

TIMEWATCH

GAME MASTER'S SCREEN AND RESOURCE BOOK



KEVIN KULP



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INTRODUCTION

Plot hooks for a time travel game are everywhere, but it's not always obvious where to start. There's a tendency to want to get the *perfect* mission hook, the *perfect* time travel idea. We instead recommend that you leap in head-first. Find an idea or a time seed that sounds fun, print off some Agents from the *TimeWatch* templates available online, and go – quite literally – save time.

This collection of GM resources will help. In it we talk about everything you'll need to build a *TimeWatch* adventure. You'll find resources for making combat even more fun, strategies for researching mission hooks, and pre-made Rebel organizations to bedevil or ally with your time-traveling Agents. You'll also

find 16 new time seeds for near-instant missions, organized by the Adversaries and Antagonists that each mission seed uses. If you read the Adversaries in the main book and thought, "that sounds fun but how would I use it?", you'll like this section.

Overall, we encourage you to make *TimeWatch* your own. Whether you're running a sprawling campaign or a focused one-shot, as long as your players are having fun and arguing about time travel, you're doing it right.

Kevin Kulp
Boston, October 2016

HOW TO BUILD A TIMEWATCH ADVENTURE

There are as many ways to build a *TimeWatch* adventure as there are ways to build an adventure for any other type of game, but here's how we do it. You should adjust this to match your own style.

PREPARATION

Keep your ears open for plot hooks. When you're listening to news, reading Wikipedia, or reading social media, great *TimeWatch* hooks show up all the time.

Historians actually know who brought the smallpox virus to the New World; it arrived on in Veracruz on April 23, 1520, carried by an African slave who was part of Panfilo de Narvaez's expedition.

Decide on the campaign frame. The type of game you want to run vastly influences the type of mission you'll want to create. If you want a funny game, for instance, you probably won't focus as much on plagues, assassinations and tragedies. If you want human time travelers as enemies instead of aliens or sophosaurs, you'll want to avoid the more "wahoo!" types of adventures.

Smallpox reduced the population of Mexico from 25 million inhabitants to 1.6 million inhabitants. Themes of war, death and plague suggest that the campaign will be a more serious one.

Consider the complexity and scope. Something epic than spans lots of locations, or something simple that keeps the agents more-or-less in one time period? Something in the past that requires research, or something in the future where you can make all the relevant history up?

An Adversary who prevents or delays smallpox changes the course of colonialism. This is a large-scale, possibly multi-session mission.

Consider your Adversary. Who's your bad guy? What

is her motivation, appearance, style, manner of speaking, and backup plan? Is she trying to achieve a grand triumph, trying to get revenge on someone, or is she just selfish and wants to improve things for her own family? Does she know *TimeWatch* exists and that someone will try to stop her? Does she think ahead and lay traps? If so, where's she most likely to fail, then how can she succeed there instead?

Playing god, a future anthropologist with more resources than sense purposefully prevents smallpox from being introduced into Mexico. He plans to set everything back to rights, but is accidentally killed before he can reverse his experiment. Alternate history rages out of control.

A sadistic Aztec priest acquires the dead anthropologist's belongings, including his time machine. Experimentation almost kills him but he soon learns that he can travel to the future and the past—and that once there, he can see the results of his actions, thus allowing him to fine-tune his plan for a millennia of Aztec supremacy. Unfortunately, no one has told him about chronal instability and the insanity that can accompany it.

THE HOOK

Come up with an interesting plot hook. It doesn't have to be a world-changing idea, but the agents should have an intriguing reason to investigate. Has the atmosphere suddenly turned poisonous? Have all great composers suddenly disappeared? Do druids rule modern Great Britain? Pick something fun, something memorable, and riff off of it.

Spanish colonialism was beaten back by a strong and healthy Mexico. Although disease does eventually come, it never strikes as severely and world history changes to favor Mexico and South America.

Research the hook. This may be as simple as making things up, or as complicated as searching online resources

for actual and alt-history that others have written. Try not to overdo this; unless you're having great fun, limiting this to half an hour is usually sufficient.

Google something similar to "Mexico alternate history no smallpox" to see others' thoughts on this scenario.

When the Adversaries win, what happens? As we've mentioned, *TimeWatch* adventures typically begin with the bad guys having already succeeded. What are the consequences of their (hopefully short-lived) victory? Perhaps the stakes are ridiculously small, like a single person winning a bar bet, or perhaps the change they make ripples across the entire world over the course of centuries.

This is also where you consider who the Adversaries are and what memorable hook or characteristic they possess. You usually hate a villain more once they've become familiar to you; all good villains need to be despicable, interesting, or both. A memorable villain usually has a strong personality, clear goals, a memorable voice or appearance, and should be familiar to the Agents before the last and final climactic fight.

A strong and undivided Aztec culture resists Spanish invasion, disrupting the flow of gold and silver to Europe that encouraged world-wide trade. The Industrial Revolution is delayed, Western Europe is weakened, Russia gains in strength, and European history is rewritten.

The future anthropologist is a polite, severely dressed, mild-mannered researcher with no field experience but the sort of gung-ho, risk-taking attitude you can only get from finally deciding to do something you already know to be stupid. The time traveling Aztec priest who gradually develops megalomania is a short, strong brute wearing a xicolli (a sleeveless coat). He is laden with golden bangles and necklaces and possesses a disturbingly intense stare.

What did the Adversaries do to win? It's important that you know what your Adversaries did to succeed, especially in the key pivot points that started off a chain of causality. Those are the scenes that the agents will focus on.

The foolish future anthropologist who cured the smallpox patient zero was killed in a simple street altercation before he could return and re-infect the patient. To fix the temporal cascade, agents could arrest him before he ever gets involved, or they could re-infect the smallpox carrier.

How will Adversaries try to resist their changes being revoked? Unless you're out of time at the end of the game session, chances are that someone likes the new world order better than the old, and they'll resist having history changed back. The question is, what (if anything) can they do?

The 23rd century Sino-Russian oligarchs who control time travel technology in the rewritten world don't take kindly to their existence being erased. They send a military strike force and a team of doctors back to Veracruz, with strict instructions to annihilate any other time travelers they encounter.

Similarly, the insane Aztec priest refuses to allow the Agents to remove his future empire. He will lead a hand-picked band of jaguar warriors through time to stop them at whatever historical pivot point the Agents choose to repair.

What did the Adversaries do after they won? Odd little victory dances aside, deliberate changes to the time stream are usually performed with a particular goal in mind. Think about what your bad guys do after they think they've won. That way you won't be caught off guard when your Agents time travel to stop them but arrive at a non-critical juncture.

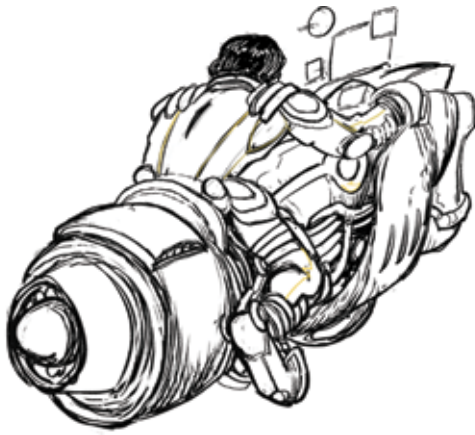
With the anthropologist accidentally dying before his experiment was complete, there's no main villain per se, just a foolish mistake and the inevitable fallout.

How does the change ripple through time? Some changes are minor, some are major, and some rewrite the world. How quickly changes propagate forwards and backwards is entirely up to you, and the amount of perceived time between "I've made a fundamental change to history" and "that change has rippled into the past and the future" usually depends on what's convenient for the story. For instance, to steal an image from the movie *Looper*, if you have someone's present and future self in the same room and you cut a finger off the present self, their future self immediately loses a finger. On the other hand, if you send someone back in time and they accidentally change all of history so that vast over-population occurs, you may have a short period of time when you know something has gone terribly wrong but the coming wave of changes hasn't reached you yet. With luck, that's just enough time to get to a time machine yourself. This delay is how the sophosaurs managed to avoid complete destruction when the Chicxulub impactor was steered back into the Earth.

If you're not a fan of gradual change rippling forward, instant change can also work in *TimeWatch* adventures. Just remember that anyone with one or more points in Paradox Prevention can tell that something has changed.

Rippling forwards but not backwards, the Aztec resistance to Spanish invasion takes some time to propagate into the future. The time stream partially corrects itself for the change—the shift isn't enough on its own to make the river of time entirely jump its banks—and investigating Agents in the future may find that Aztec and Russian influence in the world have expanded greatly, while the USA and Western Europe have shrunk in prominence. Aztec architecture supplants Roman architecture in popularity across America and Western Europe.

What's the trail the Agents might follow? Where can they shortcut that trail? You always want to give Agents the starting time and place to begin the investigation. At worst, give them a choice of two starting points, but playtesting has shown that not giving a start point results in half an hour of analysis paralysis. Far better, we think, to get people started in the right direction up front. If you know what triggered a change in history, and know what has changed well enough to point the Agents at a starting point, subsequent clues become fairly logical.



Agents are in The Citadel when they're assigned their mission, finding out why geo-political borders have changed. They travel to a vastly expanded and more powerful 20th century Russia, discover that it began to dominate the world in the 16th and 17th centuries, and learn that was due to Spain's weakness and commitment to fighting the Great Aztec Empire overseas. This leads them to 17th century South America, where they interact with Aztecs and perhaps even meet (or fight) the time traveling Aztec priest; this leads them back to the smallpox plague that started the change. They'll need to investigate why the plague didn't start, and possibly save the chronal anthropologist's life.

Cinematic and exciting moments. What would look good on a movie poster? What scenes do you want the players to remember for months to come? Work to build opportunities for these into your adventure, focusing on exciting locations, interesting villains and devious or treacherous betrayal.

The majesty of a contemporary Aztec empire in its prime. Marching along wide boulevards as you try to question captured Spanish conquistadores. The horror of needing to re-release a plague that killed millions.

Logical, satisfying conclusion. What's the most likely wrap-up? Are there stylish ways that the Agents can solve the problem, other than your main path?

Confronting and chewing out a foolish, self-involved chronal researcher prevents the entire time change before it ever happens. Even better, a chronaton-crazed Aztec priest and his honor guard arrive to stop you, wearing Aztec garb and wielding stolen high-tech weaponry.

Did they miss anything? This is something you ask yourself at the end of the adventure. Any villains left alive who might have survived, and who would hold a grudge? Anything get changed that may ripple forward to change the campaign world? These small changes add up, and contribute to the richness of the game setting you've created.

One native was secretly immunized by the researcher and lives when he should have died. His offspring and generational line turn out to be great and commanding people who make many small political and humanitarian improvements over the centuries to come. When discovered, do the Agents leave it or fix this, too?

Long-term changes or rewards. In addition to the normal build points awarded at the end of a mission, other tangible benefits or changes sometimes occur.

One of the consequences of a longer Aztec empire was remarkable new recipes coming out of Mexico and South America. A cuisine-focused Agent might collect these and start his own restaurant when not out on missions.

Relationship changes. Did any new stresses or secrets develop within the Agents' team? How about within TimeWatch supervision, or amongst antagonist cabals that work against them?

The Agents recruit a new member to TimeWatch from the alternate-timeline Aztec empire, an incredibly capable warrior. How does that new Agent feel about their world and their history being erased as if it never occurred in the first place? Will they hold a secret grudge?

PROVIDING DESCRIPTION

Sometimes, sensory details are more important than historical details when describing a new place that the Agents have just time traveled to. That's particularly true if Agents are just passing through, or if they need to visit only one location. A quick pass through Wikipedia for the year and location doesn't ever hurt (unless it takes up valuable game time), but to keep the players immersed in the action, give some thought to what it might be like to actually be there.

- Draw in a breath. What's it like? Is it wet and musty with overtones of swamp and rot, so bitterly cold that it hurts to inhale, dry and dusty and hot as blazes? Can you smell sewage (all too true for many human cities throughout history), or horses, or the smoke of cooking fires, or machine oil, or expensive perfume, or the pollutants of factories? Is it misty, rainy, snowy, smoggy, or crystal clear?
- What do you hear? An autochron typically brings you into locations where no one else is looking at you, but that doesn't mean a lack of sound. What languages can you hear? Are there accents? Is there music? Are there animals, or children, or machines? Is there the dull white noise of omnipresent fans, the shriek of alarms, the tolling of bells, the hammering of a thousand war drums, the scream of artillery shells, or the buzzing of insects?
- What do your surroundings look like? How wide are the streets? What are people wearing, and what's the color of their hair? Are they bearing weapons? Are they nervous or relaxed? What's the architecture?

To do this, you should steal egregiously from any movies you've seen, games you've played or books you've read. The *Assassin's Creed* games provide descriptions of the rooftops of 15th century Florence. Post-apocalyptic scenes may be taken

straight from *Mad Max*, spaceship descriptions from *Aliens*, old west descriptions from your favorite John Wayne or Clint Eastwood movie, and WWII descriptions from *Saving Private Ryan*.

You can let your players set the scene—"What time of day is it? What month is it? How's the weather? What kind of a location do you want to appear in?"—or you can decide this yourself. Flavor text for different eras will help define everyone's memories of what occurs. A hunt for a hidden oasis and the stranded time traveler stuck there will feel very different as the Agents travel between a brutally hot desert and a dripping, pestilential jungle.

THINKING ON YOUR FEET

"To see the results of our actions, we travel 100 years into the future and find an encyclopedia."

"I think this has something to do with Hitler's grandparents. Let's go find them."

"Time to flee this fight, heal up, and show up again 15 seconds after we left."

"We failed? Okay, let's go back farther and try again."

"I spend a Science! point. Can I get a freeze ray?"

"If I'm going to die anyways, I may as well have my future self show up to heal me. What do I have to spend?"

Every now and then, *TimeWatch* can throw a curve ball at you.

It's not surprising; players have latitude to be wildly creative. With more options, some players decide to push the envelope and solve problems in a way you didn't anticipate at all. They may find and confront your villains in a different time or a different place than the wonderful climactic encounter you had planned, or they may come up with an end-run around your entire adventure.

It's tricky to start embracing this instead of rejecting it, and it can be overwhelming to have to determine place and time descriptions on the fly. What's your best tactics for when this occurs?

Rule one: Don't panic. It'll still be fun. Don't say "no," say "Huh. Interesting."

Rule two: if you have a smart phone or a tablet handy, Wikipedia is worth its weight in gold when prepping or running a *TimeWatch* game. If your players ask a hard to answer question that may have a quick answer on Wikipedia ("Where can we find Alexander the Great?"), and you aren't comfortable making up the answer, taking a 5 minute break while you check history may be worth it. Just making up an approximate answer and going with it may also be okay; if none of your players know, and you don't want to slow down the game, sometimes you shouldn't feel guilty in the least about inventing historical details that are completely wrong.

If you make up an answer that contradicts actual history, and the players notice it, tell them it's an error if you don't

want to risk the game being sidetracked. If they pursue the red herring and you want to turn it into a major plot point on the fly, all the better; just don't feel that you need to.

Rule three: perhaps you were already thinking of wacky options when you first came up with the adventure, using the process listed on TW p. 198. If so, that will help you understand what logically happens when the players try their clever solution. If not, excuse yourself to go to the bathroom (or just take the aforementioned five minute drink break) and consider how time traveling antagonists might respond to the new situation. Will the players' actions make things better or worse? Will new enemies show up, or take action in retribution? Then take a deep breath and let them go for it.

Rule four: don't get bogged down on minutiae. *TimeWatch* Agents are exceptionally competent, and there usually are better uses for your time than micro-managing small details. Exceptions abound—some games like a *Conspiracy* game may turn on whether or not an agent can enter a locked room without detection, or whether they can reach the top of a building to observe and record a secret meeting between two other agents—but in more action-oriented games playing out such activities may just slow down the story. It's okay to say "you spend Preparedness, you have the weapon you need. How does it show up?" instead of making them time travel to go and buy it.

THE LOGIC OF PARADOX

It can be confusing to remember how paradox works, and how the various time-related abilities (Chronal Stability, Reality Anchor, Timecraft, and Paradox Prevention) interact.

Quick reminder: what's a Paradox test? As described on TW p. 90, players make a Paradox test when their Agents encounter paradox. They roll a d6 and try to get 4 or higher; if they don't, their Agents lose 4 points of Chronal Stability. Before they roll, they can spend points from Chronal Stability to add to their die roll. Either the Difficulty or Loss may be higher than 4 when the paradox is severe.

When does Paradox occur? Paradox occurs when something the Agents learn or experience contradicts a known fact. When that happens, call for a Difficulty 4/Loss 4 (also called D4/L4) Paradox test. In general, if you think to yourself "man, that seems like a paradox," it probably is.

Paradoxes occur whenever history or known events are contradicted. By dint of their job, Agents are usually around (or the cause) when that happens. Researching events from the future can sometimes trigger paradox; Agents can easily jump forward twenty years to read about an event in history books, but this locks in that version of the event for them. When their actions give that event a different outcome, they will typically trigger paradox.

Worried she's about to enter an ambush, an Agent makes a Paradox test and spends 1 point of Paradox Prevention to send herself a note from the future (as described on TW p. 94). If the note says "there's an ambush waiting," and she then avoids the ambush, there's no additional paradox; no knowledge

has been contradicted. If the note says “You’ll be caught in an ambush,” and she then avoids the ambush, there is additional paradox.

GMs may also declare that paradox occurs if someone important is killed in a fight when they shouldn’t have been; if an important meme or concept gets transmitted to someone who shouldn’t know it (such as the truth that time travel is real!); when anachronistic devices are left behind; when Agents violate their own past by going back to change something they have already experienced, such as leaving themselves a note; or if antagonists or neutral parties change the world around them.

That last one deserves a little more attention, because it typically only triggers paradox when Agents are affected personally. For instance, let’s say enemies of humanity ensure that mankind never invents the time machine. All TimeWatch Agents carry their own autochron. This is a paradox, and Agents would need to make a successful Paradox test or have their autochron disappear. They wouldn’t have to face paradox if the world changed around them in a way that didn’t directly affect them. If apples suddenly disappeared from the world due to a time change, for example, an Agent would only experience paradox if she was carrying an apple that she wanted to hang on to.

The penalty for a failed Paradox test isn’t always Chronal Stability loss. It could be mind control, memory loss, an item held by the Agent disappearing from existence, or insanity. You’re encouraged to use paradox and Paradox tests as your answer when you think, “time has changed, how do I decide if it affects the Agents?” If they fail their (typically Difficulty 4) test, they’re affected.

Chronal Stability and Reality Anchor are the time travel equivalents of Health and Medic; as an Agent’s Chronal Stability degrades, the Agent feels the undertow of time’s river sweeping them away, and they begin thinking as if they’re a native of the time period they’re currently in. Reality anchor reminds them of who they truly are, grounding them in reality and strengthening their ties to their true personality. Agents make Paradox tests every time they time travel, when paradox occurs, when (relatively rare) weapons directly affect Chronal Stability, and whenever the GM dictates a test must be made.

Timecraft is an Agent’s knowledge of how time travel and chronal theory work. 2 points of Timecraft are required to even have a chance of fixing a broken autochron (or other time machine). Spending 2 points of Timecraft at once allows an Agent to briefly pick between two separate realities, as noted on TW p. 45.

Paradox Prevention alerts Agents when something has changed due to time manipulation; while everyone else around them who lacks this skill may never notice, a character with Paradox Prevention will realize something is wrong if, for instance, all poodles suddenly disappear or every 1950s housewife is suddenly carrying a laser pistol. Spending 1 point of Paradox Prevention can give +3 to a Paradox test, but it can also be spent to allow fun-but-possibly-overpowered time tricks. There’s no master list of such tricks, but examples include:

- having your future self come back to help you in a fight
- leaving yourself a note telling you what to do
- negating the local effects of a paradox that would otherwise affect you
- using your autochron to time travel to a parallel reality that doesn’t directly branch off of your own (such as the dying timeline where sophosaurs originate)
- arranging for a ridiculous coincidence, such as Archduke Franz Ferdinand’s driver turning down the wrong street and drifting to a halt just in front of assassin Gavrilo Princip, thus setting the Great War into motion; or Robert E. Lee’s battle plans for Antietam being found by the Union army, wrapped around three cigars

If you lack Paradox Prevention, the only way to notice when time has changed around you is when the true history stored in your tether contradicts what you think you know to be true and accurate.

THE TERROR OF INFINITE POSSIBILITIES

The major challenge of *TimeWatch* is that playing around in all of history is terrifying.

Seriously, it’s intimidating. Many people do best when given focus. It’s easier to immediately grasp the scope of a dungeon-based fantasy game or a modern horror game than it is that of a time travel game. In *TimeWatch*, you have all of recorded history to play around in AND all the past and future history that’s unrecorded, too. How the heck are you supposed to deal with that?

The trick is to limit your options—not by time frame (although you can certainly do that, running an all-modern or all-future game) but by picking your bad guy’s goals. If you decide that the Ezeru are trying to bring Earth to a global thermonuclear war, then they probably aren’t going to spend a lot of time trying to save Abraham Lincoln from assassination. If you decide that well-meaning TimeWatch rebels (with a secret agenda) are trying to bring about a peaceful and enlightened utopia by changing time, they won’t be attempting to start nuclear war.

In a longer campaign many of these villains are acting at once, requiring the characters to determine the source of the problem, their motives, and the most expedient and appropriate solution. A petty dictator who sets up his own island kingdom for twenty years is less important in the long run than one who triggers multiple volcanoes to cause global cooling. As the GM, you should decide on villains and scenarios that sound fun and make for good mysteries, then proceed accordingly.

If you’re suffering from analysis paralysis, ask yourself “what would make the best action movie” and go from there. For instance, it’s hard to go wrong with something

like a classic 19th century pirate ship somehow transported into the modern-day Florida Keys: it's cinematic, gives your players an opportunity for swashbuckling, and the mysterious problem of who sent it is far from obvious. Maybe you don't even know the answer yet, but that's okay; when you're being overwhelmed by historical possibilities, every choice you make brings you closer to an answer.

BUILDING A TIME RIDDLE

TimeWatch is a historical investigation game, and that means that you need to plan your mystery in time as well as space. This requires a different style of clue than you might find in a traditional investigative game.

No time travel: "He's been murdered? We search the crime scene for DNA evidence, pull video from the cameras outside, and see what the murdered stole in the process."

Time travel: "He's been murdered? We travel forward in time to read the newspaper reports, then travel back in time to leave a hidden micro-cam at the crime scene. Since I'm going to plant it later, it should already be here right now, so I'll just... ah, there it is. We'll review the footage and then time travel to lay an ambush for the murderer. That will cause paradox, but it will also save the victim."

With time travel it becomes easier overall to determine who committed a crime, so that no longer becomes the focus of investigations. Instead, most time travel mysteries have you figuring out that a crime has even been committed in the first place. You may deal more with minions who then lead you to the true perpetrators, or events that aren't truly what they appear to be. While a traditional mystery might start with the murder and subsequent investigation, add time travel and you need investigation to even discover that there's been a murder.

Time travel: "Wait, why did air quality in the 20th century just get noticeably, shockingly worse? I wonder if something happened to the people who pushed for cleaner air and less pollution. Let's go see; if someone got murdered and it's changed Earth's atmosphere, we need to find out why."

When designing clues for a time travel game, think about motivations and consequences. Why does someone want something different to occur? What are the results of that change, or how could that change come about in the first place? How might that change ripple forward through history, in expected and unanticipated ways? Then you introduce your Agents to the end of that chain of clues, the effects resulting from an earlier non-obvious cause, and let them work their way backwards along the chain of effect. Most of these clues may be distinguished because of historical facts or events that are wrong compared to accepted history; recognizing these changes makes Agents ask about what might have caused such anomalies, and Agents work their way backwards through the historical evidence.

This makes the evidence easy to find, so long as Agents know where to look. They may need to scour newspapers for historical anomalies, travel back to make irascible police

sergeants their best friend from young adulthood, or use other time travel tricks to follow the chain of clues. Once they arrive at the root cause, uncovering the criminal isn't even necessarily the most pressing responsibility. They need to uncover the criminal and either undo their crime, or arrest the criminal before the crime has ever occurred.

Building a chain of clues to a time-related investigation can be quite satisfying; not only is it fun to think about cause and effect, if the Agents do their jobs right, the crime is never committed and everything turns back to normal.

TYPES OF CLUES

A clue is any piece of information that forwards the plot and provides an opportunity for play to continue its momentum. The fact that plot is moved forward with continued momentum distinguishes a clue from other elements of play, like action beats (where only momentum advances) or investigatory beats (where clues and their information are either placed into a context or expanded).

The tendency is usually to think of clues as physical objects, since the majority of TV shows and films show us material clues: the bloody knife, the smoking gun, fingerprints, and unidentified corpses. This overlooks the fact that there are other kinds of clues.

There are emotional clues, jealous or angry people sparked into action. There are prophetic clues, where a past experience repeats itself – a repeat criminal offender or serial killer, for instance. There are situational clues, where specific circumstances meld together to indicate action, such as an unarmed investigator dumpster diving in a poorly lit alley with her back turned and earbuds in. There are remembered clues, where people's memories of facts differ than true recorded history, triggering the Paradox Prevention ability to let Agents know that time has been changed.

There's an additional type of clue when time travel is added to the campaign: the temporal clue.

A temporal clue is a clue linked to a specific time. Why did the incident being investigated happen at the time it did?

"He was supposed to sign those contracts tomorrow, and now his entire business will fail. He sure died at the worst possible time."

The place it happened may speak to motive or opportunity, how it happened may speak to who did it, but consider the time as part of the answer to the question of why it happened. Why couldn't it have happened later? Or earlier? What, if anything, is significant about this particular moment?

A final clue is the historical clue, where a change in known history indicates a deeper cause earlier in the time stream. When an Agent learns that Christianity never developed at all, he knows the problem lies near or prior to 30 BCE; when the Agent learns that the Yellowstone super volcano erupted in 1950, he knows that might make a good time period to start to investigating, and then return later to stop the eruption from ever occurring.

MISSION RESEARCH

Don't yet have a mission hook for your game, and friends are showing up in an hour? Don't despair. Building a fun *TimeWatch* mission should never feel like academic research unless you want it to.

WIKIPEDIA AND THE INTERNET

Unless you're setting a mission wholly in the future, the internet and sites such as Wikipedia are invaluable for harvesting good plot hooks. Entering search terms such as the following can be gold mines of good ideas.

- amazing historical coincidences
- mysterious disappearances
- historical turning points
- counterfactual history
- alternate history

Once you have a mission hook, use Wikipedia or other online resources to learn more about it. Your goal isn't exhaustive knowledge; that would take more time than you likely want to spend on game prep. Instead, you're looking for enough detail to build a mission, and for the interesting historical personages surrounding the event. A few details about the location also help. With that information, building a *TimeWatch* mission becomes relatively fast and easy.

Wanting a fun game but only having half an hour before your players show up, you search the internet with the search term "insane coincidences." You quickly run across a remarkable case where an author named Morgan Robertson wrote about the Titanic... 14 years before it occurred. His book "Futility, or the Wreck of the Titan" was a stunningly accurate depiction of the Titanic disaster, right down to the ship's speed and location. You decide that Robertson was a passenger on the Titanic who got flung backwards in time when he was caught in the Chronal backwash of a time traveling thief. You decide that the clue chain will take the Agents to Robertson in 1898, then to the deck of the sinking Titanic, then after the treasure-hunting thief. With a running gunfight on the sinking cruise ship in the cards, you're confident that you have tonight's game session well in hand after 20 minutes of research.

The most important fact to remember when researching a mission is that *TimeWatch* isn't a simulation. If you feel like researching a *TimeWatch* game is intimidating or a chore, you may be spending too much time on exact history that the players will never need to know. You don't need to know everything; you just need to know a little bit more than your players, and enough to structure a fun mystery or adventure.

LOOKING TOWARDS THE FUTURE: WHEN YOU DON'T WANT TO DEAL WITH RESEARCH

No time, or no interest, for historical research? Time travel works both ways, and you want to make sure your players who specialized in History (Future) get their money's worth. Set a mission either entirely or partially in the future, or set a mission in our present (the 20th or 21st century) where antagonists from the future invade. The latter may feel a little *Terminator*-y, but there's huge advantages to running this sort of game:

- You and your players can build a communal future-history. Ask each of your players to state a historical event that's happened between now and the time your antagonists come from.
- If you decide you don't like any aspects of the future history you and your players create, it's simple to have it be an alternate future that's eliminated when past or present history changes.
- No research is required, as you can make up anything you need. Just write it down so that you can refer to it in future games.
- Future history allows you to include technological and alien threats that might otherwise feel out of place in a past-history game.
- Likewise, antagonists and supporting characters have an excuse to haul out high-tech weaponry. If you're tired of enemies ineffectually firing Sharps rifles at the Agents, a beam rifle makes for a terrifying and welcome change.

Even when an adventure takes place partially in the past, try to work in future time travel clues as well. They're a great opportunity to drop the Agents into any kind of utopia or hellish post-apocalyptic hellscape you wish, and they provide a wonderful change of pace.

THE CHECK-A-DECADE METHOD

When searching for historical inspiration and you choose not to check alt-history or literary sources, one of our favorite techniques is picking a decade and working forward from any interesting occurrence we run across. Wikipedia's decade summaries are superb for this purpose. The trick is not to just find something that's historically important; it's to find something that's historically relevant and interesting to your players.

There are lots of interesting possibilities listed when Googling "1640s decade Wikipedia." For instance, Oliver Cromwell was active in the English Civil War during this time, Massachusetts institutes the death penalty for anyone who has a rebellious child, and the Ming Dynasty collapses. Here's something: in 1642, Rembrandt van Rijn finishes his painting "The Night Watch".

That's worth some thought. It's a nice visual example to show. Can an interesting plot be made out of it? What if someone was using a time machine to appear in famous paintings throughout time? That creates a subtler, less violent mystery that still needs to be stopped: who is the mysterious egomaniac who insists on photo-bombing famous paintings, and why is he doing it?

On Wikipedia, type in "famous paintings" and select a half dozen that you decide the photo-bomber appears in. The next question is: why is he doing it? He could be driven by ego. He could be a TimeWatch Agent who lost a bet, or a rebel who had fled TimeWatch. That last one has some possibilities. Perhaps he is surreptitiously trying to send a message to TimeWatch in a non-threatening way, hoping to attract an Agent to talk to. Why? Perhaps he has heard about a massive and catastrophic strike that is scheduled, or an alien plot, and he needs to let TimeWatch know without drawing attention to himself. But what if he's a wanted fugitive and saboteur himself? The Agents will need to find him at one point in time, talk to him, and listen to his warning without being caught in an ambush by their mysterious enemy.

For a mission based on this theme, see TW p. 373.

You won't always strike gold on your first try, but decade-based summaries are full of potential plot hooks. Once you find a few that sound fun, it won't take long to see if there's enough potential there to develop them further.

ALT-HISTORY AND YOU

Alternate history forums and websites can provide great inspiration when designing missions, but a word of caution: many such sites are far more interested in what should have, or would have happened, and less interested in what would make an exciting game. Take inspiration accordingly, and don't be quick to give up fun or interesting gameplay in exchange for what other people consider the most likely alternate histories.

This is a game, not a history lesson (mostly), and your planning should be inspired by others' alternate histories without being slavishly devoted to them. Your players won't know if you just chose the portions you considered to be the most fun to investigate.

It's good to remember that alternate history is really nothing but a giant clue that leads your Agents to the true linchpin and turning point of the alternate history. That clue serves to lead players to the true villains at exactly the correct moment in time; any fiddly or boring details that don't help in that regard can be handily discarded, used as convincing set dressing to make the alternate history seem more real, or filtered to pull out a handful of the most interesting alternate facts. Just remember that any exposition that doesn't serve these causes is likely to become distracting or boring faster than you'd think.

LITERARY INSPIRATIONS

If you first fell in love with time travel or parallel universes by reading Heinlein, Asimov, Chalker, Anderson, Turtledove, or Hawke, or any of a hundred other authors, use those plots and stories as inspiration for your own game. Take a rough storyline, twist the plot enough to make it a surprise for anyone else playing it, add in your own story framework and supporting characters, and you're ready to go. One caution: never try to reach the same resolution or dramatic story beats in your own game as the story did. You can't (and shouldn't) manipulate your players the same way you'd write literary characters, and you'll have the most fun when you trust your friends to bring their own brand of heroism to the mission.

You can just as easily draw on cinema, radio plays, podcasts and comic books. Completely reskinning *Terminator* to be less recognizable (different time period, different type of assassin, different assassination target) can be done in less than ten minutes but easily provides four hours of fun and action-packed play. You may not want to borrow from someone else's story every time, but it's a great way to build a mission quickly with a minimum of fuss.



PICK A THEME

One thing that helps narrow down your story possibilities is to pick a theme for the mission. You can instantly see a list of hundreds of different story themes by Googling (unsurprisingly) “List of story themes,” but it’s easy to think of several dozen on the spot.

A few examples include:

Fear of Failure: Having ruined the most important relationships in his life, an inventor goes back in time to fix his mistakes—but doing so causes paradox, unleashing time-related terrors upon his home town. Every attempt to fix them makes them worse. It’s up to TimeWatch to step in, solve the rips in space and time (and clear up the displaced beasts and soldiers running amok), and find the seven versions of the scientist desperately trying to make things right. If you think arguing with yourself as seven identical supporting characters is fun, this is a nice, small, self-contained mission.

Power of Words: A young Ukrainian boy whose family has been exiled to a Siberian work camp finds a bit of futuristic technology frozen in a snowbank. He uses some sort of psychovocal amplifier to make people obey his every word, and within ten years he is leading a fanatically loyal and unswerving army that will soon sweep across Europe. The TimeWatch team is sent in to stop the charismatic demagogue, but a bigger mystery soon looms— who first abandoned that futuristic technology in Siberia, and why?

Reunion: A well-meaning but unwise historian gathers multiple US presidents together in order to observe and record the ensuing conversation and debate. He fails to wipe out the memory of the event, however, and the US founding fathers go back to their own time with the knowledge of time travel and the country’s future. They amend the US Constitution to correct what they see as future problems, and in doing so throw the future into terrible disarray. It’s up to TimeWatch to notice the problem, discover the reason for the changed documents, and have strong words with the historian—even as choral soldiers from the alternate dystopian future travel back in time to make sure their personal history isn’t erased.

Vengeance: A disliked TimeWatch commander falls to friendly fire from his own team and is left for dead. Barely surviving, he later uses his choral abilities to lay a deadly trap to gain vengeance on his so-called allies. The Agents are brought in to investigate the missing team. Will they be caught in the trap as well, or side with the obnoxious but betrayed commander?

If you are drawing a blank for a good mission hook, start with theme instead of with actual history, and work outwards from there.

PICK CONTINUING VILLAINS

If you’re going to have an antagonist present for more than one mission (even if it’s just their minions, influence or the consequences of their plans), make sure it’s an antagonist you think is fun, interesting and terrifying enough to carry the lead role in a sci-fi television show. Style is just as important

as competence. Think back to *Raiders of the Lost Ark*; no one knows exactly why Major Arnold Toht (the short, pudgy Nazi Gestapo agent) was terrifying, but he had style and he knew how to use it. Your recurring villains should have the same, with personalities and motives that make them fun to play and plan for across multiple sessions.

After all, the Agents may kill an Adversary in the first game of a series, and then encounter younger versions of the same enemy in the game after that, and the game after that. Even better, if they kill the younger version after they already slew the older version they’ll suffer from paradox! So think of your continuing Adversary as someone you enjoy running, and bid him or her a fond farewell when they’re finally, decisively defeated.

If you’re planning on bringing in younger versions of a recurring villain, the older version that the Agents first encounter will remember them as the detested Agents who have thwarted several of his schemes in the past, even though you haven’t played out those scenes yet. Such villains should indicate that he already knows them, foreshadowing later encounters.

CONTINUING PLOTLINES

TimeWatch makes a great one-shot game, but there’s a special joy to continuing plotlines. In the same way that TV shows gradually reveal villains over the course of a season, you can gradually introduce choral masterminds who manipulate history for their own benefit. Agents gradually discern a pattern, and investigation reveals that their multiple foes are trained, supplied, and inspired by the same charismatic Adversary who plots *TimeWatch*’s entire destruction—and who has a personal grudge against the Agents for reasons they haven’t yet discovered, perhaps because the event has yet to occur.

If you have the opportunity to run multiple games of *TimeWatch*, consider a short series where arching plotlines are linked. The payoff in terms of story and plot revelation can be particularly satisfying. Better yet, planning missions becomes easier because the single master villain provides constraints; if you’ve already decided a master villain’s plot arc, it becomes simpler to decide what actions might both bring him closer to his goal while simultaneously introducing plot hooks for the Agents.

Hoon is a chrome-magnon, a caveman brought into the future and equipped with cybernetics by an unscrupulous warlord who wanted to hand make his own army. Unfortunately for the warlord, the cybernetics made Hoon into a genius instead of an unthinking soldier of destruction. Hoon is sending unthinking, pre-programmed caveman cyborgs on missions into the past and future to acquire technicians and equipment that will let Hoon open a massive time gate. When he’s ready he will kill the warlord and lead his army of chrome-magnons back in time to the birth of mankind, where Hoon’s army will conquer the world of proto-humans—and change the future of mankind in the process. Until then he hides in plain sight within the warlord’s army, keeping his brilliance a secret.

Hoon makes a pretty good villain, sending off mysterious cave-man cyborg agents through time to gain the resources he needs, but he might lack scope and resources to be the villain of an entire series. A good way to expand his reach is to have Hoon be secretly manipulated by an alien parasite or a second villain who is even more dangerous but who cannot time travel on her own. This second villain is using Hoon and his army to get back to the dawn of man, where she can use Hoon's army to achieve her own aims of molding and shaping humanity.

This combination might make a good 4 or 5-game series. After two missions of different chrome-magnon saboteurs, the agents uncover and defeat the warlord, only to find that they have played right into Hoon's hands. Then they face Hoon back in prehistoric times, only to discover that he's being secretly manipulated as well. Perhaps Hoon allies with TimeWatch to defeat his secret master, and perhaps he doesn't, but it's possible for the results of the battle to ripple forward through history, affecting the world for millennia to come.

INTERWEAVING PLOTLINES

Consider weaving multiple plotlines together if you're running more than a single game in a series. A single mystery or plot might be easily solved; two or more concurrent mysteries, one significantly more complex than the other, gives the players some hard choices as they slowly unravel enemy subterfuge over multiple games.

One method for doing this is to introduce one or two clues from a secondary (or "B") mystery into the primary (or "A") mission during every game. Perhaps the Agents keep finding untraceable spying devices set to observe them; or they run into multiple instances of smuggled future weapons brought into the past; or every Adversary they face has been trained and financed by a single, shadowy organization.

Interestingly, historical changes from a session's A plot may temporarily wipe out clues to the B plot that Agents really wish to research and solve. They'll need to solve the A plot just to be able to continue their B plot investigation.

Having multiple plotlines ensures that your players will have both short-term and long-term goals. They'll never lack for something to do during a session, and you can easily introduce cliffhangers and lingering tension between games. Whenever the players wrap up a continuing plotline, they will change their world for the better, and that helps make your game come alive.

VARYING ENEMIES

One-note enemies won't stay interesting for long. When you place the agents up against a mob of generic antagonists that all use the same game statistics, describe them differently enough to hold the players' attention. The 12th rampaging Neanderthal in a row may be boring, but the savage caveman with the half-flayed face shouting out half-intelligible screams of challenge as he jumps off a wall towards an Agent's unprotected flank? He'll be memorable, and the players will never know if his stats are identical to everyone else's.

That's even more true across a mission or a series. A single special Adversary can go a long way; not every ezeru fights with the same tactics, and not every major fight or plotline should involve ezeru. Just as TV shows like *Star Trek* made sure to vary their antagonists before an alien species became boring, you should do the same in *TimeWatch* missions.

As a good rule of thumb, vary antagonists either thematically or visually at about the point when your players think they know what to expect next. A thug with a chainsaw feels and fights differently than a medieval Viking with a battleaxe, even if they use the same combat stats. You'll keep the game fresh by pacing the involvement of different sorts of foes, and by giving each group different motives for mayhem.

CALLBACKS

The advantage of a time travel game is that it becomes easy to have reoccurring motifs. Incorporate callbacks in your game, a reference to an event that has already happened. This can be as simple as referencing a key historical figure in multiple missions, or as complex (and fun) as sending the Agents back to an event they've already been at, just to make sure they have to hide themselves from themselves as they chase down an entirely different mission set at the same time and place.

Due to time travel, you can even legitimately introduce consequences before an event has been caused.

The office door is kicked in. "You!" shouts the bulky, thick-necked man with the tommy gun. You're gonna pay for what you did!" You've never seen him before.

"Darn it," says a player. "Now we're going to have to go back in time and make sure we ruin his life."

It then becomes partially the players' responsibility to make sure the callback makes sense. This can be an extremely handy clue to use when players become stuck in a mission; the nature of the sudden ambush often delivers many clues about the person who engineered it, and helps the players decide where to go next.

TYPES OF ADVENTURES

When you're planning your game, here are a handful of approaches which you can use as the basis for a mission, series or campaign.

CRISIS OF THE WEEK

This is the most common *TimeWatch* adventure, especially for one-shots, mostly because it's tremendous amounts of fun for both players and GM. The core format is simple:

1. An enemy changes history,
2. The Agents discover that history has changed, and gain a place and time to start.
3. The Agents trace the mystery through time until they determine the root cause of the change.
4. The Agents neutralize the saboteurs.
5. The Agents find a method for fixing time, either negating the original change or setting things right through other actions.

If you're a fan of alternate history, this type of adventure is a delight to plan and investigate. There's a wealth of internet resources available for alternate-histories, making research much easier than it was a decade ago.

CONSPIRACY AND PARANOIA

In a conspiracy adventure, people that the characters trusted may turn out to be corrupt, or an ongoing pattern of sabotage points to a hidden intelligence directing a series of seemingly unconnected events. This suggests a master villain that may take several adventures, or an entire season, to identify. This structure is one that television shows such as *Buffy the Vampire Slayer* used perfectly: a master villain initially unknown to the protagonists, minions of the villain being thwarted by the heroes in seemingly unconnected episodes, side episodes that dwell on emotional arcs or unconnected monsters, all leading to an emotional and action-packed confrontation as the heroes identify the villain and they actively work to thwart one another.

There are far worse models for a *TimeWatch* campaign. While we supply you with a variety of possible master villains, from alien species to exiled scientists to rogue organizations to sentient language, you should feel free to make your own. Start with a highly capable, charismatic leader who wants something that can only be achieved by changing the timeline. Think of different ways that the ultimate goal might be reached, turn each goal into a session, and build the arc accordingly. Clues in each session begin to point towards the intelligence and identity of the master villain behind it.

For far more information about running an entire series centered around conspiracy, see TW p. 251.

INTIMACY - AND NOT NECESSARILY THE SEXY KIND

Action and investigation only gets you so far. If you want the Agents to live in a three- (or, considering time travel, four-) dimensional world, they need to know that the other supporting characters around them are more than cardboard cutouts. The Agents should have people they care about, and to do that they'll need a real reason to care about these people.

Make some missions personal. This is where the background, drives and secrets of the characters come into sharp focus. An intimate or personal mission at regular intervals, either mixed into a traditional session or as a focus in itself, is a great way to keep players emotionally involved in the game.

The trick, however, is not to use the backstory created by players as a bludgeon against them. No one likes this; Aunt May can only get kidnapped so many times before Spider-Man stops wanting to save her. Instead, riff off of this history to build and add to it. Perhaps an adventure involves the son or grandson of an Agent, or the ancestor, the family enemy, the lost spouse, or the incident which almost killed the character and first precipitated their recruitment into *TimeWatch*. It's a nefarious plan for a villain to remove a persistent enemy by using a time machine to make their life perfect, thus ensuring that they'll never want to join *TimeWatch*.

ACTION

Intimate and personal stories are great, but so is blowing stuff up. Players will eventually get tired of always having to cover their tracks as time travelers. Let's face it, a *TimeWatch* Agent's life is defined by caution: they're restricted from wholesale slaughter, they have to operate covertly, they're always conscious about possible choral instability, and every once in a while they just want to cut loose.

For example, perhaps *TimeWatch* needs to know something desperately. The only person who might have known would be a physicist who died early in life. The Agents must stop his death, let him age, question him, then go back and re-engineer his death. Any fights in that time loop are effectively safe, because it's getting erased regardless.

This type of situation is when you give Agents the opportunity for wholesale mayhem. Use an adventure set in a parallel timeline or closed time loop that won't test their Chronal Stability by causing death or destruction, or present them with villains who aren't tied to the timeline. Robots, cyborgs, aliens, and soldiers doomed to die soon anyways can lead to some spectacular fights. Plan for huge sky-incinerating explosions to get rid of truly nefarious threats. Include ludicrously powerful high-tech weapons that only work in a particular alternate timeline. Encourage solutions where the best strategy is to raise an army of inconsequential, fanatically loyal pre-historical soldiers who charge an enemy's base (all for spending just a point of both Anthropology and Military Tactics) as a mere distraction, while the team put time to right.

You probably don't want this style of game all the time. Playing god can actually get boring, and being incredibly sneaky and clever is one of the hallmarks of a good *TimeWatch* game. But be alert for your players' moods, and when you think it's about time, allow them the opportunity for some consequence-free mayhem and high-action danger. You'll end the night laughing and grinning ear to ear. And hey, if you like, have the adventure's theme act as a clue or a link to the progress of the overall campaign.

A PLOTS AND B PLOTS

Try to make each game about more than just one thing. In television this is called the A plot and B plot; while the A plot may be about stopping a time traveler from kidnapping Shakespeare to save their writing career, the B plot may be about a character's past catching up with them or a conspiracy within *TimeWatch* itself that has the Agents trapped between two competing commanders. Doing this lets you shift the focus back and forth for pacing, and both plots can tie into each other or partially resolve if you wish.

OLD FAMILIAR FACES

Just as Mulder and Scully had Skinner, and Bond had M and Q, there are a number of advantages to having a single supporting character act as the face of *TimeWatch* for the Agents. This person is their handler, their confidante or boss, a researcher and intelligence agent whose job it is to brief them and set them on new missions. Building trust between the handler and the Agents is useful; it makes players feel more attached to the *TimeWatch* organization, it provides continuity, it gives the group a mole on the inside to learn internal *TimeWatch* rumors and gossip, and it inevitably raises the specter of corruption or betrayal whenever the group needs to depend on their handler fully.

It's also advantageous to introduce other *TimeWatch* Agents and teams. The group might meet them while socializing between missions or while on a mission; it's even possible that they'll find themselves briefly opposed to their friends' goals. Whether rivals or allies (or both), other Agents can pop up regularly on their own missions.

Ancillary characters in *TimeWatch* help make the universe seem real, especially when they change and react to the player characters. Armory officers who either approve or disapprove of the Agents' weapon selections, and who can be convinced to supply particularly interesting or useful gear; memory modification technicians who lose their patience the first time the Agents use a MEM-tag inappropriately; robotic janitors who perhaps see and understand more than anyone gives them credit for. If this supporting cast reacts and responds to the Agents' exploits and accomplishments, *TimeWatch's* Citadel will begin to feel like a home.

Pure rivals can also be introduced; Agents who detest the player characters for one reason or another and who go out of their way to embarrass them, discredit them, and make them look bad. A good rival is a thing of beauty for the GM, as rival groups often have enough political clout within *TimeWatch* that they can't be dealt with through violence.

QUICK TIPS FOR A TIMEWATCH SERIES

The assumption and goals for a one-shot game of *TimeWatch* may be very different than for a series or campaign. Loot and (most) character development doesn't matter in a one-shot game, and neither do the long-term consequences of the characters' actions. In a Mythos campaign it doesn't matter if five of your six Lovecraftian investigators die or are driven screamingly insane, so long as the hideous evil is thwarted by the end of the session. It's okay if your choral agents blow up Cartagena; law enforcement can't track a time traveler and consequences don't carry over into the next one-shot. And let's face it, your stock archetype spy or scientist Agent probably isn't going to be all that different at the end of a one-shot adventure than she was at the beginning of play.

If you're in a long-term campaign, however, these things matter. Your investigator may really prefer to keep her sanity and a portion of her health. Those Agents discover that any massive assault that makes international news has consequences for history and the time stream. Your hero who started as an archetype may fall in love, develop allies, and decide there are things in this world she'd give her life for.

That brings us to a *TimeWatch* series or campaign. We designed the game to provide an intuitive and self-contained one-shot adventure. That's evident in the default mission



structure: get a mission, time travel, investigate the time disturbance, try to fix history, and take down the bad guys before they use time travel to detect and assault you first. It's fun, allows huge amounts of flexibility, and like any one-shot has a minimum of real consequences. Each mission is self-contained, and there's not necessarily much character development in the process. History is restored, but have the characters fundamentally changed? You had to replace Abraham Lincoln with a cyborg after accidentally getting him killed early, but will anyone notice before Ford's Theater?

That's where the concept of a *TimeWatch* continuing campaign comes in. Here are four rules to remember as you settle into a series or campaign:

- Relationships and secrets matter
- Enemies remember and multiply
- Small changes add up
- Work to avoid the gimmick

RELATIONSHIPS AND SECRETS MATTER

If you're playing more than a game or two, pay attention to whom the characters meet, trust, and love. Maybe they live embedded in the normal time stream while not working, with a normal job, boss, family and set of friends who care for them, and from whom they need to keep secrets. Perhaps they have relationships with TimeWatch coworkers, never quite knowing who in the vast organization is on their side and who may be subtly working against them. Do hidden secrets turn allies to enemies -- and are they themselves the one to blame? This is why characters have secrets, and GMs are encouraged to exploit and draw on those secrets for adventure ideas.

As a GM you may include factions, secret organizations or cabals within both TimeWatch and history as a whole that give Agents secret and personal missions to accomplish alongside their normal history-saving work. When a player isn't quite sure why their Agent has been asked to accomplish something, the long-term ramifications of their choices becomes a lot more interesting.

ENEMIES REMEMBER AND MULTIPLY

An Agent may have to fight an arch-nemesis long before you've ever met her for the first time. Agents may have the allies of an enemy come calling at the time when they're the most vulnerable. Any personal history they let be known

might conceivably be exploited by their foes, and the players shouldn't be surprised if unexplained and mysterious enemies show up at exceptionally inconvenient moments. They'll strike to eliminate an Agent from TimeWatch if the player lets them, and that may mean a tactic as insidious of ensuring that an Agent has an incredibly happy childhood, just so they're never tempted to lead a life of adventure.

Players can use this same game feature against their enemies. Agents should try to discover the earliest point when their foes might be vulnerable. They should strike against their enemies' friends, relatives, or history. They should harass their nemesis at a half dozen different places in their life, in the hopes of stopping their ultimate plans. Agents should just be cautious not to be the cause of their hostility in the first place.

Ultimately, continuing play becomes personal. It becomes more about the Agents and what they experience during their missions, and less about external missions where the Agents are solely focused on solving the mission itself and saving history. The best games are a combination of the two.

SMALL CHANGES ADD UP

If an Agent ends up with some sloppy solutions to alternate history, enemies may try to leverage and exploit these for their own gain. Say, for instance, that an Agent teaches some jolly Austrian children baseball while on a mission in the 19th century. That's the sort of thing that history usually takes care of on its own, reabsorbing the knowledge back into the river of time until Abner Doubleday reads about the Austrian game and decides to re-invent it. A clever GM might have their enemies try to pry that small shift into a much larger breach, changing the timestream in unexpected ways just to try to open some weaknesses in the flow of history. Continuity in multiple missions is a joy, mostly because players may find themselves dodging and hiding from their younger selves from three missions ago, just to reduce the chance of paradox.

WORK TO AVOID THE GIMMICK

That's really what time travel is, a fabulous gimmick, but it's a means to an end just as much as it is an integral part of an Agent's everyday adventures. Once a player gets used to the flexibility and problem-solving that a time machine gives them, you should break the pattern and create a mission or an adventure that might be solved almost completely without their time machine. As missions transition to become more personal, and players find their characters changing in both power and attitude as a result, you'll be well settled in for long-term campaign play.

BUILDING ALTERNATE HISTORY

We've talked about mining actual history for mission hooks. What about history that hasn't yet happened?

THE FUTURE IS WHAT YOU MAKE IT

Future history is a joy to build, mostly because you aren't constrained to a pre-established timeline. You'll never have players checking your historical information when you run a game set in the future; events and dates are entirely under your control. A huge amount happens in even a century, and as you stretch hundreds, thousands or tens of thousands of years into the future, you've got a lot of space to play with for any technology or events that you want to occur.

Let's put this into perspective. Fossil evidence suggests that modern humans evolved in East Africa about 200,000 years ago. Cockroaches have existed on Earth for over 300 million years, 1500 times longer than humanity. Crocodiles have existed for 200 million years. Dinosaurs existed for 165 million years, 825 times the current duration of humanity. The T-Rex alone existed for roughly 2 million years, ten times longer than we have so far.

Now, picture the speed that humanity has developed technologically in just the last 500 years—a pittance! An eyeblink!—and you realize how hard it is to predict the future. There's a huge amount of time in which to place future events. Want a nuclear war and a post-apocalyptic armageddon, followed by gradual rebuilding? Want global warming to flood coastlines for a thousand years before humanity gets the weather under control? Want an idyllic future of peace and prosperity, marked by brilliant invention that has come from aliens secretly living amongst us? Want humanity stretched across the stars, colonizing planets as they expand outwards? Want wars that set us back into the stone age, after which we rebuild humanity and technology over another 50,000 years?

You can do that. There's no one around to gainsay you; it's your game, and it's up to you to determine future history. There's space for everything. You don't even need to be particularly consistent; you can have humanity go extinct in the 31st century and be back up and running in the 37th century, just because time travelers from 2800 AD have traveled forwards in time to repopulate the Earth.

We suggest that you create a future Earth (and Earth colonies, if you choose) that have a particular mood or theme attached to their era. Then set any missions that involve that theme in that future era. Don't fret too much about future dates, as long as you're consistent. Even inconsistencies can be excused if you want to rewrite the future due to paradox and the actions of time travelers.

Player: "Wait, you said we've just gotten manned space travel outside the solar system in 2900 AD? Didn't we run across an interstellar wormhole generator from 2700 AD?"

*GM (seamlessly): "I sure did. Odd, isn't it? Perhaps something changed. Let me know if you want to investigate that... and here, have a *Stitch* for noticing."*

This is a useful technique if you accidentally write yourself into a corner. When you've established that killer cyborgs stamp out humanity in the 25th century, but you have a great adventure in mind that requires 27th century space travel, *TimeWatch* lets you simply ignore the great robot uprising that stamped out humanity. Your players will notice, and you can either tell them that another group of Agents fixed that history, that they have no idea why suddenly it no longer exists ("a *clue*?", they'll think), or wrap the anomaly into an ongoing mystery that they'll investigate in a future session.

You even have a ridiculously large amount of space to introduce fictional events into past history. For all that humanity arose 200,000 years ago, the span of recorded history is only about 5000 years. With a myriad of blank spots that we've lost all records for, you could drop a sophosaur empire in the middle of 5th century BCE India or a 40,000-person city of alien time travelers in Illinois' Cahokia Mounds circa 1000 AD, and there are few, if any, records to contradict you. Play around with the blank spaces of history. You have a lot of room to do so, and a quick internet search will tell you when they are.

In fact, it's up to you whether future history focuses on the near-future (late 21st century to the 25th century), the far-future (70th century or — heck, let's go for broke — millions of years in the future), or somewhere in-between. The rarer and more exotic the antagonist or technology, the better it is having come from the far future. Unique items may come from a far future that is such an unlikely tributary of the river of time that it doesn't always exist.

The trick to gradually designing future history is to make up an interesting-sounding event for a game, and write it down on a rough timeline when you do. Gradually, these events start to fill in the timeline. Sketch in other events — post-apocalyptic fallow periods, for instance, or periods of relative peace and prosperity — between the notable occasions you've jotted down. Make small notes about tech levels. Gradually, your game's future will start to emerge, leaving you plenty of space to slot in new events whenever the mood strikes you.

OUR HISTORY IS WRONG

Want to make your game less slavishly tied to actual history? Another useful plot hook is changing what the *players* know history to be. Perhaps Genghis Khan really should have lived longer, or European diseases shouldn't have ravaged the Americas, or Julius Caesar should have been murdered by the pirates who captured him in 75 AD. Either *TimeWatch* altered the true history themselves, or someone else did and *TimeWatch* hasn't yet noticed and corrected it at the start of the game. Either way, you can play off the players' expectations of what true history is, and then twisting that to your advantage. This creates a wonderful reveal when the players realize that all their expectations are wrong, and that all the history they know from that event forward is suspect.

THE TIME WAR

If you like complexity in your game, it's possible that the "true" past and future timeline is a fiction maintained by TimeWatch that represents a successful future for humanity. Anyone who disagrees with this timeline is attempting to change it constantly, and other enemies are trying to change it back. Ezeru, the Colony, reptoids, sophosaurs, and more are in a constant temporal battle that continuously calves off small alternative time streams and parallel universes. None of these groups have the vitality or energy of the primary timeline, however, and so they attempt to trap their enemies in false histories while they claim the main history all for themselves.

In this environment, it's possible that wholesale battles spring up regularly. It may be difficult or impossible for TimeWatch to hide these, leading to a world where feigned natural disasters cover up far more devious warfare. A *Time War* game involves feints, attacks, defenses, and maneuvers that work against multiple enemies; while still an investigatory game, instead of the focus on fixing and repairing history that a regular *TimeWatch* game has, a *Time War* game makes fixing history secondary to gaining an advantage on TimeWatch's enemies. History is the battleground, and there's bound to be casualties. See TW p. 314 for more information on one way to run a *Time War* frame.

PARALLEL TIMELINES

While *TimeWatch* has an entire campaign frame based on parallel timelines, they're also easy to slip into regular games as plot devices. *TimeWatch* assumes that parallel universes form often but don't last long; like water draining from a river's tributary after a dam is built, such temporary timelines fade away after they've been cut off from the main flow of time.

That's not always the case, however. Some parallel timelines can be temporarily or permanently stable. Time travelers can travel there with some difficulty (and GM permission), and an alternative to murder or execution may involve transporting a miscreant to a parallel timeline where they can live out their life in exile. Agents may need to travel to another timeline to acquire a rare piece of technology that hasn't been invented anywhere else, to speak to a person who is dead or subsumed in their own timeline, or to practice a difficult mission before trying it in their own reality.

In addition, sometimes time traveling inhabitants from alternate timelines figure out what's happening to them in time to escape. *TimeWatch* antagonists such as sophosaurs and ezeru come from this background. If you want exact duplicate of the Agents or their allies, parallel universe duplicates is a fine method for doing so.

Some parallel timelines have different temporal or physical laws. When TimeWatch finds timelines that are easy to enter but difficult or impossible to escape, they often use these realities as prisons for other time travelers.

PARALLEL TIMELINE MECHANICS

Several requirements govern travel into and out of parallel dimensions.

- **The Agents must have the coordinates.** In practical terms, this means that the GM must allow them to travel to the parallel timeline. Coordinates can be gained from research, captive technology, or simply a prisoner revealing the information. It's up to the GM to give this information when she wants to allow the Agents to travel between parallel dimensions. Alternatively, it's possible that physical transition points exist in the real world between parallel realities. A person might be able to walk into a house by one door, walk out by another door, and be in a completely different parallel universe with no knowledge of the transition. More commonly, walking into thick forest or sailing into a particular patch of ocean seems to trigger such events. These soft spots exist between worlds, and they have a disquieting tendency to move around unpredictably.
- **The Agents must be able to overcome dimensional resistance.** Each parallel timeline has an entry requirement in spent Timecraft points; the cost is paid by the group as a whole (so an Agent with high Timecraft can cover for an Agent with only 1 point). Since Agents begin with 1 default point of Timecraft per character, this cost is typically based on how difficult or dangerous the GM wants to make the process, or by how much fun the group would have traveling there. Super-science, bizarre weather, and celestial conjunctions might lower these cost.
Where dimensional travel should be impossible: 3 points or more per Agent, a prohibitively high cost. The most inaccessible parallel dimensions (such as the prison parallel "the Lockout") might require as many as 10 points per Agent to enter or leave, making them impossible to reach without special assistance.
Where travel should be difficult: 2 points or more per Agent, inaccessible for most starting teams and for teams that haven't applied build points to the Timecraft ability.
Where travel should be easy: 1 Timecraft point or fewer per Agent. Any mission team can pay this so long as they haven't yet spent Timecraft points during the mission. A cost must be paid both entering and exiting the parallel timeline, but that cost may differ. Some parallel timelines are easy to enter but difficult to leave; others are difficult to enter but simple to leave. The requirement to pay for exiting means that Agents often must finish a mission in the parallel timeline before regaining spent points and having the resources to exit. GMs who want the parallel timeline jaunt to be just one section of a mission should relax or ignore this rule.

- **Dimensional resistance varies constantly.** Time of year, chronal fluctuations, technological boosters... there are a myriad of reasons that entering or exiting a parallel timeline may be difficult or impossible during one mission, but simple during the next. While this is typically explained with clever time travel technobabble, the real reason is that the GM should eliminate or reduce artificial barriers to following a fun adventure that she's planned. That's also true if the adventure involves an invasion from a parallel universe that only occurs during certain astronomical alignments and the like.
- **When travel is mandatory, technology can help.** If the GM wants the Agents to travel across dimensions, she simply needs to allow a Science! spend or Timecraft spend to produce a super-science "chronal amplifier" or something similar. This plot device contains a pool of Timecraft points that is spent on sliding to a specific parallel dimension. It makes normally difficult or impossible dimension-hopping easy, possibly requiring no Timecraft expenditures at all, and is only available with the GM's permission.
- **Being from a parallel timeline has its risks.** When in a parallel timeline, Paradox tests are at +1 difficulty and Chronal Stability loss is one point higher than normal. This cost might fade for creatures who have lived in the parallel timeline for an extended period of time, such as sophosaurs in the primary timeline. This higher cost and potential loss does not apply to standard travel tests.
- Traveling between dimensions requires a standard Difficulty 4/Loss 4 Paradox test instead of a travel test. Travel between timelines can be straining.

NESTING YOUR VILLAINS

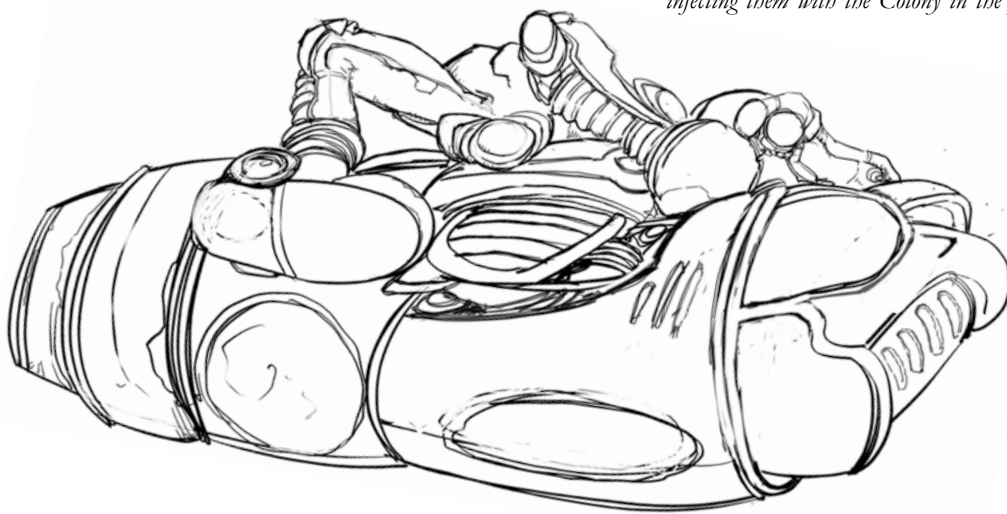
Not literal, bird-related nesting — unless your antagonists are alien, avian monstrosities with barbed beaks and armored feathers. Which is possible, presumably, but unlikely. Instead, we're referring to working your way up the villainous chain of command, eliminating one antagonist in order to discover his allies, subordinates and superiors.

You won't find this necessary in a one-shot game, where finality and closure at the end of the game just adds to the fun. In a series or campaign, however, any antagonist might be part of organizations that directly or indirectly report to other influential and malevolent power groups. Whether inconsequential pawn or secret commander, a foe can tie into the bigger picture. You'll give your mysteries continuity and structure by nesting your villains so that some antagonists are connected to one another.

Note that the most powerful Adversaries aren't necessarily defined by their puissance or their mastery of time travel. The truly powerful may simply lead, and have many other Opponents and Mooks who are younger and more deadly to eliminate physical threats.

In 1287 the Vietnamese leader Tran Hung Dao sought wisdom from the spirits within an ancient jungle river. The Mongols had captured the capitol two times before but soon withdrew, leaving death and devastation in their wake. Tran Hung Dao knew they would return. He sought an answer from the spirits, an answer that would help him guide his country to safety. Instead, he found spores from the Colony, and he was quickly colonized.

The Colony (see TW p. 167) is sentient mold that cannot time travel but remembers the length and breadth of history. Unlike most humans exposed to the Colony, Tran Hung Dao was not fully colonized; instead he integrated the Colony's vast memory and intellect with his own human experience. He used this knowledge to rout the Mongols at the Bach Dang River, infecting them with the Colony in the process. Within decades



nearly all of Mongolia and Eastern Asia was subsumed by the Colony, and Tran Hung Dao had a vast army of unstoppable fungi-infected soldiers who could no longer feel pain. He set out to conquer the world.

Tran Hung Dao is no warrior himself. He is consumed by the Colony and barely moves. He is surrounded by fierce defenders, however, and anyone wishing to injure him would need to get through them first. The Agents will encounter his guiding wisdom and military prowess in spore-infected antagonists both before and after the 13th century, because what one member of the Colony learns, all members of the Colony learn. It will take several encounters or missions before the Agents are able to work their way from charismatic or deadly lieutenants back to Tran Hung Dao himself — and by then he remembers them from the future, and will be prepared for their interference.

It's recommended that you make a quick flowchart of what Adversaries and villainous organizations are connected to what other antagonists. That way, when the Agents break into the edges of the organizations, you know what information about them flows to the people in charge, and you understand what resources might be brought to bear to try and stop them.

TWISTING TROPES

To keep players on their toes, take the players' expectations and twist them. Apparent enemies might be allies, apparent allies might be enemies, villains may act unexpectedly, normal people may be tremendously important to history, "normal" time might be subtly and unexpectedly different due to prior sabotage, and changes to the time stream might have unanticipated effects. Research "time travel tropes" on the internet for classic plot lines and themes related to time travel, and consider ways to twist or customize these so that your players aren't necessarily expecting the Adversaries' true plot.

That said, at its heart *TimeWatch* is a game about chronal investigation. Changes in the timeline should always happen for a reason, even if that reason is minor. It's okay to work backwards from a strange plot hook like "rhinos should be ubiquitous and domesticated," in order to make a mission where an Adversary accomplishes just that. Just be cautious about creating aspects of a changed timeline that are simply red herrings. Creating a timeline where rhinos are everywhere and never tying it into the main plot is something to steadfastly avoid. You never want to introduce weirdness without understanding the chain of events behind it. Working out those reasons is half the fun of a time travel game.

One common trope in time travel stories is accidentally stumbling across famous figures of the day. This should happen all the time in *TimeWatch* missions, mostly because it's just fun for players to debate philosophy with Benjamin Franklin or pose for Michelangelo. Players can make this happen themselves by spending a Paradox Prevention point for a ludicrous coincidence, just the thing to meet and befriend a famous figure of the day.

If you put famous historical figures in an ahistorical context, such as making Thomas Jefferson a bartender instead of a

founding father of the USA, be sure to know the reason why the historical figure's fate has been changed. Your players will be jumping on that clue like a bloodhound on a scent trail, so you won't want it to accidentally be a red herring.

THE ORIGIN OF ANTAGONISTS

When you're trying to figure out where your antagonists have come from, things can get confusing fast. Foes can be from the **core** or a **parallel** timeline, **humans** from Earth or **aliens** from another planet (or even **entities** who fit neither of those two descriptions), and either **time travelers** or **contemporaries** who are in their native time. It's good to keep in mind who the antagonists are.

CORE TIMELINE ORIGIN

Creatures from the core timeline are ones from Earth's unaltered history. That includes all the people and animals who have lived in the real world. Depending on your game, this may include "real world" alien incursions such as Area 51 or the existence of reptoids. Dinosaurs exist in the core timeline, but hyper-intelligent dinosaurs do not—unless you, as GM, decide to make that a secret part of your game history.

Creatures from the core timeline seldom have specific temporal powers linked to their origin, and usually lack the Tempus ability unless they've acquired time travel. Someone from our core timeline isn't susceptible to chronal instability while they're in their own native time, and they are unlikely to have any abilities that a regular person from that time wouldn't have. For instance, psychic abilities are possible if the GM has decided that people develop psychic abilities in the future, but not otherwise.

In early 18th century London, Skegg throws a chronal destabilization grenade at Isaac Newton, who turns out to have secretly been an evil genius that TimeWatch needs to stop. Newton is in his own natural era and is unaffected by the blast, which only affects time travelers (people with Tempus or Chronal Stability).

PARALLEL TIMELINE ORIGIN

In comparison, parallel timeline or parallel universe creatures are a hugely varied lot. They range from the stereotypically evil duplicate with a goatee, to individuals raised in an utterly different society (such as one where Carthage won the Punic Wars instead of Rome), to non-humans coming from a world that is mostly water, mostly ice, or an insect-controlled radioactive wasteland. As a reminder, creatures from parallel timelines tend to be more sensitive to chronal instability than usual, suffering a 1-point penalty to the Difficulty and Loss of most Paradox tests until they adjust to our reality. That adjustment occurs solely at the GM's discretion.

Skegg is from a parallel timeline that TimeWatch destroyed when they made sure an extinction-level meteor hit the Earth. Every time the rest of her team makes a D4/L4 Paradox test, Skegg has to make one that's D5/L5. If her team somehow finds its way to Skegg's fading home parallel, she'll lose that penalty even as the rest of her team gains it. Around the point that both Skegg's player and the GM keep forgetting about the penalty, the GM decides that Skegg has been in our reality long enough to have fully adapted. The penalty no longer applies to her.

Parallel timelines open up any tragic, ludicrous, imaginative, horrific or deadly possibility you can think of. You just need to be able to rationalize how it is possible. A world where Neanderthals triumph over Cro-Magnon man? A world where the dinosaurs are not killed by a meteorite? A world where Tesla's designs triumphed over Edison's? All possible. Not only can supporting characters and antagonists come from these parallel timelines, but with the GM's permission player characters can come from them as well.

Some timelines are not always possible, and are not always self-sustaining. A parallel timeline created artificially when true history is altered exists for as long as that history stays changed. Timelines that are sufficiently well established (or that the GM finds interesting) may survive despite their separation from the main time stream.

Creatures from parallel timelines usually have a wide array of chronal abilities that are powered by their Tempus general ability.

HUMAN ORIGIN

The type of foes will vary by campaign frame. A *Conspiracy*-style game, for instance, will feature more human antagonists (many likely employed by TimeWatch itself) alongside shape-shifting alien species who masquerade as human. Many *TimeWatch* games never feature any non-human antagonists at all; let's face it, if you look at human history, we make pretty good villains all on our own.

Just because you prefer to use human antagonists, however, there's no reason you can't use a variety of Tempus-powered chronal abilities. Pick and choose appropriate ones from the list later in this chapter.

ALIEN ORIGIN

If it evolved on a planet other than Earth and it isn't human, it's most likely an alien. There are any number of different types of creatures this category could cover; innumerable TV shows, movies, role-playing games and science fiction novels are brimming with ideas to steal. For easy adaptation, borrow aliens such as the kch-thk and vas mal from the GUMSHOE game *Ashen Stars*. Humans from the future who were born on a planet other than Earth don't usually qualify as aliens, unless there's been significant changes in their physiology or psychology.

While space-faring aliens likely won't possess chronal powers unless they're also time travelers, there are plenty

of Tempus-powered abilities or technology that your alien antagonists can wield. If you like, select some chronal powers and simply explain them off as stolen technology.

Reptoids are shape-shifting reptilian aliens who have infiltrated human society, but they aren't time travelers. Perhaps they're waging a secret war against other aliens or time travelers here on Earth, a war that most humans never even notice. They possess the Tempus ability, which powers their unique capabilities.

ENTITIES

We use "entity" to designate an intelligent creature that originated on Earth but is non-human. Hyper-evolved porpoises, radioactive giant cockroaches such as the ezeru, and genetically altered intelligent dinosaurs all fall under this category. So do mysterious post-human beings from the end of time who have evolved into something far greater than our minds can comprehend. An entity could be an unnaturally intelligent dog, a sentient meme surrounded by a cloud of nanobots, an ephemeral time-ghost that possesses its prey, or a self-aware hologram projected from a distant corner of alt-history.

Entities have access to a wide array of Tempus-powered abilities.

CONTEMPORARY ORIGIN

An antagonist with a contemporary origin is either a villain who has never time traveled, or one who has access to time travel but is not displaced in time at the moment. For instance, a TimeWatch Agent who has returned to his native era to visit his family technically has a contemporary origin despite also possessing an autochron. This is an important distinction, because anyone with a contemporary origin cannot suffer from chronal instability.

Native era, in this case, is defined as "during an individual's natural life span, so long as he is not overlapping himself."

The GM decides that Mace Hunter was destined to die of disease five years after being recruited by TimeWatch in 1843. If he returns to the years 1843 - 1848 on a mission, he's safe from additional chronal instability until he leaves, until he overlaps himself with another future or past Mace who is also visiting, or until he overstays his natural lifespan.

When someone with a Contemporary origin creates a time-related paradox, they don't (and can't) lose Chronal Stability. That paradox has to go somewhere, however, and local time and space are likely to do something unexpected; the GM is encouraged to be particularly clever and diabolical with the result.

Contemporary antagonists may still have access to a wide array of Tempus-powered abilities, and are arguably more dangerous than ever, because they don't generally lose Tempus to chronal instability.

TIME TRAVELERS

If you're existing in a time in which you shouldn't normally be alive or you're overlapping yourself by existing in two or more places at once, you're a time traveler. Congratulations! Hostile time travelers may target Earth in the far future or far past and use their time travel to bedevil or influence events at different points in time.

Depending on GM fiat and the technology they're using, time travelers vary in their access to the time stream. Some only have access to a very small sliver of history, while some have unfettered paths to all of time and the parallel universes that flow nearby.

It's worth noting that not all time travelers have access to TimeWatch-Agent levels of technology and science. They may use anachronistic weapons, suffer from not having a translator, and catch (or spread!) unexpected diseases; or they may bring weapons and technology to bear that even TimeWatch hasn't encountered before.

As you would expect, time traveling antagonists likely have access to a wide array of technology and Tempus-powered abilities.



SPICING UP COMBAT

At its heart, *TimeWatch* is inspired by classic science fiction novels and cinematic action. That means that when you want cinematic and fast-paced combat, you need to aim your play-style in a direction that encourages it.

ADJUST THE DEADLINESS

GUMSHOE combat allows a large number of Mooks to focus fire and quickly take down seasoned Agents. A pistol-wielding Mook with a combat Modifier of +1 inflicts an average of 2.3 points of damage per turn against armored Agents. That means that a crowd of ten Mooks inflicts an average of 23 points of Health damage against a single target in one round, enough to kill most Agents, or 6 damage per target against a 4-person team of Agents. This drops significantly if the Mooks have a +0 combat Modifier, and jumps up significantly if they have a +2.

This means that as GM, you should only have many Mooks aim at a single target if you're going against the genre and deliberately trying to take that character out of the action. Your players will find the game more fun when Mooks spread out their fire a bit, enough to still seem deadly and dangerous, but not enough to drop an Agent from full health to unconscious in a single turn. There are lots of ways to do this, as listed on TW p. 222; you can split Mook initiative into two or more groups, reduce the total number of antagonists (or have them arrive in waves), or let the players gain initiative at the start of the combat round.

We're a big fan of combat that is dangerous and meaningful. We just don't want you to slaughter the team by mistake. Plan accordingly.

VIVID DESCRIPTIONS

Let the players describe their own actions; your focus is on the antagonists, and description matters. Players will be much more invested in a fight against an ezeru if you describe the multiple arms tenting out the human skin before popping out with a wet tear to grapple the Agent; a fight will seem more interesting if you describe the thug jumping for cover after smacking an Agent in the back of the head with a well-made bar stool. In a game where many effects can be described however you like, using vivid descriptions to help players visualize the scene will keep them interested and focused.

LET THE PLAYERS DESCRIBE THE SCENE

When a player asks "does the building have a second story?", and it doesn't matter to you one way or the other, the correct answer is "you tell me." The more you let your players fill in the world around them, the more invested in the fight they'll be.

If they ask you a question like this, it's probably because they have a fun idea in mind; letting them describe the scene allows them to use that idea, making the game better for everyone.

REWARDING CREATIVITY WITH MODIFIERS

When a player uses a brilliant tactic or has a creative idea, consider rewarding it with mechanical benefits.

Player: "She's hiding behind that stone wall, sniping at us? Well, then it's a good thing I brought <rolls Preparedness and succeeds> my handy-dandy Multihari dust beam! I don't aim at her, I aim at the wall that's shielding her, and I disintegrate it. Is there any reason it doesn't collapse into dust, revealing her?"

GM: "No reason at all. Her Hit Threshold drops to 3 until her next turn. She looks very, very surprised."

The mechanical benefit doesn't have to happen every time, and it can be quite small; usually just awarding the player a Stitch is sufficient. A small pool of points for the team to draw on that represents their new advantage also makes for a good reward. However, we recommend that you reward the behavior you want to see in a fight, so encouraging and recognizing creativity and avoiding tedious play quickly points the players in your preferred direction.

Note that this is also true if play bogs down while the players analyze clues or excessively plan. Encouraging and rewarding proactive action is usually enough to get them moving again.

THREE-DIMENSIONAL (OR MORE!) MOVEMENT

Many fights don't happen on the same level; combatants might fly, climb, cling to ceilings, move at ridiculous speeds, or even fight while time-traveling. If you have your adversaries take advantage of these unexpected angles, your players soon will as well. And remember, dropping an Agent off a high cliff just gives the other players an excuse to time travel underneath them and catch them.

UNEXPECTED POWERS

Many adversaries have special abilities such as Technology, Cybernetics, or Mutation (or even Magic in some campaign frames.) This allows the antagonist to pay 2 Tempus and immediately produce some sort of special effect. Use this liberally to create force fields, temporary armor, unusual ray guns, anti-gravity devices, and much, much more for your antagonists. While not appropriate for every opponent, creative use of these special abilities will make your foes seem much more complex and capable than they otherwise would. You'll keep players on their toes in a fight, and that's a good thing.

UNUSUAL WEAPONRY

Similarly, encourage players to use their Preparedness or Tinkering to produce high-tech inventions and weaponry that help them in a fight. These devices don't necessarily need to be in the rules; if a creative player wants a grenade that covers an area with a glue-like web of sticky strands, make them name it and describe it, assign a Preparedness Difficulty based on its effectiveness (and perhaps on its rarity), and let them make the attempt. Problem-solving like this usually turns a combat on its ear and makes the fight more interesting.

The one reason to disallow or modify such things is if it somehow makes the game less fun for all the other players. Devices that stop an entire combat instead of just taking a few combatants out of the action might have a prohibitively high Difficulty or might be altered by the GM. For instance, "a device that instantly kills everyone nearby but leaves us unaffected" would probably be discouraged.

CONSEQUENCES

Actions have consequences, especially when you're a time traveler and you're locked in combat. Destruction of property might echo down through history, or the death of locals might ripple forward through time, and both of these cause paradox. This is why the Agents are issued PaciFists; killing people isn't always a wise idea.

Most importantly, local people react realistically when they see anachronistic technology and actions. They may panic, run in fear, take notes, film and broadcast the scene with their cell phone cameras, or remember every detail and later write it down in a book. A supporting character's opinion of the Agents will certainly be influenced by what they've seen, and spending Interpersonal points later won't necessarily be sufficient to get a hostile supporting character back on the Agents' side.

You can help make a fight seem more real by touching on consequences after the fight is over. This doesn't necessarily mean beating the players over the head with the results of their actions, but a few small ripples might be enough to remind them that their actions as time travelers matter – not just now, but forwards into the future as well.

GETTING THE RIGHT FEEL FOR COMBAT

Overall, pay attention to your group and see what kind of combat they love. Some people want fast, efficient fights; some want cinematic shoot-outs with complex tactical choices. Once you know, focus on that style of fight, changing it up just enough that your players don't feel bored and the fights remain unique.

NEW GEAR

ASIMOV-CLASS FLIGHTCYCLE

Cost: Difficulty +2

Future, Blatant

Illustrated on the cover of the TimeWatch GM screen, Asimov-class flightcycles are the latest in high-maneuverability multi-terrain transportation for TimeWatch Agents. Activated by sliding an autochron into the front control panel, a flightcycle is capable of both high-speed flight and time travel. They can accelerate from hovering to over 160 km/h in a single combat round and can make tight turns due to inertial dampeners. Lower-class flightcycles with fewer capabilities exist at +1 or +0 costs; higher-class flightcycles with advanced weaponry and underwater/deep space capabilities are also available at higher costs.

Agents with the **Keep Up Vehicles** booster have their Hit Threshold raised by 1 while riding an Asimov-class flightcycle, as the vehicle's evasion protocols are calibrated for high levels of driver skill.

INSOMNIA DART

Cost: Difficulty +0

Future, Subtle

The insomnia dart is delivered by a mosquito-like microbot which attacks with Scuffling +0; if the bot misses its target three times in a row, it is destroyed without affecting the target. On a successful hit, the target feels a small pinch. The highly engineered cocktail of chemicals that then enters the target's bloodstream prevents it from getting more than momentary sleep for the next 72 hours. This has the effect of raising the Difficulty of most tasks that the target attempts by +1 per 24 hours without sleep, to a maximum of +3.

The insomnia dart is useful when Agents wish to drive a target towards the breaking point, eroding their patience and good judgment in favor of emotional extremes and irritability.

NÍÐHÖGGR'S SKALD

Cost: Difficulty +3

Future, Blatant

Níðhöggr (or Malice Striker, sometimes anglicized Nidhogg) is the legendary serpent who gnaws at the root of Yggdrasil. The futuristic device Níðhöggr's Skald was invented by a Norwegian super-scientist, and was designed to help time travelers convince primitive people that they are using magic. The device is incorporated into a gauntlet that projects hexagonal bubbles of temporal energy; this energy causes micro-fissures in material when used as a weapon, and deflects incoming projectiles by altering their trajectory.

Upon activation, a sphere of interconnected blue translucent hexagons forms around the wielder, with visible distortions

and crackling energy between hexagons. While active the user gains an Intimidation 1 pool to be used during the encounter.

This magical-seeming effect lasts for up to a scene and raises the user's Hit Threshold by 1 against any non-beam weapon attack. If the user makes a successful Scuffling attack, the effect ends and all energy discharges into the target, shredding flesh and inflicting an additional 1d6 Health damage. The user can raise this damage by +1 for every 2 Health points the user spends, up to a maximum bonus damage of +3.

An Agent activates her Níðhöggr's Skald and walks amongst a primitive clan of cave people, watching as the cower from her due to the Intimidation effect. She's then attacked by the exiled time traveler who is ruling the clan. The blue hexagons increase the Agent's Hit Threshold from 4 to 5 until she makes a successful Scuffling attack; when she does she inflicts her normal +0 Damage Modifier for that attack, plus an additional 1d6 from her Níðhöggr's Skald, which ends the Skald's effect for this scene. If she chooses, she can suffer up to 6 points of Health damage during her attack to inflict up to an additional 3 Health damage on her foe.

For the cave people watching, the magical and terrifying visitor blasts their ruler with blue light that literally rips the flesh from his bones as she inflicts 2d6+3 Health damage in a single attack, leaving her covered in blood as well. There will be cave paintings drawn about this, that's for sure.

NOSTALGIA GENERATOR

Cost: Difficulty +1

Future, Subtle

A nostalgia generator is usually used to influence negotiations and debates, or to buy time during chases or combat. It throws the target's memories back to a part of their life that they loved. A target in conversation becomes more prone to acting friendly or happy, and a target in a chase or combat suffers a -2 penalty on any Tests it attempts until the beginning of its next turn. This distraction could make a chasing target crash as her thoughts drift, or could cause a combatant to fire ineffectively as his thoughts drifted towards his childhood.

In the rare case where a target has no good memories of their past, such as a robot, the nostalgia generator has no effect.

PREDICTIVE SOUNDTRACK

Cost: +0

Future, Blatant

Most useful for people who don't mind advertising their presence, this auto-composing musical technology looks five seconds into the future as it generates a personal movie soundtrack for an individual. The music will swell before love scenes, turn tense before combat, and devolve into terrifying and discordant notes when the Agent's life is on the line. In game terms, this device raises an Agent's Alertness Modifier by +2 and lowers the Agent's Stealth modifier by -2.

TIMELOOP

Cost: 2 point Timecraft spend plus Tinkering +4
Future, Restricted, Super-Science

A timeloop is a 24-hour period in a specific area that resets itself each day for everyone except for individuals not native to that 24-hour period. For instance, each day the natives in a timeloop wake up at the same time, go to work by the same route, and eat the same food, only changing from their original routine while they interact with an unaffected time traveler. The memory of time travelers doesn't reset; for them, each day is a new day where the events in the world around them repeat daily.

Time travel is impossible within the loop, and people do not age while in a timeloop. Every day that passes in the loop is a day that passes in the real world as well, however, and suspended aging catches up with a time traveler after they exit the loop into real time. Abandoned timeloops eventually decay and collapse in on themselves, creating minor paradox effects and *déjà vu* when they do.

Dr. Breen needs a safe refuge while she works on a complicated invention. She creates a timeloop in Auckland New Zealand on January 1, 1950. She spends 30 months in the timeloop. While she's there it is always January 1, 1950, and all the people in Auckland go through whatever they historically did on that date. Each day is different to Dr. Breen, and her invention progresses, but each day is the same around her; a fly buzzes at the window at exactly 2:42 PM, and someone shouts in the street at exactly 5:02 PM each day. The lives of the people around her only change if she acts to change them, by ordering different food in a restaurant or by traveling and talking to different people.

She can leave the timeloop and travel out of Auckland on January 1, and time restarts for her; or she can exit the timeloop by its true exit and reemerge into July 1, 1952, 30 months after she began it. When she does, those missing 2.5 years of aging will settle back onto her.

Because it's almost impossible to find someone hidden in a timeloop, these are often used by criminals who are hiding from TimeWatch or other enemies. It's said that the missing days when major calendar systems change have all been converted into timeloops.

TIME SEEDS

ANIKA BABBAGE (TW P. 165)

This adventure focuses on the organizational framework of TimeWatch, and is a good adventure to run if you want something other than historical sabotage.

Anika is a lonely and isolated technological prodigy with a remarkable mastery of time travel. Her goals are to restore

her own timeline (one that's generally more pleasant than the true timeline, as it turns out), destroy or dismantle TimeWatch, collect remarkable technology, and make friends. That last goal is a distant fourth unless she's feeling insecure.

The Hook: "Ada" is a malicious and sentient botnet designed by Anika that infiltrates TimeWatch tethers and autochrons, giving Anika up-to-the-second information on TimeWatch agents and preventing those Agents from controlling their time machines correctly.

The Plan: Anika knows what she needs to change in order to restore her true timeline, but TimeWatch's vast resources have made it almost impossible for her to succeed. She decides to test a plan that disables many of those resources. Anika sets up a laboratory in 2070 London and uses specially-designed robotic minions to kidnap a lone TimeWatch Agent. She researches the Agent's autochron and tether, programs a sentient AI named Ada to control them, and modifies the Agent's memory so that they don't remember being kidnapped. Then Anika has her minions return the kidnapped and mind-wiped Agent (and their now-infected technology) to the location she snatched them from milliseconds after the kidnapping.

You can make this kidnapped Agent a non-player Antagonist, but it might be much more fun to pick one of your players and have it be their Agent instead. That means that a player character accidentally spreads the Ada AI to every piece of TimeWatch technology they encounter, including their own team's. If they return to the Citadel, the entire Citadel will quickly be under Anika Babbage's control through her secret tethernet. If one of the player characters is Anika's infection vector, an Agent with **Medical Expertise** will be able to detect the memory modification by scanning their brain. Spending a point of **Medical Expertise** will restore a portion of those lost memories.

Infected tethers betray no changes other than erasing all details of Anika Babbage and her history from their records, along with any other information she doesn't wish known; it will require an Agent with **Trivia** to recall pertinent facts about Anika, since there is no other method to easily research her. Once Agents use **Hacking** to discover Ada's existence in their devices, they may communicate with it. Ada is cold, proud, logical, almost impossibly intelligent and capable, lonely, and exceptionally loyal to its creator.

Infected autochrons work to transport Agents to a time and place of Anika's (and the GM's) choosing, and then stop working. Anika hopes to strand all TimeWatch Agents somewhere innocuous in history to keep them out of her way.

Once discovered, removing Ada from a device is nearly impossible. Making an autochron usable for one jump requires an Agent with **Hacking** to make a Tinkering test of Difficulty 10. Removing Ada completely from a single device requires a Difficulty 18 Tinkering test by a character with **Hacking**. Tell the players these target numbers. Luckily, multiple **Hacking** and **Science!** Investigative points can be spent to create a pool of 3 Tinkering points for every Investigative point spent. The odds can be improved using a different strategy; the sentient AI Ada may be exceptionally effective and an antagonist in its own right, but like its creator it is exceptionally lonely. An Agent who makes a sincere and genuine effort to befriend the

malicious intelligence may spend **Charm** or **Reassurance** to contribute to the hacker's Tinkering pool.

If stranded in time with broken autochrons, the Agents may also be able to thwart Ada by acquiring a time machine from someone other than a TimeWatch Agent. **History (Future)** and **Timecraft** allow Agents to know roughly when and where time tourists and other travelers arrived, along with knowing when and where primitive time machines were invented.

In order to thwart the Ada virus, the Agents must disrupt Ada while she is busy programming Ada in her 2070 London lab. They are unlikely to beat her in a straight fight, but any disruption will interrupt her plan, and the entire loop will collapse into paradox, restoring the correct (and uninfected) timeline.

The Mission: There's no mission briefing for this. The Agents try to time travel from anywhere other than the Citadel and they end up in a time and location of the GM's choosing; attempts to leave simply create paradox by looping them back to the exact same time and location where they just arrived. Investigation into the malfunctioning autochron reveals tampering; investigating the tampering reveals Ada and the involvement of Anika Babbage; and the mission progresses from there.

CHRONAL ANTHROPOLOGIST (TW P. 159)

The Hook: The Smithsonian discovers an ancient Egyptian colony in the Grand Canyon

True History: The year is 1909 and explorer GE Kincaid is paddling up the Colorado River through the Grand Canyon. He discovers a man-made cave and thinks it leads to an abandoned mine. Within, he discovers a labyrinthine series of chambers filled with Egyptian-like tablets, a statue of the Buddha holding a lotus in either hand, sealed urns, mummies in sarcophagi, and an amazingly large underground complex.

He makes a report to the local paper, the Arizona Gazette, and contacts the Smithsonian Institute.

The Smithsonian dispatches an archaeologist named Jordan. Jordan makes a remark to the Arizona Gazette that he is enthused and excited by the site. Allegedly, teams are sent

to excavate the caves and relocate the artifacts to Washington DC.

Then GE Kincaid and the Smithsonian archaeologist Jordan vanish. When the press contacts the Smithsonian, they deny knowing anything about the subject. They have never heard of Kincaid and they never had a staff archaeologist named Jordan. They never got any mysterious Egyptian or Asian artifacts from the Grand Canyon. When the press contacts the National Park service, they too disavow all knowledge. The cave is first blocked off by fences, then sealed with metal doors, and finally buried. The cave is located at a far removed section of the Grand Canyon and access to the area is restricted by the US Government.

Were Kincaid and Jordan just a pair of con men? If so, what was the con? Nobody lost any money, though it can be argued that they drummed up newspapers sales. The Smithsonian was reported to visit the site, but instead of debunking it and declaring it was all hoax, they play the "We have no idea what you're talking about" card instead.

Alternate History: What's going on here? Did the indigenous people of North America and Europe have experiences that the TimeWatch needs to suppress in order to maintain the popular perception of American history? Did the site represent temporal manipulation? Was it a ezeru or sophosaur break-through point that TimeWatch covered up, but now intrepid explorers may uncover and thus expose TimeWatch to the general public?

It could be any one of these things. Most likely it's a choral anthropologist who illegally attempted their own personal anthropological experiments by importing different civilizations into the American southwest.

The Mission: When the hoard is discovered, it's up to TimeWatch to make the problem go away – and to track down the people responsible for it in the first place. The Agents are tasked with the substantial cover-up, with no paradox, and with tracking down the miscreant who broke regulations in the first place.

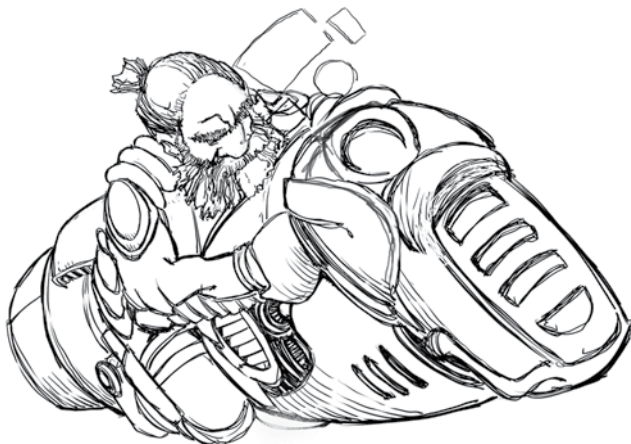
Research: "GE Kincaid and the Grand Canyon," "when the Smithsonian discovered an ancient Egyptian colony in the Grand Canyon"

CHRONAL TROUBLESHOOTER (TW P. 160)

The Hook: An ace Soviet WWII pilot goes freelance.

True History: 1 August, 1943, southern Ukraine. A Soviet pilot from the 73rd Guards Fighter Regiment spots a formation of undefended German bombers and peels off to attack them. Her wingman watches in horror as the trap is sprung - German fighters appear out of nowhere and a ferocious dogfight ensues. There are eight of them. The pilot in the trap - the pilot they were after, the one they knew would fearlessly plunge into a knot of bombers - is Lydia Lityvak.

Senior Lieutenant Lityvak is 21 years old, a few days shy of her birthday. She is vain and outspoken, serious and occasionally cruel. She bleaches her hair blond and keeps a



bouquet of flowers in her cockpit. A born pilot with a perfect balance of skill and aggression, Lityvak made her twelfth kill a few weeks earlier. She has been transformed by the death of her fiancé - a fellow ace - into a monomaniacal force of nature. She lives to hunt and destroy German aircraft. Her ambushers are counting on her lust for vengeance overcoming her caution.

She is outmaneuvered and outgunned. The last thing Ivan Borisenko, her wingman, sees is Lityvak disappearing into a cloud, one wing smoking, a cloud of German fighters nipping at her tail like jackals. There's no explosion, no parachute. Lydia Lityvak simply vanishes like so many others.

The conventional narrative is that she crashed somewhere in southern Ukraine, probably already dead. But rumors persist that Lityvak survived to be taken prisoner. And there are other, stranger rumors - rumors of a blond-haired female pilot flying with the Bolshevik Workers' and Peasants' Red Air Fleet - in 1918. And in the Cathédrale Saint-Alexandre-Nevsky in Paris there is a curious fresco depicting an "angel in flight" from 1519 that looks exactly like Lydia Lityvak.

Alternate History: What actually happened to Lityvak is unknown, but TimeWatch believes that she's still flying - and fighting - on her own for causes that she passionately believes in. It's possible that she's added a time machine to her plane; it's much more likely that she's somehow found a method to slip between decades when her will is great enough. Either way, she's a tremendous asset for anyone lucky enough to enlist her for aerial warfare.

The Mission: Find Lityvak at a point in her life after she disappears in the Ukraine. If she has joined an alternate chroanal organization, find out who and try to recruit her to TimeWatch instead. Recruiting her might mean helping her in her current cause - if so, make your work count.

Research: "Lydia Lityvak"

CHRONO-HOUNDS (TW P. 167)

The Hook: A female schoolyard bully in 1938 Seattle stumbles on a method of summoning chrono-hounds, inadvertently causing Bill Gates to disappear from history after the chrono-hounds erase his mother, Mary Maxwell.

True History: Bill Gates's mother was Mary Maxwell, born July 5th 1929 in Seattle Washington. She married William H. Gates Sr. in 1951 and had three children, one of whom was Bill Gates (born 1955), the founder of Microsoft.

Alternate History: Children can be so cruel, can't they? In 1938 Seattle, one particular schoolyard bully named Martha Clapman made the cruel kids look like angels. Say what you like about unfortunate circumstances and poor parenting, this 9-year-old girl was the terror of her peers. She threatened, intimidated, and used physical violence to get what she wanted. A band of her victims finally stood up against her and reported her to the school principal. Martha was suspended, and then physically abused by her inebriated father. Martha blamed her victims for everything - the abuse, the shame, the suspension. Everything. She just wanted all of them to die,

especially one girl named Mary Maxwell, who talked the other kids into standing up to her.

It was on a walk during her suspension that Martha found the tablet. It had been washed up by the sea, dark and slimy and ancient, and she didn't understand the runes on it... at first. She brought it home and hid it under the back shed. Soon she was studying it for hours at a time, the odd diagrams and letters burning their way into her mind. That night she dreamed of ancient black entities that squirmed and chattered, and she told them what she wanted. The next day, all of Martha's enemies had disappeared from reality. Her father was amongst them. So was Mary Maxwell.

Martha had never been happier.

The Mission: Bill Gates has disappeared from time, making the history of computing and technology completely different - and worse. Agents are sent back to 1955 Seattle to find out what happened to him. They will trace it back to a series of disappearances in 1938 when Bill's mother vanished, supposedly abducted by Abner Clapman (Martha's father). Once Martha finds them interfering, however, the chrono-hounds start attacking - and that's never a good thing.

Research: "Mary Maxwell Gates", "1938 Seattle"

COLONEL SIR BAYARD CAIDE (TW P. 166)

Caide is an utterly charming rogue with no morals and an excellent (but unearned) reputation.

The Hook: The US Civil War is unexpectedly altered after a series of Civil War reenactors band together to purchase a time machine, hire Caide to act as their General and bodyguard, and critically change key battles in a way that allows the South to win.

True History: Confederate Lt. Gen. Theophilus Holmes had a predilection for keeping his soldiers out of combat and finding excuses not to attack. He chose not to reinforce Vicksburg, lost Mississippi river outposts, and was generally incompetent and cowardly. Confederate General Robert E. Lee transferred Holmes out of the Army of Northern Virginia after the Seven Days Battles.

Alternate History: Disgusted by Holmes and curious about what might have happened if he had actually been a competent commander, a group of Civil War reenactors from the 23rd century pool their money to buy a time machine and hire Colonel Sir Bayard Caide to take Holmes's place at the Battle of Malvern Hill on July 1, 1862. What they don't know that Caide is an untrustworthy wretch who will desert them at the worst possible time if it means saving his own skin. However, Caide proves to be quite an effective Commander - enough that the trajectory of the war begins to change.

The Mission: The Agents are sent to Vicksburg on July 9, 1863, after the Confederates hold Vicksburg instead of surrendering it to the Union army. There they meet Caide in the disguise of Theophilus Holmes, and they met Caide's many friends (including the reenactors) who are delighted with his success and wish him to remain both safe and in charge. Since

Caide might run at the first sign of life-threatening danger, the Agents will need to make sure that everything he's changed in the war is erased. To do that, they'll need to prevent Caide from being hired, or head to the Battle of Malvern Hill to stop him there.

Research: "Theophilus Holmes", "Malvern Hill", "Vicksburg Campaign", "incompetent Civil War generals"

THE COLONY (TW P. 167)

The Hook: Global warming causes frozen Colony spores in the Antarctic to thaw and infect researchers – as well as the local wildlife. Millions of infected fungus-penguins is a horrifying sight.

True History: The Antarctic's ice is less affected than the Arctic's by climate change, but by 2090 (when this mission takes place) the thaw is underway.

Alternate History: The sentient fungus that thinks of itself as the Colony is released from ice in 2089 by a research team drilling for ice core samples. Researchers at the base become infected, and the spores spread to local fish and birds. The Colony then spreads to entire penguin colonies, and infected penguins begin to travel north to purposefully infect humans visiting the Antarctic on cruises. A global emergency is declared when the Colony starts to spread in the countries of every tourist who was exposed; by 2095, the few remaining uninfected countries are living in deeply paranoid police states, with flamethrowers and sterilization protocols to try and destroy affected humans and wildlife.

The Mission: When monitoring stations show that world pollution dramatically drops in the early 2090s, TimeWatch knows something has gone wrong, and the Agents are dispatched to Cleveland Ohio in 2093 to find out what. They find a mold-covered, Colony-zombie infested plaguescape. Investigation indicates that the fungus came from the Antarctic in 2090, and it's up to the Agents to track down the source, hopefully not facing too many mold-colonized penguins and seabirds in the process.

DIMENSIONAL MASTER (TW P. 170)

The Hook: In this *Time-Crime* scenario, the players are time-criminals attempting to rob the Spanish treasure galleon the *San José*. Unfortunately, the time-traveling narcissist who refers to himself as the Secret Dimensional Master is arranging for the ship's vast wealth to be stolen at the exact same time, and control over the loot comes down to the time-criminals'

creativity, subtlety, and ability to think on their feet.

True History: The *San José* was the flagship of an 18-vessel Spanish treasure fleet, captained by Capitán Santillán. She was a 60-gun, 3-masted Spanish galleon that sunk in 1708 off the coast of Cartagena, Colombia when its powder magazine detonated during a fight against a British squadron. The *San José* was carrying approximately \$1 billion dollars (in 2012 exchange rates) in Peruvian gold, silver and emeralds when she was destroyed. When she sank, she took most of the crew and all of the treasure with her; there were only 11 survivors out of 600 crew and passengers on board.

Alternate History: The time-criminals set out to rob the *San José* before she sinks, and considering the limitations of the black box (particularly its inability to travel through space), that requires them to set up a complicated scam in order to get the black box on board the *San José*, or to find some other method for absconding with the vast riches on board. They might hire on as sailors, present the black box as some sort of safe, set up the black box in a different ship, bribe sailors to mutiny at the best possible time, or any number of possible solutions to complete the heist.

Unfortunately, the Dimensional Master also has his eyes set on the treasure, and he's so determined to make sure the ship explodes on schedule that he's going to personally set off the explosion (assuming he has his escape plan in place). The time-criminals will find his team of rival criminals a thorn in their sides, as the rivals will be trying to steal the exact same score they are. With the time limit of the explosion just after 7 PM on June 7, 1708, each side will have limited opportunity to get away – especially when the ship is in the middle of a battle. The time-criminals might need to incorporate the Dimensional Master's pretentious posturing into their own plans, using his more advanced time machines instead of their own when they make their exit.

To complicate the matter even further, the Dimensional Master has seeded the 600-person crew of the *San José* with cybernetic and robotic soldiers. He figures that it simplifies a theft when all the guards on duty are literally under your own control. The time-criminals may find this to be vast complication or a handy feature, depending on how much they enjoy fighting and combat.

Of course the ship will be in battle against the British for hours, and that means that every hand on board will be pressed into helping the fight. The time-criminals and their rivals will all need to dodge and avoid sailors whose job is to ensure that no cowards are hiding down below-decks during the battle.

The Mission: Ideally the time-criminals will escape the *San José* with the score, their own hide, and their reputation intact, shaming and embarrassing the so-called Dimensional Master in the process. They'll make a powerful enemy, but they'll boost their Rep tremendously in the process. As long as they get away alive, they may have cause to count their blessings.

Research: "Spanish galleon *San José*", "Wager's Action"

ETERNAL CHURCH OF THE PIERCING CONSCIOUSNESS (TW P. 172)

The Hook: A pro-technology church arms Mongols with futuristic technology, including instant communications and accurate weather forecasting devices. Great Khatun Töregene uses this power to solidify her control over her armies as she leads the Mongols into a new Golden Age, conquering all of Europe and Asia before time traveling to capture portions of the future as well.

True History: Following the death of Ögedei Khan in 1241, his widow Töregene took control as regent and maintained power as the Great Khatun for four years. She governed the Mongols with skill and subtlety until her eldest son, Güyük Khan, was elected Great Khatun in 1246.

Alternate History: At the start of Töregene's reign as Great Khatun, Father Antonio Hajarnavis of the Eternal Church of the Piercing Consciousness time travels to pay her a visit. He leaves with Töregene convinced of the existence and importance of time travel. He gives her access to a time machine, and together they bring back technology that the Hordes will accept and which can improve their combat effectiveness. The most fundamental change they make is giving Töregene access to instant communications for herself and her Generals.

The plan succeeds. Everyone sees the value of the instant communications, and the Mongols are able to act as a unified army even as they sweep across different portions of the continent. Weather forecasting allows them to plan their attacks, and high-tech weaponry eventually makes the Horde even more effective. Töregene remains Great Khatun for her entire lifetime, surviving multiple plots and schemes to depose her, and the Mongols conquer all of Asia and Europe before spreading down into parts of Africa. When portions of her army become unsettled, Töregene sends them through a time portal into a different place and time, with instructions to conquer and carve out an empire there as well.

The Mission: The Roman Empire's history is changed after they encounter a roving army of thousands of Mongol soldiers in 10 BCE, and TimeWatch steps in. Investigation of the well-armed Mongols leads the Agents to their time portal and to Töregene herself. Father Hajarnavis continues to act as advisor for the Grand Khatun, and the Agents must decide how to erase everything he's accomplished – especially when the Mongols have gone back in time to protect him!

Research: “Töregene Khatun”, “Mongol Horde conquests”

GIDEON MONTOYA (TW P. 177)

The Hook: The Agents must visit the time traveler haven of Longtree in the Dakotas, 1811. There they need to capture a foe without resorting to violence – something easier said than done in that den of depravity.

The Plan: A former TimeWatch Agent has gone rogue, and she's taking refuge in the town of Longtree. From there she runs her rebel cell, making forays out but never straying too far from her friends and her power base within the town. TimeWatch knows that she's planning a massive infiltration job that could cause chaos within the Citadel itself, but they've been unable to learn more. The Agents are dispatched to enter the town, learn the rebel's plans (either by joining her or by spying on her), and to arrest her if possible.

Problem is, the foul-mouthed Gideon Montoya himself might be the best source of information on the rebel – assuming that the Agents can convince him to talk about her. If she learns about the Agents' presence in town, she'll do everything she can to inconvenience them and goad them into combat, assuring their exile from Longtree. Meanwhile, Gideon's deputy Jessica Carson falls in love with one of the Agents, and they may not return the affection from the insane, rotting floating head.

The Mission: Find Longtree (something easier said than done, if you've never been there) and find out the rebel's plans, all while keeping Jessica appeased. The rebel has confederates within TimeWatch itself, and the Agents are given authority to stop whatever they're planning. First, though, they have to abide by Longtree's rules long enough to gather information.

KING TUSK (TW P. 180)

The Hook: A deadly bio-engineered plague spreads from Lagos, Nigeria during the early 1950s. With a 95% mortality rate and a long period of symptomless contagion, the plague spreads worldwide. Human populations drop to a fraction of their previous levels, after which the populations of preyed-upon animals (such as elephants) rebounds.

True History: Elephants are at the tipping point of extinction, being poached faster than they can be born.

Alternate History: The 6000-year-old sentient elephant King Tusk has had enough. Aided by a sympathetic sophosaur clan, he uses the alien technology at his disposal to create a human-focused and nearly incurable plague known as “Tusk”

that is first spread amongst the elephant poachers of Central Africa. It soon spreads to Africa's major cities and then around the world, knocking back humanity's population to 5% of what it once was. With human civilization in shambles, threatened animals slowly regain the territory that was once taken away from them, and King Tusk begins a benevolent rule over the humans he now subjugates.

The Mission: Discover why 2,500,000,000 humans died of plague in the 1950s, leaving a global population of only 135,000,000 humans. Research shows that Africa is almost entirely depopulated, and that this is where the bio-engineered plague originated. Tracking the disease's origin to Central African poachers, the Agents discover King Tusk – and must try to talk him out of his plan or find some other way to stop him.

Research: “African elephant”, “elephant poaching”

PI'DRAK (TW P. 180)

The Hook: A United States President visiting the Middle East is given Pi'Drak, an evil alien intelligence contained within an ancient lapis lazuli ring named the Jemdet Nasr. The ring corrupts and changes him, turning him into an agent of global destruction through both economic and military policies.

True History: US President Richard Nixon made six separate trips to the Middle East while he was President, meeting with the heads of state of Iran, Egypt, Saudi Arabia, Syria, Israel, and Jordan. Gifts given to him include a jeweled incense burner from Saudi Arabia, a woven tapestry portrait from Iran, and an ancient oil lamp from Israel.

Alternate History: Instead of one of the gifts he was supposed to receive, a shapeshifted ezeru seeking nuclear war arranges for Nixon to be given the Jemdet Nasr. The ring is an archeological treasure supposedly dating back to the days of Gilgamesh, and citizens protest its gift to a foreign head of state. Under Pi'Drak's influence, Nixon becomes far more warlike, acting both subtly and overtly to increase tensions with the U.S.S.R. and trigger nuclear war. It isn't Watergate that brings this timeline's Nixon down; he manufactures excuses to go to war, and in 1975 Nixon orders the launch of America's nuclear arsenal in order to destroy the imagined enemies that the ring has created in his head.

The Mission: An atypically pugnacious President Richard Nixon starts a nuclear war in 1975, a year when he shouldn't have been President to begin with. The Agents are ordered to discover what changed, and to stop it from affecting international politics. Looking back at news accounts, Agents discover that Nixon's behavior started to alter after an international trip. It'll take detective work and infiltration to understand how the ring has affected him, especially when the sentient ring sees enemies everywhere and isn't shy about making sure that the Agents are destroyed.

Research: “United States presidential visits to the Middle East”, “Nixon Head of State Gifts”, “Watergate”

RODRIGO ISTALINDIR (TW P. 182)

The Hook: A clue the Agents need for a separate mission is known by a particular instance of the immortal, time-traveling Spanish courtier and information broker Rodrigo Istalindir. Unfortunately, the Agents' many enemies want the information as well, and Rodrigo decides to auction the information off to the group that can bring him the most sybaritic, interesting, unforgettable experience.

True History: None (as Rodrigo didn't exist in true history.) This scene can be part of a larger mission, and can be inserted into any adventure when the players need hard-to-find information.

Alternate History: Rodrigo knows when he's being played, and he's learned crucial information that TimeWatch desires. But several rebel and non-human power groups also want this information as well. He figures that if he's going to sell to the highest bidder, he wants something more interesting than money. Each bidder has 5 minutes to time travel away, arrange something unforgettable, and return to offer it as payment. He'll give the information to the bidder that has most impressed him.

The other power groups, unfortunately, follow the Agents in order to sabotage their offering. This may mean that the last group standing is the group that gets Rodrigo's information, assuming their banter is witty enough to amuse him.

The Mission: The information needed can be any clue the GM desires, including unique information such as the origin time of the ezeru, the location of a crucial rebel or sophosaur base, the true identity of a traitor within TimeWatch, or the location of lost and unique technology.

SCIENTIST (TW P. 163)

Hook: “CloneFall.” Clones of the most-hated historical figures escape and spread across time.

True History: History is full of warlords, dictators, mass murderers, and genuinely evil people. Sometimes they live long lives, sometimes their lives are quite short – but their actions often make future generations wish those lives could have been cut short, to spare innocent people from pain, persecution and death.

Alternate History: TimeWatch does its best to save infamous historical figures from being assassinated by time travelers, but even experienced Agents occasionally let an assassin get through in a way that can't be fixed without massive paradox. Temporal nexuses that attract many time-traveling assassins make it particularly difficult for TimeWatch to double back and fix the problem without creating choral instability. For times like these, TimeWatch biotechnicians create and maintain a secret facility full of clones.

It's understandable that they don't publicize this information; stating "sure, we have vats full of several hundred Hitlers" is likely to cause more problems than it solves. Regardless, when things really go haywire and there's no other way to save history safely, the Resurrection Protocol is invoked and technicians timebeam in a replacement clone.

This secret protocol misfires when a tired technician accidentally misses an item on his checklist while securing the containment facility, and a clone of some past or future warlord or dictator wakes up. He or she kills the technician, awakens their fellow clones, steals time travel technology and beams off to multiple eras across time.

The Mission: The Agents must track down the clones, neutralize them, and restore order -- hopefully without making their superiors in TimeWatch look bad. But they might need to track down clones of people like Queen Ranaavalona, Genghis Khan, Hitler, Caligula, Elizabeth Bathory, Robespierre, Rasputin, Attila, Ivan the Terrible, and Pol Pot.

It's going to be a long night.

Research: Whichever dictator or reprehensible historical figure you want to scatter across the timestream.

SENTIENT HOLOGRAM (TW P. 183)

The Hook: An unkillable ghost advises Kublai Khan's armies about an upcoming typhoon destined to sink their fleet when they invade Japan in the year 1274. Based on the ghost's oracular predictions, the Mongol fleet sails in 1273 instead, and utterly conquers Japan.

True History: Twice Kublai Khan's troops sailed to conquer Japan, in 1274 and 1281, and twice the fleet was destroyed by typhoons that later became referred to by the Japanese as "divine wind." The second fleet, which spent months at sea while looking for a location to land that wasn't protected by a two-meter-tall wall, was composed of more than four thousand ships carrying nearly 140,000 men.

Alternate History: A 22nd century Korean scientist with a grudge against Japan discovers a method for projecting her image and personality through time. The scientist sends her sentient hologram back to the year 1272, with the goal of warning Kublai Khan about the typhoon which will prevent his armies from successfully invading Japan. Unable to be injured (and equally unable to affect the world around her, other than by communication), the hologram pretends to be a divine oracle. She gathers a huge cult of believers around her and successfully warns Kublai Khan in time. Japan is conquered, changing the future and giving the 22nd century scientist the grim satisfaction of vengeance against a country she despises.

This changes history in two major ways. Individual Japanese lineages are snuffed out when Japanese men are killed, only to be replaced by different Mongolian lineages filled with individuals who more-or-less accomplish the same achievements (time being somewhat self-correcting by nature.) The defeat also breaks the Imperial line and dispels



the Japanese belief in their own invincibility. This inculcates a more cautious approach which affects Japan's diplomatic relations for centuries.

The Mission: The Agents are sent to investigate changes in world War II, leading them to realize that the Japan they're seeing is different from what they were expecting. Historical research reveals the successful Mongolian invasion, and it takes time travel to uncover the Mongolian oracle of Kublai Khan. The question becomes, how do the Agents stop a foe who has a fanatical mob of followers, but who can't easily be hurt herself?

Research: "Kamikazi (typhoon)", "what if Mongols invade Japan"

SOPHOSAURS (TW P. 184)

Hook: A fake-dinosaur roadside attraction in Virginia becomes a refuge for actual dinosaurs. A scientist killed in the park is linked to the invention of time travel, and his death ripples forwards and backwards in time.

True History: Roadside attractions such as the actual "Dinosaur Land" in Virginia cater to tourists who are delighted by the idea of huge artificial dinosaurs, even when those concrete dinosaur statues don't necessarily match actual scientific knowledge.

Alternate History: “Dinolandia Park” in West Virginia is more than it appears. Alongside the fake dinosaurs are real dinosaurs, time-frozen during the day. The sophosaurs who control the park release the real dinosaurs at night whenever they deem it safe, or hilarious, to kill tourists.

Dinolandia Park wasn’t always like this. The park owner truly loved dinosaurs and jumped at the chance to see them for real after a disguised sophosaur approached him one hot summer day, talking about time travel. He was quickly in over his head, however, and was forced to create a park that lured in human visitors and used real dinosaurs to cull out important humans. Now the human owner cowers in shame and terror while disguised sophosaurs take the place of their deceased human victims, using their new guises as protection while they alter history.

The Mission: Things come to a head in the mid-1970s when a California technologist passes through and is devoured. This man’s as-yet-unborn daughter would have been a scientist whose inventions were essential for enabling time travel. The ripples erasing human time travel flow forward, rebound, and start to cascade back to the past, erasing every change that TimeWatch has ever made.

The Agents are scrambled out to the 21st century through the massive wave of paradox and change sweeping through the timestream. Once they learn that the scientist was never born and that her father never accomplished any of the work he should have, they follow clues backwards until they reach the moment his personality is said to have changed: a solo road trip along the East coast in 1976.

The mission concludes with a desperate Dinolandia Park owner pleading with them for help, with time-frozen dinosaurs loosed to hunt them, and with sophosaurs desperately trying to protect their secret hunting ground. The clan Alpha will escape if possible, marking the Agents as implacable foes and plaguing them in the future.

Research: “Dinosaur Land”

TIMEWATCH AGENT (RIVAL)

(TW P. 189)

The Hook: A rogue agent convinces a single angry Navajo to betray the United States, time-traveling to 1942 Japan to teach his language to Japanese codebreakers. When the Allies used Navajo code talkers during their invasion, every supposedly secret message was understood by the Japanese, turning the tide for the Axis.

True History: The United States Marine Corps recruited Navajos as code talkers in 1942, when it was determined that fewer than 30 non-Navajos understood the unwritten language due mostly to its complex grammar. The Navajo code talkers proved instrumental in maintaining secret communications during actions in the Pacific Theater; it was stated that the Marines would never have taken Iwo Jima in 1945 if it weren’t for six code talkers who flawlessly sent and received over 800 messages in the first two days of the battle.

Alternate History: A member of the secret organization the Clockpath (TW p. 190) chooses to distract TimeWatch from a more secretive initiative by changing the result of World War II. That makes a good distraction, right? The corrupt Japanese Clockpath agent travels back to 1938, finds a bitter and disenfranchised Navajo youth and convinces him (quite correctly) that his people have been poorly treated by the American government. Believing in an ancient connection to the brave explorers who first crossed the land bridge from Asia into North America, the Navajo youth agrees to come to Japan and teach Japanese linguists his language.

As a result, the Navajo code talkers in the Marine corps are rendered useless, with every “coded” message easily understood by the Japanese. The invasion of the Pacific Theater proceeds much more slowly with far more Allied casualties, and by sabotaging the atomic bomb’s development, Japan ends up defeating the Allies and forcing them out of Pacific waters.

The Mission: The US Marine Corps is unsuccessful at invading Iwo Jima, and the Agents are dispatched to find out why. Suspicions that the code talkers have been compromised lead the Agents to a disenfranchised Navajo who vanished seven years prior, and from there, to the involvement of the Clockpath. The Agents must convince the Navajo man not to work for the Japanese, without killing him and ruining his future timeline as a tribal leader in the Navajo nation across the latter half of the 20th century.

Research: “Navajo Code Talker,” “Battle of Iwo Jima”

REBELLION ORGANIZATIONS

The *Rebellion* campaign frame of *TimeWatch* (TW p. 297) is full of alternative chronal organizations that make superb adversaries, allies, or distractions in TimeWatch missions. Here are three more, including sample missions focused on the rebel organizations.

FREE TIME

Overview

As their name suggests, freedom is the most important concept to this organization. They believe that the invention of time travel is the point at which humanity can finally redeem itself and ensure that everyone benefits from human progress.

They wish to share philosophy and knowledge, making it freely accessible to anyone, no matter their era. They hope this will revolutionize society, allowing humanity to learn from its mistakes before they happen and improve every facet of its culture.

To ensure that everyone can make use of this information, they champion all education systems, even going so far as teaching others how to read, regardless of time period. At

the same time, they oppose any form of oppression. This, of course, puts them at odds with the oppressors — and with the people who foolishly prevent history from changing.

Once this phase of human education is complete, they plan to provide everyone access to time machines. They are still researching how this can be done cheaply and efficiently. Current prototypes are tethered to an autochron, requiring a Free Time member to act as a guide.

Free Time members envision a society where people can freely travel through time and space. While giving every single person access to all knowledge and the freedom to use it as they wish will cause some chaos, eventually that will subside as people accept the new natural order.

They have already established outposts in remote locations and distant eras that focus on farming and manufacture. They believe that people will happily volunteer years of their lives at outposts in return for the gift of time travel.

TimeWatch views the organization as dangerously naïve. In every incident in which Free Time has provided future knowledge or anachronistic technology, TimeWatch Agents have had to prevent history from diverging.

Structure

Free Time tries to give the impression to their members that they are a relaxed group and that they don't have the strict rules and regulations that other organizations do. Emphasis is put on personal responsibility and loyalty to the group.

Members are allowed to make their own mistakes, but they will also have to fix any problems they cause. Until they do, they can't expect to receive any support from the rest of the group.

Unsurprisingly, there is a high turnover of recruits as new members find that they don't measure up to the requirements expected of them, or they burn out. The longest lasting members are those who don't make waves and thus, ironically, don't achieve anything notable.

Free Time does attract radical thinkers who use time travel for extraordinary things. They must constantly battle against the inertia of the rest of the group, reluctantly making alliances to ensure they are allowed to actually achieve the lofty goals of the organization.

Sample Missions

Know It All

A Free Time member, Nero, was dispatched to download information from an Omniscient Data Facility in the 51st century onto an implanted chip. Something has gone wrong and Nero has gone rogue.

TimeWatch is already on Nero's trail so the player characters must act fast. Once they've recovered the chip (and hopefully found out why Nero betrayed them), they are to travel to the 21st century and upload the future knowledge on to the internet.

Unsinkable

The player characters are dispatched on a recruitment drive onboard the Titanic. They are to befriend those who work on the lower decks and put in place choral gateways. TimeWatch Agents are present, but they're there to make sure that history is preserved. Hopefully they won't be expecting this rescue attempt.

Once the ship begins to sink they are to persuade as many as possible to pass through the gateway to be transported to a Free Time farming outpost. Unfortunately, other enemies of TimeWatch are also on board the Titanic, and things may get a bit chaotic...

Bad Apple In The Garden Of Eden

A former Free Time activist has set himself up as a cult leader in the 1960s. Calling himself "Father Time," his practice of using philosophy to prepare others for the possibility of time travel was initially supported by the group. That is, until he started to claim he was a god and demanded his followers worship him.

Not only is this damaging to the goals of Free Time, but they've learned that he plans to take his followers to the dawn of mankind, believing they will find paradise and become the source of humanity.

The player characters must infiltrate his cult and stop this from happening. With local authorities already suspicious of the group, and Father Time becoming increasingly unstable, they must handle the situation carefully.

THE BROKERS

Overview

Greed is good. Such is the philosophy of the Brokers. They want to change history on an economic scale, with themselves at the center. Establishing shell companies throughout history, the Brokers use their knowledge of future trends and stock market performance in order to make a fortune, buying up and consuming other companies.

They know more about money than they do about time travel, which has blunted their desire to be the only game in town. Their actions in a particular time zone might benefit their local business but the alteration to the economy can hurt their companies elsewhere in the time stream, requiring further changes to history.

Not only do they care little about the laws of time, but they don't care about any other laws either. The Brokers play fast and loose with what is considered legal, doing whatever they have to in order to turn a bigger profit.

Partying hard and excessive time travel can age a person fast, so senior members make use of exotic future technology to retain a youthful look. This extends into illegal cloning and transferring their minds into unwilling body donors.

On some level the Brokers know that it can't last. They know that eventually everything is going to come crashing down like a house of cards. In the meantime, they live lives of excess, because what is the point of being rich if you can't enjoy yourself?



Structure

The majority of those who work for the Brokers are completely unaware of the time travel component of the business. They simply believe that their superiors are either incredibly savvy or have inside information.

Only those who really stand out and prove that they are willing to do whatever it takes to make money are let in on their little secret (often this is commemorated with the gift of a gold watch). Ideally, such members should have few personal connections, since they will be expected to travel widely through time.

As long as a member is meeting his or her target profits, the Brokers care very little about what their members use time travel for. If someone gets into trouble, they are always willing to either help them out by sending them a warning from their future, or to cut all ties to minimize damage.

Thanks to their lack of knowledge or care with time travel, most of the senior members of the group are suffering from severe chronal instability. This is typically mistaken for hangovers or withdrawal, and is usually remedied with another wild party which, as long as there are other Brokers present, anchors them.

Sample Missions

The Rat

In 1988 a Broker-owned stockbroker company is raided by the FBI, uncovering their pump and dump scam. The player characters are sent back to prevent this from happening, ensuring that incriminating records are either removed or destroyed.

The company invites the visiting Brokers to stay and celebrate their success in typical '80s excess. They still have a job to do, however, when it turns out that the FBI were tipped off by someone inside the company. The player characters must find the rat to prevent future raids.

The Ground Floor

The Brokers are sent to invest in a 1970s electronic company that will dominate the market in the 21st and 22nd century. The problem is that the company's early success was because they were hungry for accomplishment, and their limited resources forced them to come up with creative solutions.

With the financial backing the Brokers have provided, the company grows complacent and lazy. Stock prices plummet in the future and their superiors are not happy. Can the Brokers get the company back on track?

Clean Up Crew

The player characters wake up in Las Vegas in 1995 with little memory of the night before. They are not even sure that they were in Las Vegas when the party started. Worse, a Broker executive lies dead of an overdose, his time machine missing.

The player characters must get rid of the body, recover his time machine and deal with the prehistoric creatures they let loose in the city. Things are made more difficult as clearly inebriated past and future versions of themselves keep appearing to 'help'.

EMPIRE OF SCALES

Overview

The Sophosaurs are not a unified force. Each clan has different views about how to respond to the elimination of their timeline. While some attempt to deflect the meteor that wiped out their species, others like the Empire of Scales have decided that this is futile and they should instead conquer the existing timeline.

Establishing footholds in primitive eras, they prey on the weak. Once they are feared they make contact, promising survivors that they will be spared if they do the bidding of the Empire of Scales.

Hunting parties are sent throughout time, striking when humanity is comfortable and complacent. They eliminate strong, charismatic members of society and carry out gruesome murders. They prey on those who venture into the wilderness or take a wrong turn at night. They remind humanity they are forever vulnerable.

Their favored prey are explorers. They wait on the shores of distant lands, in unmapped territories and dark jungles. Each time the humans attempt to expand their reach the sophosaur will devour them, leaving the survivors to scurry away in terror. Whenever a traveler is warned that 'here be dragons' they talk of the Empire of Scales.

Structure

The Empire of Scales maintain a pack mentality. They view every obstacle and person as potential prey. They scout, they hunt, they surround and kill. For each Empire of Scale member you see, there are two that you don't, closing in to slit your throat and liquefy your brain.

Survival of the fittest is their watch-word. Those sophosaurs who are weak or old are eliminated without a moment's hesitation. As such, each member constantly tries to prove that they are useful; their very lives depend on it.

Their central base of operations is in Mexico in a city that covers 32 square miles. Established in 100 BCE and lasting until at least 500 AD, it will later be called Teotihuacan. Here they live like gods, ruling over thousands of human slaves. To remind each human of their place, each building is built atop the bones of 200 human sacrifices.

They have smaller settlements in medieval England, where they play the roles of dragons demanding virgin sacrifices. In these dark times they want the locals to know that only they hold the power over life and death.

In later eras the Empire of Scales is represented by the cults that worship them. These cults infiltrate the media and politics, creating a culture of fear and paranoia. Psychic rituals allow the cultists to communicate with their distant masters.

The Empire of Scales maintain small estates in several different time periods, designed exclusively to hunt humans. A relaxed hunt could use vagrants and orphans for prey, while those sophosaurs seeking a challenge pick prominent warriors, killers and survivors from history.

Sample Missions

The Vulture

The Empire of Scales has ordered the player character sophosaurs to carry out a series of killings in late 1960s San Francisco. They wish to inspire fear in the locals, to make them wonder what monster could be committing these awful killings.

There is a panic, but someone is leaving cryptic messages at the murder sites and claiming responsibility. They've even committed copy-cat killings. Now the humans believe that the deaths were caused by a common serial killer.

To reclaim the terror that is rightfully theirs the player characters will need to find out who this copy-cat is; problem is, there are other time travelers also on the trail, each determined to discover the truth.

The Serpent's Den

In 1984 a team of film makers head into the Amazon jungle to make contact with the Worshippers of the Serpent, a sadistic tribe feared by others in the region. What isn't known is that this tribe is loyal to the Empire of Scales.

Summoned by the tribe in a psychic ritual, the player characters must eliminate the intruders but ensure that the tapes of their experiences are discovered. If the tape is spread, fear of what the jungle contains will spread across the civilized world.

The Hunt

The sophosaur player characters have the opportunity to prove themselves to their superiors by taking part in a hunt. With prey consisting of wanted killers and ruthless mercenaries, the chase should prove a challenge, even without the prey's usual weaponry.

What the sophosaur clans didn't expect is that several of their supposed victims are undercover TimeWatch Agents. The player characters must hunt them down before the TimeWatch members can set up a temporal beacon, revealing the location of the estate and allowing TimeWatch to send reinforcements.





