best treatment for this toxin succeeds nine times out of ten and requires a blood transfusion. For obvious reasons this procedure is not performed in busy hospitals. Instead a specialized bomb disposal medical unit (SDMU) takes the victim to a safe place and attempts the treatment. This new protocol is new, expensive, and requires particularly dedicated professionals and so remains unavailable in many areas.

Covert/Fading Weirdness: The treatment remains a military secret, but the group can draw on its resistance connections to gain access to it.

Numbers: 1

Difficulty: Weak (Escape 1, Other 4, Kill 4)

Adjust to Other Sequences: Drop Kill by 1

Toll: 0

Tags: Carcosan

Injuries, Minor and Major: Scratched/Ticking Time Bomb

Harbor Master

The Bronx Zoological Society facility hybridized humans with the aquatic dwellers of Hali to produce harbor masters. The resulting beings were deployed by the regime in spying and sabotage operations in swamps and coastal areas. Covered in rubbery, dolphin-like gray skin and staring at the world with unblinking fish eyes, harbor masters breathe through large gill structures in their throats. Their distended red gills produce a disturbing purring sound.

Due to weak musculature and skeletons composed mostly of cartilage, harbor masters fight poorly as aggressors. The same features do make them freakishly hard to hurt or kill, though. Their bodies absorb the force of most blows, including the killing impact of bullets.

Having escaped their cruel regime controllers, harbor masters would leave humanity alone were it not for their romantic yearnings. Beautiful people of any gender may become the focus of their sentimental obsessions. Harbor masters show neither interest in, nor capacity for, physical congress with their human crushes. This proves only some consolation when they take a person to their subterranean grottoes, feeding them fish and gazing at them from a besotted distance. Clumsy and none too bright, they may accidentally harm their targets in the process of capturing them.

Numbers: 1

Difficulty: Weak (Escape 1, Other 3, Kill 3)

Difficulty Adjustments: +5 if striking with non-bladed weapons (and objective is not Escape)

Toll: 0

Tags: Hybrid

Injuries, Minor and Major: Fin Scratch/Jostled

Lawn Folk

These sapient stone beings get their names from their unpleasant resemblance to garden gnomes. They were created from inorganic matter taken from Parisian gargoyles and formed in military labs with the aid of Carcosan rituals. Whether brightly painted or left to their natural granite coloration, lawn folk always boast one common feature: a wide, sinister grin.

Lawn folk enjoy entering people's homes at night. A few choose to menace victims physically. Most prefer to subtly distort a victim's personality over a series of visits. They do this by touching their stone hands to the target's forehead, establishing a psychic link permitting them to remove or alter memories. They can even implant completely false recollections.

During the regime some worked for the security apparatus, using their mental powers to turn dissidents into loyal mouthpieces of Castaignite ideology. Though most did this out of general malignity, a few miss the days of

widespread oppression and take an active part in the revanchist underground movement. Others blackmail victims to perform amusingly humiliating or destructive acts in exchange for the safe return of their stolen memories.

When required to fight physically, lawn folk prefer switchblades or combat knives.

A lawn folk can dole out its Shock cards either to a helpless character, or in place of a combat Injury.

Any foe with the Carcosan tag can sense the susceptibility of a character with the “Stolen Loyalty” Shock card.

The original lab only turned out specimens that looked like male garden gnomes. Recent sightings of sinister-cutesy fairy princess versions suggest that someone has started making a new batch.

Numbers: 1

Difficulty: Evenly Matched
(Escape 2, Other 4, Kill 5)

Difficulty Adjustments: +1 for each opponent holding either of its Shock cards (below)

Toll: 0

Tags: Warspawn

Injuries, Minor and Major: Knife Slash/Deep Stab

Shocks, Minor and Major:
Stolen Memory/Stolen Loyalty

Reanimate

Favored state security officers netting high psych test scores for determination, ingenuity, and cruelty were revived after death by a top-secret program

run out of the Pentagon. Those that survived the process became even more extreme versions of their former selves. Some retook their old positions, while others were reassigned as assassins and enforcers. Reanimates can be identified from their pallid skin, glowing eyes, and fast-growing yellow fingernails. Those who arrived at the military morgue in heavily wounded condition were refurbished with cyborg enhancements, including artificial bones and body armor plates. Open up a reanimate’s chest and you find a buzzing battery pack where the heart ought to be. A port between the shoulder blades allows them to plug into an electrical outlet to regenerate damaged tissue. The earliest reanimates can also heal by eating human flesh. Program administrators phased out this feature not because it worked poorly but because it frightened their bosses.

Numbers: 1

Difficulty: Vastly Superior
(Escape 2, Other 5, Kill 6)

Toll: 2

Tags: Warspawn, Veteran

Injuries, Minor and Major:
Throat Squeeze/Breastbone-Piercing Punch

Revanchist

Not all former state security officers want to wait patiently to be arrested and tried for the crimes they committed in the name of the Castaigne regime.

Some have stashed away weapons, vehicles, and other resources they intend to use to destabilize the new government.

Revanchists are immune to the effects of brainstopper grenades (p. 60); characters trying to use them take a -2 Fighting penalty.

Former Goons

Numbers: Number of PC combatants

Difficulty: Tough but Outmatched (Escape 2, Other 3, Kill 4)

Toll: 0

Tags: Veteran, Human

Injuries, Minor and Major: Knock to the Head/Gunshot Wound

Insurgents

Numbers: Number of PC combatants

Difficulty: Evenly Matched (Escape 2, Other 4, Kill 5)

Toll: 0

Tags: Human, Veteran

Injuries, Minor and Major: Grazed by a Needler/Shot by a Needler

Elite Insurgents

Numbers: Number of PCs minus 1

Difficulty: Superior (Escape 2, Other 5, Kill 6)

Toll: 3

Tags: Human, Veteran

Injuries, Minor and Major: Grazed by a Mangler/Shot by a Mangler

Riot Dog

Police dogs trained to maul rioters took on even more overtly supernatural qualities during the rebellion. Engineered with Carcosan parabiological breeding techniques in covert facilities, they became faster, smarter, and stronger than ordinary canines. They look like hybrids of German shepherds and hyenas, combining the determination of the former with the canniness of the latter.

When they bite, riot dogs inject a psychoactive poison that causes victims to relive their most devastating experiences. State security officers used to have them savage prisoners to soften them up for interrogation.

Since the Overthrow these creatures have become a rapidly expanding invasive species. They breed with rat-like fecundity and show zero fear of man. When riot dogs move into a neighborhood people have to stay in their homes until Animal Control officers can complete a sweep, which can take days.

Covert/Fading Weirdness:

Everyone knows about the dogs, but believes they were created by purely scientific means.

Numbers: Double the party

Difficulty: Tough but Outmatched (Escape 2, Other 3, Kill 3)

Adapt to Other Sequences:

Drop Kill by 1

Toll: 0

Tags: Hybrid

Injuries, Minor and Major: Riot Dog Bite/Riot Dog Mauling

FULL SOURCE SAFETY MONITOR PROGRAM

Subject CASAL expressed views regarding Official Broadcasting Network entertainment programming that could be regarded as contrary to the public order. Expressed view that Kurt & Courtney show is "stale" "corny" "tired" and that their routines were already dated in Paris vaudeville."

Subject CASAL referred over-frequently to masks and lakes. Potential if unproven support for theory that CASAL is over-informed on para-geometric matters. Status: keyword flag, bears additional observation.

ANALYSIS PENDING

Subject LAMBERT expressed treasonous disdain for the personal appearance of the Emperor, calling His Majesty an "old clam" and falsely claiming him to suffer from dandruff.

Subject WASHINGTON expressed view that after the regime fell, same-sex romantic relationships would quickly become acceptable-a statement of double counter-morality.

Agent intuited that an illicit liaison between subjects CASAL and SIMON may be taking place or in the offing. Status: note potential for leverage.

Subject WASHINGTON alluded to an unnamed person who may be active in terrorist circles, naming FRIENDLY'S TAVERN as possible rendezvous spot for subversive activities/recruiting.

Subjects CASAL and LAMBERT quickly closed off this line of chatter, indicating a lack of trust in Agent. Agent suggests that he may be burned with this group. Will monitor and alert Handler when / if wind-down and replacement becomes necessary.

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FRIENDLY'S TAVERN
"Your Bunk Away From Home"
Live Hotjazz
F, S, & S
HAR-4202

Shade

The souls of people slain by Carcosan beings still roam America's streets, hoping to reconnect with loved ones or exact vengeance on their former tormentors. They manifest as roughly human-shaped clouds of ever-swirling shadow. To people who never encountered them in the flesh, that's all they look like. But to those who knew them, their faces occasionally resolve into a smoky image of their original facial features before twisting back out of shape again. Shades can speak in a whispery, distorted version of the voices they had while alive.

Shades harm the mind but not the body. They may use the threat of their presence to impel a human target to do something physical on their behalf. Most commonly they seek the demise of those who tortured them for the dictatorship or shot them during the uprising.

When PCs kill them in combat, shades merely disperse for a day. To destroy one permanently, PCs must attack it with the object that mattered most to the shade when it was alive. Identifying the item requires, you guessed it, investigation.

Numbers: 1

Difficulty: Evenly Matched
(Escape 2, Other 4, Kill 5)

Difficulty Adjustments: -3 if you have the significant item

Toll: 0

Tags: Warspawn

Injuries, Minor and Major: Soul Shook/Commandment from the Grave

Shatterling

Shatterlings coalesce from the interaction of residual Carcosan energy and the brainwaves of a distressed human mind. These thought forms appear in locations where people become susceptible to negative suggestion, such as haunted houses, graveyards, prisons, and murder scenes. They take the apparent shape of a horror an agitated person unconsciously fears or expects to encounter.

Plucking a template from the mind of a tormented onlooker we'll call an experiencer, they may look like classic ghosts, night hags, or UFO aliens. When their experiencers are ex-revolutionaries, they may manifest as faceless torturers wearing DIS uniforms, grotesquely distorted riot cops, or the twisted spawn of Castagnite laboratories.

Once a shatterling appears, others can see and interact with it, perceiving it as its experiencer envisioned it. Although it possesses no physical reality and can't be photographed, it seems entirely solid to anyone meeting one, especially if it's hacking at you with a scythe or machete.

Shatterlings act according to their experiencers' assumptions, but without independent thought or volition. This may tie them to a location, or allow them to appear anywhere the experiencer, or anyone else who fears them, travels.

Pseudo-entities who manifest by belief can be destroyed by it as well. If an investigator thinks a shatterling has a physical form, that investigator can kill it. However, as soon as an individual encountering one concludes that it's unreal, it becomes nearly impossible to destroy—for that person, at least. Inconvenient!

Numbers: 1

Difficulty: Evenly Matched
(Escape 2, Other 5, Kill 6)

Difficulty Adjustments: +3 for each PC combatant who knows it's a shatterling or thinks it's unreal

Toll: 0

Tags: Warspawn

Injuries, Minor and Major:
Neuropathic Swipe/Neuropathic Disequilibrium

Sleeper

During their years in power the Castaigne regime infected hundreds of unknowing experimental subjects with a subliminal mental trigger. Once exposed to the Yellow Sign, these sleepers obey pre-programmed orders to commit acts of mayhem against opponents. Orders differ from one sleeper to the next. One set of instructions might send the sleeper looking for an authority figure to strangle; another could command an act of sabotage against infrastructure.

The activation also triggers a physical transformation, juking the victim's strength, stamina, and capacity for healing to inhuman levels.

Sleepers retain their conscious personalities and ability to communicate even as the instructions force them to perform actions that horrify them. They beg for help and mercy even as they crush the throats of their foes or tear their way through opponents.

In your mystery involving the sleepers, the operative activating them may know which specific individuals he's looking for and what orders they carry. Or he might just go around flashing the Yellow Sign at possible candidates hoping to instigate random chaos.

Numbers: 1

Difficulty: Superior (Escape 2, Other 5, Kill 6)

Toll: 1

Tags: Human

Injuries, Minor and Major:
Superhuman Blow/Superhuman Smash

Sphyx

The Bronx Park project's most valued contribution to the Castaigne regime remains an uncovered secret—until the investigators cross paths with it.

A BPZS expedition located a non-mammalian humanoid species in the Florida Everglades in the early '20s. Decades later its research scientists imbued human subjects with the DNA of the now-deceased captured specimens. The experimental subjects were called sphyx, the same name given to the originals.

The hybridization process allows subjects to turn invisible

at will. The only way to see a sphyx who has chosen to remain unseen: cover them with a visible substance that sticks to human skin. As if that weren't enough, sphyxes also read olfactory information with the acuity of a pollen-seeking insect. To do this, they unfurl antenna-like feelers located on the tops of their skulls. Given a scent sample they can use their thousands of chemoreceptors to zero in on a target's location from miles away. Sphyxes can detect traces of a scent up to a week old. When within 10 m of a target, they can assess its hormonal profile, mood, recently ingested foods, and general state of health. They can perform chemical analyses on inanimate objects as well, allowing them to keenly identify substances ranging from accelerants to explosives, toxins, bacteria, spores, and perfumes.

Their invisibility and heightened senses made them superstar secret police, bodyguards, and assassins. Sphyx abilities thrilled and frightened successive Castaigne regimes. Fearing that a large population of them would inevitably rise up and supplant humankind, they strictly rationed the number of hybridization procedures performed.

The process is only possible during the first 12 months of human life. BPZS researchers chose orphans, sometimes of dissidents murdered by the regime, to undergo the transformation.

The process also gave its

recipients classically ideal physical proportions. No matter what they eat, their physiques display the perfected musculature of Greek statues. Their facial features likewise project an intimidatingly handsome or beautiful symmetry. A sphyx may decide that this is the greatest power of all, setting aside the dangerous invisibility and weird antenna thing to go into politics or entertainment. These types will want to preserve the secret of their birth at all costs, up to and including murder.

Sphyx who have learned that their parents were regime victims may now use their powers to track down and kill anyone who had a hand in their hybridization. They could just as easily stalk post-revolutionary America as homicidal revanchists, working to instate a new tyranny, with a sphyx elite in command. Or they might act as freelancers, selling their services to whoever pays the most.

Numbers: 1

Difficulty: Vastly Superior
(Escape 3, Other 6, Kill 7)

Difficulty Adjustments: -2 if rendered visible by some kind of coating; -1 if near a source of an overwhelmingly awful smell; +1 if the sphyx's presence was unsuspected before the fight began

Toll: 2

Tags: Hybrid

Injuries, Minor and Major (while invisible): Surprise Kidney Stab/Surprise Throat Slash

Injuries, Minor and Major (while visible): Laceration/Stab Wound

Thermosaur

While exploring what remains of the Bronx Park Zoological Society complex, the team may come across the bones and scales of a thermosaur. These are not fossils, but the preserved remains of a specimen found dead at the beginning of the last century. A fully aquatic relative of the spinosaurus, the thermosaur is 15 m long and equipped not only with front and back legs but a set of bat-like wings protruding from its shoulders. Though evocative of a dragon, the thermosaur used these to propel itself through the water, not for flight. The thermosaur requires warm waters and was presumed by the paleontologists who captured it to be traveling along with the gulf stream.

An encounter with a live thermosaur suggests a scenario with an adventurous, pulpy tone, perhaps as a break from creepy reality horror.

Numbers: 1

Difficulty: Overwhelming
(Escape 3, Other 7, Kill 8)

Toll: 2

Tags: Relict

Injuries, Minor and Major:
Dinosaur Wound/Dinosaur Bite

Ux

During the early decades of the Castaigne regime, the Bronx Park Zoological Society undertook a program of reverse evolution to resurrect prehistoric creatures. Aided by Carcosan science they

attempted to backward-engineer extinct animals from the genetic material of their closest surviving evolutionary relatives. Despite their best efforts they never grew the stegosaurus Hildred II craved. However, they did succeed in breeding ux (plural uxen), a near-replica of the praxax, a relative of the terror birds that took on the apex predator role in the Americas 33 million years ago. Nine to ten feet tall, equipped with an enormous, flesh-rending beak, the ux can out-run a car, then rip its roof off to get at the delicious humans inside. Unlike more familiar flightless birds like the ostrich and emu, they do not use their clawed feet as weapons.

Though uxen were put on display at Bronx Park in the '30s, and photographs of them can be found in archives, few today believe they exist. The insurgents who unwittingly freed a breeding pair from the Bronx Zoo's covert enclosures could attest to that, had they survived.

Like most hybrids from this project, uxen are presumably susceptible to control and influence by supernatural intelligences.

Numbers: 1-2

Difficulty: Superior (Escape 2, Other 5, Kill 6)

Toll: 1

Tags: Hybrid

Injuries, Minor and Major:
Puncturing Beak/Rending Beak

Other Monster Birds

Records of the Bronx Park Zoo describe two monstrous flight-capable birds that survived at least until the beginning of the last century. Both the ekaf-bird and the ool-yllick hunted the thermosaur, nipping gobbets of flesh from between its scaled armor plates as it swam the gulf stream.

Numbers: 2-3

Difficulty: Evenly Matched
(Escape 2, Other 4, Kill 5)

Toll: 0

Tags: Relict

Injuries, Minor and Major:
Puncturing Beak/Rending Beak





SLEEPING DOGS

In this introductory scenario, the team's first foray into politics leads them to the murder of a fellow ex-partisan turned People's Deputy. The killing leads them to a continuation of the old regime's riot dog program, and a monstrous case of prewar guilt.

Crisis

The team investigates the murder of a charismatic politician, after his head is found in the wastebasket of his office at the People's Congress.

The Alien Truth

The killer deposited the head there in a panicked attempt to misdirect from the real murder scene—Hank's garage, in a nearby bedroom community. Evidence there points to a riot dog attack. The apparent involvement of these savage creatures, bioengineered by the old regime, may send the ex-partisans nosing around Gevaudan Industries, a company with sinister ties supposedly dedicated to eradicating them. The Hussar past of its CEO and chief researcher, Dr. Thomas Frenet, may put him at the top of their suspect list.

But the truth lies elsewhere: exposure to an old Frenet experiment has turned one of Hank's old freedom fighter cell members into a lycanthrope. A spasm of guilt led to a terrible transformation, and his former leader's slaughter.

Opportunity

Solving the case impresses the group's political contact, turning her into their first key ally. They gain the Chit card "Your First Patron."

Risks

This is the group's first rodeo, so they do not yet have a political power base to put in peril. No Risks occur in this scenario.

Cast of Characters

Hank Knight: The victim.

The group remembers him as a dashing colleague. Until his death he was the leading exponent of a political movement compatible with, but not exactly the same as, the team's agenda.

Tami Akana: The group's political contact, also a People's Deputy.

Dr. Thomas Frenet: Former

head of the DIS riot dog program, now head of Gevaudan Industries. He's up to something, but it's not this. (Where applicable, rename this character to make him the descendant of an intelligence officer or similar shadowy GMC from *The Wars* sequence you just played.)

Dave “the Cat” Katz: The real killer, Hank's former right-hand man, with riot dog DNA coursing through his veins.

Other members of Hank's cell:

Kimberley Block, “The Block”:

The cell's combat expert.

Alec Dowden, “Sneaker”: The infiltration specialist.

Nancy Thaler, “Gears”: The resident mechanic.

Harvey Eckhouse, “Money”: The logistics and finance guy.

Hank's political rivals, who the group will likely want to rule out as suspects:

Mercedes Marshall: An apparent political adversary of Hank's who was having a secret affair with him.

Penny Ross: A genuine political adversary.

Timeline

Thursday 7:00 pm: Hank is last seen in his office

Friday 8:00 am: Hank puts the pork shoulder in the slow cooker.

Friday 8:30 am: Leaving the garage to head for work, Hank is confronted by Dave Katz. Dave unexpectedly turns into monstrous riot dog form and kills him. Panicking, he improvises a cover for what really happened.

After stealing his keys, he saws off Hank's head, puts it in a duffel bag, and drives to the Congress building.

Friday 10:15 am: Dave sneaks in and deposits the head in Hank's wastebasket. He drives home to his apartment.

Friday 3:15 pm: Carla finds the head and the team becomes involved.

Saturday evening: Time Hank had set for his party.

Scenes

Prologue

Have players, if needed, introduce their characters to one another, describing their pre-revolutionary occupations, Drives, Parallels, and Worst Memories.

If you haven't already established the Goal, as discussed on p. 10, this is where you do that.

Once the investigation is underway the characters may react to certain GMCs depending on their receptivity or hostility to their Goal. They discover that Hank would likely have supported them, and that Mercedes and Penny disapprove of their agenda.

The GMCs' attitudes toward potential group Goals are listed below.



SKIPPING THE GOAL

When running *Sleeping Dogs* as a one-shot, you can either:

- Describe the group as pursuing the “Banish the Supernatural” Goal (rather than expending precious time asking the group to choose one).
- Drop the Goal angle entirely, substituting some other personal reason for the group to investigate. The most obvious hook: Hank saved their bacon once, during the Struggle. They’re at the People’s Congress to give boring testimony to an even more boring subcommittee when they learn of his death. Feeling an obligation to a fallen comrade, they leap into investigative mode.

Shut Down Government Lethal Chambers

Hank: Guardian; regarded GLCs as a source of moral decay and thus a threat to public order.

Mercedes: Originalist; “GLCs were an innovation of the Winthrop administration, and should not be thrown out with the Castaigne bathwater.”

Penny: All-For-One/Renouncer; “People are free to do what they want, which includes autonomy over their own demise.”

Preserve Government Lethal Chambers

Hank: Originalist; never spoke of them one way or the other but a rollback to the Winthrop era would presumably leave GLCS in place.

Mercedes: Commercial; “No new business wants to locate near a GLC. It’s time for hope and enterprise, not resignation and death.”

Penny: Renouncer; “Too many former members of the regime are using the chambers, when they should be coming forward, confessing what they did, and earning their forgiveness.”

Truth and Reconciliation

Hank: Mercantilist; feared that too many people who were unwillingly complicit with the regime would be tried and executed if war crimes trials went forward.

Mercedes: Originalist; “The Castaignes spat on the constitution for a hundred years. Tyrants will rise again if we don’t exact a punishment for the ages.”

Penny: Guardian; “Criminals must pay for their crimes, and that goes double for mass murderers.”

If the team pursues any Goal other than this one, Hank may or may not have additional sympathies but is always an advocate of war crimes trials. Passages in the scenario text assume this to be true, but then tell you how to handle this option in a parenthetical note tagged Variant Hank.

War Crimes Trials

Hank: Guardian; wanted criminals held accountable.

Mercedes: All-For-One; “Enough with prisons and electric chairs. The state must not kill.”

Penny: Renouncer; “Without forgiveness, we will devour ourselves in a cycle of revenge and reprisal.”

Preserve Order

Hank: Originalist; believed that strong policing was also a feature of the democratic era.

Mercedes: Commercial; “We can’t be strangled by government regulations.”

Penny: All-For-One/Renouncer; “When you give cops too much power, they instinctively use it on behalf of the wealthy.”

Reinstate Freedom

Hank: Initiator; believed in new ways of doing things, which meant giving people choices.

Mercedes: Mercantilist; “The Castaignes had a lot of bad ideas but their business regulations kept the economy going.”

Penny: Guardian; “Every crook and scam artist talks of freedom. What people really want after all the bloodshed is safety.”

Banish the Supernatural

Hank: Guardian; fought supernatural beings during the revolution and considered them a significant threat.

Mercedes: All-For-Ones; “If magic really does exist, we should find out how to use it to heal our

fractured society.”

Penny: Mercantilist/Renouncer; “We can harness Carcosan technology to rebuild our shattered economy.”

Harness the Supernatural

Hank: Mercantilist; grew up wealthy and knows some people who used Carcosan technologies innocuously.

Mercedes: Guardian; “Magic is the weapon of the enemy and must be banished from this reality.”

Penny: Commercial/Renouncer; “We need healthy business competition, not a monopoly by practitioners of alien ritual.”

Get Elected

Hank: Guardian; was all for electing as many ex-partisans as possible.

Mercedes: Mercantilist; “Ex-partisans should leave elected office to people who understand the economy. We need them as cops and soldiers.”

Penny: Renouncer; “Hank wanted to elect ex-partisans, who are too harsh in their thinking.”

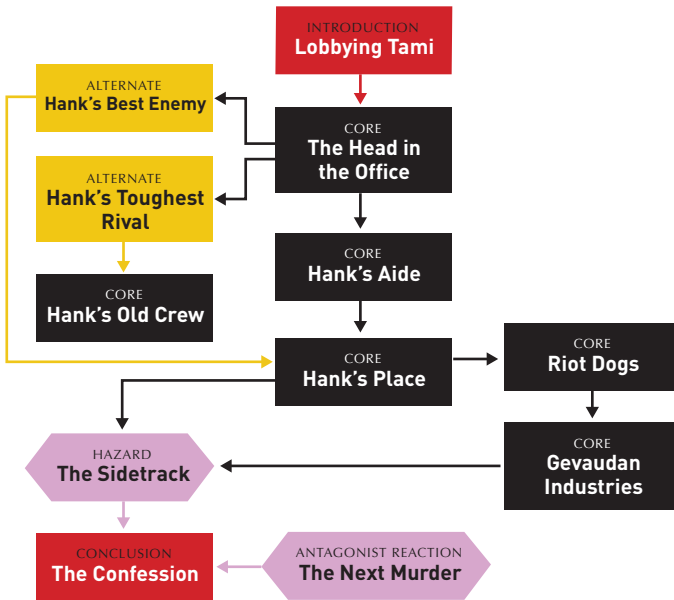
Build a Business

Hank: Commercial; was all for ex-partisans making some green.

Mercedes: Mercantilist; “Existing businesses will bring the economy back to life without hordes of meddling amateurs getting in the way.”

Penny: All-For-One; “A revolutionary who trades on past glories to rake in a buck is an opportunist of the worst kind.”

SCENE ZONE DIAGRAM
SLEEPING DOGS



Lobbying Tami

Scene Type: Introduction
Lead-Out: The Head in the Office

The scenario begins in the People's Congress, in the office of Tami Akana. Like most bureaucratic environments in this timeline, it combines grim coloring and fixtures with cheaply constructed, deteriorating utilitarian design. Tami has attempted to liven up the place with a print of a colorful

Impressionist painting. If it isn't a work by either the Paris-era Landscape or Portrait Painter PC, it's Georges Seurat's "A Sunday Afternoon on the Island of La Grande Jatte," just as famous in this timeline as in ours.

Then describe the group's relationship to Tami Akana. During the war she coordinated between them and the non-violent dissident side of the anti-Castaigne movement. The group likes and trusts her. If desired, ask one or more players to briefly describe the incidents where she won this trust.

Characters with Politics ratings above 0 know:

- That she keeps above the factional fray.
- When parties start to form, all of them will try to recruit her.
- Although they haven't heard her directly endorse whatever Goal they're pursuing, she's never spoken against it, either.

In short, she's their obvious first stop as they try to orient themselves as rookies in the new world of post-Castaigne politics.

Tami greets them warmly and mentions that she was just thinking of that time when they saved her life, along with several other activists, when all hell broke loose at the Bronx Park Zoo. She asks what brings them down to the Congress hall and how she can help.

This gives the players the chance to pitch their agenda to her. She responds to it as a worthy aim, if not particularly her number one priority at the moment. Give the impression that Tami is a behind-the-scenes facilitator type who wants to maintain unity between ex-revolutionaries as long as she can. Her worst fear is that the factions will spin away from each other, miring the constitutional process in factional squabbles that create room for a return to authoritarianism.

In response to player questions, she supplies the basic scoop on the budding political situation, describing the factions and the

conflicts that divide them, as given starting on p. 41.

(core, *The Head in the Office*)

As interest in this general exposition starts to flag, tell them that a terrified shriek pierces the thin walls of Tami's office. Something terrible is happening nearby.

The Head in the Office

Scene Type: Core

Lead-In: Lobbying Tami

Lead-Outs: Hank's Best Enemy, Hank's Aide, Hank's Toughest Rival

It is 3:15 pm on a Friday.

The scream emanates from a nearby office, its marbled glass inset window marked with the gold-painted inscription Hank Knight, People's Deputy.

Custodial staffer Carla Vargas, a heavy-set woman in her fifties, stands over a nondescript metal wastepaper basket, hyperventilating. She stares down into it, transfixed.

Reassurance calms her down enough to tell what little she knows, and to step aside so that the group can look inside the basket.

It contains a severed head. Difficulty 4 **Composure** test to avoid Shock—**Minor:** The Shudders; **Major:** Shaken.

Both Carla and Tami can confirm that it is Hank Knight, former leader of a revolutionary cell

much like the one the investigators belonged to.

Any group member who wants to stipulate that they've briefly met or dealt with Hank before or after the regime change may do so. (In a one-shot, you may want to establish this regardless, supplying the group's motivation to investigate.)

Physical Clues

Forensics: The head was severed postmortem, by a serrated blade, most likely a hacksaw. The wastebasket contains very little blood, suggesting that some time elapsed between the decapitation and the discovery of the head.

No blood spatter can be seen here.

Science: Nor does it show up under a black light test.

Forensics: The head has not been decomposing for much more than twenty-four hours.

On a search of the office in general or the desk in particular: A drawer in the desk contains an olive-green duffel bag. Half the group owns or has owned exactly the same model of duffel bag, purchased from a Cas-Mart department store.

Like many ex-partisans with enemies, Hank kept his home address confidential.

Talking to Carla

Carla had been cleaning the office for the last half an hour, leaving the wastebasket as one of her final tasks. The thought that

she was in there with that... that... for so long causes her to panic and shudder all over again. Each deputy's office gets cleaned three times a week, so the head can't have been there more than a few days.

She liked Mr. Knight, who always took time to acknowledge her and ask after her family. She can't think who in particular who would want to hurt him. Since he was a hero of the revolution, she guesses the killer was mostly likely an ex-Hussar. She used to work in this building back when it was Hussar headquarters and all of them were beasts.

(core, *Hank's Aide*) She begs the group to be gentle in breaking the news to his aide, Susan Manos, who left the room for the Congressional lounge when she came in to clean. Susan was sweet on him, she hints. If pressed to back this up, Carla just says that she can always can tell, no matter how much people kid themselves. (Carla believes this but it isn't true.)

Talking to Tami

Tami is also visibly distressed, especially if the group lets her see the severed head.

She says that Hank had lots of enemies.

He was spearheading the charge for war crimes trials. Any collaborator with the old regime who has reason to fear a firing squad might strike against him.

(**Variant Hank:** Lots of people

want the killers of their families and friends dealt with harshly. As a fighter who now calls for forgiveness, Hank received voluminous hate mail accusing him of cowardice, treachery, and worse.)

If asked about political rivals, Tami mentions two who come immediately to mind:

(alternate, *Hank's Best Enemy*) Mercedes Marshall frequently clashed with him in private meetings and during sessions of Congress.

(alternate, *Hank's Toughest Rival*) Though Penny Ross showed little personal animus toward him, she strongly opposed his policies.

(core, *Hank's Aide*) Like many ex-partisans with enemies, Hank wasn't exactly free with his home address. His aide, Susan Manos, probably has it.

Hank's Aide

Scene Type: Core

Lead-In: The Head in the Office

Lead-Outs: Hank's Place, Hank's Toughest Rival

Susan Manos' severe business attire includes a sharp-shouldered suit jacket and thick-heeled black shoes. She smokes pensively and speaks in clipped, direct sentences. News of Hank's death hits her like a quick electric shock before she reverts to her brusque demeanor.

Counterinsurgency, used as an Interpersonal ability, convinces Susan that the team can be trusted as unofficial investigators into her boss' murder. She doesn't trust the cops to get it right. They're riddled with regime sympathizers who feared prosecution under the tough war crimes tribunals Hank was fighting for.

(**Variante Hank:** Half the force is made up of former revolutionaries, who mostly hate the idea of a Truth and Reconciliation Commission.)

Susan last saw Hank when he left the office around 7:00 pm last night.

(core, *Hank's Place*) She supplies his home address, a two-story home in the bedroom community of Dobbs Ferry.

(alternate, *Hank's Toughest Rival*) Asked who would have him killed, she says it had to have been Penny Ross. Ross blocked him at every turn.

Manos claims that Ross receives funding from former war criminals, who easily have the skills and connections to pull off an assassination. The head in the wastebasket? Has to be a warning to others to abandon the tribunals.

(**Variante Hank:** Manos says that Ross gets her funding from the most radical ex-partisans, who care more about revenge than building a society that can hold it together.)

Despite Hank's effort to conceal it from her, Susan knows that he and Mercedes Marshall were having a fling. Though she

disapproved of the dalliance with an opponent, Susan doesn't want to see either of them embarrassed and so does not mention Mercedes unless the team brings her up. Then she affirms whatever Tami had to say about her while trying to steer them back toward Penny Ross.

She bristles if anyone brings up Carla's theory that she had a crush on Hank. Susan keeps her work and private life strictly separate.

Hank's Toughest Rival

Scene Type: Alternate

Lead-Ins: The Head in the Office, Hank's Best Enemy

Lead-Out: Hank's Best Enemy, Hank's Old Crew

Slight, white-haired, and professorial, Penny Ross reacts to the news of Hank's death with either detached surprise (if this scene immediately follows *The Head in the Office* and she is learning the news cold) or with composure and platitudes.

She says she admired Hank as a revolutionary war hero but feared what would happen if he got what he wanted in politics. Then she lays out her philosophical objection to his politics, earnestly attempting to sway the investigators to the merits of her cause.

The thought that Hank's followers will be able to make a martyr of him and push his agenda

through fills Penny with dread. She might offer her support for their agenda, if they bring it up and it does not conflict with hers, should they find and release evidence undermining Hank's image. In the unlikely event that they follow through on this, the "Your First Patron" Chit card they get for completing the scenario would refer to her rather than Tami.

(alternate, *Hank's Best Enemy*) Asked to name a prime suspect, Penny mentions Mercedes Marshall. Last week she stepped onto an elevator, encountering the two of them together. She realized she was interrupting a heated exchange of some kind. Penny doesn't know what it was about, but Mercedes' rage was unmistakable. (Penny is misreading a lover's quarrel as a political conflict and prelude to murder.)

(core, *Hank's Old Crew*) If the group wins her trust by seeming ready to discredit Hank or makes use of an appropriate-seeming Interpersonal ability, Penny reveals that she received a tip regarding past improprieties by his old cell. One of them, a man named Harvey Eckhouse, may have siphoned money from Castaigne-related businesses. The anonymous tip mentioned the place where Hank's gang hangs out: a bar off Highway 287 called The Trough. She was about to hire an investigator to check this out, but maybe the team wants to take a look...

Should the group push back on this, Penny concedes that the

tip could well be groundless. For all she knows it comes from an ex-Hussar source, rather than a principled believer in Truth and Reconciliation.

Hank's Best Enemy

Scene Type: Alternate

Lead-Ins: The Head in the Office, Hank's Toughest Rival

Lead-Outs: Hank's Place, Hank's Toughest Rival

Mercedes Marshall can be found in her office. Tall, with long wavy hair and bright red nail polish, she speaks plainly and with passion.

Is she a Mercantilist? She wears a subtly tailored, perfectly fitting suit.

Otherwise: She wears a boxy suit in a military shade of olive.

Her demeanor varies depending on when the heroes choose to talk to her.

Does this scene occur immediately after The Head in the Office? They find her pacing around her desk, rehearsing a speech. She has not yet heard that Hank has been killed. When they tell her the news, she collapses into her rickety desk chair as if punched in the gut. All color drains from her face.

Otherwise: She sits at her desk, stunned and withdrawn.

Psychology: Her grief over Hank's demise exceeds that of an acquaintance or rival.

If urged to tell all she knows

about Hank for the good of the republic (**Inspiration**) or assured that what she tells them will remain totally confidential (**Reassurance**) she tells them that, despite their political differences, she and Hank were secretly seeing each other. She wants whoever did this caught and punished.

(core, *Hank's Place*) She supplies Hank's address and says that they met there occasionally. The last time they were together was at his home, three days ago. Since then they've passed each other in the corridors here but kept it cool. News of their relationship would cause problems for both of them—a price neither was ready to pay yet.

(alternate, *Hank's Toughest Rival*) Mercedes assumes they'll want to rule out Penny Ross as a suspect. She blocked Hank at every turn and might be capable of anything under that bloodless, dispassionate goody-two shoes persona of hers.

Mercedes stresses, if asked, that neither Susan nor Tami could possibly do such a thing.

She also leaps to the obvious conclusion that someone from his revolutionary past, she figures. Just about anyone who had reason to fear a war crimes tribunal could benefit from his removal—provided they could keep their hands clean. Mercedes has no specific names to suggest, though.

(**Variant Hank:** Some former insurgents assume anyone opposed to war crimes trials is in

the pocket of the Hussars. One time he found a threatening note to that effect, pinned to the front door of his house.)

Confronted with Penny's elevator story (see previous scene), she flushes and...

- (if she has admitted the affair) Says that it was an argument over Hank's lack of caution in concealing their fling.
- (otherwise) Calls it a political argument that got personal. Any denial of the affair triggers

Bullshit Detector.

Hank's Place

Scene Type: Core

Lead-Ins: Hank's Aide,
Hank's Best Enemy, Hank's
Old Crew

Lead-Outs: Hank's Old
Crew, Riot Dogs

Hank lived in a two-story home in Dobbs Ferry, New York. A wheezing commuter train, leaving from the crumbling, war-ravaged hulk of Grand Central Station, connects it to the downtown core.

Both the front and back door are locked and booby-trapped. The pull-down aluminum garage door is closed but not locked.

Counterinsurgency gets the group safely through the doors, disarming the bombs. They recognize the jury-rigged workmanship as typical guerrilla tradecraft.

As the group enters, they smell the irresistible aroma of cooking meat.

Does the group take this in stride? Keep going.

Do one or more players instead react with thewwledge that they're playing a horror game and assume that this might be burnt human flesh? Difficulty 4 **Composure** test to avoid Shock —**Minor:** False Alarm; **Major:** The Yips.

The tantalizing/alarming smell comes from a pork shoulder in a slow cooker. It has finished cooking but is now on the warm setting.

Trivia: Slow cookers like this one have timers, so it could have started after Hank was killed.

Science: But not too long after, as you can't leave meat out at room temperature for long before you start to risk bacterial contamination.

The home's interior radiates the disorder of a busy guy who doesn't worry too much about cleaning up. No pigsty, but far from immaculate.

Around the kitchen the team spots signs of party planning: cases of beer, bags of potato chips, plastic drinking cups.

(core, *Hank's Old Crew*) On the fridge a yellow sticky note bears a phone number and the scrawled words "The Trough." If the group calls the number, the bartender, Rico Portabiles, confirms that Hank placed a liquor order through them. Rico indicates that Hank and his crew are his pals, and regulars at his place.

The real evidence lies behind Hank's garage door. When the group pulls it up, they find the rest of his body, wedged upright in his 1963 Castabolt convertible. This vehicle passes for a classic sports car in this reality.

Sticky blood covers the concrete garage floor. A crimson-slicked hacksaw lies near the car.

Forensics: The decapitation occurred post-mortem. The wounds that killed him look like those from a dog mauling. But not an ordinary dog: something bigger and much more savage.

(core, *Riot Dogs*)

Counterinsurgency: This could easily be the work of riot dogs, bioengineered animals deployed by the old regime against dissidents and freedom fighters.

Hank was fully dressed for work in a suit and tie when he was attacked. His wallet remains in his pocket, but his keys—which the team might correctly presume to include his office key—are missing.

Canvassing the Neighborhood

None of Hank's neighbors saw any sign of a riot dog or anything else untoward recently.

All however were invited to Hank's party on Saturday night.

(Should the team check back with them, none of Hank's colleagues or co-workers in the Congress building knew about the party. It was for the neighborhood, and for Hank's old running buddies.)

Names and profiles of neighbors to use as needed:

- Paul Ku, a roofer and amateur weightlifter who thought Hank was a solid guy.
- Geoffrey and Regina Reilly, easily frightened retirees, who predicted that Hank would bring trouble to the neighborhood.
- Cecelia Boone, flute player for the New York Symphony, who had heard of Hank but never interacted with him.

Calling the Cops

Jurisdiction over this part of the crime scene belongs to the Westchester County Sheriff's Department. If called, blond, blandly handsome Sheriff Jordan von Sommer shows up with several of his deputies.

Von Sommer got his job from his family connections and projects a sweet-natured dumb guy vibe. He affably agrees with whatever theories the team puts forward and seems content to let them do his legwork for him.

Trivia: The von Sommers are a rich family with Mercantilist ties. Jordan's job as a sheriff suggests that he comes from one of the large clan's less wealthy branches.

A **Cop Talk** Push establishes a previous relationship to him.

Riot Dogs

Scene Type: Core

Lead-In: Hank's Place

Lead-Out: Gevaudan Industries

The team can use a mix of abilities to draw on their own knowledge of riot dogs. Or they can seek out a willing expert, who supplies the points below in response to specific questions.

In my game, the group looked up the town's veterinarian. Other players might seek a zoologist or other academic expert.

Whatever her background, let's call her Tracy Gillen. Play her as well-informed, concerned about the riot dog menace, and pleased to cooperate in a case that might involve the creatures.

Details here include material from the creature description on p. 87, restructured for easy exposition (so you needn't look that up as well).

History: Riot dogs began as police animals bred through ordinary means for additional size, strength, and ferocity.

Counterinsurgency: A generation ago regime scientists started using secret technology to make them even smarter, faster, and more dangerous.

Science: Canines are well known for genetic plasticity, a quality that allows many different shapes and sizes from the same root species.

Counterinsurgency: Riot dogs look like hybrids of German shepherds and hyenas.

Counterinsurgency: State security officers used to have them savage prisoners to soften them up for interrogation.

Counterinsurgency: When they bite, riot dogs inject a psychoactive poison that causes victims to relive their most devastating experiences.

History: When the regime fell, someone let them loose. Since then they've been breeding like rats. They sometimes swarm into a neighborhood, requiring people to hide behind closed doors until heavily armed Animal Control officers complete a sweep, a process that can take days.

Science: Their population uncontrolled by the DIS's science wing, the creatures now mutate at a rapid rate. The latest whelps could be capable of anything.

If asked to examine the body, Tracy confirms that the injuries show the classic signs of riot dog mauling.

(core, *Gevaudan Industries*)

People Person: A coffee shop acquaintance—you remember, good old Phil, with the aunt up in Canada—once told you about a riot dog invasion his sister's landscaper witnessed. Ordinary Animal Control officers couldn't get them out of a wooded area near a rich enclave. Its residents had to pool resources and hire Gevaudan Industries, located in nearby Mount Pleasant, New York.



With **Accounting** and time to conduct a search of business records, the team learns that the founder and CEO of Gevaudan Industries is Dr. Thomas Frenet, a notorious member of the Hussars' science wing.

Counterinsurgency: People suspected of far less serious war crimes than Frenet rot behind bars. Yet somehow, he is not only free, but running a company.

Business: His funding comes from several prominent Mercantilist families.

(These last clues may instead surface during *Gevaudan Industries*, below.)

Gevaudan Industries

Scene Type: Core

Lead-In: Riot Dogs, Hank's Old Crew

Lead-Out: Hank's Old Crew, The Confession

Signage clearly marks the location of Gevaudan Industries. It occupies three refurbished buildings in an otherwise war-ruined industrial park. From its brown brick to its boxy construction, it projects an image of anonymous blandness.

Gatekeepers

Nervous receptionist Della Sims serves as the first layer of defense against people walking in and trying to get to Frenet. She tries

to find out what they want and eventually calls on a higher-up to deal with them.

Depending on how they present themselves, the person she calls, cool and composed company official Krista Russell is either Gevaudan's Media Relations Officer, or its Head of Security.

Russell provides these answers to the group's questions:

- Dr. Frenet is a busy man and can't fit in an impromptu meeting with random drop-ins. (Like Frenet himself, Krista uses an Americanized pronunciation of his French family name: FREN-net not Fren-AY. If you're using a name from your Wars sequence for this character that can be likewise Americanized, do that.)
- Gevaudan Industries performs an important service, both in the near-term efforts of its containment unit, and in the farther-reaching aims of its research division.
- Containment supervises the teams who go out to eradicate riot dog infestations as they occur.
- It continues to expand as the riot dogs increase their range, spreading from the original point of release in New York across the eastern seaboard.
- The company is in talks with the Canadian government to expand its containment units north of the border, where they are sorely needed.
- If you sight riot dogs, do not approach them. Call this number

and we'll send Containment. (On this note Russell proffers her own business card, and one with the emergency number for Containment.)

- The Research Division seeks a cure for riot dogs—a means of eliminating this AIS entirely.
- “Oh, AIS? Yes, yes, a bit of jargon we use around here. Artificial Invasive Species.”
- Dr. Frenet heads research, taking personal charge of the various research programs.
- Yes, it is true that Dr. Frenet was required by the old regime to work on their riot dog program. The knowledge gained through that regrettable association can now be put to positive use.
- The identity of the individual who released the dogs during the final days of the revolution is of great interest to Gevaudan. Perhaps it means nothing—or maybe it provides a vital clue to their eventual eradication.

Though she tries her best to deflect them, when the team makes it clear that they're not going to relent until they talk to Frenet personally, Krista screws up her features and agrees to see if he can squeeze them in. A player can choose to win her over immediately and without fuss by spending an **Intimidation**, **Leadership**, or **Inspiration** Push.

Dr. Frenet

Frenet is a short, compact man with a shining bald pate. He wears a white lab coat over a black shirt

and black slacks and peers at the investigators through small-lensed, round glasses with thick black plastic frames.

He wants potentially influential ex-partisans like the PCs to believe, or at least reluctantly accept, that he has gone straight and wishes to be of maximum service to the new America. When rattled, flashes of his old self, the coolly efficient torturer, disrupt his placid self-presentation. In response to questions he says the following:

- He does not know Hank Knight. (**Bullshit Detector:** Judging from his facial twitch, he sure does.)
- The riot dog problem is bad and will only get worse. Like humans but unlike other animals, the riot dog population can expand exponentially.
- Without control entire cities might have to be abandoned to the creatures for generations.
- Frenet was only too happy to take on the responsibility of undoing this ecological disaster.
- Though of course if it had been up to him the dogs would never have been released in the first place. That fault lies squarely on the shoulders of unnamed revolutionaries—perhaps now members of the People's Congress.
- The riot dog program started more than 30 years ago. He joined it 15 years ago and ran it for the seven years before the revolution.
- Yes, sadly, he was required

to use the dogs to both to hunt suspected dissidents and to terrify them during interrogations.

- He never directly loosed them on demonstrators, but was, unfortunately, required to authorize their use for that purpose.
- During the old days riot dogs always returned to their trainers after completing their missions. They were bonded to particular handlers, who they obeyed as their alphas.
- Even if they were let loose by hostile operatives, as happened once, the trainers could find and recover the dogs.
- The problem with the final release of the dogs was that many of the trainers had already been killed or gone AWOL in the fighting. With no human alphas to call them to heel, they went feral, reverting to their pack instincts.
- Of the possible cures for the riot dog problem, the most promising one is a new friendly, non-aggressive strain now being bred in the lab. He hopes to engineer a propensity for gentleness as a dominant trait. When the strain is perfected, Gevaudan will release it into the wild to mate with the existing population, eventually resulting in a docile animal that presents no threat to people or other creatures.
- (core, *Hank's Old Crew*, if shown the photos of The Trough from his desk drawer; see

Sneaking In, below) Those are from an abandoned research effort to uncover the identity of the persons responsible for the riot dog release. Frenet had a private investigator determine the whereabouts of the former insurgent cell he suspects of having committed this shameful crime. They hang out at this bar.

- Frenet gave this up his inquiry when the head of the cell, Hank Knight, achieved political prominence.
- Also, he had to accept that no one other than him particularly wants to pursue the fighters who released the dogs. The populace excuses the deadly blunders of one side and excessively punishes those by the other.
- (leveraged clue, *The Confession*) Frenet suspected Hank's crew because they released the dogs once before. But back then trainers were able to recover the animals, with only a handful of civilian casualties.
- How many casualties? Oh, less than a dozen deaths. The dogs got into a tenement building and hit a rec room where children were playing.
- Frenet does his best to convince one or more team members to pay a supervised visit to one of the new, tame riot dogs; see below.

Who's a Good Boy?

Frenet ushers any investigators willing to meet one of the new dogs into a containment chamber in the complex's laboratory building. The walk there takes them past plexiglass walls, behind which dogs of various sizes gestate, suspended in artificial amniotic fluid. Frenet advises them to empty their pockets of any food products. He declines to join them inside the chamber. When they enter, its door seals shut after them. Then an electronically operated doggie door in corrugated metal slides up, allowing the dog to visit them.

Wagging its misshapen tail, the monstrous hyena-dog sniffs at them cautiously, then bounds over to jump up on them and attempt to lick their faces.

Build this up for maximum ominous effect.

If they let the dog bound up onto them and shower them with affection and saliva, nothing bad happens.

Should they flinch, the dog drops onto its haunches and growls.

A **Reassurance** Push or Difficulty 5 **Morale** test calms the dog.

An **Intimidation** Push causes it to back down, treating the character as its alpha.

Absent that, to Frenet's obvious chagrin, it attacks. Enclosed in the visitation chamber, Escape is not possible.

Solo Riot Dog

Numbers: 1

Difficulty: Weak (Escape N/A, Other 3, Kill 4)

Difficulty Adjustments: +1 if a combatant PC has expressed a love of dogs; +1 if a combatant PC has expressed a fear of dogs; -1 if a combatant PC has expressed a dislike of dogs

Toll: 0

Tags: Warspawn

Injuries, Minor and Major: Riot Dog Bite/Riot Dog Mauling

Sneaking In

Either before or after talking to Frenet, the group may choose to break into the complex after hours to gather additional information.

A character casing the joint with **Counterinsurgency** notes that security is tighter around the lab building than the office and administrative structures. (Though they may or may not know by this point what goes on in each building.) Also: the guards are employees of a separate security firm, meaning that a) they're probably not the toughest opponents, and b) they're probably regular working stiffs, not fanatical members of an evil organization.

Difficulty 4 **Sneaking** gets the group into the building housing Frenet's office. Difficulty for the lab area is 6.

A failure might pit them against security guards or put them in a room with angry riot dogs.

- Riot dogs are Tough but Outmatched (Escape 2, Other

3, Kill 4; Toll 0, **Injuries, Minor and Major:** Riot Dog Bite/Riot Dog Mauling).

- Security guards are Weak (Escape 1, Other 3, Kill 3; Toll 1, **Injuries, Minor and Major:** Pain Baton Tap/Pain Baton Hit).

In Frenet's office the group might find documentation providing information given in previous sections of this scene, perhaps in less slanted fashion.

(core, *Hank's Old Crew*) In his desk they find a sheaf of black and white photos of people going in and out of a bar called The Trough. Frenet's response, if confronted with this, appears in the sub-section detailing his interview. If the group has already met Hank's crew they see that the photos are of them, plus assorted random bar patrons.

The character with Sneaking can open the small safe in Frenet's office.

- It mostly contains folders full of raw scientific data. Science: It's hard to parse the numbers without context but they square with a genetic research project.
- The only valuables in the safe are a series of envelopes, each containing \$1,000 in small bills, each labeled with a month, starting with next month. There are four envelopes in all. (These contain Frenet's upcoming payoffs to Dave.)

Hank's Old Crew

Scene Type: Core
Lead-Ins: Gevaudan Industries, Hank's Toughest Rival, Hank's Place
Lead-Outs: Hank's Place, Gevaudan Industries, The Sidetrack

The Trough is your basic roadside drinking hole. Everybody knows your name but they're damn well not gonna spill it to outsiders.

Streetwise: This working-class bar is for serious drinkers, mostly male. They're rough and can probably handle themselves. Customers here might know a guy who knows a guy but won't be directly criminal themselves. If the group starts a fight inside, the locals and bouncers will probably join in, and not on your side. On the other hand, a fight that heads properly to the parking lot will be treated as nobody's business but those involved.

Counterinsurgency: Even if the group hasn't seen images of Hank's crew yet, it's easy to clock the crew that's been in the shit. They have that veteran, guarded hunch to their shoulders and have picked the most defensible table in the event of a firefight.

Hank's people are:

- Kimberley Block aka The Block, their broad-shouldered scrapper.
 - **Counterinsurgency:** You can tell she's retired from active

combat because she's let her ashen blond hair grow long and keeps it in a ponytail—a dangerous handhold for a hand-to-hand opponent.

- Alec Dowden aka Sneaker, a mousy-looking fellow in his fifties, dressed in a gray hoodie and tight dungarees. His threads are old and therefore all drab items from Castaigne-era government-run department stores.
 - Nancy Thaler aka Gears, keeps her hair close-cropped and has a bit of a beakish nose. Oil stains under her fingernails give away her occupation as a mechanic.
 - Dave Katz, aka the Cat, has chestnut-colored curly hair and wears a satin bomber jacket embroidered with the logo of the Fiery Five, a popular hotjazz combo.
 - **Counterinsurgency/Cop Talk:** He has a .38 jammed into his waistband at the small of his back, another in an ankle holster on the right-hand side, and a long knife taped to the opposite calf.
 - Harvey Eckhouse aka Money, the only one with any fashion sense or an apparent budget for clothes. Looks like a silver fox businessman type.
 - **Forensics:** A close look at his hands shows that someone once broke all of his fingers.
- How the scene goes down depends on whether the group headed here quickly or have taken care of other business first.

If the team has only completed the scenes at the Congress and Hank's Place, they'll be the ones breaking the news of Hank's death to his comrades. A Psychology spend (requested by the player; do not prompt) reveals that Dave Katz appears momentarily less shocked than the others.

Otherwise, they've learned this already and are pissed that the team is only just now coming to them. +1 Difficulty to the parking lot rumble, if it happens. Pushes can't be used to avoid the rumble.

Whether just taking on the fact of Hank's death or angrily waiting for the investigators to approach them, his crew figures they're the ones who should be looking into his murder and bringing the culprits to swift vigilante justice. They insist that the team turn over the case to them. When they resist, they offer to settle the matter with a brawl in the parking lot. They are really itching for this fight and are sufficiently grief-stricken not to care that the PCs aren't the fittest target for their rage. They agree to ground rules: no weapons, no intentional fatal blows.

Medicine/Streetwise: They've already put away quite a few shots, so they'll be easier to take than if you caught them at their best.

Psychology: They're looking to blow off steam, not to do any permanent harm.

In that context, the crew counts as Evenly Matched: (Escape 2, Other 4, Kill 5; Toll 0, **Injuries,**

Major and Minor: Roughed Up/Blow to the Head).

If your group devotes great effort to avoiding a physical confrontation and will feel a sense of accomplishment after doing so, let this work.

Even if Hank's gang wins (unlikely), the scrap clears the air. They concede that maybe someone with distance would do a better job of finding the killer. They still want in on the justice-dealing part, though.

Now they're ready to answer questions:

- They didn't leave too many enemies on the board by the end of the revolution. If someone killed Hank, it was probably one of his political opponents. Like someone who fears war crimes tribunals.
- Harvey gives them a list of Castagnites they helped bring in. As far as he knows they're all still in jail and isolated from the outside world. But maybe the team wants to double-check. (Should they do that, they find that all of those people remain imprisoned. Dispense with this dead end as briskly as you can.)
- Anyone asked about Frenet or riot dogs denies any first-hand knowledge of them. Whoever's talking, this pings **Bullshit Detector**.
- If asked for suspects, all start by assuming it's some revanchist cell striking out against key people in the push for war crimes trials. When pressed

for second choices, each has a different culprit—while insisting that they have no specific information and are only making educated guesses.

- Kimberley says they should treat Penny Ross as a suspect. No one can be as goody-goody as her image. She's probably taking revanchist money under the table.
- Harvey tells them to check out Mercedes Marshall. Once they dig into her, they'll know why.
- Alec says he doesn't trust that Tami Akana character. She's too well-connected, and never takes a stand.
- (alternate, *The Sidetrack*) Dave says they should look into Renny Perkins, a runner for several resistance cells. Hank's crew dropped him after coming to suspect that the Hussars had turned him. A few weeks ago, Hank mentioned receiving threatening messages that might have been from Renny, who maybe feared that he'd be swept up as a traitor to the revolution.

Running a scene where a group of GMCs meet the team all at once can be tricky. Avoid having characters you play talk to each other; if you can't, summarize what they're saying instead of staging dialogue with yourself.

Do the characters close out the joint alongside Hank's crew?

They can watch them get into their

respective vehicles and drive off. Everyone is completely smashed and drives terrifyingly well all the same. The players may find this remarkable, but the characters don't. Drinking and driving wasn't all that taboo during the Castaigne years, and folks care about it even less in these heady days of freedom.

Should a player ask, their vehicles are:

- a customized jeep, commandeered from the riot police, with insignia painted over (Kimberley)
- an old brown sedan (Dave)
- a luxury sedan (Harvey)
- a mustard colored compact (Nancy)
- a battered red convertible (Alec)

Should the team contemplate following any of the crew,

Counterinsurgency tells them that with skilled operators like these they can't expect to get far. At best you'd manage to find out where they live, and, as hammered as they all are, they'll know they were followed. Quickly dispense with this dead-end lead if the players persist.



The Sidetrack

Scene Type: Hazard

Lead-In: The Confession, Hank's Old Crew

Lead-Out: The Confession

Bureaucracy or **Cop Talk** turn up the address of Renny Perkins: a decaying bungalow on Staten Island.

Should the player with **Counterinsurgency** ask, that character remembers Perkins. He used to perform support tasks, like message delivery and materials scrounging, for a couple of crews. On a Push, the character also recalls his paranoid streak and fondness for talking shop about door-mounted boobytraps.

Perkins has sunk into half-justified paranoia and has trapped every entrance to his home, which he rarely leaves. He is present when the team arrives.

Getting in without an explosion requires a Difficulty 6 **Insurgency** test; -2 to Difficulty with the above Push. On a failure, the character making the test takes the Injury card "In the Blast Radius;" anyone nearby takes "Thrown Free of the Explosion."

Perkins, a shaggy-haired guy wrapped in a plaid blanket, bits of cheese powder in his beard, pops up with a shotgun. A Difficulty 4 **Fighting** test disarms him.

He assumes that the team has come to assassinate him, on

account of those rumors about being a double-crosser.

At first, he insists that it was all a bum rap, but **Interrogation** or **Intimidation** get him to admit that they backed him into a corner, giving him no choice to turn informant. But he mostly only confirmed to the DIS what they already knew. When he could get away with it, he'd feed them disinfo. He doesn't deserve no war crimes trial, he pleads, and certainly no summary execution.

Renny splutters a shocked denial if asked about Hank's murder. He's on the defense here. No way would he risk going anywhere near Knight. And march into the chamber of deputies with a head in a bag? That's a triple no way! (If the team hasn't mentioned this detail, he heard it on the news.)

Bullshit Detector calls this as panicked but truthful.

He has no idea why Dave would finger him as Hank's killer.

- He did see the Cat a couple weeks back, at an informal swap meet where materiel gets bought and sold.
- The Cat was selling some guns and didn't get very much for them.
- Renny was picking up some C-4—fat lot of good that did him, he complains, looking at the exploded bomb that failed to keep the heroes at bay.
 - “Did he see me buying explosives? Sure, and then I got a bad feeling and hauled ass out of there.”

- (alternate, *The Confession*; a player must ask specifically about this) Yeah, Hank and the gang had a run-in with riot dogs. Before the revolution, Hank and Gears got picked up by the Hussars, who interrogated them using the dogs. Renny remembers from the grapevine that something bad happened, but if there were more details he never heard them.

The Next Murder

Scene Type: Antagonist Reaction

Lead-Ins: Hank's Old Crew

Lead-Out: The Confession

Triggering Condition: When the group a) has run out of leads or b) your pacing requires a jolt...

...they find out that Alec “Sneaker” Dowden has been slain in his apartment, apparently by a riot dog.

You may decide to reward efficient investigation that gets to *The Confession* quickly, skipping this scene.

Convey the news to them in the most efficient manner possible given the current situation. They might see it on a televised news bulletin or get word from Susan Manos or someone else they talked to at the People's Congress.

Ideally this happens after they've met Hank's crew and know who the victim is.

Alec lives in a forbidding concrete tenement in Queens, on a street lined by similarly oppressive apartment towers.

His apartment remains an active crime scene; **Cop Talk** gets the group in the door to talk to the homicide detective who caught the case. From his bleary expression to his coffee-stained teeth, everything about droopy-mustached Detective Derek Goodwin announces his yearning to write this off as an accidental death and keep it off his desk.

Depending on the believability of the timing, Alec's body is either still on-site or has been taken to the morgue, leaving the group to rely on crime scene photos.

Goodwin tells it like this:

- The wounds are absolutely consistent with a riot dog mauling. They already had a guy in from the zoo to confirm it.
- Obviously the vic had to have left his door ajar for a random corridor-prowling animal to go wandering in.
 - **Counterinsurgency:** That's not something a professionally paranoid partisan, even a retired one, does.
- The dog must have wandered into the foyer through its front door, which neighborhood kids often leave propped open. Then it could have gotten up the stairs and sniffed around till it found the open apartment door.
- No one saw the dog.
- Why did it come into the building in the first place? The

zoo guy said it could have been attracted by cooking smells.

But, hey, those things were bred to be much smarter than ordinary animals. Who knows what goes through their minds?

News outlets are all over this story; it bleeds and therefore leads. It warrants media attention not because the victim enjoys any great fame, but because fear of riot dogs is growing and this represents a horrifying escalation. *They can get into apartments now?*

Canvassing the Neighborhood

If the team looks for people who might have seen the riot dog go in or out of the building, they find Ada Schultz, an elderly woman who frequently watches the comings and goings at its front entrance. When I ran this, the players canvassed the apartment building across the way; put Ada wherever the team seeks a witness.

A self-appointed citizen watchdog mostly concerned about the area's burgeoning reefer trade, Ada calls the police once or twice a week to inform on suspicious-looking folks headed in or out of the tenement. (A frustrated Detective Goodwin, if asked, writes her off as a nuisance and a crank.)

One way the PCs can get her to open up is to use Cop Talk to promise to get the police to pay more attention to her reports. Let any other credible-seeming approach work.

Ada says she saw a man come

stumbling out of the building, as if drunk, an hour before the police arrived. He had blood on his jacket and shoes—and maybe elsewhere too. He was medium height, medium build.

Pressed for further details, she admits that she doesn't see too good these days.

Anyhow, he stumbled down the sidewalk until he got to a vacant lot up the street, where he had parked a brown sedan, and drove away. To the west, she adds, if asked.

(core, *The Confession*) That's a basic description, but fits only one remaining member of Hank's crew—the Cat.

If they stayed to watch Hank's crew leave The Trough but didn't ask about vehicles at the time, a Push allows an investigator to retroactively recall Dave getting into a brown sedan.

The Confession

Scene Type: Conclusion

Lead-Ins: The Next Murder,
The Sidetrack

Bureaucracy or Cop Talk yields Dave's home address, an apartment above a rug store in Crown Heights, Brooklyn.

Dave wearily answers the door when they knock.

Until they confront him with their evidence, he sticks to the attitude he displays in *Hank's Crew*. **Has he steered them to The**

Sidetrack yet? If not, he tries to do that now.

But if they know about the run-in with the riot dogs (from *The Sidetrack*) or the figure leaving the scene of Alec's killing and getting into a brown sedan (*The Next Murder*), his shoulders slump and he stops resisting their efforts to pry the truth from him.

Unless otherwise situated by the players, he sits himself behind the card table where he's been playing solitaire.

Trivia: That's spider solitaire, played with two decks.

In response to their prompts, his story goes like this:

- He screwed up on an operation to bomb a Hussar police academy. The others got away, but he and Hank were arrested and taken to an interrogation center.
- There the both of them were savaged by riot dogs. He got bit, bad.
- **Did Renny Perkins say it was Gears and Hank who got caught, not Dave and Hank?** If confronted on this point, Dave admits that he told a not entirely true version of the story to Perkins and probably some others.
- The dogs used their weird power to make them relive their most devastating experiences.
- Dave was about to crack and spill everything he knew about any resistance cell when an explosion rocked the complex.
- Alec, Kimberley, and the

others had undertaken a high-risk extraction mission.

- As a distraction, they blew up the door to the riot dog pen. A bunch of the animals escaped, into the surrounding neighborhood.
- The DIS officers chased down the escaping dogs, and he and Hank were rescued.
- But before the Hussars could round them up again, the dogs charged into a tenement building. They killed two kids and permanently maimed several more.
- The crew agreed to never speak again of the screw-up that led indirectly to the riot dog attack on innocent civilians.
- But ever since then it has torn at Dave's guts.
- Whenever he gets too worked up about it, and starts to visualize what the dogs did to those kids, his body begins to change.
- Every time it happens, the response gets weirder and bigger.
- He couldn't believe it when, in the wake of the revolution, Frenet somehow got himself permission to not only remain free, but to set up a new riot dog facility.
- Dave went to him to demand treatment for his condition.
- Frenet agreed, and even offered to pay him a monthly stipend. But to get it, he had to submit to tests—and stay quiet about what the bite had done to him.
- Later he developed the suspicion that Frenet was slow-

walking the treatment, because something in his altered cells had some kind of use in his riot dog pacification project.

- That's when he went to tell Hank all about this, catching him getting ready to leave for the chamber of deputies.
- But as he began to explain, his adrenaline shot up through the roof and he found himself changing completely—part man, part dog, all monster.
- When he regained his senses, Hank was dead. He panicked and came up with a half-baked scheme to hide what he'd done. It wasn't the fear of getting caught so much as the shame of what he'd done—coupled with that other shame from before.
- So he cut off Hank's head and left it in his office to make it look like a political vendetta.
- Afterwards he realized how crazy it was and tried to tell the others but couldn't.
- The animal was inside him, and with it, the survival instinct of an animal.
- He figured he could risk revealing himself to Alec, especially if he got loaded enough.
- But again, as he started to unburden himself, the beast came out... and they know the rest.

The standard thing to do next would be to have Dave start to transform, so that the group has to fight the monster at the end. To do that, borrow the Beast of Gévaudan

profile from *A Feast for Wolves* (see *The Wars*, p. 109), perhaps adjusting the strength up or down as seems dramatically appropriate.

Do that if you think your group will be disappointed to avoid a climactic monster fight.

Otherwise, Dave concludes by reaching for his gun. When the players react by miming their own drawn guns, he puts his hands up, and assures them that his bullets aren't for them. He can't finish himself—the animal consciousness inside him won't allow it—but maybe they can do it for them.

Having him start to transform makes the decision easy. Do that if your players hate moral dilemmas.

A character who does blow him away in cold blood tests Difficulty 4 **Composure** to avoid Shock — **Minor**: Hardened; **Major**: Dead-Eyed Stare.

Denouement

The group achieves its initial entrée into the political world by letting Tami know that the apparent political assassination was instead a horrible instance of manslaughter. By default, they get the Chit card “Your First Patron.” You may instead substitute a different Chit that more directly relates to your players' choices in the scenario.

They might decide to break it to the remaining members of Hank's crew, perhaps when sadly attending the joint funerals for Hank, Alec, and Dave.

Blowing Up Gevaudan Industries

Even though Frenet is not implicated in Hank's murder, your group may choose to sabotage his company on general principles. (Mine sure did.)

A Difficulty 5 **Insurgency** success allows them to specify that they blow up the complex in the middle of the night, with no serious casualties.

Adjust the Difficulty depending on what the team wants to accomplish.

This choice leaves you with a potential political scandal to surface in a future scenario. With Gevaudan sidelined, the spread of riot dogs across the eastern seaboard explodes. A pack of the animals attacks attendees at an amusement park. An ill-trained animal control company lacking Gevaudan expertise cannot avert carnage and a terrible front-page story. Public hearings threaten to uncover the team's role in taking out Gevaudan, and hence their partial responsibility for the tragedy.

Additional Antagonist Reactions

When your pacing calls for a danger injection, consider these alternatives.

Feral Riot Dogs

Triggering Condition: You need to throw some arbitrary but thematically appropriate danger at the PCs.

Dave's scent attracts and enrages

regular wild riot dogs. They may show up and then attack the team whenever they're poking around in a location he has visited over the course of the case. This can justify a riot dog incident at Hank's home, The Trough, or around the scene of the first murder.

The riot dog foe profile appears on p. 87.

Gevaudan Reprisals

Triggering Condition: If the players give Frenet reason to think that they're gunning for him.

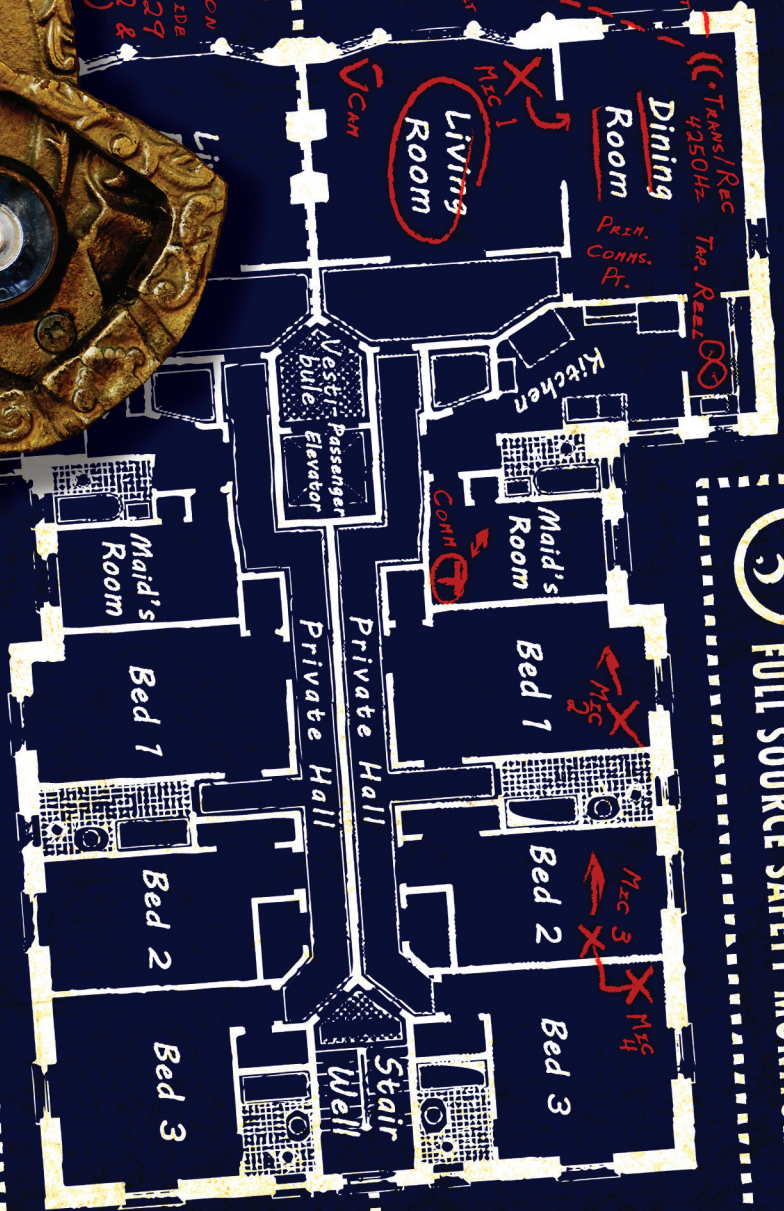
Frenet dispatches a security team to ambush them. A character might also return home to find a team tossing the place for intel. Use the Revanchist, Insurgents or Revanchist, Elite Insurgents foe profile on p. 86.



E. 62nd Street

FIXED
RCV.
STATION
@ SUICIDE
CHS # 229
(CNR 62 &
ATUN)

MOB. RCV.
STATION
421 FEET



CLASSIFICATION: MASK/2



DEPARTMENT OF INTERNAL SECURITY
FULL SOURCE SAFETY MONITOR PROGRAM

APARTMENT 4B APARTMENT 4A

File Number:

F216541616-40E-NYC

Street Address:

No. 40, E. 62nd Street, 44

Update

Rev. 61

2/18/15

WARNING: Disclosure of information contained in this plan may be punishable by extreme measures including but not limited to: oil boarding, gel masking, smoke immersion, electric contact, amputation, or summary execution.

CLASSIFICATION: MASK/2

CARDS

Shock cards

FOREHEAD VEIN

Shock

+1 to Fighting tests.
After you take part in a
fight and win, discard.

IT EATS YOU UP

Shock

Discard by conclusively
striking against an old foe.
If still in hand at end of scenario, roll a
die. Odd: becomes a Continuity card.

PANG OF DOUBT

Shock

The next time the GM calls for a
Composure test, roll a die first. Odd:
-1 on your test. Even: discard.

LINES GET MUDDY

Shock

-1 to Focus and Presence tests.
Discard when you take an Injury card.

FALSE ALARM

Shock

-1 to Sense Trouble tests;
+1 to Composure tests.
On your next Composure failure, lose
1 Composure and discard this card.

THE YIPS

Shock

x = the result of a die roll, plus 1.
Lose x Composure.
Discard as recipient of an
 x -point Morale spend.

Use In: W, A

DAMMIT, MAN

Shock

-1 to Focus tests.
Discard by paying a price
to gain redemption.

SERIOUSLY, DAMMIT

Shock

-2 to Focus tests.
Discard by doing something
redemptive that hurts you politically.

Use In: A

TWINGE

Shock

-1 on Focus tests.
After a failed Focus test, discard as
recipient of 1-point Morale spend.

Use In: W, A

SPASM OF GUILT

Shock

-2 to Focus tests.
Discard by taking a risk to
atone for your past.

GRIM FLASHBACK

Shock

-1 to Morale tests.
Discard as recipient of a
Difficulty 4 Morale success.

Use In: W, A

YOU KNOW YOU BROKE

Shock

Roll a die: lose Morale
equal to the result.
On a Fighting success, roll
a die. Even: discard.

Use In: W, A

THE MONSTER INSIDE

Shock

Roll a die: lose Morale
equal to the result.
Use In: W, A

SULLIED

Shock

-1 to Presence tests for each
Shock card you hold.
Spend 1 Morale and roll a die.
Even: discard. Odd: trade for
“A Diverting Indiscretion Will
Put This in Perspective.”

Use In: W, A

EXPEDIENCE

Shock

-2 to Presence tests.
Discard by doing the right thing, even
though it will hurt you politically.

LOYALTY CHIP (INTACT)

Shock

Discard by taking a risk to
significantly aid an enemy.
As recipient of Difficulty 4 First Aid
success, trade for “On the Mend.”

LOYALTY CHIP (BROKEN)

Shock

Discard by taking a risk to significantly aid an enemy.
As recipient of Difficulty 4 First Aid success, roll a die and gain the Injury card "Draggy." Even: discard.

TUNER DISLOCATION

Shock

At end of each interval, roll a die.
Odd: lose 1 point from a Focus ability of your choice. Even: discard.

TUNER HABIT

Shock

When you fight without using a tuner, make a Difficulty 4 Composure test. On a failure, also gain the Shock card "Distracted." When you have "Distracted" and fight with a tuner, roll a die. Even: discard this and "Distracted."

MENTAL PROBE

Shock

Roll a die. Even: -1 to your next Focus test, then discard. Odd: -1 to your next Presence test, then discard.

IT LICKED YOUR MIND

Shock

-1 to Focus and Presence tests.
Discard when the parasite is destroyed.

STOLEN MEMORY

Shock

-1 to Focus tests.
Discard when you destroy or help to destroy the being who did this to you.

STOLEN LOYALTY

Shock; Continuity

When a GMC flashes the Yellow Sign at you, you must make a Difficulty 4 Composure test to avoid obeying that person's simple commands (unless they are immediately self-destructive). Discard when you destroy or help to destroy the being who did this to you.

SOUL SHOOK

Shock

Lose 1 Health each time you make a Presence test. If your Health is 0, lose 1 Athletics. Discard after scoring a Presence success with a margin of 3 or more.

COMMANDMENT FROM THE GRAVE

Shock

Effect comes into play when the shade gives you an order: if at the end of an interval you have taken no action to obey the shade, lose 1 Health, 1 Athletics, and 1 Fighting. Discard by fulfilling the order to the shade's satisfaction.



THE SHUDDERS

Shock

Roll a die; lose that number of Composure points, noting the number lost. If your Composure is already 0, trade for "An Image Scared in the Mind." Discard after a night's sleep. When you discard, roll a die. Even: regain those lost Composure points.

SHAKEN

Shock

-1 to Composure tests.

RATTLED

Shock

Your next test takes a -1 penalty. Then discard.

DISTRACTED

Shock

-1 to Focus tests.
After a Focus failure, spend 1 from the pool of any Focus ability to discard this card.

HARDENED

Shock; Continuity

When you make a ruthless choice that saves a life, spend 3 Composure to discard.

DEAD-EYED STARE

Shock; Continuity

Once per session, you may make a free Intimidation Push. All PCs lose 2 Composure.
When you make a ruthless choice that saves a life, roll a die. Even: trade for "Hardened."

Injury cards

GRAZED BY A NEEDLER

Injury

Lose 2 Athletics. Discard as recipient of a Difficulty 4 First Aid success.

SHOT BY A NEEDLER

Injury

Physical tests automatically fail with a margin of 3. After two intervals, you may discard as recipient of a Difficulty 5 First Aid success.

GRAZED BY A MANGLER

Injury

Lose 3 Composure. Discard
as recipient of a Difficulty
4 First Aid success.

SHOT BY A MANGLER

Injury

Composure pool drops to 0. Presence
tests automatically fail with a
margin of 3. After two intervals,
you may discard as recipient of a
Difficulty 6 First Aid success.

PAIN BATON TAP

Injury

-2 to tests for 30 minutes of
game time, then discard.

PAIN BATON HIT

Injury

-6 to tests for 15 minutes of game
time, -2 to tests for following
15 minutes, then discard.

CAMBUK ZAP

Shock or Injury (player chooses)

-4 to Composure tests when
in view of the Yellow Sign.
Discard after two intervals.

CAMBUK SLASH

Shock; Injury

-4 to Composure tests when
in view of the Yellow Sign.
After two intervals, you
may discard as recipient of a
Difficulty 4 First Aid success.

KNOCKED OUT

Injury

You fall unconscious and can take no further actions for 30 minutes of world time.

Then wake up and discard.

If you wake up as a prisoner, and do not get an opportunity to gain key information as a result, you may then discard a non-Continuity Shock card.

NEURAL HEMORRHAGE

Injury

You fall unconscious and can take no further actions. After 30 minutes of world time, you wake up, trading this card for your choice of the Injury card "On the Mend" or the Shock card "Rattled."

If you wake up as a prisoner, and do not get an opportunity to gain key information as a result, you may then discard a non-Continuity Shock card.

FORGET-ME-DO

Injury

-1 to Presence tests.

x = your failed margin plus a die roll.

Everything that happened to you in the past x hours (world time) seems like an unreliable blur, with actual events and dream-like impossibilities tangled up together.

After one interval, discard and roll a die. Odd: the memory confusion persists permanently.

FORCED AMNESIA

Injury

Everything that happened to you in the scenario so far seems like an unreliable blur, with actual events and dream-like impossibilities tangled up together.

Discard by finding definitive external proof of the event you were meant to forget.

AVERSION BRACELET I

Injury

When you can see a Yellow Sign from 12 or fewer meters away, -1 to tests, and this becomes a Shock card. Effects last for one hour (world time).

Discard as recipient of a Difficulty 4 Mechanics success.

AVERSION BRACELET II

Injury

When you can see a Yellow Sign from 24 or fewer meters away, -1 to tests, and this becomes a Shock card. Effects last for three hours (world time).

Discard as recipient of a Difficulty 4 Mechanics success.

GOODBYE GAS EXPOSURE

Injury

-1 to Physical test.
On a Difficulty 4 Health success,
or as recipient of a Difficulty 4
First Aid success, roll a die. On a
1, trade for "Precarious Recovery."
Otherwise, trade for "Draggy."

GOODBYE GAS CONTACT

Injury

-2 to Physical tests.
If received with no other Injury cards
in hand, counts as 2 Injury cards.
On a Difficulty 6 Health success,
or as recipient of a Difficulty 6
First Aid success, roll a die. Even:
trade for "Goodbye Gas Exposure."
Odd: trade for "On the Mend."
If still in hand at end of scenario,
you dissolve into goo and die.

READBALL GRAZE

Injury

An enemy knows everything you
perceived and thought for the
last x hours. x = your margin on
the test to avoid this Injury.
Discard as recipient of a Difficulty
4 First Aid success. If the First Aid
test fails, trade for "Draggy."

READBALL HIT

Injury

An enemy knows everything you
perceived and thought for the last
x hours. x = your margin on the
test to avoid this Injury, times 2.
Discard as recipient of a Difficulty
6 First Aid success. If the First
Aid test fails, trade for "Shot."

ENHANCED PUNCH

Injury

Roll a die. Even: lose 2 Health.
Odd: -1 to Physical tests.
Discard at end of interval.

ULTRA-BEATDOWN

Injury

-2 to tests.
Trade for "Patched Up" as
recipient of a 3-point First aid
spend and a 2-point Morale spend
(can be from different PCs).
If still in hand at end of scenario,
gain "Permanent Injury."

ROUGHED UP**Injury**

Lose 1 Composure.
Discard after any Physical success,
or by spending 1 Athletics.

STAB WOUND**Injury**

-1 to all Physical and Focus tests.
Discard after a Physical
or Focus success.

SPORE EXPOSURE**Injury**

At end of next interval, make a
Difficulty 4 Health test. On a
failure, trade for "Precancerous."
On a success, discard.

PRECANCEROUS**Injury; Continuity**

At the end of every scenario after
this one, roll a die. Even: lose 1 point
of your Health rating; you may
not increase your rating through
improvement while holding this
card. Odd: after a final speech to
comrades, your character dies.
Discard by finding a Carcosan healing
potion. (Your GM will provide a plot
or subplot making this possible.)

**SHATTERING
HAND STRIKE****Injury**

You can't take tests or make Pushes.
Every hour (game time) you
may make a Difficulty 4 Health
test. Success: discard.

RAZOR HAND STRIKE**Injury**

You can't take tests or make
Pushes, or do anything but lie
on the ground bleeding out.
Every hour (game time) you
may make a Difficulty 5 Health
test or receive a Difficulty 5
First Aid test. Success: trade for
"Shattering Hand Strike."

ZAPPED

Injury

-3 on Athletics and Fighting tests vs. beings like the one who zapped you.

After an hour of world time, discard by spending 1 Health.

HIGH VOLTAGE

Injury

-2 to your next Physical test, -1 to the Physical test after that. Then trade for “On the Mend.”

WRENCHED NECK

Injury

Lose 1 Health each time you make a Physical test. If your Health is 0, lose 1 Composure. Discard on a Physical success with a margin greater than 1.

DUPE BITE

Injury

Receive a Difficulty 3 First Aid success within 15 minutes of world time or die. Each PC can try First Aid on you once during that time.

SCRATCHED

Injury

-1 on tests.

At end of interval, spend 2 Health to discard. If you don't have the Health to spend, trade for “Ticking Time Bomb.”

TICKING TIME BOMB

Injury

After 24 hours of world time, you feel a compulsion to find a crowd and wander into it, at which point you explode and die, killing everyone within 50 m.

Discard as recipient of a special blood transfusion from a Specialized Bomb Disposal Medical Unit. Your GM will make this possible in the story, though maybe at some cost or risk to the group.

FIN SCRATCH**Injury**

At next interval, pay 1 Health and discard.
If you have no Health to spend, discard after two intervals.

JOSTLED**Injury**

At next interval, pay 1 Health and 1 Athletics and discard.
If you don't have the points to spend, discard as recipient of a Difficulty 3 First Aid success.

KNIFE SLASH**Injury**

After a successful Physical test, pay 1 Health to discard.

DEEP STAB**Injury**

Counts as 2 Injury cards. You can't make tests or spend Pushes. After an hour of world time, trade for "On the Mend," as recipient of a Difficulty 5 First Aid success.

KNOCK TO THE HEAD**Injury**

Discard as recipient of a 1-point First Aid spend.

GUNSHOT WOUND**Injury**

-2 to Physical tests.
Trade for the card "On the Mend" as recipient of a Difficulty 6 First Aid success.
If still in hand at end of scenario, you succumb to your injuries and die.

THROAT SQUEEZE

Injury

-1 to Physical and Composure tests.
Discard as recipient of a First Aid test. Difficulty starts at 6 and drops by 1 at the start of each new interval.

BREASTBONE-PIERCING PUNCH

Injury

-2 to Physical and Composure tests, -1 to all other tests.
As recipient of a Difficulty 6 First Aid success, trade for "On the Mend."

RIOT DOG BITE

Injury

-2 to Composure tests.
Discard as recipient of a Difficulty 4 Morale success.

RIOT DOG MAULING

Injury

-2 to Composure tests.
After a Composure failure, discard as recipient of a Difficulty 5 Morale success.

SUPERHUMAN BLOW

Injury

Roll a die. Even: Health drops to 0. Odd: Athletics drops to 0.
Discard as recipient of a Difficulty 4 First Aid test. If the margin is greater than 2, refresh the affected pool.

SUPERHUMAN SMASH

Injury

Health, Athletics, and Fighting drop to 0.
As recipient of a Difficulty 4 First Aid success, trade for "On the Mend."

NEUROPATHIC SWIPE

Injury; Shock

Trade for "On the Mend" as recipient of a Difficulty 5 First Aid success.

NEUROPATHIC DISEQUILIBRIUM

Injury

If this card and the next Shock card you receive are still in hand at the end of the session, the Shock card becomes a Continuity card. When you discard a Shock card, make a Difficulty 4 Composure test. On a success, discard this card too.

SURPRISE KIDNEY STAB

Injury

-2 to tests.
As recipient of a Difficulty 5 First Aid success, roll a die. Even: discard. Odd: trade for "On the Mend."

SURPRISE THROAT SLASH

Injury

You can't take tests or make Pushes, or do anything but lie on the ground bleeding out. Any PC seeing you take your injury must succeed at Composure vs. Difficulty 5, or take the Shock card "Rattled." As recipient of a Difficulty 5 First Aid success, trade for "Laceration."

LACERATION

Injury

When called on to make a Physical test, you may choose to take a -2 penalty on the test and then discard this card.

FLESH WOUND

Injury

-1 to non-Focus tests. Trade for "Laceration" after on a non-Focus success.

DINOSAUR WOUND

Injury

-2 to Physical tests.
After an hour or more of world time,
as recipient of a Difficulty 5 First
Aid test, roll a die. Even: discard.
Odd: trade for “On the Mend.”

DINOSAUR BITE

Injury

Counts as 2 injuries. You
can’t make tests.
After a day or more of world
time, as recipient of a Difficulty 6
First Aid success, roll a die. Even:
trade for “On the Mend.” Odd:
trade for “Dinosaur Wound.”

PUNCTURING BEAK

Injury

If you have 3 Fighting to lose, lose
3 Fighting. Otherwise, -1 to tests.
Receive a Difficulty 4 First Aid
success to discard after any failure.

RENDING BEAK

Injury

You can’t make tests or spend Pushes.
As recipient of a Difficulty
5 First Aid success, trade
for “Puncturing Beak.”

BLOW TO THE HEAD

Injury

-2 to Sense Trouble tests.

IN THE BLAST RADIUS

Injury

-2 to Physical tests. Counts as
2 Injury cards. Trade for “On
the Mend” as recipient of
Difficulty 6 First Aid success.
If still in hand at end of scenario,
trade for “Permanent Injury.”

DRAGGY

Injury

Choose one General ability type:
Focus, Physical, or Presence.
-1 to tests of that type.
After any failure, discard if you
have no other non-Continuity
Shock or Injury cards.

ON THE MEND

Injury

-1 to all tests. Trade for "Still
Hurting" on a Physical success.

PRECARIOUS RECOVERY

Injury

-1 to Physical tests.
On a Physical failure, roll a
die. Odd: trade for the card
you traded this card for.
Discard on a Physical success
with a margin of 3 or more.

SHOT

Injury

-2 to Physical tests. Counts as
2 Injury cards. Trade for "On
the Mend" as recipient of
Difficulty 6 First Aid success.
If still in hand at end of scenario, you
succumb to your injuries and die.

PATCHED UP

Injury

-1 to tests.
Trade for "Recovering" on a
salient Physical success.

PERMANENT INJURY

Injury; Continuity

Chit cards

YOUR FIRST PATRON

Chit

Now that you have one powerful person to show you the ropes, your entry into the political world has begun.

Discard to get misdemeanor charges against any single person dismissed.

Discard to discard any Hit card.

1

OFFICIAL EXONERATION

Chit

This evidence proves that you did not in fact abuse the public trust.

+1 Goal points if your Goal is tagged Public.

Spend to discard 2 Hit cards, if one of them penalizes Trust Goals.

1

HEROIC COVERAGE

Chit

Media coverage celebrates your success, and the risks you took for it.

+1 Goal points if your Goal is tagged Vigilance.

Spend to discard 2 Hit cards, if one of them penalizes Private Goals.

1

TO HELL WITH JACKBOOTS

Chit

Your actions show that freedom never comes out of the business end of a riot baton.

+1 Goal points if your Goal is tagged Freedom.

Spend to discard 2 Hit cards, if one of them penalizes Public Goals.

1

SOMETIMES MONEY IS ITS OWN REWARD

Chit

This much-needed cash will keep you going for a while at least.

+1 Goal points if your Goal is tagged Private.

Spend to discard 2 Hit cards, if one of them penalizes Freedom Goals.

1

BEHIND BARS

Chit

You proved the skeptics wrong. Sometimes ordinary citizens do get the help they need.

+1 Goal points if your Goal is tagged Order.

Spend to discard 2 Hit cards, if one of them penalizes Vigilance Goals.

1

THE SYSTEM WORKS

Chit

You proved the skeptics wrong. Sometimes ordinary citizens do get the help they need.

+1 Goal points if your Goal is tagged Trust.
Spend to discard 2 Hit cards, if one of them penalizes Order Goals.

1

GOOD PRESS

Chit

This one goes in your clip file. Choose a character to receive +1 to Politics tests. Bonus remains in effect as long as you hold this card.

1

PUBLIC ACCLAIM

Chit

They're chanting your names! After making an Interpersonal Push, the player rolls a die. Even: refresh a General ability pool of your choice.

1

HARD KNUCKLE REPUTATION

Chit

This will show people not to mess with you. After making an Intimidation Push, the player rolls a die. Even: gain a Push.

1

IN GOOD WITH THE COPS

Chit

Word will get around that you did the right thing for the boys and girls in blue. After making a Cop Talk Push, the player rolls a die. Even: gain a Push.

1

YOUR STORY SPREADS

Chit

You might be reluctant to talk about your role in the rebellion. But now that the word is out, you might as well leverage that into something positive. After making an Inspiration Push, the player rolls a die. Even: gain a Push.

1

RESPECTED ACROSS THE AISLE

Chit

You've demonstrated to the dealmakers that you know how to bargain.

After making a Negotiation Push, the player rolls a die. Even: gain a Push.

1

KINDLY PRESENCE

Chit

People find you soothing.

After making a Reassurance Push, the player rolls a die. Even: gain a Push.

1

MOB TIES

Chit

Don't think of yourself as corrupt. It's more like, uh, corrupt adjacent.

After making a Reassurance Push, the player rolls a die. Even: gain a Push.

1

ON A ROLL

Chit

In politics, perception is everything. And when you look at yourselves in the mirror, you see a bunch of winners.

Once per session, you may choose to roll a die. Even: discard a Hit card. Odd: discard this card, and a Hit card.

0

SLUSH FUND

Chit

If you have no cash, you can't make change.

At end of session, spend 2 Politics per player. (Any number of PCs can spend.) If you can't make the spend...

...and your Goal is Public, trade for the Hit card "Money Scandal."

...and your Goal is Private, trade for the Hit card "Shakedown."

The group may choose to discard "Slush Fund" at the beginning of any session.

2

SCAPEGOATS EXONERATED

Chit

Your investigation disproved false, bigotry-fueling allegations.

+1 to Politics if your Goal is tagged Trust.

1

REVANCHISTS EXPOSED**Chit**

Your investigation led to the apprehension of unrepentant Castagnites.

+1 to Politics if your Goal is tagged Justice.

1**WEIRD IS GOOD****Chit**

Your efforts protected freedom of expression against the forces of paranoia. Not all shocking art invokes the Yellow Sign.

+1 to Politics if your Goal is tagged Freedom.

1**AGAINST HALI****Chit**

Your investigation prevented the further dissemination of that reality-destroying play.

+1 to Politics if your Goal is tagged Order.

1**OLD TRICKS****Chit**

You found a good use for the skills you learned during the rebellion.

If your Goal is tagged Freedom, you may, once per scenario, refresh all characters' Insurgency pools.

1**GRACE UNDER PRESSURE****Chit**

In a tough spot, you kept it together. People respect that.

If your Goal is tagged Trust, you may, once per scenario, refresh all characters' Composure pools.

1**WELL-OILED MACHINE****Chit**

People envy the way you work together.

If your Goal is tagged Order, characters may transfer their Morale points to other characters' Fighting pools.

1

NEVER COMPLACENT

Chit

You've shown that you're never going to let down your guard. If your Goal is tagged Vigilance, you may, once per scenario, refresh all characters' Sense Trouble pools.

1

ORIGINALIST ALLIANCE

Chit

You've won support from the faction that wants to restore the pre-Castaigne constitution—and the annoyance of those who don't. -2 to Politics tests when swaying members of the Initiator faction. +1 when swaying Originalists. Discard if you antagonize Originalist leaders.

1

INITIATOR ALLIANCE

Chit

You've won support from the faction that wants to rewrite the constitution from scratch—and the annoyance of those who prefer the 1919 version. -2 to Politics tests when swaying members of the Originalist faction. +1 when swaying Initiators. Discard if you antagonize Initiator leaders.

1

COMMERCIAL ALLIANCE

Chit

You've won support from Congress' free market faction, and sideways looks from their opponents. -2 to Politics tests when swaying members of the All-For-One faction, -1 with Mercantilists, +1 with Commercialists. Discard if you antagonize Commercial leaders.

1

MERCANTILIST ALLIANCE

Chit

You've won support from the faction calling for a well-regulated economy, and suspicion from the free-marketers and redistributionists. 2 to Politics tests when swaying members of the Commercial faction, -1 with All-For-Ones, +1 with Mercantilists. Discard if you antagonize Mercantilist leaders.

1

ALL-FOR-ONE ALLIANCE

Chit

You've won support from the faction that wants redistributed wealth and decentralized government. That earns you the scorn of business interests. -2 to Politics tests when swaying members of the Mercantilist faction, -1 with Commercialists, +1 with All-For-Ones. Discard if you antagonize All-For-One leaders.

1

GUARDIAN ALLIANCE**Chit**

You've gained support from the law and order faction, and the distrust of those who've had enough of surveillance and uniforms.

-2 to Politics tests when swaying members of the Renouncer faction.

+1 when swaying Guardians.

Discard if you antagonize Guardian leaders.

1**RENOUNCER ALLIANCE****Chit**

You've gained support from the faction seeking nationwide reconciliation, and the sneers of law and order types.

-2 to Politics tests when swaying members of the Guardian faction.

+1 when swaying Renouncers.

Discard if you antagonize Renouncer leaders.

1**HOMELORD ALLIANCE****Chit**

Heavily armed paranoid shut-ins trust no one—except you, for some reason.

Once per scenario, you may specify that a wild-eyed crackpot shows up anywhere this might credibly occur, usefully disrupting the current situation. At end of scene, roll a die. On a 1-2, discard this card. On a 3-4, gain Hit card "Bull in a China Shop."

1**FRIENDS IN THE RAMIREZ CAMP****Chit**

Allies of partisan leader and possible presidential candidate Stephanie Ramirez owe you a favor.

1 Goal points if you have at least one other Chit that grants a benefit keyed to the Trust tag.

1**FRIENDS IN THE PALMER CAMP****Chit**

Allies of partisan leader and possible presidential candidate Jack Palmer owe you a favor.

+1 Goal points if you have at least one other Chit that grants a benefit keyed to the Vigilance tag.

1**REPUTATION FOR EFFICIENCY****Chit**

People in the know know your know-how.

Spend, narrating a sloppy last-ditch effort to prevail, to specify that you succeeded at any test, with a margin of 4.

1

SCANDAL DEBUNKED

Chit

Irrefutable evidence emerges clearing you of those false accusations..

When you receive a Hit card, roll a die. On a 1, discard that Hit card immediately.

1

WINDOW INTO THE HUSSARS

Chit

What you've learned about the way the DIS worked will help you when dealing with state security agents in future cases.

After spending an Investigative Push on a GMC who used to work for the Castaigne security apparatus, a player may roll a die. On an even result: regain the Push.

1

LAB COAT CONNECTIONS

Chit

Seeing how science types operate will help the next time you need to deal with them.

After scoring a Network success to have a contact in the scientific or technological world, a player may roll a die. On an even result: refresh Network.

1

TRANSPORT TIES

Chit

You know what real magic is? The power to summon a fleet of trucks.

Once per scenario, you may dispense with a problem that can be solved with the application of transportation resources.

1

HOUSING TIES

Chit

You helped someone who can put roofs over peoples' heads.

Once per scenario, you can find a temporary place to live for someone who needs it. Discard to make the arrangement permanent.

1

WATCHFUL PRESENCE

Chit

You can call on reliable folks to keep an eye on things for you.

Once per scenario, you can place volunteer guards in a location to visibly deter trouble. Works against non-supernatural adversaries who can't risk a fuss.

1

TECH SUPPORT**Chit**

You earned a favor or two from people who know how to repair stuff.

Once per session, treat a Mechanics failure as a success with a margin of 1.

1**FRIENDS IN THE DA'S OFFICE****Chit**

A happy prosecutor is a helpful prosecutor.

Once per scenario, you may shield a character from prosecution for a misdemeanor.

1**FOLLOW-THROUGH****Chit**

People believe that when you say you can do something, you will.

Once per scenario, a single PC may make a free Reassurance Push. When a GMC fears retribution or blowback, you may discard this card to ensure that it won't occur. (Doesn't protect against supernatural forces.)

1**PRESS TIES****Chit**

If you're not spinning, you're being spun.

Once per scenario, you may arrange for a story favorable to you or your agenda to appear in the media.

1**SHADOW MOVES****Chit**

You've learned to act without being seen to act.

Once per scenario, you can specify that no one attributes the results of a Politics success to your actions.

1**DIVERT THE NARRATIVE****Chit**

Bullshit thrives on the desire to believe.

Once per session, a player may make a Difficulty 6 Politics test. On a success, discard a Hit card.

1

CULT OF PERSONALITY

Chit

One of you has gained traction in the public imagination.

When you gain this card, choose a player. All other players gain +1 on Politics tests if that player is present for the current session. Discard this card if the player's character leaves play after taking a Final Card.

1

UPPER ECHELON

Chit

Wealth has taken a look at you and likes what it sees.

When you gain this card, choose a character. That character gains +1 to Politics tests and +2 to Network tests when interacting with members of the moneyed class.

1

CARES ABOUT PEOPLE LIKE ME

Chit

It's the people in the middle who swing elections.

When you gain this card, choose a character. That character gains +1 to Politics tests and +2 to Network tests when interacting with members of the middle class.

1

CHAMPION OF THE UNDERDOG

Chit

People who never get a break look at you and feel a measure of hope.

When you gain this card, choose a character. That character gains +1 to Politics tests and +2 to Network tests when interacting with members of the working class.

1

STAR POWER

Chit

One of you has that indefinable quality that makes people like and trust you.

When you gain this card, choose a character. That character gains +2 to Politics on any action bolstered by a public or media appearance. Discard when character leaves play after taking a Final Card.

1

Hit cards

SMEAR CAMPAIGN

Hit

The truth doesn't matter when the lie feels good.

-1 Goal points if your Goal is tagged Public.

-1

UNDER A CLOUD

Hit

The way your opponents tell it, your actions sound downright shady.

-1 Goal points if your Goal is tagged Private.

-1

FEAR EATS THE SOUL

Hit

Scared people don't trust easily.

-1 Goal points if your Goal is tagged Trust.

-1

COMFORTABLY NUMB

Hit

The people have grown complacent.

-1 Goal points if your Goal is tagged Vigilance.

-1

LURE OF THE ARMBAND

Hit

Some people just want to march around saluting somebody. The worse the somebody, the more they like it.

-1 Goal points if your Goal is tagged Freedom.

-1

THE CENTER DOES NOT HOLD

Hit

Mere anarchy is loosed upon the world.

-1 Goal points if your Goal is tagged Order.

-1

GOING SOFT

Hit

The way your rivals tell it, you've lost the uncompromising spirit that got you through the rebellion.

Discard by winning a fight that gets positive press coverage.

-1

BULL IN A CHINA SHOP

Hit

Coming off as unpredictable only works for the players at the top. And you're not there yet.

Discard by seeking out a nervous political ally and making a Reassurance Push.

-1

BLUE WALL

Hit

The cops used to think you were on the level. But you pushed it too far, and now they've chalked you up as just another bunch of suits.

Characters can't make Cop Talk Pushes unless they also spend 2 Politics.

Discard by taking a risk or making a sacrifice to help the police.

-1

YESTERDAY'S NEWS

Hit

The story that brought you to prominence is getting stale. Time to find a new schtick.

-1 to Politics tests.

Discard by solving a case in a way you can publicize to your advantage.

-1

TOO SMOOTH BY HALF

Hit

Once lost, trust can be tough to recapture.

During the first half of any session, discard by spending a total of 6 Politics, which can come from the group in any combination. Sell your GM on this by describing credible efforts to repair your reputation.

-1

UNREASSURING

Hit

You make people nervous.

Characters can't make Reassurance Pushes unless they also spend 2 Composure.

Discard when your solution to a mystery brings calm to the public.

-1

IT'S NOT THE CRIME, IT'S THE COVER-UP

Hit

If news of this gets out, you can take everything you've built and kiss it goodbye.

At the beginning of each session, if you have 2 or more Chit cards, roll a die. On a 1, discard all of your Chit cards and trade this card for "Under a Cloud."

0

SHAKE-UP

Hit

Your allies have fallen from grace. The new power brokers don't much care for you.

Discard a Chit card of the group's choice when you get this card. If you have no Chit cards, the next one you get is instead discarded.

Discard on a Difficulty 4 Politics success applied to one of the new people in charge, with a penalty equal to your number of Hit cards.

-1

MONEY SCANDAL

Hit

The first rule in scandal reporting is "Follow the Money." Someone did that... to you.

-2 to Politics tests.

Trade this and any Chit card for the Hit card "Under a Cloud."

-1

SHAKEDOWN

Hit

The wise guys who've been funding your operation show up, expecting some quid for their quo.

Enforcers for the mob demand a risky and ethically compromising favor. They'll keep coming around, drawing unwanted attention, until you comply.

If you do comply, trade for the Chit card "Slush Fund."

-2

RIPPLE OF UNEASE

Hit

Your mistakes have given ammunition to people who want to give more powers to the police.

-1 to Politics tests if your Goal is tagged Freedom or Trust.

Discard by taking a risk to foster freedom or trust.

-1

AND THEN IT ALL WENT NUTS

Hit

Your mistakes caused a riot.

-1 to Politics tests if your Goal is tagged Order.

Discard by taking a risk to bring about order.

-1

HAVOC UNLEASHED

Hit

Your mistakes let the monsters out.

-1 to Politics tests if your Goal is tagged Vigilance.

Discard by paying a price to make up for your lapse in vigilance.

-1

SHOCKING NEW EVIDENCE

Hit

One of your past cases threatens to unravel, putting an enemy back on the streets.

-1 to Politics tests if your Goal is tagged Order.

Discard by exposing the bad guys behind this false exoneration.

-1

ANGRY VETERANS

Hit

Your fellow ex-partisans say you sold them out. And all for a whiff of power.

-2 to Politics and Network tests when dealing with former revolutionary fighters.

-1

WRONG FOOT TO TREAD ON

Hit

Someone powerful now has reason to remember your names. And it's not a good one.

When you succeed at a Politics test, roll a die. Odd: reroll the die used in the test.

-1

GAFFE

Hit

You said the wrong thing in the absolute perfect way—for the other side.

The GM designates a character. -1 to Politics tests in sessions when that character is present.

Discard by also discarding any of the following Chit cards: "Star Power," "Divert the Narrative," "Good Press," "Cult of Personality."

-1

CLASS WARRIOR

Hit

Rich people regard you as dangerous radicals.

-1 to Politics tests when interacting with members of the moneyed class.

-1

OUT OF TOUCH**Hit**

Regular folks see you as either too sympathetic to the rich, criminals, or both.

-1 to Politics tests when interacting with members of the middle class.

-1**BOUGHT AND SOLD****Hit**

People who have the odds stacked against them see you as part of the problem.

-1 to Politics tests when interacting with members of the working class.

-1**OPPO RESEARCH****Hit**

A scandal from your past returns to haunt you.

Whenever a shady story from any PC's past becomes public, roll a die. Odd: discard a Chit card. When that happens, a Difficulty 4 Politics success allows you to discard this card.

0**SLEEPING DOGS****Hit**

No one wanted to remember the thing you just dug up.

-1 to Politics and Network tests when your Goal has any apparent connection to the supernatural.

-1**DEBACLE****Hit**

Your negligence endangered the public.

When you solve a case, any combination of players may spend 3 Pushes to discard.

-2**CAN'T CATCH A BREAK****Hit**

You just seem... unlucky, somehow.

-1 to Politics and Network tests when dealing with People's Deputies and other members of the political class.

-1

MARKED BY THE SIGN

Hit

That haunted look in your eyes makes it hard to strike political deals.
Characters apply the number of Shock cards they have in hand as penalties to Politics, Insurgency, and Network tests.

-1

BODY COUNT

Hit

For political operatives, your activities sure stack up a lot of corpses.

At end of each session, check to see if any GMC deaths arose from the action this time out. If the answer is no, you may spend a Push to discard.

-1

COMPLICITY

Hit

You accepted a favor from someone with a closet full of skeletons.

Once per scenario, the GM will call for a Difficulty 4 Politics test. On a failure, the value of this card becomes -1, as a scandal connecting you to the favor-giver breaks out and drags you in as peripheral figures.

0

FEATHER BEDDING

Hit

A spending scandal brings an ally or associate into disrepute.

-1 to Politics tests.
When you solve a case, make an Accounting spend and roll a die. Even: discard.

-1

UNFIT FOR CAMERAS

Hit

When you show up to the People's Congress bandaged and bloody, it sets tongues to wagging.

Treat 6s rolled on Politics tests as 1s.

At end of session, check to see if any players hold non-Continuity Injury cards. If the answer is no, discard.

-1

OUT-SPENT

Hit

Your adversaries are raising more funds than your allies. You need to show you can contribute.

Discard by taking a risk to gain the ongoing support of a deep-pocketed donor.

-1

LOSING IT**Hit**

A top figure among your allies shows symptoms of Carcosan mental influence.

Discard by finding and eliminating the source of baneful influence.

-1**OR GET OFF THE POT****Hit**

You refuse to be beholden to anyone. In politics, that means you can't be trusted.

Discard by definitively aligning with a major faction.

-1**GRUDGE****Hit**

You've crossed the wrong person and now await the promised political revenge.

Discard by digging up discrediting information on the one who has sworn to bury you.

-1**BACKSTABBED****Hit**

A supposed ally now works to sink your plans, and you don't know why. If a Chit card represents your relationship to your ally, it is discarded. If not, the value of this card is -1.

Discover the secret reason behind the betrayal to repair the relationship and discard this card. Regain the previously discarded Chit, if any.

0**SILLY SEASON****Hit**

A nonsense controversy has embroiled the People's Congress, stealing the attention you need to make progress.

Discard by taking a risk to prove that your real problem matters more than this fake one.

-1**COUNTER-NARRATIVE****Hit**

Your opponents have been making a persuasive case, decreasing public support for your agenda.

-1 to Politics and Network tests.

Discard by discrediting their arguments with the public.

-1

**Trip Planning Map
of The Empire, Suanees,
and California**

Showing
PRINCIPAL HIGHWAYS and NATIONAL PARKS
COPYRIGHT: GENERAL DYNAMICS CO., INC.
CONVENT STATION, N. J.

July
e, his
nobody twice volun
clean out the teeth tray !"

New Lingo Sweeps Big Apple

We're all walking and talking like freedom fighters now! As we fete the heroes of the revolution, we've taken their slang as our own. A guide for the perplexed, to the hottest in argot and colloquialism:

- bunk:** safe house, headquarters
- coin:** to inform upon
- drink-up:** wild party
- eagle, eagling:** to keep a careful eye on
- ears, earsing:** to place someone under audio surveillance
- Effort:** the insurgency
- KSF:** Key Shadow Figure, a covert intel analyst for the Effort
- layout:** operation
- moke:** a disreputable, sleazy person
- rec on:** look at
- straight-shake:** an official during the old regime who remained honest and honorable
- twist:** covert revanchist operative
- walkaround:** a .22 pistol

2015

Here's What



APPENDICES

AFTERMATH

CHARACTER SHEET

Name

Player

Drive

Occupation

INVESTIGATIVE ABILITIES

PUSHES (2): ☐ ☐

GENERAL ABILITIES

Athletics (Physical)	
Composure (Presence)	
Driving (Physical)	
Fighting (Physical)	
First Aid (Focus)	
Health (Physical)	
Insurgency (Focus)	
Mechanics (Focus)	
Morale (Presence)	
Network (Focus)	
Politics (Presence)	
Preparedness(Focus)	
Sense Trouble (Presence)	
Sneaking (Focus)	

Parallel

Worst Memory

Welcome to the Aftermath

It is the present day in an alternate reality.

Six months ago, you and your teammates toppled the Castaigne regime, the authoritarian government of Imperial America. After more than a century in power, it, and the shadowy figures behind its throne, has gone.

You aim to use the skills you developed as revolutionaries to help rebuild your shattered nation.

But weird mystery has always had a way of finding you, and you suspect that it hasn't done with you yet.

Everyday Life

You've gone back to the job you had during the Struggle.

The economy was already stagnant when the final push against the regime began. Recovery is just around the corner, you hope. You might not be getting paid your full salary. Somehow though, everyone muddles on.

At night you gather with the rest of your crew at a favorite hangout, maybe one where lots of other former insurgents gather.

You listen to hotjazz, the exciting new music form that's sweeping the nation, now that a totalitarian agency no longer controls culture and entertainment.

You probably drink Belgian beers—a huge craze now that protectionist trade regulations have gone out the window and anyone with the dough can import anything.

The old monopolies, given out to cronies by the Emperor and his family, fight to survive against sudden competition. Everyone wonders if a soft drink competitor will rise to replace the freshly privatized Casta-Cola Company.

Brands that died out in our reality continue in this one. Studebaker is a major car manufacturer.

Look and Feel

Grim, utilitarian concrete towers fill the streets of your home, New York City.

They lie atop a grander layer of now-grimy, once-white structures built during the optimistic 19-teens. During this period the famed reformist President Winthrop leveled the city's vibrant, ramshackle neighborhoods for monumental façades of neoclassical columns teeming with Greek and Roman influences.

In place of a subway system, New York boasts the underground highways, major thoroughfares that rumble beneath the surface, under a light display of artificial stars.

For fashion and design, think late '50s or early '60s.

Technology has advanced to what we would think of as a 1980s level, at best. Forget video tape, the Internet, sophisticated DNA testing, personal computers, or digitized documents.

The government's weird weapons of oppression remain on the street. From needle guns and obedience whips to mind-warping

gases and implants, the science of oppression is one area where the Castaignes excelled.

Weirdness

The eerie realm of Carcosa kept the Castaignes on the throne. The final battles of the Overthrow somehow closed the gates between worlds. The minions of the King and his court can no longer freely come here. But some of them, and the monsters spawned with their alien discipline of parageometry, remain on this side.

The role of the unnatural in the last hundred years of history might be common knowledge to the average person, a secret few know, or a strangely fading memory. Ask your GM about your game's Weirdness Level.

Government

Elections haven't been held yet. The Interregnum Administration promises them soon, but first the People's Congress, an appointed body dominated by former dissidents, has to settle on a new constitution. Parties haven't formed yet; some hope they never will. Instead various factions tussle for influence.

As a group, you will choose a political agenda and try to bring it into being. Choose from this list, or make up one of your own:

- **Shut Down Government Lethal Chambers:** The Winthrop government installed suicide machines throughout the country. Now that the world

has gone sane again, you want these closed down.

- **Preserve Government Lethal Chambers:** The chambers remain a popular symbol of self-determination. You support the individual right to choose and want to protect the GLCs from those who would shut them down.
- **Truth and Reconciliation:** You think that society can only be healed by exposing the crimes of the past, and then forgiving them.
- **War Crimes Trials:** The Castaignes might be gone, but many who abetted them in oppressing, torturing, and killing innocent people remain. To bring closure to those they harmed, they must be rooted out, interrogated, and made to face the people's justice.
- **Preserve Order:** The period after a revolution can be as dangerous to the ordinary person as the time of tyranny that preceded it—if not more so. Only with safe streets and tough justice can civil society flourish.
- **Reinstate Freedom:** The Castaigne regime forced people to obey. You want a constitution that protects the rights of individuals to earn a living, love who they want, worship in the manner of their choice, read whatever pleases them, and speak their minds without fear of official censorship.
- **Banish the Supernatural:** The Castaignes held onto power

as long as they did because of the help they got from another realm. You can't let the monsters and aliens come back to rule humanity again.

- **Harness the Supernatural:** The otherworldly beings who helped the Castaignes were evil. But the magic they wielded is just an alternate technology, neither good or bad in and of itself. In the right hands, it can heal, innovate, and bring prosperity to a devastated nation.
- **Get Elected:** If you leave government to people driven by fancy opinions, common sense goes out the window. During the rebellion, you learned to fix problems, preconceptions be damned. Time to bring that wisdom to public life!
- **Build a Business:** You intend to use your accumulated know-how to provide something people need—jobs and opportunities.

Meet the New Cops

The Interregnum Administration kept police forces running by flushing out the worst regime stooges and replacing them with trusted revolutionaries.

When you go to the cops, you will run into some old allies, but also officers who worked under the Castaignes. The first group distrusts the second, and vice versa. With sedition laws struck from the books, local forces now focus on crime and public order, leaving politics aside.

Prosecutors' offices still function, enforcing the laws they think will remain on the books. Expecting any convictions gained now to be appealed when a new criminal code comes in, they're reluctant to move on any case that isn't absolutely solid.

The Provisional Federal Police hunt for war criminals to put before the Tribunal. Activists opposed to this process, knowing that one in four people informed to the old Department of Internal Security, instead argue for a Truth and Reconciliation Commission.

Whether they're destined for forgiveness or imprisonment, folks still fear the old secret police, popularly known as Hussars, or the Huss. They used to hunt you down. Now the tables have turned.

Shrunkun Empire

The USA doesn't stretch from sea to shining sea. To the south lies the independent nation of Suanee, a majority black nation that has managed to keep learning and democracy alive in an otherwise bleak time for the continent. California, once a breakaway republic, now considers union with the new, democratic America.

Further Reading

For more atmosphere, world-building, and a template for adventure in the world of *Aftermath*, check out the novel *The Missing and the Lost*, also from Pelgrane Press.

REFERENCES

Relative Challenge Table

Relative Challenge	Difficulty (Escape)	Difficulty (Other)	Difficulty (Kill)	Toll
Weak	1	3	3	0
Tough but Outmatched	2	3	4	0
Evenly Matched	2	4	5	0
Superior	2	5	6	1
Vastly Superior	3	6	7	2
Overwhelming	3	7	8	2
Too Awful to Contemplate	3	8	10	3

Foe Difficulties

Strength of Opposition	Difficulty (characters' objective \neq kill or render helpless)	Difficulty (characters' objective = kill or render helpless)	Toll
Weak Foes	3	6	1
Tough but Outmatched Foes	4	7	2
Evenly Matched Foes	5	8	2
Superior Foes	6	9	3
Vastly Superior Foes	8	12	5
Overwhelming Foes	9	13	5
Too Awful to Contemplate	12	16	6

Post-Revolutionary Shocks

Situation	Difficulty	Minor	Major
A Revolutionary Hero Turns Out to Be a Heel	4	Dammit, Man	Seriously, Dammit
You Interpret Something Innocuous as Extremely Alarming	4	False Alarm	The Yips
You Meet, But Can't Strike Against, a Foe from the Old Days	4	Forehead Vein	It Eats You Up
You Remember Being Tortured	5	Grim Flashback	You Know You Broke
You Ally with a War Criminal	5	Sullied	Expedience
You Remember Committing Torture	5	Spasm of Guilt	The Monster Inside
You Remember the Terrible Thing You Did	4	Twinge	Spasm of Guilt
You Use a Castagnite Weapon	4	Pang of Doubt	Lines Get Muddy

Group Matrix

Player	Character	Civilian Occupation	Drive	Worst Memory	Parallels

Investigative Ability Worksheet

Player name					
Character name					
Accounting (A)					
Architecture (A)					
Art History (A)					
Bullshit Detector (I)					
Bureaucracy (I)					
Cop Talk (I)					
Counterinsurgency (A)					
Flattery (I)					
Forensics (T)					
History (A)					
Inspiration (I)					
Intimidation (I)					
Intuition (T)					
Leadership (I)					
Medicine (T)					
Negotiation (I)					
Occultism (A)					
People Person (I)					
Photography (T)					
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