

A Murder In Suburbia

An Adventure For Call Of Cthulhu

Requirements: a small group of persistent investigators

In this adventure, the investigators return home to their peaceful old hometown upon hearing news of a young relative's horrible death. Taking part in the funeral, they soon discover a sinister presence among the town's children, perhaps even the murderer of their young cousin. Discovering that the past can never be had again, they come to realize their town – and the once-innocent youth – are now decayed, degenerate, and a haven to sinister secrets.

A MURDER IN SUBURBIA

This scenario was designed for Cthulhu Now, in any rural or suburban setting in the 1990s world of Call of Cthulhu. It is based on the author's own childhood fantasies, nightmares, and superstitions, and I hope it will bring you as much satisfaction in playing as it did me in writing.

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KEEPER'S INFORMATION:

Recently, just one summer ago, the uncle of one Johnny Spence, a local sixteen year-old, came to visit his family and stayed for a few weeks. This uncle, Brian Spence, was a member of the dwindling merchant marine, a sailor aboard a cargo ship plying the Pacific. Uncle Brian brought with him (among other things) an interesting book that he gave to his only nephew, Johnny.

Brian did this for several reasons. First of all, Brian was no "good uncle"; he was a sick pervert, a sadist, and (like his nephew) spent most of his youth in and out of juvenile detention. He and Johnny were very close, closer even than Johnny and his own father, and Johnny instantly trusted the man.

Brian, knowing that Johnny would never tell on him, passed the book on to his nephew for safe keeping - for the time being. You see, Brian was being hunted by the law in Hong Kong and in the United States, after having committed several ritual rapes and murders in Hong Kong, Tahiti, and San Francisco. Having fled the merchant life for a time (he lied to his brother, Johnny's dad, telling him he had been "laid off" until the sailor's union could get him other work) to evade the law, he went back home to visit his brother, and to lay low for a while.

Brian knew the law would eventually catch up to him, and he knew that the book would give him away (in it, as detailed later, were detailed instructions on how to ritually rape and murder, to enhance POW and act, in effect, like a potent drug); so he passed it on to Johnny.

This was the second part of his plan. Giving the book to his teenage nephew (whom he knew was in and out of trouble with his parents, and was on the same track as he was as a kid), he knew Johnny would open it, sure that Johnny would be intrigued, just like he was when he found it in Tahiti so many months ago. Johnny, like himself, would try it. Experiment. When he found how great the thrill was, how powerful the rush, he'd be hooked too. Brian would then return, months later (when the heat was gone) to collect his book, and maybe even take Johnny with him - like he'd always promised the dreamy kid -

taking him under the wing and working together.

Once Brian left, the police caught up. Although they asked questions, Brian's brother had no idea what he had been up to. The police moved on.

It wasn't long before Johnny, however, made the connection. He figured there had to be something up with this book of Uncle Brian's. Just like Brian thought, though, Johnny was far too loyal to his understanding uncle to turn him in, or even to talk about the book. Instead, he took a look at it on his own.

Johnny was scared, but intrigued. A local tough, and a bully, he wasn't the kind to back down, to throw the book away. He was intrigued. Hey, if Uncle Brian had used it, maybe he could too? Hiding the book among his collection of Penthouse and Playboy magazines, Johnny proceeded to put the neat little things in the book to the test.

Now for recent events.

Johnny first began to assimilate the things in his book with the goings-on of his "gang" of friends several months ago. At first, it was just jokes. It was the renting of horror movies, to get them in the mood. It was morbid jokes, midnight venturing into the graveyard (later on, the investigators get a chance to hear about these things, starting them on their way of piecing together the events which led up to the past murders).

Just a few months ago, Johnny and the most select of his friends - Winona Elderly, Dylan Dreyfuss, Jennifer Freely, Bobby McTavish, and Stevie Benson - did the unthinkable. Having gotten most of them drunk, Johnny led the others out to Hedger's Grove (see later for more information on this and other places in Meadowdale), where he and the others murdered their first victim - one Deacon Helmsley, a local boy of thirteen years, and a wanna-be member of their "gang".

Following the murder of Deacon, the members of the gang were in a state of stunned silence. Most barely remembered that night, and were too scared to piece things together. Most even suppressed the memories, thinking it either just a dream, or a drunken stupor. All were too afraid to go to their parents, let alone the police, and admit they'd been drinking - or involved in a murder. Most simply pretended nothing happened, either deluded by their own reasoning, or by the silence of the others. It had, after all, been just a bad dream.

Johnny, of course, knew the truth, because he hadn't been drunk. He knew who was there, knew who had been killed - he knew it all. Of course, he kept silent during the police investigation, delighting in his own pleasure - and the power he had gained from the sacrifice. In the ritual, and during the next few days, he was consumed by a rush that exceeded any mere earthly drug.

He was hooked.

Johnny plotted the next killing, but this time, he made the mistake of letting two kids, from outside their group, join in. One of them, after a night of "hanging out", failed to get drunk, and Johnny failed to notice. They took another kid, Nikki White, raped her, and murdered her at Benson's Trail.

The next day, Johnny became aware that one of the kids, Francis Greely, had not been drunk. He remembered everything. On the last day of school, Johnny noticed how Francis stayed away, how he looked scared. Johnny was smart enough to figure it out.

Johnny got his buddies together once more, and they went out and abducted Francis. This time, they took Francis to another isolated spot, and murdered him.

Unfortunately for the would-be teenage cult, Francis Greely was the cousin of a group of paranormal investigators. His cousin, hearing of young Francis' death, is summoned to the small town of Meadowdale

(in any state you as Keeper need it to be) to attend his funeral. While there, the investigator - and friends - stumble upon a cult in their old home town. Right under everyone's noses...

INVESTIGATOR'S INFORMATION:

Before the start of play, choose one of the investigators at random, but keep in mind the following:

1. Choose only an investigator whose background has yet to be fully developed. This includes family and where he/she was raised.
2. Choose only an investigator whose player is capable of role-playing relationships with family and old-time friends.
3. Choose only an investigator who has a natural cunning and intuition to pick up on the smallest, most unlikely of hints.

Once this investigator is picked, proceed to describe to the group, in detail, how they come to be involved in the coming events.

One of the investigators receives, in the mail, a letter (see "Handout #1"), from a close aunt in the small town of Meadowdale - the town, in fact, where the investigator grew up as a child. The letter speaks of a terrible recent tragedy.

Tickets to Meadowdale take several hours to arrange, but without further ado, the characters manage to get the next flight in, and rent a car to take them to the main investigator's home town. The drive, in all, is a mere two hour trip.

COMING HOME TO MEADOWDALE:

Meadowdale is, to the investigator who grew up here, just like it was when he or she was a child growing up.

Meadowdale is the typical suburban town. The roads are neat and paved. Crosswalks are clearly evident. There are several fields in and around town, mostly home to wild and tall grasses, where dragonflies and mosquitos thrive during the summer. Behind every clump of trees rests a possible place to play - a hidden pond, an abandoned or condemned house, you name it.

Forests are all around as well. Behind every nice home, just meters beyond the streets, the suburban sprawl gives way to dry forests. You can't head in any direction without coming, at some point, to a deep branch of forests.

The town itself is a lot bigger now, though. Where there used to be only a few hundred homes, there are now over a thousand. Meadowdale has three new schools, a police station and fire department, even a 911 center. The library is new, as is the public pool ... and the growing number of service-oriented establishments, such as the used car dealership, the fast-food restaurants, and other such shops, has increased tremendously. Meadowdale is no longer a backwater town; it is now a small piece of America.

When the investigators first pass into town, they drive down Meadowview Drive off the freeway, which was almost a half an hour back. This road, they can see, is the main artery through the town, and most of the traffic is centered here.

It is obviously summer vacation for the students of Meadowdale's schools, as is evident by the large

number of kids in the streets, whether hanging outside the pool halls, the convenience stores, or in the backstreets outside of homes. As they drive, they can see kids hanging out in alleys, riding bikes on the sidewalks on main street, or playing in sheltered wooded yards. Treehouses are alive with childish laughter; boys play baseball with their friends in fields within sight of the road. Every now and then, the sound of an ice cream truck's record-player can be heard echoing through the happy summer atmosphere.

ARRIVING AT AUNT MAYBELLE'S:

Aunt Maybelle's house is as it always was - quaint and small. Outside, in the driveway and along the street, cars are parked, cluttering the narrow backroad. The neighbors, across the way, are having a barbecue, and murmur when the investigators add their vehicle to the growing number already present.

The investigators are met at the door by Aunt Helen, the woman who sent them the letter, informing them of the tragic events of late. She immediately smiles warmly at the sight of her niece/nephew, and embraces him or her warmly.

From here, Aunt Helen meets any investigators brought along, and so long as they show decent respect and concern for the recent loss, she will gladly assure them a place in the house during their stay. She then brings the investigators inside to meet everyone.

Inside, Aunt Maybelle's is incredibly crowded. Although some of the family members are out getting groceries (or whatever), the related investigator is assaulted by the sight of familiar faces; cousins, uncles, and aunts, all of whom he or she may or may not remember too clearly.

This is a good chance to role-play. Play out concerned relatives. An elderly uncle, glad to see another loyal family member show up in a time of crisis. Cousins the investigator hasn't seen for years, eager to find out what he or she has been up to these days. Perhaps even a father or mother that hasn't been seen for years, who now must come to terms with what his or her son/daughter does for a living.

Aunt Helen informs the other investigators (if the niece/nephew is busy) that they will be sharing a room (if there are three or less of them) or two (if there are more than three present) upstairs. She will personally lead them up a narrow set of steps to the cluttered upstairs, where children of all ages are playing, out of sight of their grieving parents.

Aunt Helen leads the group to their room(s). The rooms upstairs are homey, rustic, and a bit cramped; beds are soft as one could ever hope for, with beautiful quilts made personally by the owner of the house, Aunt Maybelle Greely. The curtains are lacy and soft, dimming the light as it comes through the single narrow window. The rug is thick, and muffles the sound of conversation below, but does little to shield the room from the sound of giggling and screaming children outside.

In addition to their bed(s), there is a full-length mirror on the back of each door, a pair of dressers, an old-style wardrobe, and a few shelves on the wall holding old knick-knacks and books (the related investigator recognizes these fondly from old stayovers in the past, years ago, when Aunt Maybelle babysitted him/her for the investigator's parents).

Downstairs again, Aunt Helen will show the visiting investigators the kitchen, where they can help themselves to whatever's available (thoughtful investigators will offer to help pay for food for the entire gathering, earning the gratitude of all present) - the fridge is stocked with soda, cold chicken, and other stuff. Each night, the family gets together to order pizza, or fried chicken, to feed the children and adults. If the investigators haven't offered by now, Aunt Helen hints that it's okay to pitch in to pay for such expenses.

Finally, when all are together again, Aunt Helen introduces the investigators to Aunt Maybelle, who is sitting on the back porch, overlooking the clover-covered yard, comforted by some dozen family

members, ranging from visiting teenage cousins to elderly uncles and even a grandparent or two.

Maybelle's eyes water with every new arrival. She instantly recognizes the investigator to whom she's related, and embraces him or her warmly and needingly. She welcomes each of the investigator's friends and comrades to her home, and insists they stay and help themselves to her hospitality while they remain.

Speaking with Aunt Maybelle about the murder, at this time, should be obviously out of the question - she's obviously had a hard time coping, and to bring it up again (other than giving their regards) would be disastrous to her composure.

Any investigator upstairs, however, should be allowed to make a Spot Hidden check, perhaps while unloading their suitcases, or speaking amongst themselves out of hearing range of the adults. Success indicates that one investigator notices a single boy, sitting alone, in the bedroom of Aunt Maybelle, watching cartoons.

Approaching the boy, the investigator notes he is very sad-looking, wearing only pajamas, and sitting amidst a bundle of bedsheets and a warm quilt. He says nothing when the investigator approaches.

The child, eight years old, is Matthew Greely, Francis' brother. He is still in shock, somewhat, from his brother's recent death, and is staying very much out of the way of the adults and other children. Even the other kids on the same level of Aunt Maybelle's house are aware of his state, and don't bother him.

Matthew will only talk to a kind-looking woman, or any investigator who takes the time to be nice and soft-spoken - and who makes a Psychology roll. With success, Matthew may be spoken to.

Matthew will say, quietly, that he loved his brother, Francis, very much. If asked about anything else, a Psychology roll must be made for every question. He has only the following things to relate:

1. Francis was a good student, like himself, and they spent a lot of time together.
2. Recently, towards the end of the school year, Francis began making friends with the "bad crowd". If asked who this "bad crowd" is, Matthew can only name one person, their leader - Johnny Spence.
3. Matthew cannot, for any reason, understand why anyone would kill his brother.
4. Matthew is totally unaware of how Francis was killed, where he was found, and in what condition.

If the investigators ask Matthew about any strange or odd things Francis did recently, directly and specifically, he can relate the following things:

1. Francis did, one night, sneak out of their bedroom. He told Matthew not to follow him, and not wake up his mom and dad. Francis came back at roughly two in the morning, and refused to ever talk about where he had gone.
2. If Matthew makes an Idea roll (50% chance), he also remembers Francis mentioning that he was to meet with his best friend, Davy Brennan, that night, and they were going somewhere together (but where, Matthew doesn't know). Matthew can provide Davy Brennan's address, if asked.
3. Only a week or so later, Francis was murdered. Matthew remembers that the night of his murder, Francis went out again in the middle of the night (another Idea roll, and Matthew remembers that Francis met Davy again that night, like he did the last time). Again, Matthew does not know where Francis went. That was the last he saw Francis.

GETTING SETTLED IN:

Once the investigators have met the family, made firm old acquaintances, etc., they will, around the house, hear at least one or two things about Francis' death. They can easily obtain information from Aunt Helen (once she's quit running about seeing to her sister's guests), or from any cousin or old family friend at the reunion (but not Aunt Maybelle - yet).

Characters need not make any checks to get information on Francis' death, but you shouldn't present these facts as monologue either; the people speaking are distraught, sad, and heartbroken, and what they say is as much a sorrow as a source of information. Make your players feel as if these are just things being said; don't hint, in any way, to any supernatural connection. The following points can be learned at this time:

1. Aunt Maybelle is totally shaken by the death of her son. Being a widow (since her husband, Edward, died three years ago), it has been doubly hard coping with the death while still having to take care of little Matthew, her younger son.
2. Aunt Helen was the first to come to Aunt Maybelle's comfort, and organized everyone coming to visit and support her. All this organization and hectic atmosphere must be terribly taxing on her, but she's taking it all so well!
3. The reception will be held the day after the investigator's arrive, at Harlowe's Funeral Parlor here in Meadowdale. All friends and family are, of course, invited.
4. The people gathered at Aunt Maybelle's are genuinely glad to see the investigator come home after all these years. They are sad, however, that this reunion must come at such a sad time, under such terrible circumstances.
5. Matthew, Francis' little brother, has taken the murder very hard, the poor thing. He's spending a lot of time alone, and won't even play with the other kids. Poor dear.

If any of the players genuinely role-plays getting into a conversation with one of the investigator's friends or family members, more information may make it's way into the private, whispered conversation:

1. The police are stumped, and even the FBI has given the investigation up. Aunt Maybelle refuses to give up hope, and Sheriff Wilson, down at the police station, has personally vowed to find the killer, no matter what it takes, and to bring him or her to justice.
2. Francis was found in a local grove, called Brooke's Hill (south of town; anyone present can give directions to interested investigators, without question). No one remembers, however, the name of who it was that found the body (this information can only be gleaned at the police station).

LATER THAT DAY:

Once the investigators have settled in, hopefully they will have picked up some clues, or at the very least, the inclination to find out further about young Francis' murder.

From here, allow the investigators to pursue their own leads. The section, "Field Investigations", lists the relevant localities in Meadowdale, that the investigators can visit or investigate. Refer to that section whenever your investigators break from the main plotline of the scenario; although some events are set to happen at certain times, allow the group to pursue their own investigations in between events.

The day winds down like any other summer day; the sun hangs high in the sky until past eight o'clock, and it only gets really dark by nine. At around seven o'clock, the bustle is still going on at Aunt Maybelle's, though the entire complement of family members is now fully here. The house is packed with kids in the

upper level (so as not to disturb Aunt Maybelle and the other grievants), and at least four families, including the investigators and friends, are staying at Maybelle's. Some six other families are staying at nearby hotels and motels.

At some time when the related investigator is alone (or with his or her fellow investigators), Aunt Helen approaches them, away from the bustling conversation in the living room. She asks the investigator, rather awkwardly, if he or she wouldn't mind going and picking up some dinner for everyone- especially the kids, they're getting a little restless from hunger - maybe some fried chicken from Chicken World, or something cheap. Because of all the commotion, she and the others forgot to prepare dinner, and they couldn't rightly ask Aunt Maybelle to provide. Aunt Helen offers to pay, unless the investigators insist otherwise.

CHICKEN WORLD:

At seven o'clock, Chicken World is bustling with business. A few cars sit outside, with teenagers eating and drinking and listening to loud music. The drive-through is completely backed up, and when the investigators arrive, it's obvious that going inside and waiting would be quicker than sitting in line in the drive-through.

Inside, Chicken World is your typical suburban fast-food restaurant; it's slightly crowded, except at the counter (business is brisk; most people are already at their tables, enjoying their fried chicken and grits), and a handful of teenage students, off for the summer, work the kitchen in the back, and the registers up front.

As the investigators enter, all lines are empty, and only one employee stands at the counter, a young teenage girl, with short black hair, white skin, and purple-painted lips. As they approach, she disposes of her chewing gum quickly, turns, and smiles, asking what she can get them.

After they've made their order (hopefully suitable for an entire army), the girl punches it in, and begins to prepare their bags.

As they wait, one of the girl's co-workers, emerging from the back smiling, yells to her "Hey, Winona, Steve called - he wants to know if you're up to comin' to the old drive-in tonight. What should I tell him?"

The black-haired girl turns and yells back that she'll be there. The other guy goes back, and the girl smiles at the investigators. If they ask, she tells them, in an impatient "know-it-all" voice, that the drive-in's where they sometimes gather to have some fun. She won't say any more.

(The girl, by the way, is Winona Elderly, one of Johnny Spence's gang, but at this point in the scenario, the investigators are unlikely to be aware of the significance of this fact. They may, however, recognize her when they meet her later on, from this early meeting).

When the investigators leave, they pass by a group of teenagers emerging from a car. One of them bumps into the lead member of group - the kid turns, scowls at the investigator, and the others all laugh as the adult founders for what to say. They then go in, without further ado.

Once they get home, dinner is uneventful, but Aunt Maybelle and Helen are relieved and thankful for the investigators' graciousness. After dinner, everyone eventually goes to bed, hoping to wake early to go to the funeral reception.

The investigators may turn in now, or they may consider going to the "old drive-in" that night. Whether they do this on a grudge, or out of sheer curiosity, the next section deals what happens there. If the investigators fail to go, skip this section altogether.

THE OLD DRIVE-IN:

Finding the old drive-in is easy; for those who don't know the town, there's only one in Meadowdale anyway. For the investigator that grew up here, he or she remembers it fondly, remembers going there to see old movies; the place closed down in 1979, and has since failed to be developed. It still stands where it did when the investigator was young.

Although the old property is now surrounded by a chain-link fence, it is obvious to anyone dipping back into the woods, on either side of the theatre, that in many places the fence has been cut, jarred open, or simply torn-down. It is easy to get in if one avoids using the front gates.

The lot is empty, cracked, and overgrown in places by lichen and weeds creeping through cracks in the pavement. The old sound and camera booth seems to still be intact, as does the refreshment center, but the latter has obviously been condemned a long time ago. The screen itself seems in pretty good shape, though one corner is torn slightly.

When the investigators arrive, they see a small group of adolescents in the lot, sitting on a pile of old tires, making themselves comfortable, drinking beer and soda, with bags of chips and pork rinds passed between them. If the investigators are careful (Sneak checks), they can watch them unseen from the trees or from the refreshment stand.

A Spot Hidden check identifies the group of kids as consisting of one girl and three boys (none of their faces can be made out). One of the boys separates from the crowd as the others laugh, making his way to the projector house, high above.

After about ten minutes, the kids begin shouting up at the projector house for the one teenager to get the movie rolling. As soon as they start yelling, the huge screen comes to life with sparkles and beams of light. The others quiet as the movie starts. In a few moments, the other boy comes back, and takes his seat to watch the flick.

It is obvious that nothing "sinister" is going on, other than trespassing. The kids watch the movie (a really bad horror movie, such as "The Church" or "Cthulhu Mansion"), some of whom talk all the way through. After about fifteen minutes, it is obvious that the investigators are wasting their time here.

Just as they begin to leave, allow the group to make a Listen check to hear footsteps sneaking through the underbrush. If they take caution and wait, they see an adolescent girl go by, wearing a patched black leather jacket, jeans, etc.. If they merely watch, she looks around nervously, sneaks by, and goes through a hole in the fence to join the others in watching the movie.

If stopped, the girl is taken off guard by the sight of adults. She is Jennifer Freely, though she won't outright admit it. A very attractive young girl (15 years old), she tries in vain to hide a six pack of stolen beers behind her back. Her grossly overpainted scarlet-pink lips hang open guiltily if she's caught.

If pressed about her appearance here, Jennifer simply says "she's hangin' out with her friends". If they point out that the theatre has been condemned for years, she counters with "what's the big deal?" and "everybody does it". When they're done asking her questions (and if any male investigators show even the smallest bit of interest), she flaunts her good looks in their faces, pursing her rich scarlet lips as if for a kiss (or more ...) then walks off to join her friends.

Investigators watching see the girl approach the group, get embraced by one of the boys there (Johnny Spence), and points in their direction. All the kids look. It's obvious the investigators won't get anything from continuing their surveillance now. If they continue to watch, they are heckled obscenely until they leave.

THE NEXT DAY:

The investigators awaken the next day to the sound of kids playing downstairs and running in the hall outside.

Breakfast is being served a little late today, because after having flown across the country, a lot of the live-ins sleep in late. Aunt Helen, along with Uncle Milton (a distant uncle) get together to make an award-winning breakfast of pancakes, eggs, bacon, and sausage. The smell rising from the kitchen downstairs helps rouse everyone in the house.

Downstairs, during breakfast, everything is hectic. The children are all watching cartoons, while the adults clutter up the place eating, keeping their children behaving, or running about looking for suits and clothing to wear to the reception.

Determine one investigator at random; this investigator, while going to the kitchen to clean up, may make a Spot Hidden check to notice, outside in the backyard, Aunt Maybelle, standing alone.

If the investigator goes outside, he or she finds Aunt Maybelle alone, teary-eyed and tired-looking, staring at a swing-set in the backyard. When the investigator comes out, she sniffs loudly, wipes her tears, and gets to her feet, taken by surprise.

Alone with Aunt Maybelle, the only thing the investigator can do is try to comfort her; this requires a Psychology check, followed by an Oratory check. Failure in either means the investigator fails to comfort her, and in the awkwardness of the attempt, Aunt Maybelle politely excuses herself (and the conversation ends).

If the investigator succeeds, Aunt Maybelle opens up a bit. When playing the conversation, include the following points:

1. Aunt Maybelle, at first, is found staring out into sun, mumbling to herself. "Where's his hat? Francis always wore his little red cap. Where did he put it?" If asked what hat she is speaking of, she simply tries to smile, but breaks into tears. It is obvious she is having trouble letting go of her son ...
2. Aunt Maybelle is entirely shattered by Francis' death. The fact that he was murdered, being so young, is horrendous. The very brutality of the murder chills her to the bone.
3. Aunt Maybelle is, naturally, worried for her other son, Matthew, who hasn't been the same since the killing.
4. Maybelle seems adrift, lost, and devastated. She needs all the support, from friends and family, that she can get.

If the investigators have yet to get the inclination to look into Francis' murder, Aunt Maybelle's finding comfort in them should be adequate motivation.

HARLOWE'S FUNERAL PARLOR:

Harlowe's Funeral Parlor is the place where the reception is to be held. After breakfast, and about two hours of everyone getting ready for the event, everyone arrives around noon for the reception.

Harlowe's is situated in a field on Meadowview Drive, amidst a collection of old homes. A small lot alongside the building allows the families of Francis Greely to not clutter the roadway. In the hot summer sun, a few birds flutter about, but the mood is indeed quite somber.

Inside, the atmosphere is subdued, even though some three dozen people or so are here, including children (an area upstairs is reserved for children, to keep them occupied while the adult relatives pay their respects). In the third of three main rooms of the funeral parlor, the reception is being held. One by one relatives of Francis Greely take their turns paying their respects at Francis' casket. Aunt Maybelle, and her aging brother Tom, are the first, and they're obviously devastated. Others follow, quietly paying their respects. When the investigator(s) comes up to pay his or her respects, the investigator finally gets a chance to look at Francis' body up close.

Francis is dressed in a smart black suit, his hair neatly combed, his eyelids shut over his lifeless eyes. Despite the attempts of the funerary workers to conceal his wounds with a thick tie, high collar, etc., Francis body was obviously badly mutilated.

Francis face bears some heavy make-up, covering knife slashes on his cheeks and chin. Anyone making a Know check realizes the extent to which he was beaten and tortured (if they have yet to realize the need to investigate Francis' murder, just looking at his body should now motivate them). A Spot Hidden check by anyone present allows him or her to notice the slight discoloration around his neck, just peeking out from under his collar. A person with any medical background, or making a First Aid check, realizes this is evidence of some kind of strangulation. Further examination, however, is prevented by etiquette (they can't examine the body right there).

The reception lasts for about three or four hours, with most everyone congregating in the main room, or at an upstairs refreshment area, talking quietly over coffee and donuts, dodging children as they run about playing.

After the reception, the family heads home for the rest of the night. That evening, the atmosphere is subdued, quiet, and sorrowful. Nothing else occurs for the rest of the night.

THE FUNERAL:

The next day (and the night before) are pretty much the same as the previous one, but by noon, the whole family gathers at the Meadowdale Cemetery for the funeral.

After a private mass with family and close friends (the investigators sit just one row behind Aunt Maybelle, alongside Aunt Helen), the casket is driven to the cemetery, just a few blocks away. The mood is solemn, sober, and melancholy.

The funeral is held outside, in the shade of several trees in the middle of the well-manicured cemetery. Francis Greely's entire family is gathered, including the investigators.

Role-play the sorrow, mourning, and the needed comforting on the part of Aunt Maybelle and the others - including young Matthew, who weeps quietly (and wordlessly) through the whole ceremony. Create an atmosphere of sadness, loss, and subtle fear and insecurity. Here are example events:

1. Aunt Maybelle, supported by her brother, breaks out into a wail; only a soothing voice from one of the investigators (who also makes a Psychology or Oratory roll) will calm her. She will hold on to the arm of whoever comes to her comfort, her brother whispering sincere thanks for the investigator's actions at this troubled time.
2. Uncle Charlie, Maybelle's older brother, can't believe what happened to Francis. He speaks quietly, in the back of the crowd, of how just "yesterday" he was playing with that boy on his lap. With a shake of his head, he tries to dispell the nightmares he's been having - he keeps seeing Francis in his dreams. That was his favorite nephew, he'll whisper. He'll never be the same.
3. Grampa Joe, now getting a little senile, doesn't remember why he's here. Some of the relatives (such as

Aunt Helen) ask one of the investigators to take him back to the motorcade to prevent him from blurting out something hurtful in Aunt Maybelle's presence. Although dottering, the old man is eager to chat, if a bit dated in conversation topics.

Sometime during the funeral, allow the investigators to make Spot Hidden checks to notice a figure walking among the gravestones, watching the funeral from a distance.

Any investigator that succeeds notices an attractive teenage girl, wearing a patched and shoddy black leather jacket, skin-tight and ragged jeans, cowboy boots, etc.. If the investigator bumped into Jennifer Freely before (at the Drive-In), they recognize her, standing there nervously, smoking a cigarette, the stains of her lipstick evident on the short butt as it hangs from her lips.

Jennifer puts out her cigarette if adult investigators approach, and tries to slip away. Investigators, if they follow, must make a Sneak check to avoid being seen. If Jennifer sees them, she breaks into a run, running through the woods, going straight home. She thus loses the group unless they make a Tracking check.

If the investigators successfully shadow her, Jennifer takes a few forested backstreets, dodging behind cars, etc.. She makes her way to the house of Winona Elderly. Once she goes inside, however, investigators won't be able to track her movements (she hangs with Winona for about half an hour, then heads home).

If the investigators physically catch her in the graveyard, Jennifer fights back, but she's no match for a stern hold. If asked why she was hovering around, Jennifer lies and pretends she's just "hanging out". A Psychology check immediately reveals she's lying; a second success indicates she's covering a feeling of fear inside her.

Jennifer denies any knowledge of Francis Greely's death, but a Psychology check reveals she's lying. She will not however, under any form of persuasion, reveal why - she's terrified of what "others" might do to her if they found out she talked.

To get her to talk, the investigators need to succeed in an Oratory check - but the players have to not only roll well, but come up with good dialogue as well. She needs a reason to talk, a good reason. Telling her how much Francis meant to them, or to his family, and how they're trying to let him rest in peace by finding his killers, are the most likely ways of getting her to talk:

1. A successful Oratory check while asking Jennifer about the funeral results in her admitting she heard "something" about a boy's death. She just wanted to "check it out".
2. Jennifer admits, rather freely, that she didn't know Francis. This isn't exactly a lie either.
3. If the investigators mention the brutal facts of the murder, a successful Psychology check reveals Jennifer is really shaken up, despite denying any knowledge of the case (Jennifer only vaguely remembers the murder, as she was drunk and high when it happened).
4. If threatened, Jennifer counters that her boyfriend, Johnny (Spence), will be really pissed if they do anything to her.
5. Jennifer, wide-eyed and obviously scared sh-tless, will try to flee if presented evidence connecting her with the murders (for example, cigarette butts with her lipstick on them). Under no circumstances will she admit guilt - yet.

Once it is obvious she has nothing more to say, Jennifer takes off like a bat out of hell - vanishing into the graveyard.

THE DAY GOES ON:

With the end of the funeral, the family breaks up and goes home. A light supper is served at six, with most of the adults congregating in the living room and neighboring rooms. Private hushed conversations are started, while the majority of the family stays in the living room, comforting Aunt Maybelle.

The children are upstairs watching cartoons, still dressed in their best, enjoying ice cream cake bought by Aunt Helen to add a little cheer to everyone's disposition - and especially for the kids. The investigators, exhausted from an emotionally-overwhelming day, are welcomed among family and friends.

The atmosphere is casual and relaxed. Everyone is trying to forget. Despite this, the investigators may (or should, rather) have nagging doubts.

Now would be a good time for the investigators to excuse themselves politely and sneak off to do some investigations of their own. If they leave quietly, they will offend no one and draw no attention to themselves.

THE BASKETBALL GAME:

Two days later, the following events occur. Still staying at the Greely residence after the funeral, things are beginning to heal. Aunt Maybelle, though still shattered by her son's murder, is beginning to come out of her shell.

The evening of the second night, Aunt Helen approaches the investigators. The night is a warm and pleasant one, the kids making a ruckus throughout the house, T.V.s blaring and laughter screaming through the halls. Aunt Helen approaches the investigators with a favor to ask of them.

The adults need a night off from the kids. The mourning, combined with the constant attention required for the children, has put a strain on all the adults. Tensions are rising, and a few incidents have occurred (kids getting spanked for misbehaving). Aunt Helen thought it would be nice if the kids got out - maybe go to an arcade or see the basketball game at the Middle School.

The investigators should feel obliged to help out. Aunt Helen is relieved if they offer to take the kids; there are only seven of them, ranging in age from three to fifteen - both sexes. Although she admits they'll be a handful, she offers the investigators some cash for food and entertainment, and her sincere thanks.

The indoor gymnasium is surprisingly packed; parents and kids from the neighborhood have shown up en masse. It's summer vacation, and this is what it's all about; an evening of community competition. The school halls are filled with streamers and balloons celebrating the last game of the summer.

The two teams are the Meadowdale Tigers and the Milefield Moles; all are comprised of students of their respective middle schools, aged 13-15. The sound of adolescents playing hard basketball echoes loudly in the gym; the sound of screeching sneakers on polished wood, cheers and shouts, dribbling balls, school cheerleaders leading the crowd in barely audible chants, and the referee's whistle creates an atmosphere that makes everyone forget the troubles of the past few weeks in Meadowdale.

Towards the end of the game however, something occurs that may shake up the investigators.

During the game, the investigators hear some heckling from up in the stands, just a few rows away. Turning to get a look (other adults and kids seem annoyed by the heckling as well), they see a young man and a group of teenage friends, laughing and drinking beer up in the back row. They are making lewd and drunken gestures towards the players; although they don't make the shooter miss, it is obvious that they are beginning to disturb the game.

If one of the investigators gets up and goes up the aisle to talk to Johnny, he or she is unnoticed (there is too much cheering as another basket is made) until reaching Johnny's seat.

Johnny appears to be a handsome young man with round red cheeks. His hair, light red in color, is worn ridiculously low over his face and to the side in a weird style. He sits wearing clothes that look at least a few sizes too large, over which is worn a glossy black leather jacket; his one hand nursing a bottle of beer and the other giving his neighbor a high-five. He sits with Dylan Dreyfuss, Stevie Benson, and Bobby McTavish (in that order, away from the aisle).

Johnny ignores the investigator until spoken to directly. He and the others then turn. Dylan and Stevie look, then start whispering to themselves. Bobby continues to watch the game. Johnny, however, slouches back casually as if totally unconcerned.

Regardless of what the investigator says, Johnny simply takes a sip of his beer, swishes it around in his mouth, then pauses. Before the investigator can move, however, he spits the saliva and beer out onto the investigator's shirt. The other teens start laughing, saying things like "way to go, Johnny!" in their most annoying voice (starting a physical fight with Johnny at this point will get the investigators nowhere; he doesn't even fight back. The commotion draws attention from other adults, who will automatically accuse the adult of attacking Johnny. Within a few minutes, some school faculty come up the aisle and pull the two apart - the adult investigator is asked to leave immediately).

If the investigator asks Johnny to please be quiet, he and the others simply laugh. Johnny smiles, and looks the investigator over. Suddenly quiet, he simply gives the investigator the finger with his free hand. The others break into drunken laughter again.

"You got a problem, asshole?" he asks.

Johnny responds to rude threats and curses with a bored grin that forces only one corner of his mouth into a curl. He presents a visage of cool and calculated delinquency - not rage. He responds to direct answers with direct replies - he doesn't care about the enjoyment of the investigator or his or her charges for the night. He doesn't care if he's ruining the game for the others. He certainly doesn't care that he's too young to drink. Does the investigator have a problem with that?

The conversation is likely to end here. However, if the investigator makes some kind of real threat or challenge to Johnny ("real" meaning that the investigator lets on that they know about the occult, believe in magic, or are onto Johnny's "game"), Johnny's eyes run cold - half-closed, staring deep into the investigator. His friends quiet when they see Johnny's lack of amusement.

Suddenly, taking everyone off guard, Johnny smiles. He leans back, sips, and then speaks.

"You think you know anything? You don't know s**t, man. I know s**t. You wanna know, mister?"

"Tell you what. Me and some friends are goin' up to Brooke's Hill for a campout tonight. Some beer, some pot, maybe a little makin' out ... maybe you'd like to come, hmmm?"

The others start jeering eagerly, but cease their slurred insults when Johnny raises his hand.

"You wanna see some really weird s**t, mister? You wanna know what's up in little old Meadowdale? Be there - midnight - alone."

Johnny has no more to say.

Regardless of the outcome of the talk with Johnny, once the investigator heads back to his or her seat, a Spot Hidden check by that investigator allows him or her to spot two of the cheerleaders - Jennifer Freely and Winona Elderly - cheering on the crowd. Jennifer, however, is not facing the court, but looking up at the investigator walking away from Johnny. She looks as though she were embarrassed by Johnny's

behavior - maybe even sizing up the investigator for some unknown reason (but her eyes, wide and frightened, give the impression that she may be wanting to talk). If caught looking at the investigator, she looks away nervously - as if she didn't want to be seen questioning Johnny's actions. Winona nudges her and they start cheering.

The game continues on into the night, with no more interruptions. Everyone has a good time, and the game ends around 10:00.

THE CAMP OUT:

It is obvious, to investigators suspecting the juvenile gang, that Johnny has picked Brooke's Hill for a reason - it was here that Francis Greely (the investigator's very cousin) was murdered. Whether Johnny is suggesting he was here that night, or whether Johnny is simply playing on a probable sensitivity to the place (like deliberately aggravating an old wound) is uncertain.

When the investigator arrives, it is pitch dark, midnight. No cars are on the shady suburban road called Meadowdale Drive. A full moon, obscured by high clouds, sheds weird light upon the dark stands of trees that stretch on into the distance south of the road, up into the hills.

It takes five minutes to ascend the wooded hill to its summit. About four minutes up, the investigator hears distant laughter towards the summit; through the trees, a vague firelight (a bonfire) can be seen.

Just as the investigator nears the clearing, a figure emerges from the darkness, just prior to the investigator being discovered. It is Jennifer Freely, wearing a black shimmer blouse, leather jacket, and stretch pants. She looks worried.

Jennifer appears to have climbed the hill alone (Johnny told her to stay home tonight). She whispers a word of warning to the startled investigator:

"Get out of here, mister. I'm warning you - you don't know what you're getting into. Just ... just go home, okay?"

Jennifer won't elaborate if asked. If the investigator refuses, or starts to make any commotion, she takes off down the hill through the bushes (she doesn't want Johnny to know she was warning the investigators - it would get him suspecting she knew something she should have forgotten). If followed, she races off on nimble legs, running home in frightened anguish.

If the investigator continues on, he or she enters the clearing. Johnny is there, dancing wildly to some heavy trash music coming from a portable stereo. Winona Elderly, Stevie Benson, and Bobby McTavish are all present (Dylan is missing, however, but do not make a note of this; let the investigators figure this out). Stevie is smoking pot; Bobby is laughing with streams of beer coming out his nose. Winona is smoking a joint, being felt up by both boys.

A small bonfire burns in the clearing; beer bottles, some smashed, others simply drained of their contents, litter the grass and mossy ground. The juveniles are obviously very intoxicated.

Johnny finishes his dance by pulling out his penis and peeing on the other three - who scream, curse, or laugh drunkenly. Johnny quickly zips himself up and turns to the shocked investigator. He smiles, licks his lips, and welcomes the lone investigator with a frightening look in his semi-stoned eyes.

The others offer the investigator a beer or joint, motioning for him or her to sit down at the fire with them. Johnny takes a seat, popping open a new beer and taking a sip.

Johnny eludes questions for the moment. The others simply laugh, or make stupid and nonsensical replies

(remember, the three of them don't actually remember anything from previous murders, so they won't go spilling any beans), followed by drunken laughter. Johnny seems to smile, as if happy to see them so plastered.

Johnny evades the investigator's questions again and again. He plays with him or her, like a cat playing defensive with an eager mouse. He performs a few tricks of sleight of hand to keep the investigator off guard (takes a silver dollar from the investigator's ear; pulls a joint from a prudish investigator's palm - much to the amusement of the others; etc.). He continues his evasive replies.

After the investigator has had at least one drink, and seems to be getting really frustrated, Johnny finally raises his hand for silence. It takes a moment for the others to quiet.

Johnny smiles, and waves his hand (palm down) over the dancing flames of the campfire. The others watch with wide drunken eyes.

Johnny takes his hand away, and reaches into the dirt by the fire. He takes a handful of the stuff, and throws it into the fire. There is a sudden flash of light; the drunken teens fall over giggling. Johnny smiles, glancing in their direction, a look of content on his face (they are totally drunk by this time).

"You know mister, I think you got it wrong ..." he says, his voice deceptively innocent. "I ain't got nothin' to tell ya about the recent murders. No sir. I jus' thought - well, I jus' thought maybe you'd like to hang with us, mister. Heck - we jus' come up here to tell ... ghost stories."

"Yeah, ghost stories!" says Stevie, laughing with the others.

The investigator, probably fed up by now, is not stopped if he or she tries to leave. Johnny speaks up, however, so the investigator can hear his words. He begins to tell the ghost story.

(At this point, Johnny is now beginning to cast his spell, Death Dream. Required rolls should be taken care of later, however).

"Yeah, I got a ghost story to tell. Once upon a time there was this kid - Frank, or Franky was his name. I forget - just another face in the crowd, ya know?"

This little bit should get the investigator interested. Is he talking about Francis?

"So anyway, this Franky kid, he wasn't too smart. He's, you know, one of these kids who'll do anything to be cool. So he turns to the Devil.

"One night, he sneaks away to this hilltop where he gives himself to the Devil. Yeah. Kneels before him. Looks into the Devil's eyes. Knows what true power is. Knows what an insignificant thing he is. Such a small, worthless thing. He knows it. He sees it in the Devil's eyes."

Johnny is staring right into the investigator's eyes now, the same dead look in his eyes. The same curl in his lips.

"The Devil tells him how he's gonna die - gonna have his f**n' neck strangled, f**n' wrung like a goddamn rag, man. But Franky, he's got no balls. He can't stare his fate down. He gets up - runs off, like. Dashes off down the hill, into the darkness. But the Devil, see, he doesn't care. He doesn't even chase after him. 'Cause, ya see, he's got the power. He's got the magic. He's so much ... BIGGER than Franky.

"Franky can't get away. He jus' can't. Something tells him he's gotta return. Maybe it's the beer Franky's been drinkin'. He never could handle pot, that Franky. So he jus' ... wanders back, not knowing what to do.

"He comes back, and the Devil's there. Waitin'. Just waitin'. Franky just stumbles in, drunk as s**t and

high as a kite. The Devil laughs - 'hey, Franky, I was kiddin, man'. So Franky - remember, he ain't too swift - sits down and goes to sleep. Hey - it's been a hell of a night."

Johnny's eyes are wide, as if he were in a trance.

"Franky never wakes, mister. Poor kid just ... never wakes up. His dream comes true, man. He's strangled in his sleep. The Devil man, he's got the power - and the power crushes his throat.

"Now you know the story, man. You think you could face the same fate. Think about it, mister. An invisible force - wrappin' itself around your throat? You can't fight it - it strangles the air outta ya lungs. They say suffocation's like torture, man. Think you could face it?

"I wonder," Johnny says, his voice quieting as spoken at the tail end of some declining ecstasy, "what you'd be like in Franky's shoes."

(The spell has now taken effect; Johnny has spelled out the investigator's doom, identical to Francis').

Johnny leans back after the story, and inhales some pot. His eyes flutter, and he passes out against a log. The others, drunk and far-gone, have nothing to say. The campfire gathering is over.

THAT NIGHT:

Returning home, the investigator is met by no one; everyone is in bed. Wandering to the kitchen, the investigator sees Aunt Helen still up, having tea, looking through a picture album. Her mood is obviously one of remiscence.

Aunt Helen is surprised - she thought everyone was in bed. She offers to make some tea for the investigator before bed. She wiped away cold sad tears.

Aunt Helen, if asked, explains that she was "just looking at some old photographs". The photos are of the investigator, as a child, growing up in Meadowdale (or from a past visit). She smiles fondly, touching the satin finished shots with her fingertips.

"What happened to those days? Where did they go ..." she mumurs quietly. "Things have changed so much since you were kids. The whole word ... just ... 'grew up'. I just don't ... don't ... know what to do anymore."

Aunt Helen breaks down and cries. Her normally friendly and outgoing personality seems to have just been a mask. A well-maintained mask, but one which had to come down. She's human. With some comforting, Aunt Helen is calmed and can be convinced to go to bed.

When the investigator in question goes to bed, however, something strange happens. At roughly two in the morning, in the dark of night, the magic of Johnny's Death Dream is tested.

The investigator has a nightmare; images flash in his or her mind from a strange haze. The dream starts as the investigator seems to walk out of a fog, onto the top of a wooded hill. All is dark.

There, as vivid as real life, the investigator (dressed only in the sleeping clothes he or she is sleeping in) sees Francis Greely, kneeling in the mossy grass, at the foot of a cold and dead campfire, the logs charred and black.

Francis turns slowly at the sound of the investigator's approach. His pale face turns slowly ... revealing a dead and lifeless visage (use Francis' autopsy report to describe the horrendous deformations of his body). A low childlike moan issues from his mouth, like steam slowly escaping from a kettle.

Francis gets to his feet, advancing on bloated and jerky legs towards the investigator, raising his slightly lacerated arms as he stumbles forward on naked feet.

No matter how the investigator tries, there is no escaping the animated corpse of his/her murdered cousin. Francis is soon upon the investigator, wrapping his cold white hands around his/her throat. He begins to strangle the investigator!

As stated under NEW SPELLS, the only way to resist the fatal effects of this spell is for the victim to make a POW x2 check on D100. Failure results in the investigator's immediate death.

If the victim passes the check, he or she simply wakes in a cold panicked sweat, screaming in the middle of the night. The images are still vivid in his or her mind.

THE NEXT DAY:

If the investigator died the night previous, the Keeper may have to modify things considerably. A second tragedy in the family results in a complete breakdown of Aunt Maybelle. A second funeral is planned. The remaining investigators must, now more than ever, get on the track of Johnny and his gang!

However, if the investigator managed to resist Johnny's Death Dream (as is hoped), the next day starts like any other. The investigators are met downstairs by relatives. A few sympathetic comments are passed by relatives who heard the investigator's screams in the night (they assume it was a nightmare about Francis, but do not ask details out of respect).

As they enter the kitchen, the investigator's hear the surprised and horrified voice of Aunt Helen - who is there reading the morning paper. She is stunned.

If the investigator examines the article she was reading, it is on the front page. The article can be found as Handout #5.

The family is shocked - another child has been murdered. There is a stunned silence in the house. Aunt Maybelle can't find out, it is unanimously agreed among the adults. The investigators should now hasten their investigation!

WHERE TO GO FROM HERE:

From here, the scenario can take a number of courses, all depending on how much of what the investigators have learned. With the murder of Davy Brennan, a few vital pieces of information are lost (that is, if the investigators never got around to speaking with him). If the investigators miss this information, they will have to find this information on their own, through field investigations (see the section "Field Investigations").

The days pass until the investigators catch on to Johnny Spence's morbid cult activities. The rest of the adventure cannot be detailed; Johnny is no longer concerned about the investigators, so long as they don't harrass him or get in his way. If they make their presence obvious, he and his buddies play it safe and stop their activities until the investigators move on.

It's all up to the investigators. They must retrace their steps, go to the various scenes of murder. If they haven't done so already, they must now piece together the facts and find out who, and for what reason, killed the children of Meadowdale.

FIELD INVESTIGATIONS:

The following section details various locations the investigators can go to while investigating the mysterious deaths in Meadowdale. They are presented in a loose format, because investigators may miss one or more if they don't stumble onto the right leads.

THE POLICE:

The Meadowdale Police Station is an older structure, sitting on Meadowview Drive near the center of town, flanked on one side by the Fire Station, and Rosie's Diner on the other.

When the investigators arrive, it's a quiet part of the day (or night). Traffic is light, and people walk across the streets when they need, as they need to. The buzzing of flies becomes evident as they approach the station, where the mangy bloodhound, Regis, sits at the front door, watching all passerby emotionlessly.

Inside, the station is surprisingly modern, if somewhat understaffed. The front area, panelled in wood, is equipped with a powerful radio, allowing the front secretary, Marge Combs, to stay in communication with the patrol cars as well as the sheriff when he's in the field. She also acts as the local 911 operator, and has manuals behind her desk, along with a computer (with modem) that can connect her to county emergency services if needed.

Investigators will only be able to see the police if they have a good excuse - they can't simply walk in. The investigator with relations to Francis Greely will receive the sympathy of Marge at the front desk, and she pass word on to the sheriff; but Sheriff Wilson will only talk (other than kind words and wishes, that is) if a successful Oratory check is made - this simulates the investigator's degree of outward concern towards the investigation.

Sheriff Bruce Wilson is a middle-aged man, and an avid coffee-drinker. He is friends with many of Meadowdale's citizens, and he seldom goes anywhere without Regis, his bloodhound and companion of ten years. Any investigator from Meadowdale remembers that Sheriff Wilson was sheriff here even as far back as he or she was a child here - and he was always known as a kind man, never one to go too far to crack down on teenage pranks. He was more likely the type to merely take a vagrant teenager home to his parents, and "lose" the paperwork and forget the charges altogether, in lieu of a heart-felt apology.

In any case, Sheriff Wilson doesn't have much to say, at least at first. In the case of an investigator simply wanting to learn more about the investigation, Wilson only has the following to say:

1. The investigation is still underway to find out what exactly happened to Francis Greely the night he was murdered.
2. There are no suspects, as of this date, who are in custody, or are being considered, for the murder.
3. If asked about the "bad crowd" Francis had begun to hang out with, Sheriff Wilson cannot comment. He knows there are several bad elements in Meadowdale's juvenile population, though none (so far as he knows) are likely candidates for murder.
4. Because of the brutal nature of the crime, the FBI was called in, but currently they have been unable to link the crime - or so they say. An FBI agent is in town, but she pretty much keeps to herself. If pressed (another Oratory check), Sheriff Wilson can give the investigators the agent's address at Dina's Roadside Motel, in town.
5. The kind regards and wishes of the police department are with the family and friends of the young victim, and they vow to do whatever it takes to see justice done. The culprit will be found, eventually.

Although some of this information is helpful, those investigators approaching the Sheriff from a professional stance will get a different response. The Sheriff refuses to talk to anyone without identification from either a news agency or a police agency. Private investigators will be looked at angrily, and the Sheriff will openly call to check on whom supposedly employed them. If they are caught lying, he threatens to cite them with a number of small crimes, including the obstruction of justice, and throws them out. Also, if any of the investigators identifies him- or herself as a relation to Francis, the Sheriff (out of respect) will only relate the above information.

If, however, the investigators manage to present themselves as professionals seeking information on the crime, the Sheriff will be able to relate the following points:

1. Francis was found by Mr. James Carson, a local breeder of bloodhounds, during his morning walk through the woods. His address will be readily given.
2. When the police got to the scene, the condition of Francis' body was horrendous. He had apparently been stuffed under a log, his neck strangled, his body serrated by several puncture wounds all over.
3. Evidence on Brooke's Hill suggested several other people had been there the night of the murder; the grove had been disturbed, and the remnants of several small fires were evident.
4. The FBI sent a small task force to investigate the murders. They were, however, interested in another crime, which they refused to relate to the local authorities, and left soon after. They took no evidence with them, and left only a single field agent to continue the investigation alone. She has only been in contact with the police on rare occasions.
5. If asked directly and specifically about Johnny Spence and his friends, Sheriff Wilson will nod, admitting that the boy is a local trouble-maker. The Sheriff can provide some known hangouts of their "gang" - Big Al's Used Tires (with address), Meadowdale Middle School (with address), and an old fireworks stand outside of town (he can give directions). He can also provide the investigators with the addresses for Spence, and his "girl", Jennifer Freely.

If the investigators question Sheriff Wilson about past murders or current unsolved crimes, he has the following items to relate as well, depending on the line of questioning:

1. A murder just like this one occurred one month ago. The victim's name was Deacon Helmsley, a twelve year-old boy and student at the same school as Francis Greely. He had been found under a log as well, his body slashed and stabbed and similarly mutilated.
2. The scene was much the same - evidence of several small campfires. With a successful Idea roll on Sheriff Wilson's part (80% chance), he also adds that they found evidence of smashed beer bottles, but the fragments were too small to lift prints.
3. The local police, and the FBI, believe the murders to be related, but they are unsure of who to blame. The FBI have subtly suggested that it may be the work of a railroad hobo, or a group of hobos.
4. Sheriff Wilson believes this suggestion was half-hearted; he suspects the FBI is here for other reasons, but for what he is unsure. This suspicion is only revealed if the investigators deliberately ask his opinion on the FBI's theory.
5. Recently, just a week or so prior to the murder of Francis Greely, a local schoolgirl (14), Nikki White, went missing, and has failed to turn up. Because she was known to hang out at the railroad tracks outside of town, the police suspect she may have hitched a ride or eloped with a known hobo boyfriend (his name, if asked, is Freddy Yates). The case has been turned over to the FBI, but she is expected to turn up soon.

If investigators have solid proof (and only solid proof) that they are, in fact, legitimate law enforcement or private investigators directly involved in the case, the Sheriff will be able to provide coroner's reports on

both murders (see "Handout #4"; reading these reports costs an inexperienced investigator 0/1D4 SAN). If the investigators ask to see the bodies of either boy, Sheriff Wilson informs them that Deacon Helmsley was interred several weeks ago, and that the body of Francis Greely is currently at Harlowe's Funeral Parlor. As a result, both bodies are unavailable for examination.

If asked about the murder of Davy Brennan (which occurs later in the scenario), the Sheriff relates the following:

1. The police department does not think the murders related. Davy had his throat cut and his body stabbed. The other children were only superficially stabbed; they are believed to have been strangled to death. The method is totally different.
2. The sheriff will tell the investigators (if he has had good relations with them up to this point) that Davy's room was broken into; someone came in through the open window, probably climbing up the tree outside. No evidence was left at the scene.
3. The FBI agent, Williams, has already taken a look at the case, and is working with the department to find the killer.

Before any investigator posing as (or actually seriously acting in the capacity of) a legitimate private investigator leaves, Sheriff Wilson tells them, in a serious, almost desperate voice, that he and his department would appreciate any leads, at any time, that will lead to the solving of this brutal murder.

THE LOCAL LIBRARY:

Investigators looking for other clues might consider looking into the Meadowdale Library, situated in a shaded section along Meadowview Drive, a long sleepy artery running through town. The library itself is an old Georgian-style structure, once the local schoolhouse (in the early 1900s), but has since been converted to the library. It is only a fifteen minute walk to the Meadowdale Middle School.

The library is a quaint old structure, as anyone seeing it the first time will notice. A small parking lot is located outside (a 1950s addition), and narrow wooden steps lead up from the lot to the gabled and roofed entrance. A few signs posted outside challenge the passerby to come in and to pick up a book (mostly part of a state-funded program against illiteracy). Behind the library, the boggy, wooded creek which ruined the land's value is an obvious explanation why this place was converted into the local library (to cut costs).

Inside, the library's antiquity is immediately apparent. The building, despite having been freshly-painted just this spring, creaks under every footstep. It is mostly dark, and the interior is crowded with row upon row of bookshelves. A few side tables, drenched in the darkness of the corners of the room, allow readers privacy while they read. Electric lights can be turned on in each of these booths.

At the library's far end, in the light of the great door-length windows, sits the librarian's desk. The librarian, Emma Druary, sits here only when there are a lot of people; otherwise, she can be found re-shelving books or fixing tea in the quaint back room, which combines kitchen with storage space (she has a room and bathroom upstairs, out of sight).

Mrs. Druary will be more than willing to allow newcomers to use the library. Library cards cost only a dollar, and require only the signing of a name and the recording of an address. She herself will be able to comment on the recent murders:

1. Mrs. Druary is especially hurt by the recent murders. She says she knew the boy, Francis - well, at least met him on occasion. He was a good student, or so she heard, and he came to the library often to do homework with his little brother. She never knew him to be in much trouble - any, really - and the murder

horrifies her. It's coldness, it's spontaneity, frightens her deeply (no Psychoanalysis roll is necessary to realize this).

2. Mrs. Druary (or anyone making a Library Use roll, at -10 because of the cluttered nature of the library) can easily find the microfiche records or magazine clippings of the past murders. Investigators must be aware of both victims to look up their relevant clippings (a Library Use roll for each is also required). Consult Handouts #2 and #3 for details.

HEDGER'S GROVE:

Investigators going to Hedger's Grove will find it easily. Not much has changed here since the police closed the area off to the public after the murder of Deacon Helmsley.

Hedger's Grove is a dark grove of trees, overgrown with thorny thickets to the west, north, and east (but not to the south, facing the road). From the edge of Hedger's Grove, the street (Meadowview Drive) can be seen only vaguely; those making an Idea check realize that, at night, any activity in the grove would likely be unseen even by those walking along the roadside.

Hedger's Grove is now overgrown; the summer heat has seen to the growing of tall golden grass, and the place remains pretty much untouched. A few old logs rest here and there, and the ground proves to be uneven in several places. A slight wind blows.

Investigators making even a cursory examination of the area find that anything that might have once been here, has long been taken by the police. Allow the investigators to spend as much time here as they want, searching and investigating for clues. They find nothing until a Spot Hidden check is made, at 1/2 chance.

Located in the thickets, unnoticed by police, is a tiny shred of some black material - torn by one of the many thornbushes. The scrap, however, is too small to give any indication of where it came from (it matches a tear in the black jacket of Jennifer Freely).

Once the investigators have searched for at least fifteen minutes, allow each to make a Listen check. Success indicates that they hear someone coming from the direction of the road.

In a few moments, a solitary female figure enters the grove, wearing a pretty flower-print dress, a baseball cap, and carrying a bouquet of flowers in one hand. When she sees the investigators, she seems very shocked, and very upset. No matter what the investigators do, the woman (Mrs. Monica Helmsley) will begin to tear, screaming at them to get out of here.

Mrs. Helmsley has come to honor her son, Deacon, who was murdered here. She thinks the investigators are reporters, or local delinquents, and she wants them out of here. Calming her to a reasonable state requires a Psychology check immediately - one failure indicates she runs off to her car in a weeping fit, taking off and going to the police (which leads to Sheriff Wilson warning them off, sternly but not aggressively).

If the investigators succeed in the Psychology check, Mrs. Helmsley can be spoken to. If the investigators calm her, and explain why they are here (she will speak to anyone posing as police, private investigators, or relatives of the newly-fallen boy, Francis, the latter with warmth and understanding):

1. Her name is Mrs. Monica Helmsley, and her son, Deacon, was murdered here in Hedger's Grove just two months ago. She is still broken up about it, and her husband left her just last month because the murder put an incurable barrier between them.
2. Despite the fact that no recent evidence has come up, she still holds on to the idea that the police will find her son's killer, and bring that killer to justice.

3. She extends her deepest regrets to Maybelle Greely, the investigator's aunt, for her similar loss just recently.
4. If asked, Mrs. Helmsley cannot, for any reason, explain who would want to kill her son, or why. She, like the police, believe her son was killed at random.
5. If asked (and the asking investigator passes a success Psychology roll), Mrs. Helmsley will offer her opinion on who, of all people, would kill her son. She suspects that one of the rail tramps down at the old railroad tracks might have done it, but she's not sure.

(Mrs. Helmsley can alternatively be sought out by the investigators if they find her name during their investigations. She will, however, have little else to tell them if questioned at home).

Nearby Homes:

Clever investigators may think to interview the occupants of nearby homes, because Hedger's Grove can be seen, albeit vaguely, from the nearby street and houses.

Two of the three nearby homes prove fruitless, and in any case, it requires a Fast Talk or Oratory check for the investigators to convince the occupants to talk at all (everyone extends their sincere regrets, but don't want to get involved). If they pass, on the third attempt, they find that one member of the household did, in fact, see something the night of Deacon Helmsley's murder.

The person is Lisa Olson, a five year-old girl. She only speaks up when she's watching her single mother, Dotty Olson, talking with the investigators at the front door. Her mother is as surprised as the investigators to hear little Lisa speak up.

If asked, Lisa will, with a successful Oratory or Psychology check per question, be able to convey the following facts:

1. Lisa did, in fact, see something strange at the time of the murder (her mother, and any smart investigators, will refer to the incident in a non-frightening way, or else Lisa will block it all out of her mind).
2. She woke up to use the bathroom, and while she was in there, she saw something across the road, in the woods near Hedger's Grove.
3. Lisa says she saw several "lights" (which she describes as bonfires, if asked to elaborate) in the woods, and heard a lot of giggling, hooting, and laughing. She did not recognize any of the voices, and saw no one.
4. Lisa went to bed afterwards, and put the incident completely out of her mind, because she thought it unimportant. She is not sure what time it was, but guesses it was around midnight.

Lisa will be unable to tell the investigators more. Dotty Olson will be much obliged if the investigators promise to pass this information on to the Sheriff.

BROOKE'S HILL:

The site of Francis Greely's murder is a sun-bathed hill, surrounded by stands of trees, just south of Meadowview Drive. From the hill's thick forest, neither the road nor the surrounding suburban homes can be seen clearly.

Brooke's Hill is eerily quiet when the investigators arrive. Horseflies buzz in the grassy meadow, but no birds abound. The sound of traffic is long drowned-out by the time the investigators make the five minute hike up the wooded slope.

Investigators find that the hill is very much the way it was the day after Francis was found. Since it hasn't rained since the actual date of the murder, the scene is still in good condition.

The first thing investigators note, right off the bat, is evidence of at least three small fires, like campfires. Most of these were obviously hastily extinguished, and the cinders are scattered throughout the grass. Like Hedger's Grove, the ground here is uneven, with a pothole here or there - it was in one of these that Francis' body was found, concealed by a log. There are several small logs here and there, mostly overgrown with thick moss or fungus.

Investigators spending any time here in a thorough search of the crime scene may make Spot Hidden checks to notice something of interest. Located in the grass, by one of the fires, half-embedded in the earth, is a small shard of dark brown glass. Further examination proves that it is probably glass from a beer bottle. It is obvious that the police found other shards of the glass, as several pieces are apparently missing - presumably taken as evidence.

The relative of the boy who died, if he or she already hasn't thought of a cult or mythos connection, feels very strange here, feels very upset and anguished. At this time, tell that investigator that just being here, at the sight of his or her cousin's murder, is strangely chilling in an undescrivable way.

MR. JAMES CARSON:

Mr. Carson, who found the body of Francis Greely while on a morning walk, lives in an unassuming house near Brooke's Hill.

Mr. Carson is a mundane-appearing man in his late 50s, accompanied only by his three prize bloodhounds, Murphy, Pete, and Alex. Carson is in good shape for his age, despite his thick-lens glasses, and meets the visitors at his shaded doorway in his jogging clothes and with a glass of carrot juice in hand.

Mr. Carson is openly friendly to the investigators when they arrive, and his three dogs yip happily as they are invited in - on nearly any pretext. The insides of Mr. Carson's house are as expected; comfortable, shady, and fit for a single retired man. Mr. Carson takes a seat in his living room, opposite an old television set and a comforting fan that drives away the summer heat. He politely offers to get the group drinks of pop to refresh themselves.

Mr. Carson immediately quiets when (and if) the investigators bring up the matter of Francis Greely. Yes, he admits, he did discover the body of Francis Greely. If the investigators convince him that they are relatives of Francis, he will sit with them and speak of the horror he saw that morning:

1. Mr. Carson has a rigid schedule he adheres to. He awoke at 5:00 that morning and went jogging with his dogs. By the time they got to Brooke's Hill, Carson says, he was merely following his hounds. He explains that Murphy, Pete, and Alex just took off up the hill, into the trees, and that he followed, calling to them.

2. Coming to the hill's summit, Mr. Carson distinctly remembers the sound of breaking glass under his feet as he proceeded. He had been picking up cigarette butts - damn litterbugs - as he went along, but as he looked up he was shocked by what he saw (at this point, an Oratory check is required to get him to continue; otherwise he hesitates for some time before continuing).

3. What he saw, he says in a hushed whisper, staring out the window into the sun-bathed field, was the

body of the boy - Francis - stuck under a log in a ditch - Murhpy was digging it up. There was lingering smoke up there - as if from some small bonfires or campfires.

4. The boy, he says, wasn't so covered in blood "like in the movies". He was pale, though, and his neck was "all bruised and bloated - like I've never seen". The most unsettling thing, Mr. Carson says closing his eyes, was the boy's tongue, which was sticking out of his mouth grossly and unnaturally.

5. Mr. Carson, regaining his composure, says he ran away immediately to his house, and called the police. He told them, like the investigators, everything he had seen.

6. No, he had not seen or heard anything unusual the night before, but then again, he slept pretty sound, and out of direct view of the hill itself.

If the group asks (specifically) about the cigarette butts, if he remembered what brand they were, he shrugs, but then looks surprised. "Strange you'd mention it," he says, turning and rummaging through his nearby litter bin, "I was in shock when I went to call the police. Still had the cigarette butts in my hand, clenched so tight my knuckles were white. I forgot to mention it to the police - simply threw it away like litter. They've got to be here somewhere ... come help me look."

A single Luck check is needed to find the butts, still in the trash can (if failed, it means he already disposed of that week's trash). The cigarette butts are too short to identify the brand, but some pinkish-scarlet lipstick can be seen faintly on the filter end.

Mr. Carson sincerely wishes the investigators luck in tracking down the culprit of this brutal murder, as he sees them to the door. He has nothing more to tell them.

THE RAILROAD TRACKS:

Investigators coming to the railroad tracks in search of any clues to the disappearance of Nikki White are in for a surprise ...

Depending on the time of day the investigators come down to the tracks, they find it either miserable in the mid-day sun, or eerily silent in the summer moonlight. The tracks are located in the forest, running by Meadowdale towards nearby Benson, just a few miles away, where there's a decent depot.

Outside Meadowdale, however, an old railcar turn-out is situated, or was once, but the rails have long rusted, and it's no longer used. Everyone in town, however, knows that the place is a local hangout for hobos and other transients, and is not entirely a safe place to go at any time of day.

When the investigators arrive, they find a few rusted refrigerator cars, a decayed wooden freight car, and a few other rail cars still sitting in the old turn-out, their wheels long rusted and overgrown. A few small fires smoulder here and there, cooking cans of beans or soup stolen from neighborhood stores.

As they enter the camp, the investigators will soon come upon two rail hobos - Jake and Tommy, drinking away at a brown-bagged bottle of tequila. The two will be wary of strangers, but do not move from their comfortable place by the fire.

Jake and Tommy are both vagrants, and poorer still. They scan wealthy-looking investigators for obvious wealth, but will not take any action if it doesn't look like they can get away with it cleanly (there's already enough attention on their little hide-out).

If the investigators ask about Freddy Yates or Nikki White, the two hobos laugh. They will be eager to answer questions, so long as their paid at least \$5 per answer (let the investigators offer the cash; the two hobos set no initial price for information):

1. They know Freddy well. He's a transient like themselves, and they look out for each other.
2. They've seen Nikki once or twice - but not recently, no. She and Freddy had a thing going.
3. Freddy's around - he hasn't left Meadowdale.

Once the investigators hear this last piece of information, the two hobos will gladly lead them to Freddy's car in exchange for another five dollar bill.

Freddy lives in absolute squallor, like his hobo companions, in a nearby freight car made of rotting brown wood, sitting on rusted and tarnished wheels, almost cemented where it stands to the old tracks. The sliding door hangs open during most of the day, and inside, the investigators are introduced to a slowly-waking figure.

Freddy, despite being grubby and smelly, is actually quite handsome. The major feature which attracts is the look in his eyes, a look of years of hardship, abuse, and untold dark experiences. When the investigators first enter his car, he rouses himself and looks around, telling Jake and Tommy to beat it.

Freddy won't talk to the investigators about anything unless they pay him, just like Jake and Tommy. He will only answer innocent questions, and if put on the spot with a question about the recent child murders, he gets agitated and insulted (although he's innocent, he thinks the investigators might be trying to pin the killings on him and his hobo friends).

If the investigators ask about Nikki, however, Freddy's attitude changes. He freely gives the following information:

1. He and Nikki were seeing each other. She was only fourteen, but he's only seventeen, and he really felt they had something together. She always told him she wanted to run away with him, give up everything to be together. He promised he'd try to save as much as possible for the eventual elopment, but it never happened.
2. Several weeks ago, Nikki stopped sneaking off to the railroad tracks to visit Freddy. Freddy, unable to go into town to check out what was wrong, waited. She never showed.
3. About two or three weeks ago, the FBI came asking questions. They suspected Freddy had either seduced Nikki into going away, or he and his friends had duped her and murdered her (this last part he says with bitter resentment). Freddy denied both, as did his friends. The FBI were unable to link him with anything, and though he spent a night in the Meadowdale jail, they were forced to let him go the next day. He returned here to wait for Nikki, but she hasn't shown.

Freddy is eager to find out what's up with Nikki. If the investigators make a good impression with him, Freddy tells them he really cares for her, and that he's really scared. He's doubly scared now that even the FBI are looking for her - he thought, for a while there, that she had changed her mind, had chickened out. Now she's actually missing. Almost coming to the point of crying, the young man nearly begs them to find her.

BENSON'S TRAIL:

This secluded and forgotten area, located deep in the woods south of Meadowdale Drive (about two miles), will only be investigated by the group if they are somehow led here - they will find no reference to this area except through one of Spence's cronies.

Benson's Trail was once a popular Sunday hiking trail, but is no longer well-traversed; nearby railroad tracks (now abandoned) spoiled the place's beauty, and people stopped coming. The place is now just

thick forest, the trail little more than a weed-covered and overgrown mud strip leading from nowhere to nowhere.

Searching the trail takes 1D4 hours of back-breaking work; the mosquitos here are exceptionally ravenous, and the flies and gnats are constantly harassing the eyes and ears of those plunging into the wild underbrush. However, with patience, a startling and horrendous discovery is made deep in the woods.

Stumbling into a small forgotten clearing, any investigator making a Spot Hidden check notices a suspicious pile of branches and leaves - a poor attempt at camouflaging something.

Investigators removing the piles of branches and leaves uncover a horribly-rotted corpse (Nikki White) - a body of tattered flesh and broken bones piled on top of itself, it's flesh-bare skull staring out at them. Chittering black beetles crawl over it's surface, while spiders and ants devour the remaining tatters of flesh. The corpse is entirely nude - no clothes remain.

Any investigator making an Anthropology check immediately realizes this is the corpse of a caucasian girl (anywhere from 13-15 in age); any investigator making a Know roll can see she has been here for at least three weeks.

Those who take care to look will, with a Spot Hidden check, find faint traces of campfires in the clearing; a solid (and unbroken) beer bottle sits amid a pile of leaves. A few discarded condoms, deteriorated and floating in a brackish puddle nearby, hint at the relative age of the scene.

A Luck check, combined with a Spot Hidden roll, locates the girl's clothes hidden in the underbrush; a broken bra, a torn and soiled skirt and blouse - the buttons missing as if torn open violently. No identification exists.

(Sheriff Wilson, or Agent Williams, if made aware of the body's existence, call a team here immediately to survey and document the crime scene. The documentation will take 1D4 days, during which all access to the scene will be prohibited. At the end of this time, sadly, the body will be identified as Nikki White).

DINA'S ROADSIDE MOTEL:

Dina's Roadside Motel is located in the forested outskirts of town, in a wooded area intermittent with golden-grassed fields. During the day, the entire area is dry and hot, and as a result, the place is buzzing with flies.

Dina's consists of a small main office in front, connected to a series of small motel rooms running the length of the poorly-kept parking lot out front. A tall neon sign (kept on only at night of course) gives the name of the motel, and a secondary neon sign indicates vacancies - currently, there are rooms available.

Investigators may come here at any time; they may be referred to the motel by family members if they choose not to stay at Aunt Maybelle's, or they may have gotten the address from Sheriff Wilson if they come in search of the local FBI agent. In any case, the investigators will find Dina-Doreen Barton at the front desk most of the day, watching soaps on her tiny black-and-white set at the front desk. She will be more than happy to help them, either in getting a room, or in finding one (the latter, however, requiring a Fast Talk to convince her).

The rooms at the motel are all comfortable, and cheap too. A small room, adjoining kitchen space, a T.V. with cable, and a small bathroom are to be found in all rooms. Cheap red curtains and burgundy carpeting round out the place. Food and drinks can be bought at the front lobby area, or across the street at the Seven-Eleven convenience store.

The local FBI agent, Agent Phoebe Williams, is to be found at the motel most of the day, and always at

night. She spends roughly eight hours each day either in nearby Benson, or here in Meadowdale (making her own investigations). She has a rented black Mercury sedan, parked in front of her motel room. She's not here alone because she's a screw-up; in fact, she's so efficient she is believed to be able to handle the investigation alone!

Investigators may bump into the attractive agent during the day while she is leaving or entering, but she will have nothing to say other than a polite hello - she's a professional investigator, after all, and she has a job to do. However, if the investigators insinuate she was mentioned as a source of information by Sheriff Wilson, she may (with an Oratory check) agree to speak with them.

Agent Williams will likely speak to the investigators over a small lunch at the nearby diner (just down the street), but she plays it cool, informing the group that though she is sympathetic to their loss, she is unable (by policy) to tell them anything. A strong sentimental argument will only make her finish her meal quickly and excuse herself.

Investigators wishing information must take Agent Williams off guard with some of their own; if they bring up any information or clues she has missed, her initial look of surprise soon turns into mutual admiration for the "amateurs". If the evidence is exceedingly helpful, or if the group can at least convince her it is, she may be willing to share a few facts with them - even collaborate on investigating the crimes:

1. The murders of the two children are believed related by the FBI.
2. After initial investigations of Freddy Yates (a hobo) turned up inconclusive, the disappearance of the girl, Nikki White, is also believed to be related to the murders. Her body, they believe, will soon be found. Freddy is not actually a suspect.
3. The FBI believes the killings were ritual in nature.
4. The FBI, like the local police, are unable to come up with any known suspect - yet.

If the investigators continue to come to Agent Williams for aid, and manage to develop a mutually helpful relationship, her willingness to speak more of the investigation increases. She, and the FBI in general, despite their attempts to play it down, are pretty short on clues. If the investigators have been helpful up to this point, she will give them a little more of what the FBI knows:

1. The FBI came to Meadowdale a few months ago on the trail of a serial murderer, a man by the name of Brian Spence. Brian Spence, a sailor, had spent a good deal of time in the Pacific and the Orient, where he allegedly committed several rapes and murders. His first crime in America was in San Francisco.
2. Spence's killings all involved the ritual murder of one individual; females were apparently raped. It is also believed that Spence may have coerced others into participating in these rituals (though the investigators may not pick up on this, this is the exact same method used by Johnny Spence).
3. The FBI, immediately concerned that he had returned to the States, figured he might head to his hometown, Meadowdale, to hide out. When they got here, however, Brian had fled. He hasn't been seen since, but the FBI is still maintaining a nationwide manhunt.
4. Brian Spence, the FBI believe, is a madman. He somehow picked up strange oriental rites while serving in the merchant marine, perhaps while spending time on one of various Pacific islands during his tour. In any case, he is to be treated as mentally unstable, as well as armed and dangerous.
5. Agent Williams has been making regular surveillance of Spence's home, in case he returns.
6. Investigators who have suspicions about Johnny Spence, the juvenile delinquent, may ask Agent Williams if the two are related. She informs them that Johnny is Brian's nephew. She, however, will not easily be convinced of a connection. She, and the FBI, believe an adult killer is responsible, not a

local bully.

Finally, if the investigators come to her with overwhelming evidence, Agent Williams will aid them in any capacity to bring Johnny Spence in to justice.

BIG AL'S USED TIRES:

Big Al's is a run-down old used tire shop outside of town. The building is an old clapboard building, it's grey painted face in dire need of a new coat. The corrugated iron roof is rusty, and any windows in it's side are totally obscured by dust and grime. White hand-painted letters on the front of the building include a service number (555-6875), as well as the name of the store. A larger sign, painted in stenciled black lettering, runs the length of the roof, facing towards the road.

Investigators questioning Big Al in person must come down to the shop, a pleasant and scenic drive through Meadowdale's border streets. Fields of dry golden grass, and thick woods, can be seen across the small tire yard as they approach.

Tires by the dozens sit out front, either leaning against the wall, or stacked under the nearby treeline to the west. A few old trucks, their engines missing and other vital components gone, covered in rust and filth, also sit nearby. Cans, a few coils of old electric cable, and other junk litter the dusty and dry tire yard.

Big Al's is a favorite hang-out of the local kids. Big Al, unlike some other proprietors around town, doesn't mind their presence, so long as they don't interfere with his business - in fact, some of the boys will often help Big Al move tires or load a truck for delivery, perhaps in hopes of getting more work this summer or in the future under his wing.

Big Al, unknown to the kids, is a pervert. A huge fat man, his arms and legs are like big fat haunches of meat, begging to burst his huge dirty jeans or poke out from underneath his work shirt. He is a chronic beer guzzler, a reader of Hustler and other dirty magazines, and when not working, he often sits back and watches the girls in the teenage crowd through one of his cracked and filthy windows (he's got a few spots cleared off to spy on them from inside). He especially likes to sneak out among the walls of tires, to peek at one of the girls while she's taking a piss away from the others.

In the back, behind the store, is where the kids usually hang, under the shade of the overhanging roof. An electric soda machine stands in back (relatively cheap; 50 cents a can), and this is where the kids loiter. A few kids have taken chalk and inscribed lewd and nasty comments, sayings, or poorly-versed poems on the walls.

If the investigators come to Big Al's in search of answers, what they find depends on how they ask. If they call in search of questions, Big Al will refuse to answer anything beyond what his business does (sells used tires), regular costs, and what models are available. If investigators pose as local police, FBI, or private investigators (requiring a Fast Talk check in any case), they may glean the following points of information from the man:

1. Big Al has heard of the recent slayings, but honestly has no idea how or why they were committed. He has no opinion on the matter.
2. He will admit (another Fast Talk check needed here), grudgingly, that teenagers do hang out at his shop during the summer, and that he makes no effort to get rid of them. He claims they're "good kids".
3. If asked, specifically, who is (in his opinion) the leader of the bunch, he will identify, with a laugh, Johnny Spence.
4. Big Al also knows Johnny's girl is Jennifer, but in the context of the investigator's conversation, this

point is unlikely to be brought to light.

5. Big Al has an alibi for the time of both murders; on the first, he and his twenty year-old nephew, Jake, were doing inventory well into the night. On the second, he and some friends were out boozing at the local bar, Herb's Corner.

This last piece of information, if specifically asked for, requires the investigator to make a Fast Talk check; failure indicates that once the conversation is over, Big Al calls Sheriff Wilson and asks if the investigator is who he or she claims to be. If the investigator's true name is discovered, the Sheriff gives them a warning not to harass Meadowview's citizens, and to leave the investigation to himself and his trained men.

THE FIREWORKS STAND:

The fireworks stand, abandoned since last year's 4th of July, is a decaying stand of plywood boards nailed together and stood up in an old field. The road that used to go by the stand has long fallen into disuse, and is now overgrown with thick weeds and clumps of tall grass. The buzz of flies is in the back of the investigator's ears as they enter the forgotten clearing.

It is immediately obvious that this place is yet another hangout of the local youths; a collection of soda cans, empty and smashed beer bottles, and cigarette butts litter the tall grass. A nearby stream, smelling of forest sewage, attracts swarms of flies and the litter of pull tabs and bottle caps. The fireworks stand itself seems to have been vandalized; spray paint, chalk, and knife gouges have left it marked with crude words, depictions, and proclamations of teenage love and lust. A few old oil drums, empty and discarded, stand in the nearby grass; one sits against the fireworks stand where it was perhaps once used as a waste bin.

Searching the area proves fruitless; old chewed gum, bottles pop and beer, etc. are all that litter the place. Perusing the graffiti on the backside of the stand, however, is far more revealing.

The back of the stand is apparently where the kids hang out - away from the road. The entire wooden rear is covered in graffiti. A few sayings include:

1. "Johnny + Jenny".
2. "Sheriff Wilson is a Fag".
3. "For a good time call Samantha Fonda. 555-7648."
4. "Spence's gang rules".
5. "Davy + Stevie" (scratched out).

Anyone having heard of Johnny Spence immediately realizes this is where Johnny and his friends hang out. An exceptional amount of bottles (broken and otherwise) litter the place, along with cigarette butts discolored with pink and scarlet lipsticks.

A Luck check and a Spot Hidden check (both) indicates that one of the investigators, peeking into the dusty and smelly waste drum against the wall, sees something of interest down in the trash. Clearing a few crumpled and soiled pages of Hustler magazine aside, the object is easily retrieved.

The object in question is a small red cap - a baseball cap, dirty, worn, and apparently trampled on over and over again (the significance of this item will remain unknown unless the players remember Aunt Maybelle's mumblings about Francis' little red cap - which went missing - the hat is indeed his. This is evidence that Francis was here, apparently hanging out with the Spence gang)!

There is nothing else of note here.

MEADOWDALE MIDDLE SCHOOL:

The investigators, if they've come looking for information (at any time during the day), find that Meadowdale Middle School is your typical small-town school; shaded paths and walkways between buildings, a large football/baseball field (dusty and dry in the hot beating sun, where a few little kids are flying kites), a parking lot, and a large gymnasium overlooking the various classrooms.

It is summer, and school is out. The hallways, lined with lockers, are silent, save for the distant sound of cars on Meadowdale Drive, and the sound of kids on the playing field.

The school is open, however, during the day. As school just ended a week ago, a few of the faculty is still here; summer school has already begun, and a few children are taking classes in the rooms that the investigators pass as they go through the empty halls.

If the group managed to get the name of Francis' teacher, they may visit her; as they come to her classroom, the last students are just leaving for lunch break. Coming into the room, they see an attractive young woman grading papers behind her desk in the front of the sunlit classroom.

Ms. Carla Jurgens (Ms. Jurgens to the students) will be surprised to see the investigators (being adults), but will immediately be friendly when they introduce themselves - particularly if they indicate they were relatives of Francis. Hearing that, her normally bubbly air becomes subdued and sympathetic. She will invite the investigators in to talk about Francis if they wish:

1. Francis was a good student - one of her best. He was quiet, as most intelligent kids are (this she says with an ironic smile), and was always trying his best to fit in. She smiles fondly when she says this; "he was always a trooper," she explains, "he never let it get him down when people made fun of him".
2. She can't really understand what happened, though she has read the newspaper reports. Being his teacher, she was concerned and sympathetic to the family. Despite this, however, a Psychoanalysis check reveals that she may have suspected something was up.
3. An Oratory roll convinces Ms. Jurgens to reveal her feelings. She explains, reservedly at first, that Francis was so eager to make friends that he started hanging around with one of the school's more disreputable youths - a certain "Johnny Spence" and his gang of delinquent friends. Although she felt concerned about this, she knew there was nothing she could do to prevent it.
4. If asked, Ms. Jurgens can identify Davy Brennan as Francis Greely's best friend. Davy, another of her students, was different than Francis; although not as bright, and maybe even a little rough on the edges, Davy was not a bad kid. She asks the group, out of curiosity, what interest they have in Davy.
5. Ms. Jurgens, if asked about Johnny Spence, laughs and shakes her head. Johnny is the classic delinquent - acts tough, talks foul, etc.. She remarks, with a sad smile, that "bad boys" are a lot different now than when she was growing up. If asked how, she explains that in her day, the worst "bad boys" would do was spit, give a little attitude - maybe even smoke. But Johnny - he's dangerous. If asked to elaborate, she shrugs uncomfortably - she seems to be unearthing a buried fear. Johnny once looked at her with an "unnerving smile - as if he knew something I didn't. It was crazy - all over me correcting him for swearing in class. He just looked at me, this strange look in his eyes. It sent a shiver up my spine. It was as if he were saying ... I'll get you."
6. Johnny has been suspended several times throughout the past years, she explains, and he's always been in and out of trouble. His grades are consistently bad, and she and the other teachers are always sending comments home to his parents. They, she fears, have even less control over Johnny than the school

faculty.

7. If asked about Deacon Helmsley, Ms. Jurgens shakes her head again. Although she didn't know him (he was in other classes), she remembers he was an average student, and not in any trouble.

8. If asked about Winona Elderly, Ms. Jurgens snorts with a laugh. Winona is one of Johnny's "gang". Ms. Jurgens suspects Winona is into drugs (smoking pot), and may be having sex.

9. If asked about Dylan Dreyfuss, Ms. Jurgens does not recognize the name. He is not one of her students.

10. If asked about Jennifer Freely, she shakes her head. Jennifer is "Johnny's girl". The two are inseparable. Jennifer, Ms. Jurgens relates, is a poor student, given to the same attitude and aggression as Johnny. She is a hopeless cause in Ms. Jurgens' honest opinion. Ms. Jurgens remembers having set up several conferences with Jennifer's mother, only to be stood up; Ms. Freely is a working woman, with little time to concern herself with her daughter.

11. Bobby McTavish does not ring a bell. He is not one of Ms. Jurgens' students.

12. Stevie Benson, Ms. Jurgens explains, is another of Johnny's "group". He is a poor student, showing little regard for scholastics and his future. He has been in and out of trouble for a long time; once for coming to school high on pot, another for bringing lewd polaroids of his penis to class (this she says with a stifled snicker). If a Luck check is made by the questioning investigator, Ms. Jurgens seems to recall he and Winona Elderly were having a relationship just before summer break.

13. If asked about Nikki White, Ms. Jurgens informs the investigators that she did go to school here, but she was not one of Ms. Jurgens students. She heard (through the faculty grapevine) that Nikki ran away with some "rail bum" - that is the extent of her knowledge of the missing girl.

14. If the investigator comments on coming home after all these years, Ms. Jurgens looks at him/her quietly. She then offers a word of warning - "Meadowdale is not the town it used to be, Mr. So-And-So. Times have changed. It may look the same on the outside - but believe me, times have changed". She will not elaborate on what she means (she is, however, speaking of the way the youth has changed since they were kids).

Before the investigators leave, Ms. Jurgens offers them her sincerest regards on the recent death of their cousin.

While the group is talking with Ms. Jurgens, any investigator making a Spot Hidden check (or Luck check) will notice that, outside the classroom, a young man standing at one of the lockers appears to be listening in. Wearing a tight T-shirt and jeans, the kid pretends not to be listening if he is noticed. He will close his locker and walk away.

The boy is Dylan Dreyfuss, who will take any knowledge learned from the eavesdropping immediately to Johnny Spence (who is, at this time, likely to be hanging out at Big Al's). If stopped by the investigators, he denies anything, all while bearing a bright and suspicious grin on his pimpled face.

SPENCE RESIDENCE:

The Spence residence, to the investigator's surprise, is a splendid house on Meadowdale Drive, overlooking a well-to-do court with children playing on Big Wheels and tricycles. A poorly-maintained lawn is the only thing that mars the pleasant scene.

Investigators are met at the door by Mrs. Charlene Spence - Johnny's middle-aged mother (38). She gives the group a pleasant smile upon seeing them, asking them how she can help them.

Mrs. Spence will be surprised to hear the investigators are relatives of Francis Greely ("yes, I remember - that boy who was murdered recently! But ... how can I help?"). She would like to help them in any way she can, but is suspicious if they ask to see Johnny's room. She politely but warily tells them Johnny is not home, and that she doesn't believe she can be of any help. She then closes the door.

If the investigators identify themselves as law enforcement or private detectives, she is stunned and frightened. She relates the following if questioned:

1. She knows Johnny has "problems" (she minimizes to the best of her naive ability). Johnny has been in trouble in the past - smoking in school, carrying a knife, even possessing marijuana. She and her husband have tried cracking down, only to have him bounce back worse.
2. An Oratory check gets Mrs. Spence to tell more. She fears Johnny, deep down, though she can't say why. It's as if he were only using their home as a "place to crash". He doesn't spend time with them anymore, never comes home for dinner. She is very concerned. She asks the group if they know what trouble he's in now!
3. Yes, Johnny has been acting strange lately - at least for the past few months. Ever since his uncle Brian showed up. Mrs. Spence explains that Uncle Brian is this merchant marine - black sheep of her husband's family - who visits every few years. He left in a hurry, and a few weeks later the police and FBI showed up looking for him. Here Mrs. Spence wrings her hands. She mentions something about the police suspecting Uncle Brian in some foreign murders, but nothing came of it. They haven't heard from Uncle Brian since.
4. Since that time, Johnny has spent less and less time at home. His behavior has degenerated; his father recently accepted an assignment to travel to Chicago for a convention, leaving her alone with Johnny at home. A Psychoanalysis check reveals that she likely locks herself in her room whenever Johnny is home!

Despite her fears, Mrs. Spence refuses to let the investigators in to investigate the home. If they return later to search, perhaps in the middle of the night, there is a 25% chance that Johnny will be home, in his room (forcing a final encounter with the delinquent). Otherwise, they can examine the room:

1. A Spot Hidden check reveals a stash in separate sandwich bags under his bed in a rolled-up seaman's duffle bag (a gift from Uncle Brian, no dobut); it contains dried marijuana, a few rolled joints, a clouded and blackened crack pipe, and a few old syringes - evidence of Johnny's drug use.
2. A stash of hidden pornographic magazines (requiring a Spot Hidden check to find), also contains a strange looking book, it's pages made from dried palm leaves, and bound by thick coarse fibers (human hair), between two shale covers. The book is written in English, by a harried hand in older language; it appears to have been written perhaps by a missionary as some kind of "anthropological" work on some obscure Pacific Islanders. The book is very graphic in detailing some horrendous sexual and murderous rituals; anyone reading the book will easily make the connection between the spells within and the recent murders (the book costs 2D4 SAN, and has the spells Contact Father Dagon, Blood Orgy, and Dream Death).

Investigators who come to find Johnny Spence will not find him at home - he will be out with his friends (this is done for the Keeper's sake; Johnny should only make appearances where detailed).

ELDERLY RESIDENCE:

Winona Elderly lives at a cheap bungalow in town, the kind with garbage piled up out front, a decaying and rusted car on the grass, and an old playset out back (long abandoned to the elements).

Inquisitive investigators are met at the door by a portly and ugly woman, wearing a stained apron. The

sound of dinner (or lunch) being cooked in the kitchen spills out as she opens the door. She does not look interested in the investigators.

Mrs. Kathy Elderly, and her obese husband Jimmy, are not the nicest folks one would like to meet - it's no wonder their daughter is as sleazy and messed up as she is. They will rebuke the investigators unless strong-armed or threatened.

Searching Winona's trashed room is surprisingly easy. Only a quick search is needed to uncover her private things, located in a cheap locked box under her bed. A few other items are located throughout the room in plain sight:

1. A home pregnancy test, opened and used. Winona appears to not be pregnant, however, as the results show.
2. Several used condoms, thrown in the trash (in case the investigators check, the sperm belongs to Stevie Benson).
3. A used and dog-eared copy of Playgirl, among the bedsheets.
4. Inside the box is found a diary and a few Hello Kitty pens and pencils. The diary contains mostly mundane adolescent scribbles, but a few entries are of note (see Handout #6).

If the investigators came to talk to Winona, she is only there during the day. She can be found at Chicken World nights, where they can talk to her only if persistent. She has the following things to relate (Winona is a pain to get to talk, plain and simple. For each piece of information they try to get from her, an Oratory check must be made to get her to talk):

1. Winona is Jennifer's best friend. A Psychoanalysis check reveals she is jealous of Jennifer's position as "Johnny's girl". This is deeply concealed, however, but it is obvious to a trained child psychologist that Winona is deeply infatuated with Johnny.
2. Winona knows Stevie Benson well - they are sleeping together (no denying that).
3. Winona claims she doesn't remember Francis Greely or Deacon Helmsley. A Psychoanalysis check reveals she's lying, though she doesn't seem too concerned (she recognizes the names, but doesn't remember being involved in their murders).
4. Yes, Winona drinks (a lot), but she downplays the addiction. She only smokes pot "on occasion".
5. If asked about Nikki White, Winona recoils, crossing her arms and rubbing her palms against her shoulders - as if withdrawing. Bringing up Nikki's name brings a flood of confused and frightening memories (Winona remembers watching her being raped, but refuses to believe she was there). Bringing up her name ends the conversation.

DREYFUSS RESIDENCE:

Dylan Dreyfuss can be found at home during the day - he's an average looking teenager, perhaps a little well built. He's found standing outside his parents' nice home on Meadowdale Drive, washing the family Chrysler sedan with lots of suds and an overrun of water from the hose that spirals down the driveway.

Dylan, wearing a camo shirt and jeans, watches the investigators approach with squinted eyes - the sun is bright, and the glow on the street is almost blinding.

How the investigators talk to Dylan is up to them - he will answer whatever questions they ask, trying to

be as helpful (and thus innocent looking) as he can. But it is obvious he is scared (no roll necessary), though why is not immediately obvious.

1. Yes, Dylan does hang with Johnny Spence and his friends. He's alright, Dylan claims, and they don't do any real harm. Sure, a few pranks here and there, but nothing else.
2. Dylan remembers Francis Greely; "little punk kid, wanted to be a gangsta - yeah, I remember him. Kid was a dork; we told him to take a hike. Didn't he die or something?" Dylan shows no respect for the memory of Francis, but whether this is simply the average lack of concern by an adolescent or some malicious attack is uncertain.
3. Dylan was hanging out with Johnny and the others on the nights of both murders - he thinks. He shrugs and says he can't be sure.
4. Dylan never heard of Nikki White.

Attempts to muscle Dylan result in him yelling for his father - a tall and muscled man in a nice suit (an attorney practicing in town), who emerges to stand between his boy and the investigators. Dylan claims "these men are accusing me of murder, dad," and his father asks the investigator's if this is true. Regardless of what they reply, he asks them to leave. Dylan goes inside at his father's prompting; his father closes the door and locks it after going inside himself.

Later in the scenario, after Davy Brennan has been killed, the investigators may question Dylan about Davy (if the above situation already occurred, Dylan is found at home, acting as casual as ever):

1. Dylan denies ever having met Davy Brennan. If confronted with evidence or conflicting testimony, he just shrugs, saying "oh yeah, him". He says nothing else.
2. A Spot Hidden check, made at half chance, allows the questioning investigator to notice small lacerations on Dylan's hand (fresh); he covers his hands and explains they are from working around the house if asked (they are, however, superficial cuts inflicted during his killing of Davy Brennan).
3. If asked where he was the night of Davy's murder, Dylan shrugs and says he was hanging out with Johnny Spence (this is, however, a fallacy; he was not at the gathering. No one can corroborate his story, except for Spence and the others, who will go along with anything to protect their own).

Investigators managing to break into Dylan's house after hours, or when he is out, can search his pit of a room. Typical of a teenage boy's room (posters of workout girls, laundry, garbage, etc.), a few items of note can be found:

1. A black ski-mask and sweater, thrown under his bed (used to conceal himself when he broke into Davy's room the night of his murder), stuck through with small leaves (these match leaves found on the tree outside Brennan's bedroom).
2. In a roll of socks, at the bottom of his dresser drawer, is a bloody hunting knife (the blood, if taken to the police, turns out to belong to both Davy and, in a small amount, Dylan).

FREELY RESIDENCE:

Jennifer Freely's home is located in a shady section of town, a one-story low-rent bungalow that appears to have seen better days. When the investigators arrive, they see a single car in the driveway, and a single light on near the front door.

Investigators are met at the door by a woman in her thirties, who bears a noticeable resemblance to the

young Jennifer, if in a more mature and hardened way. Her mother, Mrs. Francine Freely, greets those at the door with a suspicious and not-too-friendly look of "what do you want?"

Mrs. Freely says, from the start, she's not interested in sales gimmicks or vacuum cleaners. Once the investigators manage to convince her they're not salespeople, she says she's got to get back to cooking dinner - "I work all day - I don't have time chat; make it quick, okay?". It is obvious that Mrs. Freely, tough and hard natured out of sheer need, is a single mother taking care of a single child in a low income environment.

Mrs. Freely invites the investigators in if they act harmless enough. She goes straight for the kitchen, where she's boiling noodles and making spaghetti for dinner. The house is a mess, and most of the lights are out; the T.V. is on, showing the local news. Her uniform (from Rosie's diner) is still on her, though she's thrown the apron and shoes in the closet. She is a very casual sight, a figure torn from some single-mother-raises-troubled-child T.V. drama.

Mrs. Freely informs anyone asking that she doesn't have much time for questions, and that she normally doesn't allow male guests in the house at all (she makes no attempt to hide her bitterness towards men in general). However, an Oratory check will get her to answer a few questions, if posed as harmless chatting:

1. Mrs. Freely is not divorced; her "husband" left her soon after he heard she was pregnant with Jennifer - that was when Francine was only 16. She has raised Jennifer, alone, ever since.
2. Mrs. Freely knows that Jennifer is having a hard time, but the two get along as best they can. They live by a set of rules - they may see whoever they want, invite whoever they want over, etc.. Mrs. Freely's rules are only that there are no drugs in the home. She affirms that Jennifer has never broken this arrangement.
3. Jennifer spends much of her time outside the home, hanging with her friends. If asked, Mrs. Freely can provide the names of Winona Elderly (as Jennifer's closest female friend) and Johnny Spence (as Jennifer's long-standing boyfriend).
4. Mrs. Freely does not say much about Johnny; she suspects, deep down, that he is just another guy out to exploit a girl in need of emotional support. A Psychology check gets her to reveal that she has tried persuading Jennifer away from Johnny, but this only infuriates Jennifer more. Mrs. Freely admits she's seen some pretty bad men in the past, and Jennifer thinks her a hypocrite to preach.
5. Mrs. Freely cannot say where Jennifer was on the nights of the murders; her daughter is always out with her friends, even late at night, despite her objections.
6. Jennifer, she says in no uncertain terms, has been acting weird lately. However, she cannot put her finger on why. She says, vaguely, that Jennifer has been staying home a little more often, seeing a little less of Johnny than usual. Jennifer, however, has refused to explain why.
7. Mrs. Freely refuses to believe her daughter has had anything to do with the murders; Jennifer may be a slut, but she's more likely to believe her daughter is pregnant than a cult killer.

If the investigators have come to see Jennifer, she comes downstairs just when the group is finished talking with Mrs. Freely. Her eyes widen when she sees the investigators, and she asks her mother what they're doing here. Before she can reply, Jennifer says she's going to Winona's - to not expect her to come back until tomorrow.

The investigators can try to persuade Jennifer to talk before she grabs her coat and heads out the door. They must pass a Fast Talk check to get her to stay, and an Oratory to get her to talk. However, what she has to say depends on how far the group is into the scenario.

* If Davy Brennan has not yet been killed, and there has been no confrontations with Johnny Spence, Jennifer has nothing to tell the group (see the "Funeral" for her possible dialogue).

* If Davy Brennan has not yet been killed, but there has been a confrontation with Johnny Spence, Jennifer tries to dodge any and all questions:

1. The investigators are accusing the wrong people. Johnny will get mad if he finds out she's been talking to them. They had better leave. She will not elaborate on why.
2. She maintains her innocence and ignorance of any related facts.

* If Davy Brennan has already been killed, Jennifer is noticeably uneasy, despite attempts to hide it. Any pushing or putting of pressure on her will get her to crack and talk:

1. A successful Oratory check gets Jennifer to reveal that she was at the funeral to pay some kind of "respect" to Francis, the "little kid who got it". She says she felt guilty, but about what she won't elaborate.
2. If asked how she knew Francis, Jennifer says he was a kid trying to get into the gang.
3. If asked about the murders, Jennifer shakes her head, crying, trying to block out the vague memories that begin to arise. She denies knowing anything, but seems unsure herself.
4. If asked about the nights in question, she replies that she and the others got drunk those nights - as they often do - and went partying "in the woods". She cannot remember any details, however.

* If the investigators produce solid evidence of her presence at the murders, Jennifer (wide eyed and weeping), remembers everything. She sobs, telling the group that she was there - on all three murders. She saw Deacon Helmsley killed, saw Nikki White raped and murdered, and Francis Greely murdered as well.

1. If asked if she participated in the killings, she denies it, but an Oratory check (made at 1/2 chance) gets her to spit out that yes, she stabbed Francis Greely repeated in a drunken frenzy. However, she maintains, something "else" killed him.
2. If asked how Francis was killed, she says that Johnny cast some kind of "spell" on him. They were all hanging out and drinking, up in the woods, sitting by the campfires and telling ghost stories. Here Jennifer gets vague; a Psychology check draws out her confused and cloudy memory of those events. Jennifer claims that Francis passed out after drinking way too much, but began screaming in his sleep. He woke, clenching his neck, begging for air - only to drop dead. Johnny then told the others to get out their knives and hack away at him - "as we did with Deacon and Nikki" - until Johnny "got his rocks off".
3. If asked why the murders were committed, she says it was Johnny's idea. He has this "book", she explains, that tells all about this ritual "black magic sh-t", where you kill a person and you get "all high". She says that Johnny, each time, got really weird when it happened, like he was in ecstasy or something. She is at a loss to explain (she doesn't really understand herself).
4. Jennifer reveals that Francis would have been alright if he hadn't remembered the murder. Francis hadn't been as drunk as the others that night, and he had gotten scared. Johnny noticed, and knew he had to kill Francis - no one was supposed to remember; Johnny usually made sure everyone was stone drunk before they did the killings. He failed to notice Francis was "seeing clear", however.
5. She only remembers these events because she's been having nightmares the past few weeks. She knew she and the others had done something awful; the investigators poking around brought it all back.
6. If forced to answer, she will list the names of all those who participated in the murders - Johnny Spence, herself, Winona Elderly, Dylan Dreyfuss, Bobby McTavish, etc., all the members of Spence's juvenile gang.
7. She can provide the general location of where Nikki White's body can be found (Benson's Trail).

8. Finally, she affirms, if Johnny knew she remembered the murders so clearly, he'd kill her. Francis' death is proof of that.

(Jennifer, depending on how much has happened and how much she will say, very well may push the adventure to its close through her confessions. The keeper should be prepared to improvise should the situation get confusing at this point).

MCTAVISH RESIDENCE:

The McTavish house sits on the same street as Dylan Dreyfuss, just a few houses down. A typical suburban household.

The investigators are met at the door by an older-looking woman, who is drying her hands from doing the dishes. She smiles and replies that her son, Bobby, is in, and that the investigators can come in if they'd like to see him.

Mrs. McTavish escorts the investigators into the living room, where Bobby has holed up playing a loud and obnoxious video game. The boy, only thirteen or so, wears his big black hat backwards, and weaves about in place like a cobra before a flutist. He doesn't notice the investigators until his mother introduces them.

If the investigators show police, law enforcement, or private investigator credentials, Mrs. McTavish insists that her son turn off his game and answer their questions (she politely asks them to leave - after giving her sympathies - if they merely claim to be relatives of Francis Greely, "the murdered boy"). Reluctantly, after a threat of grounding, Bobby agrees. Mrs. McTavish leaves to go get the investigators some lemonade.

Bobby is wide-eyed and subtly frightened when the investigators begin to question him. Any character making a Fast Talk, Oratory, or even Debate can get him to talk:

1. Yes, he is part of Spence's group. He's been hanging with them for some time now. He can't say how long.
2. Bobby remembers Francis with a nod. "He wanted to join our group, him and Davy Brennan. We didn't let them. I don't know why - I don't remember."
3. Bobby doesn't remember where he was on the nights of the murders, but he says he was probably at home - or with Johnny. He looks a little confused when he says this (a Psychoanalysis roll indicates that he really doesn't remember).
4. Bobby does not recognize the name, Nikki White.
5. If given a photo of Nikki White, Bobby's eyes widen in terror, and he looks pale. He hands the photo back with a strong shove, but maintains his story. He is obviously lying.
6. No matter what time during the adventure, Bobby claims to know nothing of Davy Brennan (or his eventual murder), other than that he was a "dork" who tried to join the gang.

Bobby's mother, if asked separately and alone, has nothing to tell them despite efforts to answer their questions to the best of her ability. Her son will say no more.

BENSON RESIDENCE:

The Benson residence is a nice white split-level in town, set among the suburban gardens and meandering forests. A few rights, a few lefts, up a cul-de-sac, and the house stands before the investigators. The laughter of children playing with hoses and inflatable yard pools spills out from nearby yards.

A woman, sitting alone on a porch swing, watches the investigators approach. Attractive for her age, a look of fatigue and expressionless complacency rests on her face. Her light flowery dress billows slightly in the wind.

Mrs. Veronica Benson stands as the investigators introduce themselves. She shakes the hand of whoever offers, and replies that she is the mother of Stevie Benson. His father has left her, she says flatly - immediately taking the investigators off guard.

Mrs. Benson is a no-nonsense woman, and she makes no attempt to hide the fact that she has better things to do than talk to the group. A stern show of authority (police badges, private investigator credentials, etc.) are needed to prevent her from going inside just as the investigators try to get her to talk.

Stevie isn't home, she reveals to anyone in authority, but she'll answer any questions they have:

1. Stevie has been hanging with Johnny Spence for some time - several months, maybe a year. Yes, she knows Johnny's a bad influence, but a single mother has little or no control over her male teenage son. She says this very matter-of-factly.
2. Her son is, she says with a bitter laugh, a gangster wannabe. She is not concerned, however, that he may be in any trouble.
3. She is aware that her son often comes home drunk; she knows that he and the rest of Spence's group are often caught drinking out by the old Fireworks Stand (to which she can give directions), despite her - and the law's - objections.
4. If a connection between her son and the murders of Francis Greely and Deacon Helmsley are made, Mrs. Benson angrily demands the investigators leave, threatening to call the Sheriff to have them dragged off if necessary.

If the group is tactful, showing professional interest in her son's activities, a Fast Talk roll will persuade Mrs. Benson to allow the group to go upstairs and take a look around Stevie's room.

The tight confines of the house are evident as the group moves down the upstairs hall to the locked room of Stevie's. Without hesitating, Mrs. Benson produces a hidden key and unlocks the door, allowing the investigators entrance.

The room is a shambles; clothes and bedclothes everywhere; a wicker hamper with gum stuck to the side sits overflowing by the stained and foggy window. A few lewd posters of popular models cover the walls wherever depictions of obnoxious band leaders don't. Not a space of the walls is left bare. A few dressers and stands sit here and there, covered in Lowrider magazines and other odd pieces of junk.

Mrs. Benson leaves for a moment so the investigators can search for "whatever you're looking for". Her policy is to be as helpful as possible to avoid future trouble.

Looking around, it takes a 1/2 Spot Hidden check to find Stevie's hidden stash. Located in an old chocolates box in his dresser is a revealing collection of items:

1. A few hand-rolled marijuana joints; one half-smoken.
2. A hand-held pocket fan, for easy ventilation of the room.

3. A plastic bag filled with dried marijuana leaves.

4. A collection of poorly-shot polaroid photos; closer inspection shows pictures of Winona Elderly, posing naked in obscene positions, some of which involve both her and Stevie in the middle of vaginal intercourse, others in more disgusting positions.

5. A pair of filthy panties (a Spot Hidden check reveals the initials, "N.W.", written in laundry marker on the inside).

(The evidence found here points to drug abuse, as well as Stevie's involvement in the rape - and murder - of Nikki White).

WHITE RESIDENCE:

The White residence is a cheap bungalow on the outskirts of town. When the investigators arrive, the buzz of a cheap insect light rings through the still summer air, and the creak of the rotted old screen door adds a bit of atmosphere to the decrepit old shack.

Investigators are met at the door by Mrs. Sally White, a forty-something woman who's just hurrying out the door (going to her job at the diner, going for groceries, etc.). She is surprised to see the investigators, and looks pensive at speaking with them. It is obvious she is not the kind to speak freely.

Just as the investigators go to speak, a man in a sweat-stained t-shirt and blue jeans comes to the door at her side. He asks them, rudely, what they want.

The investigators will have to prove (or pretend, by using Fast Talk rolls) they are law enforcement to get the Whites to talk. Neither will speak if the group identify themselves as private investigators or concerned citizens, or even if they claim to be relatives of Francis Greely. Only a face of authority will get them to talk. Mr. Chuck White, the father, does the speaking most of the time.

1. Nikki is their daughter, and she's only fourteen. The "little slut" ran away a few weeks ago, and hasn't come home since. This really pisses Chuck off (a Psychoanalysis reveals Mr. White is a lazy bastard who needs Nikki around to do chores). He hints, with no subtlety at all, that the investigators are doing a damn poor job of finding his girl.

2. Nikki, as far as they know, was not involved with Spence and his gang. In fact, neither of Nikki's parents know who Johnny is.

3. Nikki had run away a few times before, but she never said where she was going until one night she blurted out she was seeing some "bum down at the tracks". The "little slut" threatened she was going to run away and marry the boy - whose name neither Sally nor Chuck can remember - and this is what they think she did.

If the investigators return with evidence that Nikki was murdered, Mrs. White breaks into angry tears, screaming at the investigators to "get the hell out of here, you bastards". Mr. White chases them off, blaming them (as well as Sheriff Wilson and the FBI) for letting their daughter get brutally murdered. They will accept no sympathy, no matter how well meaning.

BRENNAN RESIDENCE:

The Brennan household sits in a wooded area near the south end of Meadowdale Drive. Birds chirp in the trees; fields of gold grass can be seen through breaks in the trees. The investigator's car pulls up in the

driveway.

When the investigators approach the door, allow the investigators to make Spot Hidden checks; success indicates the investigators notice something out back, just visible from the front walk.

A lone boy can be seen sitting on an old stone wall under the shade of weeping willows, his eyes squinting as they stare out across a sun-bathed field behind the house. His hands mindlessly play with a well-beaten softball; his pants are dusty, and his shirt is plain but large. He doesn't notice as the investigators approach.

The boy is Davy Brennan, Francis Greely's best friend. Davy will be surprised when he's the investigators, but doesn't get up. He just looks at them with complacent, sad eyes. If the investigators identify themselves, he gets up and says "I don't know nothin".

Although Davy tries to walk away, the investigators (out of sight of the house) can stop him cold with any form of guilt-inducing talk ("Don't you want to bring Francis' killers to justice? Look, Davy, if you know anything, you have to help us!"). Early in the scenario, however, he has little to say:

1. Davy is scared - that is obvious. Francis was his best friend - the two did everything together; arcades, school dances, etc.. His murder obviously has upset him - forced him into a withdrawn shell.
2. Davy eludes questions about claims made by Matthew Greely that he was with Francis the night of the murder. He claims that Matthew must have been dreaming. No amount of forcing will get him to talk, but a Psychoanalysis roll easily reveals he is lying.

Later on, once the investigators are suspicious of Johnny Spence, if Davy is still alive, he may have more to say:

1. If Johnny Spence is mentioned, Davy hesitates before talking about their relationship. Davy explains that he and Francis were trying to get into Johnny's gang - a group of older kids who were really "cool" and feared in school. Johnny, Davy says, "doesn't even take s**t from teachers" (he won't elaborate, however). Although Spence and the others laughed at them at first, Francis finally managed to get Johnny's attention because of his persistence. Johnny allowed him and Davy to hang with them on several occasions - at Big Al's Used Tires on one occasion, and at the old Fireworks Stand on another. An Oratory check gets Davy to admit they shared alcohol and cigarettes with Spence, "but never drugs".
2. Davy can identify Jennifer Freely, Winona Elderly, Bobby McTavish, Stevie Benson, and Dylan Dreyfuss as the other members of Spence's gang of friends. He has very little to say of them, just brief descriptions of their condescending attitudes.
3. Davy says, in a hushed voice, he should have "known better" than to try to join the gang. But he and Francis wanted to be cool so badly, they'd do anything. So, under pressure from Spence and the others, they agreed to sneak out at night and join them in their parties "in the woods".
4. Davy quiets for a moment. An Oratory check gets him to reveal more. It was during one of these midnight excursions that they got drunk on booze, along with another new kid ... Deacon Helmsley. Davy's eyes begin to water. He begins to shake. Soft words of reassurance of privacy get him to say more.
5. After one of these "parties", the next day at school, Davy remembers Francis coming up to him "real scared like". Francis was really frightened, claiming he saw something "horrible" the night before. He wondered if Davy remembered. Davy admits she was too drunk - he didn't remember anything from the night before. But Francis was sure. Francis would not elaborate, however.
6. Over the next few days, Davy really didn't see much of Francis - he had been grounded by his parents. But a few days later, Johnny told Davy that he "really liked the two boys", and that "he wanted us to become official members of the gang". So he and Francis were to go to another party, this time to be

"initiated".

7. Again Davy clams up. A Psychology roll is required to get him to extrovert the events that occurred. Davy says that he went to Francis' house again - they always went together. Francis didn't want to go, and he explained why. Davy says that Francis was acting really strange, saying the he had seen Johnny "murder" Deacon Helmsley - but all he kept saying was "Johnny killed him ... I don't know how, he just did. He just told him how he was going to die ... and he did." Francis was afraid, but Davy told him that Johnny was alright - he even liked them. Francis wasn't easily convinced, but he was won over by Davy's own naivety.

8. Davy remembers going to Brooke's Hill, where everything was fine. They listened to music, had some beers ("you know, like adults"). Francis was real reserved, but soon he started to drink too. Soon they were all drunk. That's all Davy remembers.

9. The next day Davy remembered nothing of the night before. He found out that very day that his best friend, Francis Greely, had been found murdered on Brooke's Hill. He was too scared to go to the police - he wasn't even sure what happened. Now he suspects (and this he relates with aged eyes) Francis may have known something that Johnny - or someone else - didn't want known. He believes Francis was killed, and he sure won't go to the police now.

10. Davy has stayed at home the past few days. He has not seen Johnny or any other members of the gang since the day he learned of Francis' murder. He wants nothing more to do with them.

11. Davy has nothing to say of Deacon Helmsley and Nikki White. He was far too drunk during these parties to have participated.

Davy cries when the questions end. His best friend has been murdered, and he's still at a loss to understand why. They were just kids trying to fit in, just trying to be cool.

REWARDS:

If the investigators are worthy of the name, they will manage to gether evidence linking the adolescent cult with the various murders that have plagued the small town of Meadowdale.

Evidence found at the various crime scenes are enough to convict - at least - Johnny Spence and Jennifer Freely, and likely the others. Stained cigarette butts (found at Mr. Carson's), fingerprints on the beer bottle and sperm residue on the condoms (found at Benson's Trail), etc. are enough to get Johnny Spence for good. Soon after, both juveniles (if alive) confess and implicate all concerned. The knife hidden in Dylan Dreyfuss' sock drawer directly links him to the murder of Davy Brennan. The entire juvenile cult is soon brought to justice.

A great public service has been done. The investigators, for their part in the whole investigation, are not forgotten, no matter how hard outside reporters and press try to shift the focus to the big city FBI's efforts. A few days later, Sheriff Wilson, and the entire parental community of Meadowdale, hold a backyard barbeque to celebrate. Agent Williams (if she came to respect the investigators) shows up at the party to pay her regards in an unofficial capacity. It's not much, just a hometown affair. But sometimes it's just good to go home, to enjoy the company of old friends.

And celebrate the end of a nightmare.

Any SAN lost during the investigation is healed over time. If the investigators continue solid communication with Aunt Helen and Aunt Maybelle, helping each other move on, over time the wounds heal - the horror of those few days in Meadowdale fade into memory.

HANDOUT #1:

Dear (investigator's name):

I can't believe, after all these years, that we've been unable to keep contact except for in the most dire of emergencies. When you needed money, a place to stay, or in the event of a death in the family, these have been the only times we've communicated.

Just a few weeks ago, your cousin, Francis (your Aunt Maybelle's son), was found murdered. It's hard to believe Meadowdale has become so crime-ridden in these past years - it was never like this when you kids were growing up here. Needless to say, it has been a terrible trauma to the whole family, and friends and relatives have been coming home from all over the country to give support to your Aunt Maybelle and their family.

I hope you, too, will show up for Francis' funeral. Although you never really got to know Francis, I believe you knew your Aunt Maybelle quite well, and she'll be heartbroken if you don't attend. There's plenty of room for you to stay, and if you need further sleeping arrangements (are you married yet?), we'll be able to accomodate.

We're all looking forward to your support and comfort.

Sincerely,

Aunt Helen

HANDOUT #2:

Meadowdale Bugle

May 28, 1997

LOCAL BOY FOUND SLAIN!

A terror that has not raised it's head in Meadowdale since the end of World War II has come around again. Late last night, the body of one Deacon Helmsley (12), a local student at Meadowdale Middle School, was found in Hedger's Grove, just a few hundred yards from Meadowview Drive, almost within sight of the houses there.

The police have, so far, told us here at the Meadowdale Bugle that Helmsley was found in brutal shape, perhaps mutilated. The police have hinted that they will begin bringing in rail hobos and vagrants for questioning, and that the manhunt is on for a suspect.

We here at the Bugle send our most sincere regards to Mrs. Monica Helmsley, the mother of young Deacon. The whole town's heart is with you and your spouse.

HANDOUT #3:

Meadowdale Bugle

June 10, 1997

ANOTHER LOCAL CHILD FOUND MURDERED!

Early this morning, on Brooke's Hill (south of town), the body of Francis Greely was found, apparently the victim of a brutal murder. Although initial reports are sketchy, a police insider has told this office that young Greely was found, stabbed in several places, and his body stashed under a log in the woods. One of Mr. James Carson's prized bloodhounds, Murphy, found the body by accident when Mr. Carson walked his hounds this morning.

The police are so far investigating this murder as a homicide, and are searching for any correlation between this murder and the murder of young Deacon Helmsley, earlier this year. Of course, any details will be reported promptly by this paper.

HANDOUT #4:

CORONER'S REPORTS:

The two coroner's reports, filed by Marty Billings in Benson (a bigger town, just an hour or so drive from Meadowdale) on May 29 and June 12, contain the following pieces of information:

Deacon Helmsley:

Deacon Helmsley was found in a considerable state of decay. It was obvious that the moisture from the May rains had attracted flies and other insects to feed on the body, and by the time it was found (only hours after his death, by all estimates), maggots had already begun to hatch under the eyelids and in the more severe wounds.

Cause of death, despite the minimal amount of corruption already present in the body, was easily determined by six main cuts on the body; one, situated in the chest, was the deepest (three inches deep, placed neatly between the ribs), followed by two others of similar depth, and three others of a shallower nature. The hit to the chest, combined with blood loss from the other wounds, caused the boy's death. Other minor lacerations suggested the boy was tortured just prior to being murdered. Superficial bruising on the outer skin was most likely caused moments after death once the boy was stashed under the log.

The coroner concluded that Deacon Helmsley was most likely killed by an erratic individual, or perhaps a group of erratic individuals - perhaps even an elderly individual, judging by the weakness of some of the wounds inflicted. However, exact determination was, ultimately, impossible.

Francis Greely:

Francis Greely's body bore a similar resemblance, at least in treatment, to the body of Deacon Helmsley. Francis, however, was well-preserved by the dry summer heat, and was in considerably good condition when found.

The boy's body was punctured in several places, amounting to four main cuts; a stab deep in the stomach, another in the chest, one in the upper arm (a half-inch below the shoulder), and another just a half-inch above the collar-bone, at the base of the neck. However, most of these wounds were apparently inflicted after death, because of the minimal loss of blood (the wounds were on the up-side of the body, and by then, the heart had quit beating; the blood simply pooled at the body's base, and the wounds were thus unbloody).

The coroner's conclusion on cause of death centered around the extensive bruising on the boy's neck. It was obvious, by the swollen purple skin and extended tongue, that the boy had been strangled by an incredibly-strong force just prior to being stabbed. However, no prints or evidence of a vice/garotte/noose were evident.

In addition to the above observations, the coroner noted small but definite cuts and lacerations on the forearms, neck, and cheeks of the individual - probably signs of torture.

HANDOUT #5:

Meadowdale Bugle

June 17, 1997

MURDER STRIKES MEADOWDALE AGAIN!

Just this morning, the body of local child, David Brennan, was found murdered at his home on Meadowdale Drive. Although details are still sketchy, a source in the Meadowdale Police Force has informed the Bugle that there are seemingly no connections between this murder and the others of the past few weeks.

David is believed to have been stabbed to death; police sources say his room was broken into during the night, under the nose of his parents, and he was brutally murdered in his sleep.

The Meadowdale Police Force has vowed to see that the killer of this innocent child be brought to justice. But the Bugle, whose regards are fully extended to the Brennan family, has come to believe the Department to be less than capable in these matters. Still, all we can do is hope.

If you, or anyone you know, has any information whatsoever pertaining to this case, the Meadowdale Polic Department has an open tipline at 555-7644.

HANDOUT #6:

*May 28 - Got plastered again with Johnny and the guys. What a ride! Must have taken some weird s**t, though. I feel so wierd!*

June 11 - Another party last night. I don't remember nothing about it. Got so drunk I don't remember nothing!

June 12 - Something weird's going on. I've been having nightmares again. I keep having that nightmare about Benson's Trail. What did we do there? Did we kill her? I just don't remember.

June 15 - Johnny's so hot. I hate Jennifer, she's such trash. I wish Johnny would dump her!

STATISTICS

JOHNNY SPENCE

STR 14 CON 16 SIZ 15 INT 14 POW 14

DEX 16 APP 16 EDU 15 SAN 65 HP 15

Weapon: Switchblade 50%, 1D6

Skills: Camouflage 50%, Climb 80%, Cthulhu Mythos 5%, Fast Talk 25%, Hide 50%, Listen 50%, Occult 10%, Pharmacy 25%, Pick Pocket 50%, Sneak 80%.

Spells: Blood Orgy, Death Dream.

AGENT PHOEBE WILLIAMS

STR 16 CON 17 SIZ 15 INT 18 POW 16

DEX 17 APP 18 EDU 20 SAN 80 HP 16

Weapon: 9mm Parabellum 80%, 1D10

Skills: Accounting 50%, Computer Use 50%, Debate 25%, Drive Automobile 70%, Fast Talk 55%, First Aid 50%, Hide 50%, Law 80%, Library Use 50%, Listen 50%, Pharmacy 25%, Photography 25%, Psychology 25%, Sneak 60%, Track 60%.

SHERIFF BRUCE WILSON

STR 17 CON 15 SIZ 17 INT 16 POW 8

DEX 12 APP 12 EDU 18 SAN 40 HP 16

Weapon: .357 Magnum 50%, 1D8+1D6

Skills: Computer Use 25%, Drive Automobile 75%, Fast Talk 50%, First Aid 35%, Hide 40%, Law 60%, Listen 30%, Oratory 50%, Sneak 60%, Track 60%.

NEW SPELLS

Blood Orgy:

This spell was handed down from Brian Spence to Johnny Spence, from a book stolen by the former from South Pacific native islanders. The ritual is a perverse and hideously-cruel magic spell, known as the "blood orgy".

This spell is cast while the caster is ritually torturing or mutilating a victim. The casting involves ritual cuts or motions, ritual mutterings of magic words, and the presence of at least two other persons - two "witnesses". Depending on the actual method involved in the spell casting, different effects will occur:

Spell Method:	POW Gained:	Ecstasy:
Torture	+1 POW	Mesmerizing; caster becomes obsessed with the act; must make a POW x5 check on D100 to avoid progressing to the next level
Worse Torture	+1D4 POW	Numbing; caster unable to act for 2D4 rounds afterwards
Murder	+1D6 POW	Sheer ecstasy; caster unable to act for 3D4 rounds afterwards; loses 1 hit point per POW gained from exhaustion after the rush is gone.

The POW gained effect lasts only one week per POW gained. These numbers are cumulative; thus, torturing, "worse torture", and then murdering a victim grants 1+1D4+1D6 POW. Note, however, that if more POW is gained than the caster has hit points, when the rush wears off (the "rush" being the period in which the caster cannot act), the caster may actually die from pleasure overload.

Death Dream:

This spell, once solely known by the cruel and murderous witchdoctors of a few miniscule tribes in the isolated South Pacific islands, is an enchantment of incredible power. It is, however, a very difficult thing to put into effect.

The Death Dream is put into effect in a very unique way. The caster sits with his intended victim, and

relates to him how he or she is going to die, woven into a story or tale. Thus the most common way to employ the spell is in the form of a campfire tale or ghost story; the caster, telling the story to all present (but specifically directing it towards one victim), weaves the magic then and there.

The spell only comes into effect when the indicated target goes to sleep the next night. Once the person goes to sleep, after an hour or so, the victim begins to have a nightmare of the ghost story he or she was told before going to bed. All the elements are acted out, if somewhat warped. The victim is, ultimately, slain by whatever is supposed to kill him or her, in the story.

The only way to resist the fatal effects of this spell is for the victim to make a POW x2 check on D100. Failure results in death. If the victim passes the check, he or she simply wakes in a cold panicked sweat, remembering the dream very vividly and chillingly ... but only as a dream.

Upon the casting of the spell (i.e. weaving the story), 1D10 magic points are temporarily drained.