

Based on the GUMSHOE One-2-One system by Robin D. Laws

# CTHULHU™

## *Confidential*



ONE-2-ONE  
GUMSHOE

Robin D. Laws  
Chris Spivey  
Ruth Tillman



Pelgrane Press





Based on the GUMSHOE One-2-One system by Robin D. Laws

# CTHULLWU *Confidential*

BY

Robin D. Laws, Chris Spivey & Ruth Tillman



Pelgrane Press

**Publishers**

Simon Rogers and Cathriona Tobin

**GUMSHOE One-2-One System Design**

Robin D. Laws

**Authors**

Robin D. Laws, Chris Spivey, Ruth Tillman

**Art Direction**

Christian Knutsson, Cathriona Tobin

**Cover Art**

Jérôme Huguenin

**Interior Art**

Stephanie Brown @offbeatworlds, Dean Engelhardt, Christian Knutsson, Anthony Moravian, Leonard O'Grady

**Design and Layout**

Christian Knutsson

**Editing and development**

Gareth Ryder-Hanrahan, Simon Rogers, Cathriona Tobin

**Copyediting**

Christopher Smith Adair, Graeme Davis

*- Dedicated to everyone whose stories have not been shared enough.*

Copyright © 2017 Pelgrane Press Ltd.  
Cthulhu Confidential and GUMSHOE One-2-One are trademarks of Pelgrane Press Ltd.  
Pelgrane Press is co-owned by Simon Rogers and Cathriona Tobin.

**Playtesters**

Stéphane Abecassis, Christopher Smith Adair, Arianne Adair, Mikko Airaksinen, Jenny Andersson, Orson Baker, Gary Ball, William C. Bargo, Bonnie Beyea, blackcoat, Julie Bomber, Robin Bonham, Stuart N. Bonham, Katharina Brichta, Michael Brogan, Scott Camillo, Cara Clare, Tom Clare, Jon Cole, John Corey, Dylan Craig, Andrew Craker, Daniel Craker, KitKat Debris, Yohann Delalande, Steve Dempsey, Jason Dettman, James DeYonke, Michael Duxbury, Paul Edson, Stef Ehmke, Mathias Eifert, Antti Elomaa, Augustus Fandango, Eric Farmer, Daniel Fidelman, Denis Fidelman, Amelia Francis, Philip Francis, Jeremy French, Steve Gaines, Gabrielle Green, Jennifer Hakonen, Mika Hakonen, Ben Hesketh, Ben Hatton, Jurie Horneman, Morgan Hua, Eric Iacono, Betsy Isaacson, Bert Isla, Susan Isla, Tomislav Ivek, Dominik Ixert, Colin Jackson, Dave Kesler, Maria Fifelski Kesler, Carolina Khristian, Astrid Knobling-Sterner, James Kohl, Candace Koller, Joshua Kronengold, Chris Lackey, Rachel Lackey, Daryl Lea, Emmy Leeson, Kirk Leeson, Patrick Lewinson, Markus Linderum, Shannon Mac, Ryan Macklin, Maxwell Mahaffa, Whit Mattson, Thomas McGrenery, Kevin McIntyre, Kati Melgarejo, Andy Mercer, Gemma Mitchell, Alexander Newcombe, Erin Nix, Peter Nix, Debbie Norman, Erik Otterberg, Lisa Padol, Joanna Piancastelli, Simon Plant, Will Plant, Tom Pleasant, Ben Plont, Brianna Sidorick Potts, John Potts, Nikica Pukšić, Michael Richards, Simon J. Rogers, Christoph Sapinsky, Lisa Sapinsky, Emily Savidge, Liam Scanlon, Ralf Schemmann, Andrea Schmoll, Adam Schroeder, Dave Semark, Kaleb Shissler, Alexander (Ander) Shultis, Chris Spivey, Jill Spivey, Jacqueline Spurgeon, Matt Spurgeon, Joerg Sterner, Wil Stillwell-Edler, Christopher Swortwood, Andrew Tatton, Micah Tillman, Ruth Tillman, Cathriona Tobin, Aser Tolentino, Megan Tolentino, Matthew Tyler-Jones, Stephen Vandevander, Paul Venner, Calliope Westbrooke, Karen Whitney, Levi Whitney, Laura Wood, Josef Wyczynski.

Special thanks to the playtesters who made concrete our abstract concerns about representation.



# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>YOUR INVESTIGATION</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>THE FATHOMLESS SLEEP</b>	<b>95</b>	<b>WARTIME DC</b>	<b>223</b>
Getting Started	4	Cast	95	War Effort in Washington	223
Exciting Pronoun Notification	5	What Happened	96	Life in Wartime Washington	223
Rules Quick Reference	5	Scenes	100	The City	224
Vivian Sinclair	6	The Fathomless Sleep		Politicians, Civil Rights Activists, Hucksters, and Soldiers	232
Character Cards	6	Problem Cards	134	Racism on the Home Front and Beyond	236
Choosing Your Starting Problem	7	The Fathomless Sleep		Select Bibliography	238
Using Investigative Abilities	7	Edge Cards	139		
Investigative Ability Definitions	10			<b>CAPITOL COLOUR</b>	<b>241</b>
General Abilities	17	<b>NEW YORK</b>		Cast	241
General Ability Definitions	17	<b>VIVIAN SINCLAIR</b>	<b>143</b>	The Story So Far	243
Tests	22	Investigative Abilities and Gender in the 1930s	144	Scenes	245
Handling Problems and Edges	25	Kneecapping the Lady Detective	145	Capitol Colour Problem Cards	274
Horror and Madness	29	Vivian Sinclair	148	Capitol Colour Edge Cards	279
Death	33	Connections and Complications	148	Hepster's Dictionary	281
Improvements	33	Sources	149		
		Select Bibliography	152	<b>APPENDICES</b>	<b>283</b>
<b>GM-ING ONE-2-ONE</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>HARDBOILED NEW YORK</b>	<b>155</b>	Rules Quick Reference	284
Intensity Management	34	Denizens	156	Starter Notes for Experienced	
Guiding the Player	34	Gotham	162		
Running Sources	37	<b>FATAL FREQUENCIES</b>	<b>170</b>	GUMSHOE Hands	285
Running Challenges	39	Cast	171	Handout For New Roleplayers	286
Creating Investigators	40	Scenes	173	Investigative Ability List	287
Creating Scenarios	40	Fatal Frequencies		General Ability List	287
Building Challenges	44	Problem Cards	202	List With Dex's Sources	288
Lucky Breaks	61	Fathomless Sleep		List With Viv's Sources	289
Crafting the Emotional Coda	61	Edge Cards	205	List With Langston's Sources	290
Using Online Tools	62			Tables	291
		<b>WASHINGTON DC</b>		How To Solve a Case	293
<b>LOS ANGELES</b>		<b>LANGSTON</b>		Player Characters for Other Mystery Genres	294
<b>DEX RAYMOND</b>	<b>65</b>	<b>MONTGOMERY WRIGHT</b>	<b>209</b>	Generic Edges	300
Friends, Acquaintances, Rivals	65	Langston Montgomery Wright	210	Generic Problems	305
Dexter "Dex" Raymond	66	Friends, Acquaintances, and Rivals	211	Dexter "Dex" Raymond	312
L.A. Sources	66	Sources	211	Vivian Sinclair	313
Lingo	71	<b>THE HOME FRONT</b>	<b>217</b>	Langston Montgomery Wright	314
Select Bibliography	72	Wartime Economy	217	Character Card	315
<b>HARDBOILED L.A.</b>	<b>75</b>	Daily Life	217		
Cue the Exposition Card	75	Propaganda	218		
People	76	Minorities and the War	218		
Psychogeography	84				

# YOUR INVESTIGATION

In *Cthulhu Confidential*™, detectives of the hardboiled crime era probe beyond its guns, mobsters, and corruption to even darker mysteries — those involving the appalling creatures and insane deities of H. P. Lovecraft’s tales of cosmic terror.

It adapts the *Trail of Cthulhu* roleplaying game and its *GUMSHOE* system, a set of rules centered around mysteries and investigation, to a new experience: *GUMSHOE One-2-One*™. Here one Game Moderator (GM) runs a game for one player.

As in other roleplaying games (RPGs), the GM portrays all of the places, people, and monstrous entities with which the Investigator interacts in the course of play. The GM knows the answer to the mystery; the player, taking the role of a lone Investigator, uncovers it — and either puts the horror to rest, or is destroyed by it.

This introductory version of *GUMSHOE One-2-One* features three distinct solo protagonists:

- hard-boiled shamus *Dex Raymond*, braving shots to the kisser as he navigates the corruption and glamor of Los Angeles, 1937
- crusading journalist *Vivian Sinclair*, on the hunt for compelling newspaper copy in 1937 New York
- private eye *Langston Wright*, a scholarly veteran fighting for room to breathe in the official world of wartime Washington

All star in their own scenarios. Like any role-playing adventure, these serve as blueprints-slash-first-drafts of the stories you create together. Your GM reads the scenario thoroughly before play begins. The player reads none of it, preserving its surprises.

Using the guidance given in this book, GMs can use these three scenarios as models to create their own further adventures.

## *Expect Intensity*

Early testers of this game shared one observation with us again and again: it creates an extremely intense experience for both player and GM. One respondent added the word “intimate.”

Here, the sometimes-welcome distractions of group play drop away, to keep the spotlight on the two participants at all times. Exhilarating and occasionally daunting, the process results in a narrative that feels more like a well-structured, unified mystery novel than you generally get with a group tugging the story in various directions.

Tips for preserving the *One-2-One* intensity as a feature and not a bug appear in the GMing chapter on p. 34.

## Getting Started

This book assumes a GM experienced with basic roleplaying concepts, ideally having run at least one multiplayer game. *GUMSHOE One-2-One* makes an ideal introduction to roleplaying for a player entirely new to the form. The best way to show your player what roleplaying means is to run her through a scenario. This shows, rather than tells, what it’s all about.

Note, though, that the scenarios found in this book present extended, fully-fleshed out mysteries meant to evoke the twists, turns, and complexities of a novel by Raymond Chandler or Dashiell Hammett — or at least a movie adaptation of the same. Though some first-time players take to them like ducks to water, others find them a touch daunting. For a stripped-down introduction for

true neophytes, head to the Pelgrane Press web site to download a simpler, shorter *One-2-One* scenario, “The Red Mist.”

Need to convey the concept of roleplaying from the ground up? Provide your newbie with the handout on p. 286 of this book’s Appendix, or verbally paraphrase its contents.

## Exciting Pronoun Notification

In the text to follow “you” sometimes means you the player, and sometimes “you”, the character you’re playing. From context, you’ll see which is which.

This convention saves us from having to divine which pronouns you and your character prefer, which will remain difficult until we complete that secret project where books develop psychic powers.

Normally, game books skirt this dilemma by using the plural for players, but in *GUMSHOE One-2-One* there is only one.

Every now and again, clarity requires us to pick genders for the player and GM. In these passages we call the player “she” and the GM “he,” though of course anybody can take on either of these roles. Please bear with us, mentally editing the text to reflect your pronouns of choice.

## Rules Quick Reference

This summary quickly presents the game’s essential rules concepts, which we’ll go on to explain in greater depth.

*Are you an experienced GUMSHOE GM who’d like to start by seeing how One-2-One differs from its predecessor? Flip to p. 285 in the Appendix.*

Your character attempts actions in the storyline by using abilities. Abilities come in two main types: Investigative and General

**Investigative Abilities** (p. 7) allow you to gather information. The animating principle behind *GUMSHOE* states that *failing to get key information is never interesting*. If you have the right ability and you look in the right place for clues you need to solve the mystery, you will always find the information you seek. If you lack the relevant ability, your character can talk to a friendly Source (p. 9), who will also provide guidance and assurance as needed.

A piece of information need not be critical to the case for you to gain it without chance of failure and at no cost. Much of mystery-solving lies in sorting the important from the tangential. If only the crucial clues came for free, it would give the game away.

In some situations, you can spend a resource called a Push (p. 9) to gain an additional benefit. This might be information you don’t absolutely need to solve the case; more often it consists of advantages that clear the character’s path through the story, such as favors from witnesses, knowledge that keeps the character safe, or prior relationships to central figures.

You start the game with 4 Pushes, and can gain others during play.

**General Abilities** (p. 17) determine whether you succeed or fail when trying to take actions other than gathering information, usually in an event called a test. The most important kind of test is the Challenge (p. 22).

You have either 1 or 2 dice in each General Ability your character possesses.

The game uses standard six-sided dice, which roleplayers sometimes refer to as d6s.

Whenever it might be as interesting for you to fail as it would be to succeed — say, fighting a thug, running away from a creature, or trying to repair your car before you die in the desert — you roll your die or dice.

When rolling multiple dice, roll one at a time: you may succeed without having to roll all of them.

At the end of the Challenge, your die roll total may match or exceed that of an Advance (the best result), or a Hold (an okay or middling result). If not, your Outcome is a Setback, which means that something bad happens.

On an Advance you will probably gain an Edge (p. 25): an advantage you can use later in the scenario. As a reminder, you gain an Edge card. The card’s text will tell you how it works. Often, you must discard the card to gain the advantage. If you reached the Advance threshold without rolling all of the dice you were entitled to, you also gain a Push.

On a Setback, you often gain a Problem (p. 25), representing a dilemma that might cause trouble for you later. Again, you receive a card to remember



it by — a Problem card. Certain cards might lead to a terrible end for your detective should you fail to get rid of, or Counter, them (p. 26) before the scenario concludes.

Most Challenges allow you to voluntarily take on an Extra Problem, in exchange for rolling one more die.

Every so often you'll make a simple roll, called a Quick Test (p. 27), to see if you succeed or fail, without the possibility of Advances, Edges, Setbacks, or Problems.

The rest is detail. You don't have to learn any

special rules for combat or mental distress, as you would in standard *GUMSHOE* and most other roleplaying games. The Challenge system, with its descriptions of outcomes, and its resulting Edges and Problems, handles it all.

## Character Cards

For the purposes of this chapter, let's assume you're playing Vivian Sinclair, one of our three default protagonists. The information you need about your *GUMSHOE One-2-One* character looks like this:



# VIVIAN SINCLAIR

*Investigative Journalist*

### INVESTIGATIVE ABILITIES

- Accounting
- Assess Honesty
- Bargain
- Bureaucracy
- Cryptography
- Evidence Collection
- Flattery
- History
- Inspiration
- Locksmith
- Oral History
- Photography
- Reassurance
- Research
- Streetwise

### GENERAL ABILITIES

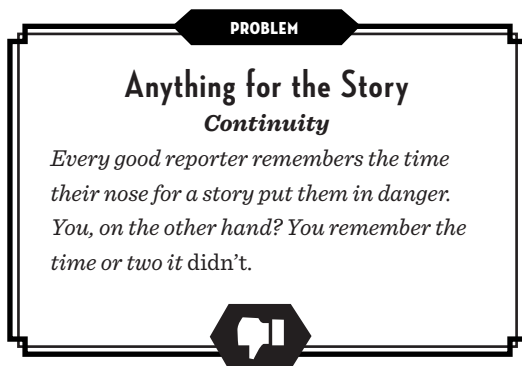
- Athletics
- Cool
- Disguise
- Driving
- Fighting
- Filch
- First Aid
- Fleeing
- Preparedness
- Sense Trouble
- Shadowing
- Stability
- Stealth

### STORY

Pad and pencil in hand, journalist Vivian Sinclair tracks down leads, grills witnesses, and turns in hair-raising stories of corruption, crime, and parts of the city's underbelly most would rather not see. Where a detective sees a case, Viv sees a story. She'll follow it relentlessly to its conclusion, even putting her life in danger to get at the truth.

## Choosing Your Starting Problem

You begin play with at least one Problem: a card representing some kind of ongoing trouble, which you pick for your character from a list of four. This starts the process of personalizing your character, turning the baseline Viv, Langston or Dex we supply into your distinctive version of the character. Text on the card explains the exact nature of the Problem, often specifying its rules effect and perhaps a way to Counter it. During play, you may gain additional Problems. For more on Problems, and their positive counterparts, Edges, see p. 25.



## Using Investigative Abilities

Your character solves the mystery driving the scenario by moving from scene to scene gathering information. You, the player, solve the mystery by figuring out what the information means. As you piece together a narrative and sort relevant facts from evocative side detail, you work out who did what to whom, and why. Then you send your character to deal with the wrongdoers, who may be human inhabitants of decadent Los Angeles, monstrous creatures evoking the cosmic horror of the Lovecraftian mythos, or a combination of the two.

As you can see from Viv's character card, she has a number of Investigative Abilities, ranging from Accounting to Streetwise. Descriptions defining what each of these do appear later in this section.

When a scene starts, the GM describes what your character can sense about it right off the bat. What does the place look like? What mood does it conjure? What objects or furnishings does it

contain, and what do they tell you? Who, if anyone, is present, and what do they do or say in response to your arrival?

You then respond by posing questions. You might ask these directly to the GM, or, through in-character dialogue, to the supporting characters present at the scene. In the second case, the GM acts out the roles of these characters, improvising dialogue and describing their actions.

Some facts appear in plain sight, right in front of you. The GM mentions these straight out when painting the scene. "There's a bloodstain on the carpet and everything in the apartment lies in disarray, as if someone — or more than one someone — were looking for something."

In key instances, though, you'll have to ask about the scene in a particular way to get the clues you need. Describe how you're gathering information and what Investigative Abilities, if any, you're using to get it. When you just say what you're doing without specifying an ability, the GM may immediately see what ability you're using without having to ask.

*Let's say you're talking to Eddie Waldron, the shifty gungel of a crooked nightclub owner. The GM, in Waldron's voice, says, "The boss ain't been here since last Sunday." You might then ask the GM: "Using Assess Honesty, does he seem like he's lying?" The GM, in neutral narrative voice, says, "You get the feeling that he's telling the truth, which is not his usual habit."*

When your character looks for information in the right place, and has a credible way to get it, you get the clue, simple as that.

Some roleplayers might be used to games where they have to roll dice, scoring a successful result of some kind, to get information. *GUMSHOE* works exactly like that, except without the roll, removing the chance of a failure that doesn't advance the story.

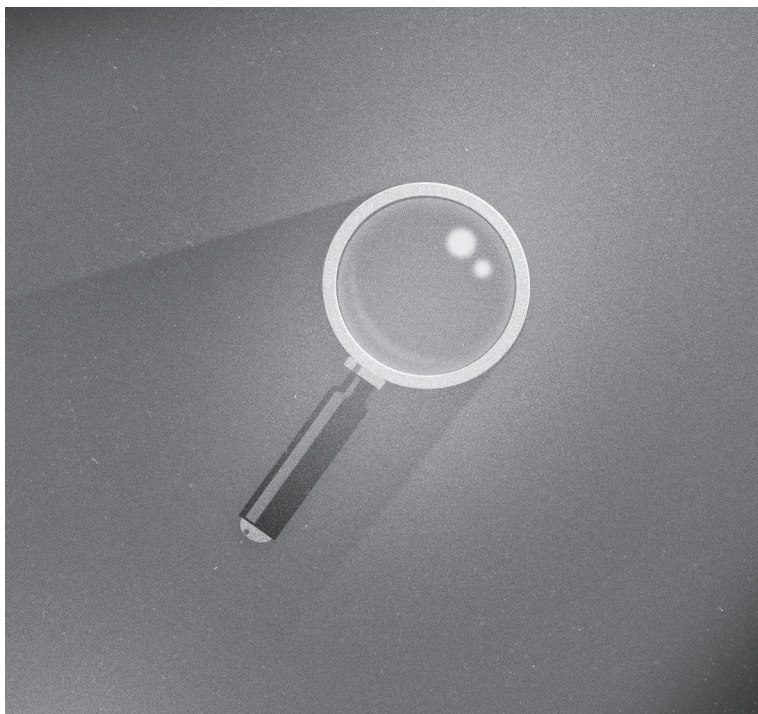
In order to obtain clues, you always have to describe your character interacting with the contents of the scene. You never just read the names of your abilities off your character card and wait for more description. Instead you have to talk

to Waldron, or ask about the strange mold on the windowsill, or go talk to the Professor about that weird manuscript you found in the sideboard.

Sometimes, you discover clues just by describing your character completing simple tasks. This happens when no special training or method is required. For example, if there are financial documents taped to the bottom of a desk, and you say, “I look under the desk,” the GM replies, “You find an envelope taped to the underside of the desk top.”

For certain clues, ones that an expert character with specialized training would not miss, the GM gives you time to ask. Before the scene ends, the GM describes you noticing whatever the clue happens to be, even if you didn’t specifically ask. That gives you the opportunity to have the fun of discovering the clue, without painting your detective as incompetent or unaware.

Usually, the best information comes from conversations – sometimes friendly, sometimes hostile – with other characters played by the GM. We call these supporting characters, or Game Moderator Characters (GMCs for short). GMCs include your ongoing allies, brief contacts who play walk-on roles, and the major figures of the case at hand, from your client to suspects to the imminent victims of dread forces.



### INVESTIGATIVE ABILITY LIST

Ability	Type
<b>Accounting</b>	Academic
<b>Anthropology</b>	Academic
<b>Archaeology</b>	Academic
<b>Architecture</b>	Academic
<b>Art History</b>	Academic
<b>Assess Honesty</b>	Interpersonal
<b>Astronomy</b>	Technical
<b>Bargain</b>	Interpersonal
<b>Biology</b>	Academic
<b>Bureaucracy</b>	Interpersonal
<b>Chemistry</b>	Technical
<b>Cop Talk</b>	Interpersonal
<b>Craft</b>	Technical
<b>Cryptography</b>	Academic
<b>Cthulhu Mythos</b>	Academic
<b>Evidence Collection</b>	Technical
<b>Flattery</b>	Interpersonal
<b>Forensics</b>	Technical
<b>Geology</b>	Academic
<b>History</b>	Academic
<b>Inspiration</b>	Interpersonal
<b>Intimidation</b>	Interpersonal
<b>Languages</b>	Academic
<b>Law</b>	Academic
<b>Locksmith</b>	Technical
<b>Medicine</b>	Academic
<b>Occult</b>	Academic
<b>Oral History</b>	Interpersonal
<b>Outdoorsman</b>	Technical
<b>Pharmacy</b>	Technical
<b>Photography</b>	Technical
<b>Physics</b>	Academic
<b>Psychology</b>	Interpersonal
<b>Reassurance</b>	Interpersonal
<b>Research</b>	Academic
<b>Streetwise</b>	Interpersonal
<b>Theology</b>	Academic



## PUSHES

The character starts each scenario with four Pushes.

In certain situations, the player may spend a Push to use an Investigative Ability to gain something above and beyond information.

For example, you might:

- spend a Push on Assess Honesty to guess the motivation behind a character's deception
- spend a Push on Intimidation to convince a barfly not to tell Vinnie the Horse that you're looking into his alibi
- spend a Push on Law to get sprung from jail on that bogus trespassing rap
- spend a Push on Chemistry to formulate an antidote to the sleeping potion you have been dosed with, using only the contents of an ordinary medicine cabinet

Sometimes scenario text refers to Pushes by Investigative Ability category, saying, for example, "Langston gets past the security guard with an Interpersonal Push." This means that the player can use any Interpersonal ability that applies to the situation, spending a Push on it to gain the specified benefit.

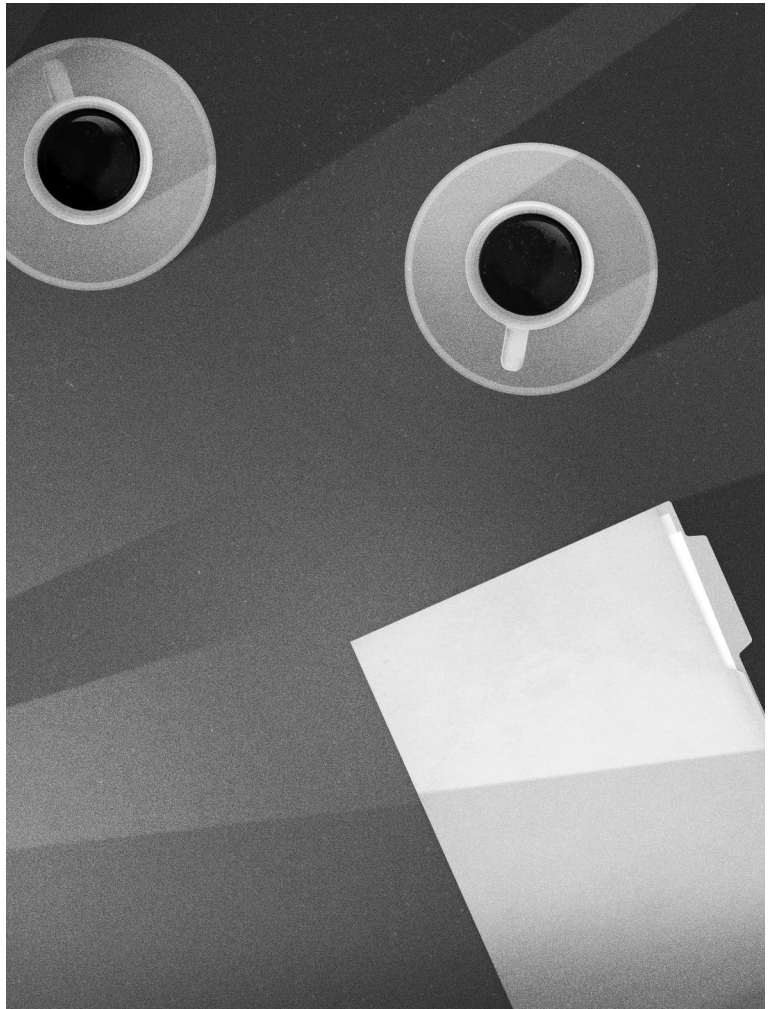
## SOURCES

Though smart and resourceful, your Investigator has not mastered every field of human endeavor. Some clues require you to consult **Sources**: experts in various fields with whom you've cultivated a relationship. Unlike the witnesses and suspects who figure in the particular case you're working, you don't need to overcome their resistance to gain their cooperation.

When you ought to call on a Source, your GM lets you know. Questions to Sources take you out of the current scene, so deal with all the questions that arise on-site before moving on.

The first time you meet with a Source character in the game, your GM describes their appearance and attitudes. Given this basic information, you then quickly sketch out the common bond that accounts for your association.

Sources exist to convey information to you, so your character does not seem ridiculously well-informed in every field of knowledge. They also give you and your GM a chance to play out relaxed, lower-key scenes featuring supporting characters






who basically like or respect your Investigator. These supply the camaraderie that springs up between player characters in group games.

An extraordinary case might place a Source in jeopardy, or risk rupturing that ongoing relationship. If you lose a Source, you later gain another one who covers the same blank spots on your resumé as the previous one did. Events that threaten a Source raise the emotional stakes, but this storytelling technique gets old when overused. Don't expect your GM to do it often, or at all.

Theoretically, the player could spend a Push to enable a Source to extract additional benefit from an ability use. This requires a scene in which the Source is present to take an active hand. A well-crafted scenario steers clear of this possibility, especially if it calls on the GM to talk to himself as two separate characters.

## Investigative Ability Definitions

The definitions in this section describe the kinds of clues you can gather with each ability, and how you might go about doing that. Each ability name appears next to two icons. The first tells you which category the ability falls into: Academic , Interpersonal , and Technical .

“You” in these descriptions always refers to the character.

### Accounting (Academic)

You understand bookkeeping and accountancy procedures; you can read and keep financial records. You can:

- tell legitimate businesses from criminal enterprises
- reconstruct financial histories from old records (uncovering, say, slave-trading or smuggling)
- spot the telltale signs of embezzlement, bribes, blackmail, or dummy companies
- reel off the latest rumors from the world of business, finance and industry
- track payments to their source

### Anthropology (Academic)

You are an expert in the study of human cultures, from the Stone Age to the Jazz Age. You can:

- identify artifacts and rituals of living cultures
- describe and predict the customs of a foreign group or local subculture
- extrapolate the practices of an unknown culture from similar examples

### Archaeology (Academic)

You excavate and study the structures and artifacts of historical cultures and civilizations. You can:

- tell how long something has been buried and date its construction
- identify artifacts by culture and usage
- distinguish real artifacts from fakes
- navigate inside ruins and catacombs, including finding secret doors and hidden construction
- describe the customs of ancient or historical cultures
- spot well-disguised graves and underground hiding places

### Architecture (Academic)

You know how buildings are designed and constructed. You can:

- guess what lies around the corner while exploring an unknown structure
- judge the relative strength of building materials
- identify a building’s age, architectural style, original use, and history of modifications
- deduce the existence of hidden rooms, priest-holes, hyper-geometric witch-garrets, and other anomalies
- construct stable makeshift structures
- identify elements vital to a building’s structural integrity
- name the architectural firm responsible for any well-known building in your area, recounting any peculiarities involved in its construction

### Art History (Academic)

You’re an expert on works of art (including the practical arts such as furniture and pottery) from an aesthetic and technical point of view. You can:

- distinguish real works from fakes
- tell when something has been retouched or altered
- identify the age of an object by style and materials
- accurately estimate the price of an objet d’art
- call to mind historical details on artists and those around them
- list the most recent films set in a given stylistic period and comment on their relative accuracy

### Assess Honesty (Interpersonal)

You can tell when someone’s trying to play you for a sap. Not only does your gut tell you when a witness is lying, life’s hard knocks have taught you to instinctively judge and sense motives and character.

Not all lies are verbal. You can tell when a person is attempting to project a false impression through body language.

Certain individuals — grifters, actors, professional gamblers, and similar — may be so adept at lying that they never set off your built-in lie detector, or overload it by being “always on.” Some people believe their own falsehoods. Psychopathic and sociopathic personality types (like most sorcerers and/or politicians) and brainwashed cultists lie reflexively and without shame, depriving

you of the telltale tics and gestures you use to sense when a person is deceiving you. Those who have communed excessively with the inhuman intelligences of the Mythos will occasionally “read wrong,” but will similarly fail to send any useful signals to a sane watcher.

Though you may know it to be false, utter hokum the speaker believes does not register as untruthful — just absurd.

Use Assess Honesty to cold-read a mark for fortune-telling scams, phony séances or mentalist acts, and the like.

### Astronomy (Technical)

You study celestial objects, including the stars and planets. You can:

- decipher astrological texts
- use a telescope, including large reflectors
- plot the movement of stars and planets, and know which ones are overhead at any given time
- predict eclipses, comets, meteor showers, and other regular astronomical phenomena

An L.A. Investigator with this ability enjoys research access to the Griffith Park Observatory.

### Bargain (Interpersonal)

You are an expert in making deals with others, convincing them that the best arrangement for you is also the best for them. You can:

- haggle for goods and services
- gauge likely prices of items, including what someone else will pay for them
- mediate hostage situations or diplomatic crises
- swap favors or information with others
- exchange cash for information

Spends allow you to gain an advantage other than information in exchange for money or other considerations.

### Biology (Academic)

You study the evolution, behavior, and physical makeup of living organisms. You can:

- tell when an animal is behaving strangely
- tell whether an animal or plant is natural to a given area
- identify an animal from samples of its hair, blood, bones, or other tissue
- analyze unknown ichor, scales, or slime

- identify a plant from a small sample
- isolate or detect natural poisons or venoms

### Bureaucracy (Interpersonal)

You expertly navigate bureaucratic organization, from government offices to large private firms.

From the hidden reasons behind a bureaucracy’s opaque decisions to the arcane details of its paperwork, you can extract the information you seek smoothly and with a minimum of ruffled feathers. You can:

- convince officials to provide sensitive information
- gain credentials on false pretenses
- find the person who really knows what’s going on
- develop and maintain contacts within a bureaucracy with which you have regular dealings
- locate offices and files
- borrow equipment or supplies

In a noir setting you also know which government officials are honest and which are corrupt. In the latter case, you may know who’s lining their pockets or is holding something over them. The same goes for members of private institutions.

Bureaucracy is not a catch-all information-gathering ability. Bureaucrats wish to convey the impression that they are busy and harried, whether or not they actually are. Most take a profound, secret joy in directing inquiries elsewhere. When players attempt to use Bureaucracy to gain information that is more easily accessible via other abilities (such as Research), their contacts will snidely advise them to do their own damn legwork.

### Chemistry (Technical)

You’re trained in the analysis of chemical substances. Given lab facilities, you can:

- identify drugs, pharmaceuticals, toxins, and viruses, among a wide variety of other materials
- create simple explosives, poisons, gases, and acids
- analyze unknown substances, alloys, compounds, etc.
- perform ballistics and gunpowder analysis of bullets or other evidence
- match samples of dirt or vegetation from a piece of evidence to a scene
- perform chemical document analysis on ink or paper



### Cop Talk (Interpersonal)

Despite the low regard in which cops hold private detectives, you know their lingo and needs well enough to extract information from them. You can:

- prompt them to spill confidential information
- get excused for minor infractions
- read between the lines when a cop can't come out and tell you the whole truth
- call in favors from law enforcement contacts — often the one cop on the force who genuinely likes and trusts you

### Craft (Technical)

You can create useful physical objects, working with materials like wood, metal, precious stones, leather, and so forth. This allows you a general background knowledge in handmade items of all kinds. You can:

- discover a secret drawer in a wooden desk
- tell roughly how old a craft object is
- identify its famous maker, if applicable
- sort fakes from authentic items
- say whether an item was skillfully or crudely fashioned
- know what kind of wood, stone, porcelain and so on an item is made of
- in the case of gems and precious metals, tell whether the materials are genuine

### Cryptography (Academic)

You can make or break codes and ciphers in any language you can read. Given some time and a dictionary, you may be able to puzzle out foreign alphabets, translating languages by brute force.

### Cthulhu Mythos (Academic)

You have begun to piece together the secret rules of the real world, rather than the ignorant scrim of physics and religion. You recognize the great names, and the truths they conceal. Have you read a Mythos tome, a rare, ancient book laying out in obscure detail the maddening secrets of Cthulhu and the Old Ones? This ability lets you recall any specific hints or facts from it relevant to your current situation. You can:

- identify inhuman creatures and their spoor
- translate pre-human tongues
- read inscriptions of the far-distant past

- predict what comes next when watching cultists perform an obscene rite
- identify which alien god has incarnated itself inside the formless monster that is currently crushing the life out of you
- distinguish a practitioner of an ordinary, ineffectual human occult tradition from a sorcerer able to call on the power of the Old Ones

Setbacks while using this ability may leave you with Mythos Shock  Problem cards (p. 32).

### Evidence Collection (Technical)

You're adept at casing an investigation site and at finding important clues. You can:

- spot hidden objects or objects of interest (such as bullet casings under a couch, or drops of blue ooze behind a desk) at a crime scene or other investigation site
- note relationships between objects at a crime scene, reconstructing sequences of events
- find, transfer, take, and compare fingerprints
- match typewritten materials to a given machine
- match handwriting to a known sample
- store objects for forensic analysis without contaminating your samples

### Flattery (Interpersonal)

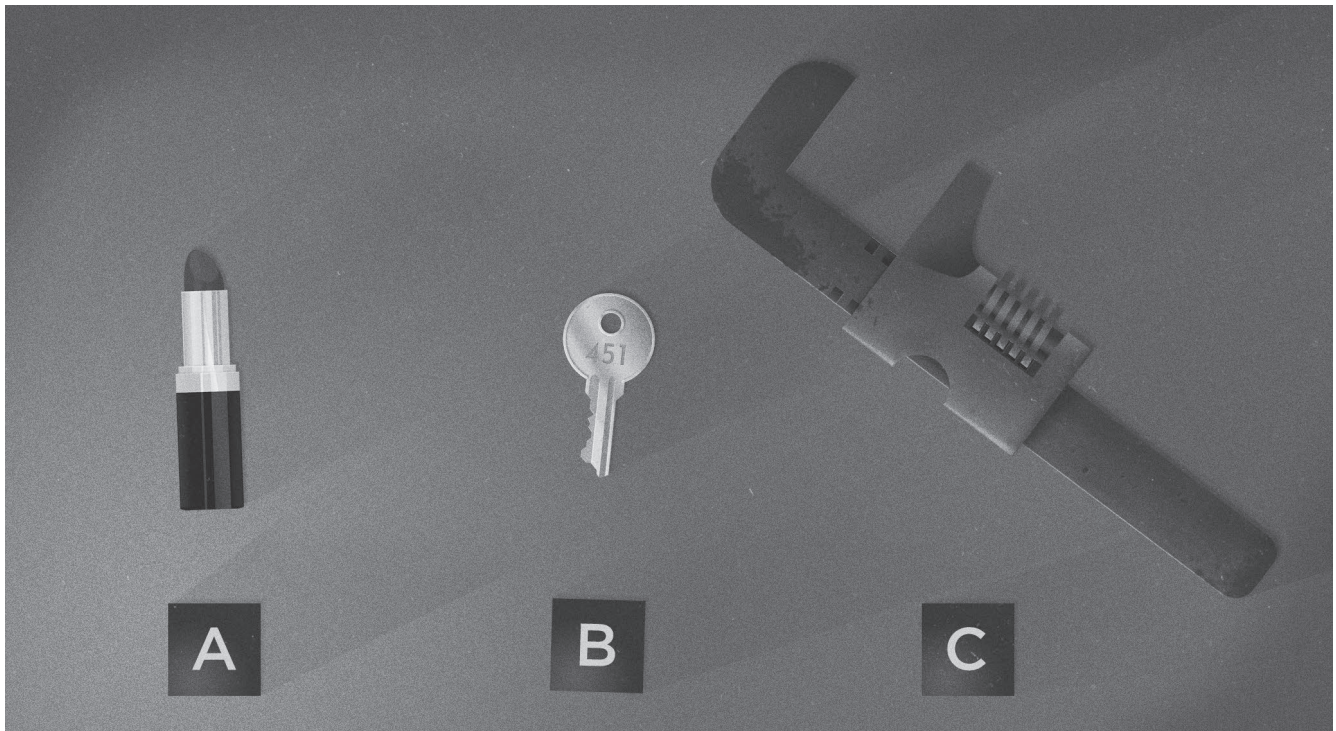
You get people to help you by complimenting or playing up to them, as subtly or blatantly as they prefer. You can get them to:

- reveal information
- perform minor favors
- regard you as trustworthy
- date you (if applicable)

### Forensics (Technical)

You study crime scenes and perform autopsies on deceased subjects to determine their cause and circumstances of death. You can use skeletal evidence to reconstruct the physical details (age, sex, medical condition, sometimes occupation) of the deceased. In the case of death by foul play, your examination can identify:

- the nature of the weapon or weapons used
- the approximate time of death
- the presence of intoxicants or other foreign substances in the bloodstream or on the skin
- the contents of the victim's last meal



In many cases, you can reconstruct the sequence of events leading to the victim's death from the arrangement of wounds on the body.

Though forensic science really only takes off in the postwar era, you can still lift and match fingerprints, make casts of tire tracks, and perform basic ballistics tests.

### Geology (Academic) 📖

As an expert on rocks, soils, minerals, and the primordial history of the Earth, you can:

- analyze soil samples, crystals, minerals, and so forth
- determine the age of a rock stratum
- date and identify fossils
- evaluate soil for agriculture or industry
- identify promising sites for oil or water wells, mines, etc.
- anticipate vulcanism, seismic events, avalanches, and other earth phenomena

### History (Academic) 📖

A broad study of recorded human history, with an emphasis on political, military, economic, and technological developments, allows you to:

- recognize obscure historical allusions

- recall important or relevant events in a given country, city, or region
- identify ancient languages and scripts (assuming they're of human origin)
- perform textual analysis on a manuscript or book to date it or identify the author
- determine the age of a document
- tell where and when an object made during historical times was fashioned
- identify the period of an article of dress or costume
- (if based in L.A.) name Hollywood productions set in a particular historical period, supplemented with a list of their ludicrous inaccuracies

### Inspiration (Interpersonal) 🗣️

You can convince reluctant witnesses to supply information by appealing to their better selves. After a few moments of interaction, you intuitively sense the positive values they hold dearest, then invoke them in a brief but stirring speech. Depending on the person you're dealing with, you might call to mind their:

- religious beliefs
- love of friends, family, or community

- sense of fairness
- desire for justice
- belief in a secular ideology, whether it be democracy, Marxism, or pacifism
- pride in personal achievement

### Intimidation (Interpersonal)

You get what you want from people by scaring them — physically, or with vividly detailed threats. You can:

- gain information
- inspire the subject to leave the area
- quell a subject's desire to attempt violence against you or others
- extract promises of future cooperation, secured by the threat of your later retaliation

### Languages (Academic)

Allows you to extract information from documents written in languages other than English. You may not be able to elegantly translate or win points for accuracy among true academics, but you find the clue you need. A scenario writer who cares about realism will not require your P.I. to explain his expertise in more than one unlikely tongue per case. Especially with obscure languages, this ability likely requires the use of an English-to-whatever-language-matters-here dictionary and some extended brow-furrowing.

### Law (Academic)

You are familiar with the criminal and civil laws that pertain in your noir city, as well as on the state and federal levels. You can bluff your way through dealings with foreign legal systems. With this knowledge you can:

- assess the legal risks attendant on any course of action
- understand lawyerly jargon
- call on legal colleagues or contacts for favors and advice
- convincingly dispute the legality of actions undertaken by police and prosecutors

### Locksmith (Technical)

You can open doors and locks, and disarm alarms, without benefit of a key. Or maybe you have some universal passkeys with you. You can also find

convenient windows to jimmy or coal-cellar doors to force, if need be. Many locks require specialized tools, possession of which without a locksmith's license is a criminal offense in most jurisdictions. Fortunately, your P.I.'s badge allows you to carry them. Very complex or tricky locks may require spends to open them speedily, to avoid noise or damage, or to relock afterward.

Using Locksmith is, in other words, a way to gather clues. A lock that won't open is like a witness that won't talk or a bloodstain you can't find: antithetical to the mystery-solving, investigative-adventure design goals of *GUMSHOE* and *Cthulhu Confidential*.

Opening a safe, bank vault, or other lock for a benefit other than information-gathering requires a Filch Challenge. You are presumed to be using your knowledge of locks as part of that attempt.

### Medicine (Academic)

You can diagnose human disease, injuries, poisonings, and physical frailties, and may be broadly acquainted with veterinary medicine as well. If past medical training makes sense as part of your backstory, you may still hold a medical license. You can:

- diagnose diseases, poisonings, and other ailments
- prescribe remedies for a treatable condition
- deliver a baby
- identify the extent and cause of an unconscious person's trauma
- detect when a person is suffering from a physically debilitating condition such as drug addiction, pregnancy, or malnutrition
- establish a person's general level of health
- identify medical abnormalities
- understand medical jargon

### Occult (Academic)

You're an expert in the historical study of magic, superstition, and sorcery from the Stone Age to the present. From Theosophists to Voodoo to the Golden Dawn, you know the dates, the places, the controversies, and the legends. You can:

- identify the cultural traditions informing a ritual by examining its physical remnants
- supply historical facts and anecdotes concerning various occult traditions, demons, and legends
- guess the intended effect of a ritual from its physical traces

- identify occult activities as the work of informed practitioners or dilettante thrill-seekers
- fake a fortune-telling session, séance, or other occult activity
- read and cast a horoscope
- identify occult paraphernalia, grimoires, symbols, and codes

This ability does not allow you to work magic or summon supernatural entities. It grants only the most superficial hints about the Cthulhu mythos. You may or may not believe that real supernatural entities and forces exist: the skill functions just as well in either case.

### Oral History (Interpersonal)

You can find sources willing to talk, win their confidence, and gather (usually lengthy) oral testimony about historical events, local traditions, folklore, family legend, or gossip. This is an excellent way to do research in illiterate or semi-literate societies, and in rural or small-town communities in general. This ability also covers taking shorthand notes or making recordings without spooking your sources.

### Outdoorsman (Technical)

Long hours of camping and exploration in the wild have made it as comfortable to you as life in the concrete jungle. You can:

- tell when an animal is behaving strangely
- tell whether an animal or plant is natural to a given area
- find edible plants, hunt, and fish
- make fire and survive outdoors at night or in bad weather
- navigate overland, albeit more easily with a compass and a map
- track people, animals, or vehicles across grass or through forests
- hunt with dogs, including tracking with bloodhounds, assuming you have friendly dogs available

Despite the period gender specificity of the term, nothing stops female characters from having this ability.

### Pharmacy (Technical)

You are able to identify and compound drugs and medicines. You can:

- identify drugs and potions, and recognize their side-effects and contraindications
- identify poisons and determine antidotes
- secure or manufacture morphine, cocaine, and other controlled substances

### Photography (Technical)

You're proficient in the use of cameras, including still and motion-picture photography. You can:

- take useful visual records of crime scenes or expeditions
- develop film or plates and enhance hidden details
- use filters and lights to capture images only visible in infrared or ultraviolet
- spot manual retouching or camera trickery in a photographic image or negative
- take trick photographs using double exposures and other methods
- realistically retouch and manipulate photographic images
- (Los Angeles) put cinematographers at ease by talking shop with them about the latest equipment
- (Los Angeles) look at a movie or professionally taken still photo and identify the studio employee who lensed it

### Physics (Academic)

You study the fundamental forces of the universe: pressure, electromagnetism, motion, gravity, optics, and radioactivity. You can:

- design or refit experimental machinery to test, detect, or manipulate physical forces and energies
- obtain and operate expensive or obscure pieces of laboratory equipment such as Crookes tubes, Geiger counters, or magnetometers
- understand and apply advanced mathematics, including non-Euclidean geometries
- (perhaps) understand advanced or alien technologies

### Psychology (Interpersonal)

Your familiarity with the latest in the burgeoning field of human psychology grants you insight into the criminal mind. Based solely on their known modus operandi, you can make accurate guesses as to the upbringing and pathology of unidentified



criminals. You can:

- predict their upcoming actions based on their past behavior
- distinguish an individual whose violence is deemed acceptable by his home culture from one who consciously defies cultural norms
- distinguish subjects who can be successfully rehabilitated from the incorrigibly violent or deviant
- tell whether a known individual's criminal behavior is in response to deep psychological impulses, or is driven primarily by greed

### Reassurance (Interpersonal)

You can get people to do what you want by putting them at ease. This may involve fast talk, genuine sympathy, a rational accounting of risks, or just a calming presence. You can:

- elicit information and minor favors
- allay fear or panic in others
- instill a sense of calm during a crisis
- gain trust
- present yourself as someone who successfully follows through on promises

### Research (Academic)

You can ferret out information from collections of books, records, files, archives, newspaper morgues, or big piles of unsorted telegrams and

correspondence. If the information lies within, and you have access to the collection, you can find it. You can also determine patterns: who wrote about what and to whom, what kinds of books an eccentric collector values, what might be missing from the official files, which records seem doctored and by whom, and so forth.

### Streetwise (Interpersonal)

You know how to behave among crooks, gangsters, dopers, hookers, grifters, and other habitués of the criminal underworld. You can:

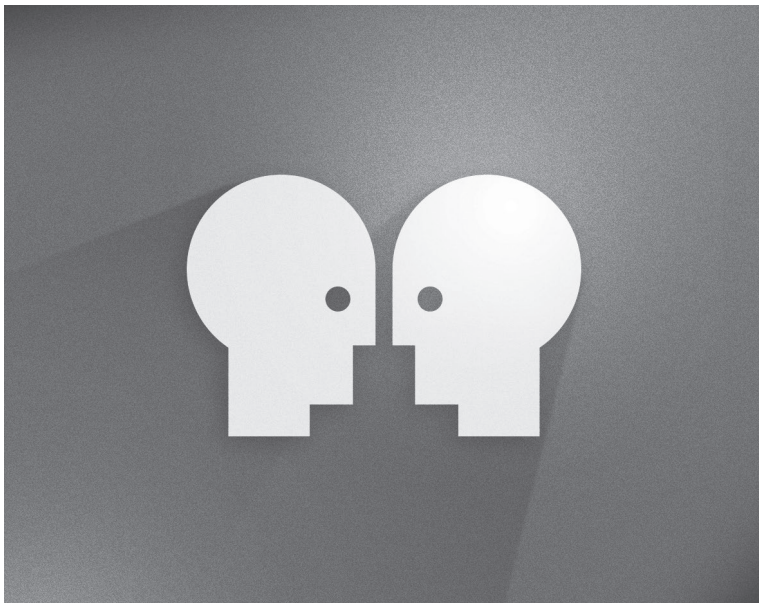
- use criminal etiquette to avoid fights and conflicts
- identify unsafe locations and dangerous people
- make and utilize criminal contacts — fences, black marketeers, drug dealers, gun runners, and so forth
- successfully price illegal goods such as drugs, stolen items, or weapons
- gather underworld rumors
- identify your city's gangland players and understand their power relationships, even if these have recently changed

### Theology (Academic)

You study human religions in their various forms, both ancient and modern. You can:

- supply information about religious practices and beliefs
- quote relevant passages from the major scriptures
- recognize the names and attributes of various saints, gods, and other figures of religious worship and veneration
- identify whether a given religious practice or ritual is orthodox or heretical
- fake (or in some traditions, officiate at) a religious ceremony
- know the prominent faiths and religious figures of your noir city — for example, the many wild new cults of the L.A. basin




This ability does not allow you to work miracles, banish demons, commune with deities, or otherwise invoke supernatural power, even if the campaign admits the existence of a non-Mythos God or gods. You may believe in a given religion or not; the skill functions just as well in either case.



## General Abilities

When attempting actions that don't directly gather information, and which can lead to engaging story possibilities whether you succeed or fail, use your General Abilities.

General Abilities fall into three categories:

- **Manual** , drawing on a combination of skill training and fine motor skills.
- **Mental** , drawing on mostly on intellectual study, perception, thought, and/or memory
- **Physical** , using your gross motor skills.

For each General Ability you have, you will see a number of dice shown on your character sheet.

These are your Ability Dice, which you roll, one by one, attempting to avoid a bad result (a Setback), hoping to improve your position (an Advance), but sometimes settling for a middle-ground result (a Hold). The explanation of tests appears on p. 22.

The benefits of Edges and penalties imposed by Problems often specify that they apply to a particular one of these three categories.

To see if you succeed with the use of a General Ability — and, if so, how well — you'll engage in a Challenge, which we'll explain shortly. That will make more sense if we first show you what each ability does.

## General Ability Definitions

When you're not sure what a General Ability does, consult these definitions.

### Athletics (Physical)

Athletics allows you to:




















- perform general acts of physical derring-do, from running to jumping to throwing bundles of dynamite to dodging oncoming objects
- resist the effects of disease, poisoning, and intoxicants
- resist the effects of exposure, such as hypothermia, frostbite, and sunstroke



Any big physical action not covered by another ability probably goes here.

Old *GUMSHOE* hands will note that some benefits of the Health ability, which *One-2-One* does not use, have been moved here.

## GENERAL ABILITY LIST

General Abilities available to Investigators vary depending on the setting. In *Cthulhu Confidential*, they are:

Ability	Type
<b>Athletics</b>	Physical 
<b>Conceal</b>	Manual 
<b>Cool</b>	Mental 
<b>Devices</b>	Manual 
<b>Disguise</b>	Manual 
<b>Driving</b>	Manual 
<b>Explosives</b>	Manual 
<b>Fighting</b>	Physical 
<b>Filch</b>	Manual 
<b>First Aid</b>	Manual 
<b>Fleeing</b>	Physical 
<b>Hypnosis</b>	Mental 
<b>Magic</b>	Mental 
<b>Preparedness</b>	Mental 
<b>Psychoanalysis</b>	Mental 
<b>Sense Trouble</b>	Mental 
<b>Shadowing</b>	Physical 
<b>Stability</b>	Mental 
<b>Stealth</b>	Physical 

To tune your game to Lovecraftian settings outside the noir framework, you might want to import General Abilities from standard *Trail of Cthulhu* we've omitted from this version, such as Piloting  and Riding . Other settings may call for the addition and removal of other abilities appropriate to their genre conventions.



### Conceal (Manual)

You can hide things from view and conceal them from searchers. Methods might include camouflage, holding items out on your person, sneaking things into drawers unobserved, building secret compartments, or even altering an object's visual signature with paint or plaster.

To discover items others have concealed, use the Investigative Ability Evidence Collection. In odd instances where finding the item grants you an advantage other than information — let's say locating the small Mauser in the false compartment just as Horgan's torpedoes come through the door — use a Conceal Challenge.

### Cool (Mental)

Measures your ability to make the smart play, instead of the impulsive one, in response to emotional temptation. Cool saves you from such standard errors of the private dick game as:

- falling for the wrong kind of dame
- showing a tell that warns the killer that you know he did it
- smart-mouthing the cop who's itching to club you
- hitting the roulette wheel when you know you shouldn't
- attempting a futile grand gesture to wring real justice from a rigged system
- resist supernatural forces attempting to influence your behavior

### Devices (Manual)

You build, repair, and operate electrical or mechanical devices. And what you can put together, you can take apart, disabling equipment either unnoticeably or completely.

You know the workings of electrical devices from simple alarm systems to the most advanced radios. You can also hot-wire a car with an electrical ignition, which is most of those built since 1920. Given the right components, you can create jury-rigged devices from odd bits of scrap.

This expertise also encompasses machines from simple stick traps to the most complex adding machines or steam turbines. (With the exception of simple latches; working with locks is covered by the Locksmith ability). Given the right components, you can create jury-rigged devices

and booby-traps from odd bits of scrap.

This doubles as an Investigative Ability when used to:

- determine the function of a given piece of equipment
- evaluate the quality of workmanship used to create an item
- make high-quality audio recordings on records, Dictaphone cylinders, or wire
- read Morse Code
- tap telephone or telegraph lines
- use a device in good repair as intended

Once per case, you may specify that you can operate and (where relevant) drive a new type of heavy machinery, such as: back-hoe, steam roller, construction crane, or steam shovel. Your GM may ask you to supply a line of dialogue explaining where you picked this up.

### Disguise (Manual)

You can become someone else: clothes, voice, mannerisms, and posture. You can:

- impersonate someone on the phone
- blend into a crowd in the street
- mingle at a party with those outside your social station
- hold an entire conversation with an unwitting friend or suspect

Expect to have to beat a high number in order to Advance while impersonating a real person to their friends or acquaintances. Depending on the situation, impersonating a plausible and even fictitious stranger ("oh, I'm his cousin from upstate New York") to people one has never met might require only a Difficulty 4 Quick Test.

### Driving (Manual)

Anyone who's been taught can drive a car down the road without this ability. You, on the other hand, are a skilled defensive driver, capable of wringing high performance from even the most recalcitrant automobile, pickup truck, or bus. You can:

- evade or conduct pursuit
- avoid collisions, or minimize damage from collisions
- navigate, read maps, and maintain a sense of direction

The ability assumes you can drive cars, trucks,

motorcycles and small motor boats. Once per case, you may reveal that you can drive another type of vehicle requiring specialized training, such as a bus, yacht, plane, tank, or gyrocopter. Where this seems unlikely, the GM may invite you to improvise a line describing the circumstances under which you learned this.

### Explosives (Manual)

As an expert in bombs and booby-traps, you can:

- defuse bombs and traps
- handle nitroglycerin or other dangerously unstable materials with relative safety
- given time, blow open safes or vaults without damaging the contents
- mix explosive compounds from common chemicals
- safely construct and detonate explosive devices or booby-traps of your own

Explosives doubles as an Investigative Ability when used to:

- figure out the configuration of a bomb from its blast effect and shrapnel
- for any bomb (exploded or unexploded), determine the method and materials of the bomb-maker, and deduce his sophistication, background, and skill

### Fighting (Physical)

Whether duking it out with fists and the occasional kick, defending against an incoming shovel with an opportunistically grabbed two-by-four, or trading pistol shots with hot-tempered gangsters, your Fighting ability dictates the result of the scrap. When facing impossible odds, an Advance or Hold might allow you to engage your enemies favorably enough to launch a successful escape.

This covers all forms of combat, from scuffling to shooting to hand-to-hand weapons. (Multiplayer *Trail of Cthulhu* treats these as three separate abilities. A solo game eliminates the need to give various player characters differently flavored ways to harm opponents, so *One-2-One* collapses them into a single ability).

### Filch (Manual)

Your nimble fingers allow you to unobtrusively manipulate small objects. You can:

- pilfer clues from (or plant clues at) a crime scene under the very noses of unsuspecting authorities
- pick pockets
- plant objects on unsuspecting subjects


### First Aid (Manual)

You can perform first aid on sick or injured individuals, including yourself. Depending on how the GM structures the Challenge, an Advance or Hold might stabilize the patient, keep him alive just long enough to hear a whispered confession, or fix him up entirely. Injuries the GM describes as relatively minor will be easier to score Advances and Holds on than ones he describes as serious or life-threatening.

### Fleeing (Physical)

This ability governs how speedily you run away from impending danger, whether it comes from a gambler's gun, cops intent on locking you up, or a formless entity from beyond space. Used for characters who aren't otherwise Athletic, to give them some chance of avoiding physical harm. If you don't have Fleeing, because you instead use the better, all-around ability of Athletics, such Challenges instead default to Athletics.

### Hypnosis (Mental)

You can hypnotize a willing subject, recovering lost memories, suppressing unwanted ones, or removing destructive compulsions. Your technique likely involves the use of narcosynthesis, in which you administer a small dose of sodium pentothal to your subject. Treat as an Investigative Ability when gaining information useful to your case. The Investigator may submit to narcosynthesis under a supporting character's care in hopes of Countering Mythos Shocks .

### Magic (Mental)

Your GM may decide that his version of *Cthulhu Confidential* allows the Investigator to eventually learn and practice efficacious magic. This might be used to summon Mythos entities, or bind them once summoned (a crucial step, yet all too often overlooked!).

A few spells allow sorcerers to harm their



opponents directly, or to subject them to mental influence. Use Athletics to resist the former, and Cool for the latter. If your Magic dice exceed your dice in the ability used to resist magic, use Magic instead.

(To my taste, giving a noir detective sorcerous powers veers too far from noir horror into the tongue-in-cheek urban fantasy of the film *Cast a Deadly Spell*. But once you start playing, it's your game, not mine, so if that's what you want, do it).

### Preparedness (Manual)

You expertly anticipate the needs of any investigation by packing a kit efficiently arranged with necessary gear. Assuming you have immediate access to it, you may be able to produce an object needed to overcome an impediment to your progress. A Quick Test simply determines whether you have the item in question. A Challenge allows you to not only have the object, but also overcome an associated obstacle.


Equipment standard to the private investigation racket does not require a test. This includes but are not limited to: notebooks or paper, writing implements and ink, flashlights, candles and matches, colored chalk, pen-knives, magnifying glasses, pocket mirrors, string, sandwiches, and a flask of middling whiskey.

Other abilities imply the possession of basic gear suitable to their core tasks. Characters with First Aid or Medicine have their own first aid kits or medical bags; Photographers arrive on the scene with cameras, film, and flash bulbs.

Narrative credibility constrains the sorts of items you might have brought with you. If the GM determines that your possession of an item would seem ludicrous, anachronistic, or out of genre, you don't get to test for it. You simply don't have it. When in doubt as to allow an item, the GM imagines the film version of your adventure. If the detective's suddenly having the desired object on hand without prior setup would earn a derisive laugh from moviegoers, the GM disallows the attempt.

### Psychoanalysis (Mental)

You can provide comfort, perspective, and solace to the mentally troubled. You may be a Freudian alienist, a priest or pastor, or just an empathetic

and intuitive individual. Unlike Reassurance spends, your counsel can aid supporting characters mentally scorched by confrontation with the Mythos. You can't use your own Psychoanalysis ability to counter your own Mythos Shocks .

### Sense Trouble (Mental)

This ability allows you to perceive (either with sight or other senses) potential hazards to yourself or others. For example, you can:

- hear the splash of a Deep One dropping into the sewer behind you
- see a flittering shape cross the moon
- have a bad feeling about that eerily hunchbacked priest at the seemingly deserted cathedral
- notice that those two palookas in the dark corner of the bar have been intently watching you all night long
- realize that anyone up in that lighthouse will have seen you coming a mile away

You always make Sense Trouble Challenges, even if you get a Hold or Setback and have to play your character as unaware of impending trouble: see p. 27.

GMs should never require the use of this General Ability to find clues to the mystery at hand. Instead, use Investigative Abilities, defaulting to Evidence Collection when no ability seems more appropriate. Sense Trouble applies during a scenario's action and suspense sequences. In short, if not seeing something will get you attacked or confront you with some other practical ill-consequence, it's Sense Trouble.

### Shadowing (Physical)

You follow suspects without revealing your presence. You can:


- use binoculars or telescopes to keep watch on a target from a distance
- find undetectable vantage points
- hide in plain sight
- anticipate blind spots in your coverage and plan for them, or use them to lose your own shadowers

### Stability (Mental)

Remain in control of your thoughts and actions

when confronted with frightening or traumatic sights, sounds, or other sensory input. Stability allows you to:

- move toward danger a self-protective person would avoid
- avoid or suppress physical symptoms of terror and disgust, from nausea to adrenaline rush
- appear calm to others, even when terrified inside
- file a weird sight deep in your memory, keeping your mind intact by refusing to entertain its true significance

Encounters with the especially destabilizing forces and entities of the Mythos may leave you with a Mythos Shock  Problem. If you fail to counter it during play, you may suffer a mental breakdown during the story's denouement.

### Stealth (Physical)

You're good at moving (and standing still) without being noticed. You can:

- move silently
- hide in shadows or cover
- evade visual security, whether guards (usual) or cameras (unusual)
- listen at doors or windows without being overheard yourself

Use Stealth when you are creeping around unnoticed; if you are trying to lose a pursuer, use Shadowing. Outrunning a pursuer is Athletics or Fleeing.

### ATTEMPTS WITHOUT ABILITY

To use a General Ability that does not appear on your character card:

1. Justify to the GM why it feels plausible, in this genre, for you to make the attempt, even though we've not previously seen any evidence your character can do this sort of thing.
2. Assuming the GM accepts this, take an Extra Problem card and roll the one die it gives you. On tests requiring a number higher than 6 to Advance, you will not Advance. But maybe a Hold is all you need. As always, you know that number before embarking on the Challenge.

When the Challenge lacks an Extra Problem, you can't attempt it without the ability.

Pushes are no help in this instance; they're for

getting more out of your Investigative abilities.

Unlike your usual multiplayer RPGs, *GUMSHOE One-2-One* scenarios are designed knowing the character's abilities. Only a poorly designed one requires you to test abilities you don't have. Instead, these typically occur when you propose doing something not listed in the scenario, with an ability you don't have.

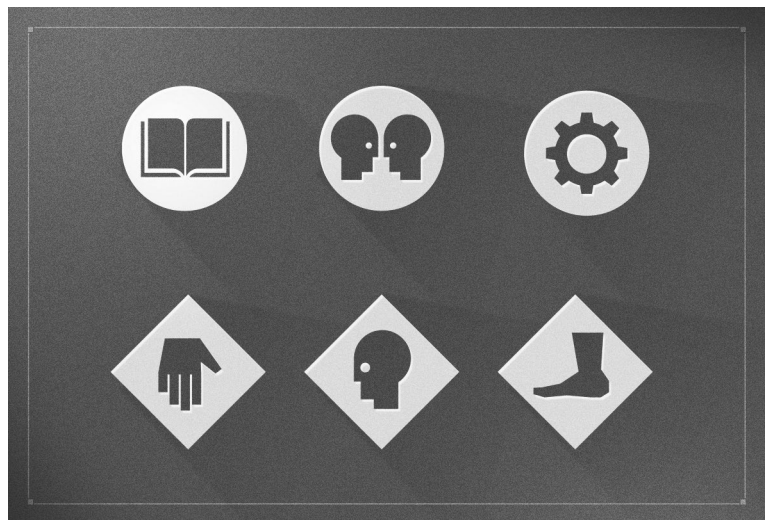
### WHEN GENERAL ABILITIES GO INVESTIGATIVE

Every so often a General Ability becomes a more likely avenue for information-gathering than any of the Investigative Abilities. Like a straight-up Investigative Ability, the player gets the information by looking in the right place for it. No Challenge or roll occurs.

*For example, you might bring the Driving ability into play as a way of allowing Langston to realize that whatever cut the brake line of the car that skidded onto the grass of the National Mall wasn't using any ordinary tool. It sliced clean through, as if by struck by some futuristic ray.*

When this happens in a published scenario, we boldface the name of the ability and note that it's being used as such.

***“Driving (as Investigative Ability) reveals that no ordinary tool cut the brake line.”***



## Tests

A **test** determines what happens when your Investigator tries to do something that might not work. Your GM decides whether your proposed action requires a test. If it doesn't matter to the outcome of the investigation, or if your failure to perform the action offers no interesting story choices, you succeed, no test required.

Two types of tests appear in the game: Quick Tests and Challenges. Challenges are more interesting and require a little more explanation, so we'll start there.

### CHALLENGES

Challenges occur in situations where degrees of success or failure can send the story into different possible branches, each of them interesting in its own way. Examples include:

- running away from a creature that surges out of the La Brea tar pits
- sneaking backstage at the nightclub
- fixing the car before the yokel with the rifle gets back

Sometimes you know that you'll get what you want, but you are only determining the costs of success (if any).

When you make a test, you describe what your Investigator is trying to do. You might directly suggest the General Ability you're using, or your GM may infer it from context.

### Die Rolls

Make a test by rolling a die. (*GUMSHOE* always uses an ordinary 6-sided die). Each General Ability has a number associated with it — for starting characters, always 1 or 2. This number indicates how many times you may roll the die when testing that ability. When you have multiple dice to roll, roll them one at a time, adding to your total as you go.

### Outcomes

Your final total determines the **Outcome** of your action. You either:

- **Advance**, succeeding especially well. This might grant you an Edge card, or allow you extra leverage in the situation at hand.
- **Hold**, which generally leaves you no worse off

than you were before, or allows you to move forward, though without additional benefit. (The occasional especially daunting Challenge may present a Hold that puts you in a tough spot, but which is not nearly as bad as the Setback).

- endure a **Setback**, worsening your situation. It may saddle you with a Problem card. Or it might simply make your immediate dilemma worse in some way.

Your GM tells you the number you need to meet or beat to score an Advance.

### Earning Additional Rolls

After rolling any die, you may gain an additional die roll by either spending an applicable Edge or taking on an **Extra Problem**.

When you take on an Extra Problem, you commit more to the task, but at a price. Think of it as going into debt, incurring future trouble to overcome your current obstacle. If you Advance or Hold, you leave the situation with only that Problem hanging over your head. If you suffer a Setback, you could wind up with two new Problems: the one listed in the Setback description, and the one you voluntarily took on. You can incur only one Extra Problem per test. Most represent minor setbacks, but a few turn out to be truly nasty. The GM does not reveal the nature of the Extra Problem until the end of the test, making the choice fraught and uncertain.

You may gain one extra die from spending an Edge and another from taking on an Extra Problem. You may never spend two Edges on a single Challenge. No Challenge provides more than one Extra Problem.

### Bonuses and Penalties from Edges

Some Edges add a bonus to your Outcome for as long as they remain in your hand. Add these bonuses to the first roll.

Others grant bonuses if you choose to discard the card. You can decide to do this at any time.

Problem cards in hand may impose penalties to the Outcome. Factor these in after the first roll. In some cases, a card's text applies only to your next test of an ability, and the card may then be discarded. Other, less obliging Problems hang around until you Counter them in some other way.

## Gaining Pushes

When you reach an Advance with dice still unrolled, you gain a Push (p. 9). This might well mean that you got both an Edge and a Push.

If you have an Edge card that allows you to roll an extra die on a test, you can spend it before rolling any of your Ability Dice, or wait until you've rolled them all. The first option increases your chances of earning a Push. The second lets you wait and see if you really need to spend that Edge on this Challenge, giving you the option of holding onto it for later.

## Back to the Story

After you have either:

- equaled or surpassed the number needed for an Advance, or
- rolled the die as many times as you are allowed and not scored an Advance

...the GM describes the story result of the Outcome, paraphrasing from the narrative text provided in the Challenge (or, if improvising Challenges on the fly, the GM describes the Outcome extemporaneously).

## Challenge Quick Reference

### On an Advance:

- You always get a special benefit, usually including an Edge.
- If you still have unrolled dice, you also get a Push.

### On a Hold:

- You end up neither worse nor better off, taking neither penalties or benefits.

### On a Setback:

- Something bad happens to you in the story, often represented by a Problem.

To increase the chance of gaining an Advance, you may take on an Extra Problem, allowing you to roll an additional die.

## Challenge Format

Published investigations present Challenges in the following format:

## NAME OF CHALLENGE

### *Name of Active Ability*

**Penalty:** If applicable, lists a penalty applied to your first die roll under certain circumstances.

Most often applies when you have a particular Problem card.

**Advance #+:** Quick description of what happens in the story when you advance. A published scenario, like the one in this book, may refer you to the main text for more detail. The number is the test's target to Advance. Any result equal to or higher than that lets you Advance. Often you earn an Edge; if so, it is named here.

**Hold #-#:** Description of what happens when the Outcome is a Hold. The numbers show the range in which a Hold occurs. The second number is always 1 less than the target to Advance.

**Setback # or less:** Description of what happens in the story when the Outcome is a Setback. Numbers show the range in which a Setback occurs. Names the Problem you incur, if any.

**Extra Problem:** Describes the most obvious Extra Problem the Investigator can take on to gain an additional die against this Challenge.



Write Challenges in the second person, as if addressed to the character. Here's an example:

## SNEAKING INTO JIMMIE HORGAN'S JOINT

**Stealth**

**Advance 8+:** You get in and out of Horgan's joint unseen, with the contents of the file folder in Horgan's desk. Kicks off the scene "File Folder" below. Gain Edge 3, "Blackmail Photos."

**Hold 4-7:** You realize that Horgan's men pay much more attention than you'd like to the door you want to sneak through. You can leave without their realizing you were casing the joint, but you'll have to figure out some other way to get that file.


**Setback 3 or less:** Horgan's men confront you. Spend a Push on a suitable Interpersonal ability, or they take you out to the alley to make with the brass knuckles.

**Extra Problem:** Problem 7, "They're Onto You"

EDGE #

### Blackmail Photos

Spend for an Interpersonal Push when dealing with Horgan or either of the Kane sisters. You have to be willing to show them the photos and portray yourself as ruthless enough to use them.




PROBLEM #

### They're onto You

*Continuity*  
Horgan and McShane suspect you might be poking into their illegal affairs. They might take action against you if they see you around again.

Until you win back their trust, possibly with a Reassurance Push, you can't make other Interpersonal Pushes on them.



### Immediate Consequences

Some Advances confer a bonus or extra die on another test that will happen right away. Some Setbacks impose a penalty. Since they are resolved right away and don't need to be tracked from one scene to the next, they don't require the use of Edge or Problem cards.

### Voluntary Losses

The player can always decide not to engage in a test, but instead to accept the consequences of a Setback result. This might happen when the player decides that failure introduces an interesting or challenging story possibility. Stability and Cool tests are the most likely to inspire a player to take a voluntary loss.

### Reading Results Text

Snippets of text portray the Advance, Hold, and Setback results as second-person narration, directed at the detective. In some cases, usually in Stability and Cool tests, they may even suggest the character's perceptions, emotional responses, or thoughts. Although the GM can always read them out verbatim, usually the player will find it more natural to hear them paraphrased into a less polished, but more spontaneous, narration. Where possible, the GM should break this text into small chunks, inviting the player to participate in a back-and-forth dialogue. See the example below.

## Challenge Example

*You undertake the Challenge “Sneaking into Jimmie Horgan’s Joint,” above. You have two Ability Dice in Stealth. The GM tells you that you need an 8 to Advance. You roll the first of your dice and get a 5. That isn’t enough, so you roll again and get a 2, for a total of 7 — still short of your target. You can either accept a Hold result, or take on an Extra Problem in order to get the third die roll that will assure an Advance. You decide to take the Extra Problem, and gain both the Advance (and its “Blackmail Photos” Edge) and the Extra Problem, “They’re Onto You.”*

*The GM paraphrases the Advance text, leaving you spaces to contribute additional narrative detail. “How do you get in?”*

*“I wait until his floor-walkers are distracted by something.”*

*“There’s a big jackpot at the craps table, and a drunk jumps up and down excitedly, drawing everyone’s attention.”*

*“That’s my moment. I slip into the hallway leading to Horgan’s office.”*

*“You see the folder you’re looking for on his desk.”*

*“I grab it and head back out again.”*

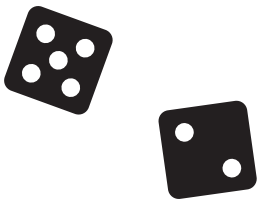
*“As you head out, you see McShane on the other side of the casino.”*

*“Uh-oh. Does he see me?”*

*“He sure seems to.”*

*“That’s bum luck. But I got what I needed. Let’s hope it’s worth the price.”*

*The GM then gives you the Extra Problem card.*




## Handling Problems and Edges

These notes guide you in using Edges and Problems during play.

### FORMATTING

The cards in this game use the following format.

Story material comes first; this is italicised under the heading, and provides a description of what prompts the card. Next comes rules material, in regular style; this includes the Ability the card relates to, and then the outcome of an Advance, Hold and Setback result. Any Extra Problems which can be taken are listed at the bottom of the card.

Some cards might not have both - cards omit the story material when their title says everything there is to say: “Stabbed” or “Smashed Headlight” require no further elaboration. Other cards present only story material, leaving the player and GM to weave them into the narrative in the course of play. The four possible opening Problem cards for “The Fathomless Sleep” work this way, for example, as do most Mythos Shock  cards.

### WHAT “NEXT” MEANS

Some Problems apply a penalty to the character’s next test, or next test of a particular type. As a player, you can’t burn off the penalty by using it on a pointless test with no meaningful bearing on the storyline. Only tests called for by the GM or the scenario, or which: a) make narrative sense; and b) threaten to put you in a worse position on a Setback, count as “next tests” for this purpose.

### WHEN INSTRUCTIONS DIFFER

When the text of an Edge or Problem card contradicts that of a Challenge, treat the card as an exception that takes precedence.

*For example, the text of a Challenge may specify that Edges applying to tests of General/Physical General Abilities, or Fleeing in particular, can be applied to the present test, in which the detective and an innocent bystander are running away from ghouls. If, however, the player has an Edge called Ghoul Lore, which can be applied to any test where ghouls are present, the card wins out, ignoring the apparently more restrictive Challenge text.*

Where the text of a Problem and an Edge conflict, the Edge takes precedence.

**DUPLICATES**

Except where indicated, if you get an Edge or Problem you already have, it is duplicated, adding an additional copy to your stack. In the case of an Edge, this represents a benefit you can use more than once, and/or one that conveys an additional benefit. For a Problem, it means your dilemma has doubled in intensity. You must Counter each card separately, reflecting a dilemma that has just become twice as bad as it was.

Bonuses and penalties “stack” to use gaming parlance. Add together all active Penalties/ Bonuses when applying them to a Challenge.

*The text of the Problem “Wrenched Back” reads:*

*-2 on your next General/Physical test, -1 on the test after that, then discard.*

*You have one copy of “Wrenched Back”, and have already applied its -2 penalty to a test. Now you get another. In the following scene you take a fighting Challenge against mind-controlled senators. You take the -1 penalty accruing from the first copy of “Wrenched Back” and the -2 from the second (since this is your first General/Physical test since getting that copy of the card). The total penalty is -3.*

**COUNTERING PROBLEMS**

Problems may reduce your range of options in the story at hand. For example, “They’re Onto You” forces you to tread warily around Horgan and McShane, or spend time trying to allay their suspicions.

Problems left unaddressed at the end of the story can lead to a downbeat ending. To prevent your adventure from ending in remorse, dissipation, bruises, or macabre demise, do your best to counter your Problems before the mystery resolves.

To counter a Problem, you must do something that would credibly get it out of your way. This may require a successful Test or the expenditure of a Push or Edge.

*Realizing that Horgan is probably onto you, you head over to his office to trade wisecracks. You successfully portray yourself as a go-along-to-get-along type who would never dream of upsetting his applecart. The GM charges you a Reassurance Push to achieve this.*

**Taking Time**

The most common way to Counter a problem is to Take Time. When Taking Time, the detective momentarily puts the investigation aside to deal with the issue raised by the problem.

*Viv watches from hiding as crooked Broadway producer Sid Diamond and his thugs kill songwriter Danny Munich. She can’t save him, but at least she can try to stay alive to make sure Diamond later faces justice. The scenario calls for a Cool Challenge not to gasp in horror as they beat Danny to death. As player, you elect to take on an Extra Problem to make sure you get at least a Hold, and manage to stay silent. You do, but are left with this card:*

PROBLEM

### Facial Twitch

*Your rational mind knows you had no way to save Danny. The rest of you isn’t so quick to forgive. Inner turmoil manifests itself as an incessantly twitching left eye.*

You can’t Push Interpersonal Abilities. Counter by Taking Time to mentally regroup.



*How exactly you mentally regroup depends on how you choose to describe it. Your particular interpretation of Viv paints her as a hard-charging type who releases her frustrations physically. You tell the GM she’s headed to her all-woman sparring club to sock a punching bag*

*into submission, imagining all the while that it's Sid Diamond's contemptuously grinning face. This gets rid of that twitch. You discard the card.*

In a few cases, Taking Time may require a Quick Test or Challenge. More often the player simply describes a brief interlude scene. The text of certain Problem cards explicitly indicates what this scene might look like. The GM may decide that your alternate solution works better than the suggested one. Players can also suggest ways to Take Time to get rid of Problems whose text doesn't describe a Counter at all.

Unless specified in the card text, Taking Time never removes a Problem marked as a Mythos Shock ⚡ (p. 32).

Taking Time is not without cost. Some scenarios may find your character working against the clock to accomplish a particular end: getting the antidote before the client succumbs to poison, finding the bomb before it goes off, or rescuing the kidnap victim before the cultists ritually strangle him.

Without a deadline, Taking Time typically gives enemies, rivals, and nuisances time to make moves against you they otherwise couldn't. These incidents, called Antagonist Reactions, are described for GMs on p. 60.

## QUICK TESTS

On occasion, your detective may face a very straightforward obstacle where you can only succeed or fail, with no particular ongoing advantages or disadvantages arising from the result. In this case, you undertake a Quick Test. If you hit the Advance number, you succeed. If not, you fail, but nothing especially bad happens. You don't gain Edge or Problem cards from the Outcome of a Quick Test. Although you can spend an Edge to gain an extra die on a Quick Test, the GM will warn you that it carries lower stakes than a full Challenge and therefore might not be worth it. Although ongoing Penalties from Problem cards apply to Quick Tests, you may not discard the Problem card.

GMs choose Quick Tests for situations where big positive or negative results are either hard to

think of, or would take the story in an annoying or fruitless direction. Quick Test Difficulties should range from 3–4.

*Let's say Viv wants to sneak into a skyscraper's telephone room in hopes of overhearing any dish its operators might have on the building's resident business tycoon, Eli Parnham. With Viv's Disguise ability, it's entirely possible that some players will try to put it to use here, having her show up in an operator's uniform and pretend to be a new hire. Viv could approach the operators in a less extravagant way and get the same information. But when you put Disguise on the character card, some players are gonna want to use it...*

*Preparing for this eventuality, the scenario's designer, Ruth, considers all the possible Setbacks that would result if Viv gets caught. That would let Parnham know she's looking into him, but he's not the culprit anyway. Rival reporter Lawrence Ames might toss her some wisecracks about promoting her to the phone pool the next time she pops into the office. Any more serious consequences would pull Viv away from the main plotline, toward petty annoyance. Rather than try to force this into the Challenge format, Ruth decides to use a Quick Test.*

If you have trouble thinking of Problems, including Extra Problems, for a Challenge, that's a sign that you should probably replace it with a Quick Test.

Where the result lacks any whiff of danger or great import, skip even the Quick Test and allow the ability use to succeed automatically.

Sometimes you'll envision a possible Challenge for which you can think of only two Outcomes. As long as there's an Edge or Problem to arise from it, it's still a Challenge, not a Quick Test.

## NO SECRET TESTS

On occasion, the GM may be tempted to make a secret Challenge roll on the player's behalf.

The classic example occurs with Sense



### Challenge, Quick Test, or Neither?

SITUATIONS	RESOLUTION METHOD
<i>Both success and failure lead to interesting story developments. Either could bring additional consequences, negative and positive, that might matter later.</i>	<b>Challenge</b>
<i>Both success and failure lead to interesting story developments. Neither inspires compelling additional consequences for later scenes.</i>	<b>Quick Test</b>
<i>Failure would be boring.</i>	<b>Automatic Success</b>

Trouble, a General Ability allowing the character to react quickly to approaching danger. A GM might reason that the player should not be tipped off if the character fails to notice something wrong.

In practice, it is almost always more effective to tip the player off by requesting a test, but in the case of failure, to withhold knowledge of what exactly the character didn't spot. Think of this generalized idea that something has been missed as the roleplaying equivalent of ominous music playing on the soundtrack, or an eerily composed shot from overhead. Should the player attempt to have the character act on the sense of unease, all the GM has to do is ask her to justify why it makes sense to do so. If she can, well, it makes sense, so allow it. If not, she'll relent, no harm, no foul.

*One-2-One* requires this level of transparency, because the player usually has the option to make a sacrifice, either spending an Edge or taking on an extra Problem, to increase her chance of success.

You may have noted that the game is entirely player-facing, meaning that the player makes all rolls, and the GM never touches a die. Secret tests would break that principle.

In practice, you can frame most Challenges so that the bad results of a Hold or dire ones of a Setback become immediately apparent anyway: the mountain lion leaps from behind the bush, Langston grows woozy after drinking the boiler-maker with the mickey in it, and so on.

### FIGHTS

Mystery stories featuring extended fight sequences are rare exceptions in film, TV and fiction. In multiplayer *GUMSHOE*, fights can nonetheless provide fun and excitement, without stopping the entire story dead when a player character bites the dust. The survivors mourn their loss and carry on the investigation as the player gets to work creating a new character.

In *One-2-One*, that won't do. The death of a sole protagonist takes a much greater toll on the story than the demise of one team member. When you set aside the possibility of death as a result, tactical choices lose their impact. So we omit these as well, providing a much more abstract combat system than multiplayer *GUMSHOE* — which compared to other RPGs is already plenty abstract.

A fight plays out like any other Challenge, using your Fighting ability. Describe yourself attacking in a way that fits your character as you perceive it: with guns, fists, hand-to-hand weapons, conveniently grabbed objects, or a combination thereof based on circumstances.

In some cases, facts you learn about opponents may help you when it comes time to fight them, granting you a Bonus on your Fighting test.



## Fight Outcomes

The GM spells out fight results like those of any other Challenge. Each fight may have different consequences, as seen in its description:

### DEEP ONE FIGHT

#### *Fighting*

**Advance 7+:** The Deep One flees, shrieking, and dives back into the sea cave. You gain access to the secret grotto, with half an hour before any of its fellow creatures show up. Gain Edge 8, “Fish-Cutting Blade.”

**Hold 4–6:** You realize that the Deep One will slash you to bits if you persist in trying to enter the grotto. You can safely withdraw to your Packard. It does not pursue you.

**Setback 3 or less:** You wake up in the grotto, chained to a sacrificial altar. See the “Grotto Altar” scene.


**Extra Problem:** Problem 11, “Clawed by Deep Ones.”

EDGE #8

#### Fish-Cutting Blade

##### *Continuity*

*A weird knife made from an alloy of steel and jade. Is that even possible?*

Spend for an extra die in a Fighting Challenge against Deep Ones, or to counter a Mythos Shock .



PROBLEM #11

#### Clawed by Deep Ones

*You have been slashed by the frog-like claw of a Deep One. It hurts like hell and a weird liquid seeps from the wound. You'd better get that taken care of.*

-2 on all General/Physical and -1 on all General/Manual tests until you Take Time to Counter this card.



This way of portraying fights lets the GM frame Challenges to exclude results that disrupt the flow of a single-protagonist narrative. On a Setback, Viv doesn't die hideously; she crawls away, shaken but still able to continue her investigation. On an Advance, she doesn't kill an antagonist whose premature exit from the story will preclude its most entertaining coming scenes, or render her ability to remain at large implausible. She gets something out of winning, but the bad guy still limps on, allowing the story to retain the satisfying shape and logic we expect from a mystery story.

## Horror and Madness


*Trail of Cthulhu* plunges your detective into a world not only of crime and mystery, but of supernatural terror. Beneath the already dark facade of 1930s society lurks a panoply of inhuman beings, eager to prey on your clients and on the people around you. On the periphery of seemingly mundane criminality dwell ancient aliens, hungry ghouls, and formless demons. Far above them on the cosmic scale exist greater entities, personifications of the cosmos' unreasoning chaos and cold indifference. They exist beyond human comprehension, where science and the



supernatural curve back on one another to become indistinguishable. Occult scholars who know more than is good for them group these monsters and pseudo-deities under a collective name: The Cthulhu Mythos. The term takes its name from one of the more active of these beings, dread Cthulhu, who dwells in torpor deep beneath the South Pacific. Some mortals dream of these slumbering entities, worshipping them as gods. The most adept of these cultists derive destructive sorcerous power from their hideous rituals. To varying degrees deluded, heedless, or psychopathic, they may act out of compulsion fostered by an ancestral corruption of the blood, or from an all-too-human lust for dominance and power.

In trying to fight them, you risk mental or moral breakdown, which may bring your story to a grim conclusion.

### STABILITY TESTS

As hard as you might be boiled, when you witness acts of shattering violence, or confront the unearthly horrors of the Mythos, the psychic trauma you undergo may lead to problems later. To see whether this happens, and to what extent, test your Stability General Ability against a target to Advance pegged to the severity of the incident. These Challenges work like any other. On Setbacks you take on Problem cards describing the specifics of your deteriorating mood and grasp of reality. These might be Mythos Shock  cards, arising from incidents that awaken your mind to dread cosmic truths. They may or may not be Continuity cards, which carry over into later scenarios if not somehow Countered.

For GMs, further tips on building Stability Challenges appear on p. 48.

## CAR WRECK

*You discover a roadster at the bottom of the ravine. Leona Farr, the starlet behind the wheel, has been decapitated. You nearly trip over her blond-tressed head.*

### Stability

**Advance 8+:** Aside from a momentary wince, the awful sight means nothing to you. Gain Edge 7, “Cool Customer.”

**Hold 5–7:** Though visibly shaken throughout the ensuing scene, you are able to take the awful sight in stride. Leona’s head might pop up in future nightmares from time to time, but most days you won’t think about it at all.

**Setback 4 or less:** This sight will haunt you for a long time to come. Gain Problem “Decapitated Starlet.”

**Extra Problem:** Problem 13, “Vengeful”

EDGE #7

### Cool Customer

*Word gets around that you kept your composure when the going got gruesome.*

Spend for a Push on any Interpersonal ability.



PROBLEM #12

### Decapitated Starlet

*The image of Leona’s head at your feet burns itself to the inside of your retinas. Whenever your mind wanders, a vivid memory of it assails your consciousness.*

-2 penalty on all General/Mental Challenges. Counter by Taking Time to submit to narcosynthesis under the care of a shrink.



PROBLEM #13

### Vengeful

*If you find out who killed Leona, you will be compelled to avenge her, risks be damned.*



## EXPOSURE TO THE MYTHOS


Throughout history, humankind has created mental constructs to shield itself from having to face the vast emptiness and meaningless entropy of the universe, as personified by its malign, alien creatures and pseudo-deities. These constructs include religions, philosophies, social mores, and simple dispositions like optimism or altruism. Exposure to the Mythos blasts these away, inducing despair, helplessness, and decision paralysis.

Some minds cracked by Mythos knowledge abandon qualm and empathy, and actively worship its crazed gods. In certain cases, people who come by their psychopathy naturally will deliberately seek out the Mythos as a source of power. They might go about this in a perfectly calm and

functional manner. Like many things common parlance might call insanity, this indicates an extreme lack of empathy and moral compass more than it does mental illness.



### Mythos Shock Cards

When you still have Problem cards at the end of a scenario, Stability Problems arising from brushes with the Mythos take precedence over all others in the bleak fate your character faces. These are called Mythos Shocks, and in published scenarios they are marked with the Mythos Icon: 

Mythos Shocks can never be Countered for free, or by Taking Time. To get rid of them, you must spend Edges. Only Edges marked as spendable on Mythos Shocks can be used for this purpose. It might take more than one Edge to get rid of an especially awful Mythos Shock.

Here's an example Stability test that might

## UNWRAPPING THE PAINTING

### Stability

**Advance 9+:** Sure, the picture is realistically rendered, but you don't let yourself believe that it was painted from an actual model. It's a work of fantasy. It has to be! Earn Edge 7. "Mighty Disbelief."


**Hold 5-8:** The painting unnerves you, but no more than a grisly crime scene photo

**Setback 4 or less:** Problem 12, "Eros and Thanatos."

**Extra Problem:** Problem 13, "Censorious Urge."

EDGE #7

### Mighty Disbelief

*You live in the here and now, with no patience for hocus-pocus. There's a rational explanation for everything.*  
Spend to counter a Mythos Shock .



PROBLEM #12

### Eros and Thanatos

#### Mythos Shock

*You can't shake the thought that the creature in this painting was real — and is somehow related to a woman you love, or loved once, or might hope to love.*



PROBLEM #13

### Censorious Urge

#### Mythos Shock

*To maintain your sense that the painting hasn't affected you, you must take any measures, no matter how mad, to destroy it once its usefulness to the case has ended. It doesn't count as admitting anything if you set it on fire and never ever think about it ever again.*



saddle you with a Mythos Shock. It occurs when you unwrap the work of art that a conspiracy of gangsters and grifters have been killing each other to possess. The signature in the corner reads “Richard Pickman.” It depicts one of the key figures of your case, Colonel Wakeland, posing with a monstrous, half-human being who bears a terrible resemblance to another, a fellow named Tom Bardette.

## Death

Your character never dies in mid-story, but can keel over at its the end: succumbing to wounds; shot by gangsters; knifed by cultists; or hauled into the sky to be torn to shreds by a bat-winged byakhee. This might happen when you fail Challenges in the final scene, or when un-Countered Problems call for ultimate doom in keeping with the horror genre and the cosmic despair of Lovecraft’s vision.

Or, you may suffer an irrevocable nervous collapse, also ending your character’s career. Either way, your next session of *Cthulhu Confidential* will have to star a new character.

## Improvements

Assuming your character survived with mind and body intact, at the end of each case, you can add one of the following:

- an Investigative Ability you lack
- a **tick** on a General Ability

A tick moves you incrementally toward a rating improvement in a General Ability. You gain no more than 1 tick per ability per case. Once you have 3 ticks in a General Ability, you cash them in to improve a rating from 1 to 2, or from 2 to 3.

General Abilities may never exceed 3.

Your total dice in Cool and Stability combined can never exceed 4.

You can take a tick in a General Ability you don’t have. Once you hit three ticks you get the ability, at one die. Be sure to take actions in each adventure justifying your eventual acquisition of the new ability.

# GM-ING ONE-2-ONE

*This chapter, addressed to the GM, shows you how to run the game for the player.*

## Intensity Management

In our responses from playtesters to this game, one theme stood out above all others: the one player, one GM format makes for an intense, intimate experience. Tension increases without other players to fall back on. The sole player remains constantly in the spotlight, without opportunities to sit back while others take the lead. Responsibility for thinking of the right questions and looking for information in the right places rests with your one player, who has to solve the puzzle without bouncing ideas off others. Nor is there any emotional respite from the bursts of lighthearted out-of-character kibitzing, banter, and digression that often relieve tensions in multiplayer games.

In the story, the character walks the mean streets alone, much more vulnerable to danger than a gang of well-armed Investigators ready to defend one another from enemies. Consistent with the physical realism expected from a hard-boiled detective tale, an outnumbered Investigator fights to get away unscathed, and does not hope to beat up four or five goons like the hero of an action movie.

Because the format inherently keeps the pressure on your solo player, as the GM you may find yourself looking for ways to give the player hope and confidence. Where most games contrive situations to make sure that the player characters physically overcome any final threats, here the detective can call in the cops or other reinforcements to handle the apprehensions — after she figures out who needs apprehending. This is what happens in the source material; it does not by definition deprive the hero of agency.

(Are you adapting *One-2-One* to a more

outlandishly stylized genre? Your samurai, wuxia or time agent detective might well lay waste to large teams of lowly henchmen in a single flurry of blows. Making that work requires only that you adjust the outcome descriptions as you write up Challenges. In these instances, you're relaxing tension by portraying a more forgiving universe, rather than easing up on the apparent difficulty of actions in an unforgiving one).

## Guiding the Player

When the feeling of the solo format threatens to turn the tension of individual play into the pressure of an overwhelming problem, act as a partner and guide your player through the story.

### HOW TO DISLodge A STUCK PLAYER GENTLY

Detectives in fiction — not to mention in real life — often reach a point where they hit a wall and can't think where to go next. There's nothing wrong with that happening to a game character. These moments of frustration intensify the feeling of triumph that comes from finally solving a puzzle. But they have to be moments, and not long stretches of frustrated stasis.

As the GM, you must expect to do more than you would in a multiplayer game to subtly point a stuck player toward the next fruitful lead. Before intervening, though, be sure that the player really has become stymied, and isn't just thinking things through.

You have the scenario in front of you, so you know what leads the character has yet to investigate, what has been learned but forgotten, and what might have been uncovered had a previous scene unfolded differently. Depending on

the situation, it might be most helpful to:

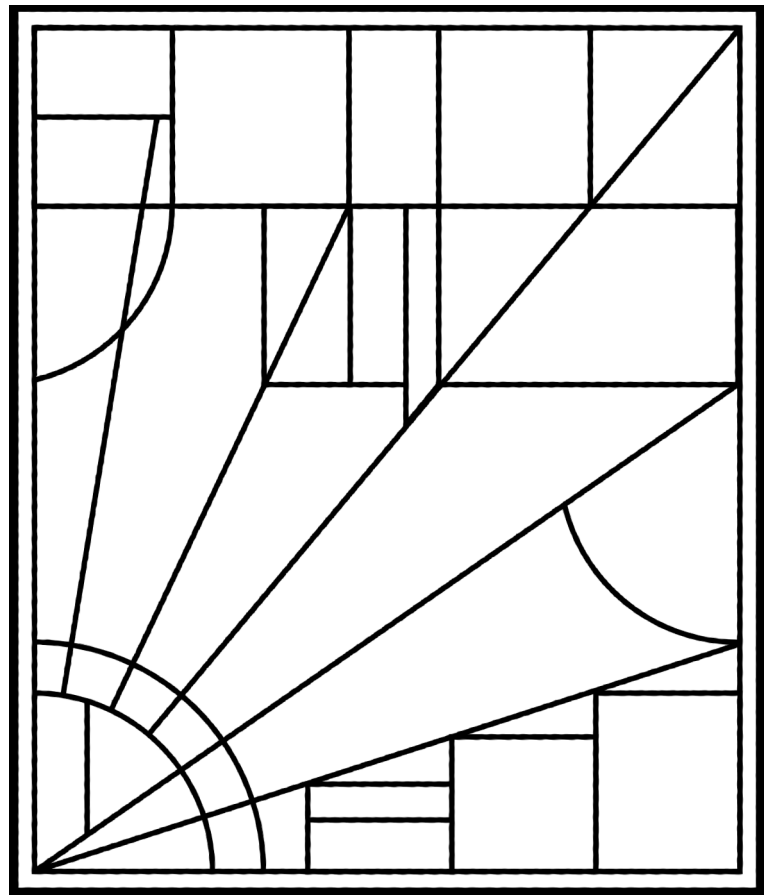
- review with the player the list of leads that haven't yet been looked into
- review what the Investigator knows so far
- mention lingering questions from previous scenes that cry out for follow-up

The balance between gesturing toward the right track and leading the player by the nose is easier to strike in practice than it is to talk about in theory. A quick verbal nudge is often all it takes to prompt the player toward the needed intuitive leap and choose a course of action.

### COMMON STICKING POINTS

Players tend to get stuck for a few common reasons.

- 1. Not wanting to talk to people.** Especially in the days of the internet, we'd rather get information from impersonal sources than engage with other people who might confuse, threaten, or embarrass us. Yet the detective genre depends on characters being willing to put themselves out there and engage in face-to-face questioning scenes; only by this means can they get the kinds of information that no one willingly commits to paper. Nudge the player toward actual conversations.
- 2. Especially not wanting to talk to scary people.** Players sometimes unconsciously remove from their mental list of leads encounters with GMCs whom they have good reason to fear. This came up more than once in test runs of "The Fathomless Sleep", with players blanking on Mickey Cohen as a person to talk to. Remind the player that *Cthulhu Confidential*, which is noir as well as horror, expects Investigators to be willing to talk to dangerous types.
- 3. Not wanting to talk in person.** Your player may try to protect the character by conducting interviews over the phone instead of in person. Remind the player that that same distance protects the witnesses from giving themselves away. Key interpersonal abilities like Intimidation, Reassurance — and, perhaps most importantly, Assess Honesty — don't work with Ma Bell standing in the way. Sometimes you have to look a mug right in the kisser to see if he's on the up-and-up.



- 4. Adopting too false a false persona.** To protect themselves from probable bad guys, players sometimes describe their detectives as approaching them under false pretenses. This happens in the source material, too, but it only works with a persona allowing the detective to ask the key questions. More than one "The Fathomless Sleep" player had Dex pretend to be an interested spiritual seeker when meeting Clara Nebel and/or William Pelley. After a certain point this made it hard to ask questions about Helen Deakin's disappearance. Address this by reminding the player, as she chooses her fake story, that it has to let her get at the key facts.
- 5. Needing to re-interview.** Often the player has missed a key point and should go back to a witness or suspect for more information. Remind the player that there is no shame in this. Happens all the time, in both fictional and real-world investigation.



In the appendix, on p. 293, you'll find a handy player-nudging shortcut, a handout called "How to Solve a Case." Provide it to your player in advance. When your player gets stuck, getting him back on the right track may be as simple a matter as pointing to the relevant bullet point.

### **"AS A SEASONED DETECTIVE..."**

Some hints can be fed to the player by reminding them of that the character knows more about investigative technique than they do:

- "As a seasoned detective, Dex would consider a stake-out here."
- "Viv's journalistic instincts tell her she's going to have to go down into that basement."
- "Langston has learned that sometimes you have to press men like this a little harder, whatever the risks."

This framing shows the *character* behaving with confidence and competence, even when the player is a little unsure.

### **SOURCES: THEY'RE HERE TO HELP**

Some players go to a Source only as a last resort, while others go off to jaw with their Sources between every Core scene. If the second approach works for the player, make it work for you. Sources exist to provide a sense of comfort and solidarity in a lonely noir world. Let the player gain support from them.

The player may use them as a way for you to act as a sounding board, in-character. Embrace that.

When they ask questions of Sources that the scenario puts in the mouths of GMCs, by all means dole out any clues that might logically arise from their specialized knowledge, remembering that they can't duplicate the direct experiences of witnesses in the case. But if, say, the scenario expects Langston to learn from an Air Force contact that the film of a UFO sighting has no photographic defects and seems genuine, he could just as easily go consult Scout Moore, his usual Source for the Photography ability.

### **GIVING OUT CLUES**

As you begin your scenario, you and the player will quickly fall into a rhythm of information dispersal. Don't let any advice given here stop you from giving

out clues in a way that feels natural to both of you.

Some players want to make frequent reference to their abilities. They want to call the shots by describing what their characters do to find clues.

Others prefer to have you supply lots of information without mentioning abilities by name.

Most fall in between, depending on the instance at hand.

Be alert to cues, and follow your player's lead. Every GM/player duo will do this a little differently.

### **SAYING YES TO INTERPRETATION**

When a player wants to deviate from the backgrounds provided for the characters, and you can't see any specific reason why that would prevent part of the scenario from taking place, say yes. For that matter, if you can see how to change that scenario roadblock and still say yes, say yes. We present detective personality details as a starting point, not to force you to play according to some established canon. As soon as you start playing with them, Viv, Langston and Dex become yours. Dex in particular appears as a set of genre tropes, waiting for players to fill in the details.

### **PUNCTURING EXCESS TENSION**

When you see your player struggling with the pressure of being onstage all the time, look for ways to lighten the mood, to give her time to think, or both. Ease off the Antagonist Reactions (p. 60), for example, when the player clearly needs a drop in tension.

You might insert a low-stakes Source scene to give a player needed breathing room. Lt. Hartman might show up to ask Langston if he wants to go on a hike in Rock Creek Park. Louisa Reynolds could insist that Viv join her at the Cotton Club to see Cab Calloway perform.

One player implemented the awesome idea of having Dex pause for journaling breaks, in which she reminded herself of where he was in the case while supplying his hardboiled voice-over narration. This had the extra advantage of giving the GM time to think and regroup, too.

### **WHY SCENARIOS GO DEEP**

*GUMSHOE One-2-One* twins simple rules with complex, layered scenarios. They aim to give

the feeling of depth you get from the tangled conspiracies of a Raymond Chandler novel.

With the benefit of playtesting, we sure hope we have avoided creating anything like the famous story wherein William Faulker and Leigh Brackett, writing Howard Hawks' film adaptation of *The Big Sleep*, asked who killed a minor character, chauffeur Owen Taylor. Hawks' telegram to Chandler elicited the response: "Damned if I know."

This "probably-happened" fable highlights the challenge of writing complex mysteries.

The interactive nature of RPGs means that you can't depend on your leading characters not to examine the weak parts of your storyline. Players poke at plot holes. With a group game, discussions between players can save your bacon by helping to cover these holes up. A group may float enough alternate theories of the case to throw a veil of useful confusion over any plot inconsistencies you may accidentally introduce. In solo play, the case becomes clearer — and falls apart if the player finds something that couldn't have happened the way you thought it did.

For this reason, the game focuses on preparation over improvisation. You can still improvise, but it's tough, even for an experienced GM. If you don't trust me on that, ask Owen Taylor.

### REACTING TO THE UNEXPECTED

That said, no amount of preparation allows you to anticipate every possible player move. Use the sample Challenges starting on p. 50 and the sample Edges and Problems in the Appendix as baselines to adapt to any surprises. Don't be afraid to rely on Quick Tests until the storyline loops back into territory laid out in the written scenario

## Running Sources

The witnesses, suspects, and clients of the mystery at hand often create dramatic tension by peppering the protagonist with verbal barbs and jabs, or by getting under his skin in other ways. Sources provide a welcome contrast to the charged and antagonistic dialogue scenes that make up the bulk of a scenario. They invite the detective to take the load off, perhaps light up one of the period's ubiquitous cigarettes, and enjoy a belt of the hard

### *How Long Are Sessions?*

Though written with the expectation of a four-hour play session per scenario, playtesters reported widely varying results. In the case of "The Fathomless Sleep", they ranged from a ruthlessly efficient three hours to an epic nine hours.

Short or long, everyone enjoyed the lengths they wound up playing. In a solo game, pacing is about going at the speed the player dictates.

Plan for four hours, but prepare to be surprised.

stuff. Sources not only divulge clues, they also provide an emotional up-note. Always play these sequences as low-key, collegial moments.

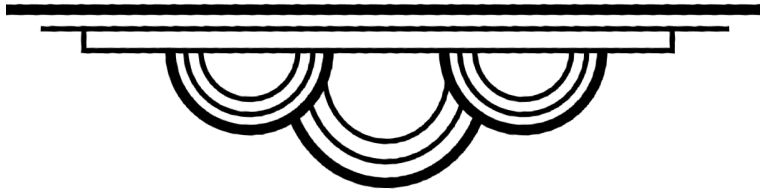
In addition to information, the player might go to Sources to counter Problems.

- Dex's shrink contact also has a medical degree, and can patch up assorted bullet wounds, claw marks, and prescribe pain killers for contusions.
- Viv's occult contact, Stella Abrams, could help Viv over a jarring incident by throwing the clay around with her in a joint pottery-making session.
- Langston's buddy Mel Hartman, like everyone who took the OSS training course in sabotage, knows his way around a wrench. The two can spend an afternoon pounding out the dents in the body of Langston's vehicle, Countering the Problem card "Battered Car."

### SOURCES AS CLIENTS

In further cases you devise, Source characters could put the detective onto a case. To stick with the idea that Sources provide support rather than stress, they themselves should typically not be in trouble or under threat. More likely, they introduce Dex to the client of the week, whose crisis the player can worry about instead.

- A research partner of Virginia Ashbury's reports that strange figures skulk around his mountain cabin. Are they spies, trying to steal his radium research? The rural sheriff

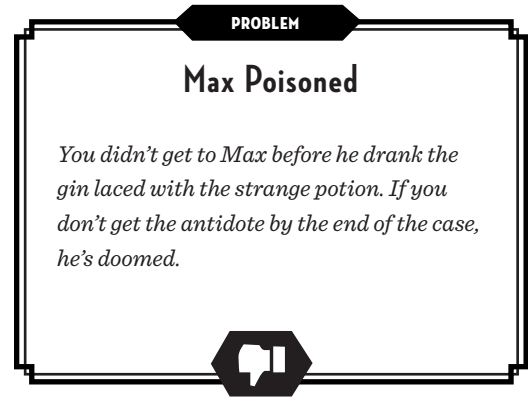


isn't equipped to handle an espionage case, so Virginia suggests he hire Dex.

- An archaeological collector friendly with Viv's explorer pal Esteban Manuel Aragon Gonzalez buys an Egyptian sarcophagus, only to have it disappear from a locked room.
- An upstanding member of Reverend Thompson's congregation stands accused of murdering his girlfriend's mother. He confesses to Thompson what he won't tell his lawyers: it was a spectral figure that drove the knife in! The Reverend doesn't believe that for a minute, but he does ask Langston to nose around a bit.
- Rosamund Carter introduces Langston to Wingate Peaslee, a visiting professor from Miskatonic University. Peaslee needs an Investigator schooled in the ways of Washington to look into evidence suggesting that key officials have been possessed by members of the ancient, inhuman Great Race of Yith. His father suffered this fate back in the 'teens, and now Peaslee suspects a spreading menace.
- Max Weyl contacts Dex on behalf of Curt Kuehle, an acquaintance from his fondly remembered days amid the decadent Berlin demi-monde. Kuehle has gotten himself mixed up with an international band of swindlers who stole a rare tome of supposed esoteric wisdom and are now busily betraying and murdering each other to gain possession of it. Illuminated by Templar-affiliated monks on the island of Malta, the original *Unaussprechlichen Falke* excites the dreams of rare book collectors everywhere. All Curt needs Dex to do is hold onto the securely-wrapped tome for a few days while he sends his former confederates on a wild goose chase. If pressed to name them, Curt alludes to a wily, book-hungry German baroness named Birgit von Kant. Surely no spiral into murder and madness could possibly result from such a trivial assignment....

## THREATENING SOURCES

If your player ventures the thought that your hard-boiled Mythos tales lack trauma and horror, then you might ratchet up the stakes by placing Sources directly in danger. Killing them off in mid-case might provide a tough shock. For deeply sustained suspense, use a Problem card to hang the threat of a Source's demise over the detective like the proverbial sword.



## Replacing Sources

Allowing Sources to become potential victims raises the prospect of having to replace them. If a deceased Source leaves the detective without someone to consult on an area of expertise, you can either:

- ask the player to describe someone else the character already knows who might be able to fill him in
- have the character seek out, and make a cold approach to, a suitable expert as part of the investigation at hand

The player might choose to approach a witness from a previous case. For example, should something terrible happen to Madame Eva, maybe Dex seeks out Clara Nebel, whom he first meets as a suspect in "The Fathomless Sleep", as his adviser of choice on matters occult or Cthulhoid.

This process could result in multiple new Sources replacing a single dead Source. Without Lt-Col Hartman, Langston might find one new Source of tips on the outdoors, and someone else to dispense forensic insights.

## Running Challenges

Challenges presented in published scenarios include text in the second person, addressed to the detective. Paraphrase it naturally rather than simply reading it aloud out of the book or from your screen. Better yet, briefly encapsulate what has happened and invite the player to describe the action.

*During the scenario “The Fathomless Sleep,” the player scores an Advance on the Challenge “Struggling with Roy.” The text says, “You overpower Roy, knocking him to the floor.” You add an imperative: “Describe how you do that.” The player fills in the details: “He tries to come at me with the wrench but I duck down and grab him by the leg, knocking him off-balance. His head smacks a car bumper on the way down. I’m on top of him, my knees pinning his elbows, before he can recover his senses.”*

Often you’ll have to treat results text as a guideline only, adjusting details to fit the way you and the player have already described events in the scene.

*Viv’s player scores an Advance on a test to hold a Deep One at bay. The text reads: “The thing understands what a gun is, when you poke it in the ribs with one.” However, you already established that Viv had her gun confiscated back at the hotel. Instead, referencing another item described in the scene so far, you adapt the line, saying: “You grab a pitchfork, forcing it back into the corner.”*

### SUICIDAL CHOICES AND OTHER RIDICULOUSNESS

Most players have their detective make only those choices that arise credibly from the situations you describe. When confronted by a dozen goons and their baseball bats at a migrant worker camp, a sensible player doesn’t say, “I leap in and attack them all at once.” When stuck on top of a construction crane two hundred feet above the pavement they don’t describe themselves leaping

off and hoping for the best. They don’t even consider such nonsensical options. They’re buying into the basic premise of the exercise, in hopes of having the fun it promises.

A small number of roleplayers enjoy rejecting a game’s premise and attempting to subvert it by exposing its alleged loopholes and logical errors. This is the RPG equivalent of having more fun dismantling toys than playing with them.

Players who fit this profile could, one imagines, react to *One-2-One’s* idea that death and other story-ending consequences only happen after the case wraps up by proposing the ridiculous or suicidal actions described above.

“If I don’t die until the end, that means I’m immortal until then!”

That’s definitely what Igor from John Kovalic’s *Dork Tower* comic would conclude, and therefore it’s definitely wrong.

Simply respond to such literalists by explaining that the character knows what would doom him, and is smarter than that, even if the player controlling his actions isn’t. Ask the player if he really wants to end the story in the middle on a note of complete anticlimactic absurdity.

Better yet, if you know that someone takes this adversarial approach to GMs and rules sets, find someone else to play with. In *One-2-One*, you only need one player, and with virtual tabletops you have a whole world full of genuinely collaborative partners to choose from.

Sometimes a player will propose a seemingly absurd or suicidal action out of sincere confusion. Always check to make sure you haven’t mis-described the situation in a way that makes an action that seems ludicrous to you look perfectly sensible to the player.

### *Sudden Endings*

In some rare cases the story may take you to a place where it feels appropriately conclusive for the character to fail fatally, even though the case has not yet been solved.

If, and only if, the player wants it, let it happen. Join together in describing the horrific glory of it all.



## INTERPRETING EDGES

Treat listed benefits from Edges as a starting point, not a stricture. If you or your player see an entertaining equivalent benefit for an Edge, by all means exercise your creativity.

Some Edge cards list narrative possibilities without mechanics. Take license to apply these mechanically as feels apropos.

*Capitol Colour's "Big Spender" card merely states that Langston doesn't have to worry about money. But if Langston's player proposes it, he might be able to discard the card to get a free Push on his Bargain ability. In the story, this might play out as Langston spending the whole haul on a massive but useful bribe.*

As you can see from the Edges given in this book, not all are created equal. For some to exert a strong impact on the player, others have to be a little less impressive than the norm. Storytelling is all about rhythm, pal.

## Creating Investigators

If something terrible happens to the character at the end of a case, you may have to create a new detective to solve cases in your chosen city.

Character cards reflect the basic abilities required for mysteries in this genre. Ask the player if she cares whether the new Investigator has the exact same list of optimal skills. If she says no, just change the character's name, pick a different defining Problem at the top of the next case, and you're off to the races. Character uniqueness doesn't matter so much in *One-2-One*, where the player doesn't have to distinguish her PC from a group of others. If Lew Archer doesn't differ so radically from Philip Marlowe, who himself has much in common with Sam Spade, Viv Sinclair's successor can get away with being much like her, save for a handful of personality quirks.

Alternately, the player can choose to swap out any Investigative Abilities for others, as per the list on p. 8. Tread especially carefully when dropping Interpersonal Abilities, the reliable warhorses of any hardboiled mystery.

In the case of General Abilities, the player can swap out any ability for any one not listed on Dex's card, giving the new ability the same number of dice as the one she's dropping. To maintain some degree of emotional vulnerability essential to both horror and noir, the character can never start play with more than 3 dice total divided between Cool and Stability. Entirely dropping a frequently called-upon General Ability will lead to a lot of failures, so we advise caution there, too.

When creating a detective from scratch, a good starting point is to have 14 or so Investigative Abilities, and around 18 dice in General Abilities, with no single ability exceeding 2 dice. You can go up or down a few points in either case, as you're not worrying about maintaining a sense of equality between multiple players. Basically you're looking to strike a balance between too many abilities to remember and not enough to feel competent. Stick to the above-mentioned Cool/Stability limit, though.

## Creating Scenarios

Start by creating and running mysteries that use "The Fathomless Sleep" as a model. Go read that now, if you haven't already.

As you become more experienced, you may decide that the formula used there bears infinite variation. Or you may experiment, branching out to other structures of your own devising.

### PREMISE

Start by establishing the question the detective must answer, along with the answer to that question.

The question in "The Fathomless Sleep" is: *What drove Helen Deakin mad?*

The answer is: *Roy Bedacht put her in a cage and exposed her to ghouls.*

Pick a question and answer that connect the two genres you're mashing up: hard-boiled detective and Lovecraftian horror. Helen's world of gambling and gangsters supplies the first. The ghouls deliver the second.

### THE WHOS AND THE WHYS

Now fill in the events that led to the answer, as driven by the characters who made them

happened. Together these two elements fill in the scenario's **Cast**, and a cohesive summary of **What Happened**.

In "The Fathomless Sleep", Roscoe Deakin got into debt with casino owner Whitey Alexander, so Helen Deakin tried to protect him by becoming Whitey's girl, but then tried to double-cross Whitey by getting a copy of his books from Phil Block. She gave these to Mickey Cohen, who works for rival gangster Bugsy Siegel, but he in turn double-crossed her, semi-unknowingly turning her over to Roy Bedacht and his ghouls when she grew too insistent about collecting her reward.

Double-crosses and gangland conspiracies make up the web which any noir detective must then untangle. These essential plot devices that fuel the genre.

Flesh out the Cast with additional witnesses, informants, and ancillary conspirators. Any good mystery requires likely alternate suspects whom the detective must rule out before settling on the true culprit. Give these characters secrets they wish to conceal, or other factors that make them look guilty. Actually being guilty of other offenses, connected to the main plot or not, always works splendidly.

A timeline of events will help you run the scenario. The process of assembling it may help reveal logical holes in your storyline. Better to fix them in advance than have to scramble when the player finds them, mid-game.

Creating a map of the Cast and their relationships to one another is helpful, bordering on indispensable. If you can later convert it to a format allowing you to reveal each Cast member as the detective encounters them, so much the better. During in-house playtesting, we had great success by creating character tokens on the *Roll20* virtual tabletop app. It allows you to move tokens from a secret GM-only map layer to a layer visible to the player. A map background of the 1937 L.A. region added visual flavor. You may find an alternate set of electronic tools to manage this, particularly if you're reading it in some newfangled future that leaves 2017 in the technological dust.

## CREATING STARTING PROBLEMS

Now step back for a moment and see if your detec-

tive needs an introductory Problem, like the four given in the opener for "The Fathomless Sleep."

If you've already run at least one scenario for your player, the detective probably has some lingering Problems still in hand. In that case, write an introduction that connects the most salient of those Problems to the assignment given in the first scene.

*One playtest of "The Fathomless Sleep" left Dex in possession of the Problem card "Gambling Debt." Springboarding from the events of the story, the player detailed Dex's grim coda accordingly: he wound up in hock to Mickey Cohen and Bugsy Siegel. Were I to run another session for that player, I'd build my opener to have Mickey ordering him to crack the case, as partial payment of his escalating debt.*

New starting Problems become necessary only for introductory scenarios featuring a new detective character, or when the last adventure allowed the detective to dispense of all significant Problems. Always create three or four of them to give the player a sense of control over the character's story arc. Some players prefer to invent their own, and are good at it. Whenever you can offload narrative tasks onto the player, seize the opportunity. This works best when you have enough lead time to ensure that the player-created Problem can have an impact in one or more places in the scenario. A strong Problem can be plugged into any story in its genre without significant work on your part. When you can't see a way to build consequences for a player-proposed Problem into your case, ask the player to propose a different one. Plenty of players would sooner pick from several options you supply than have to invent one from whole cloth.

Write Problems you create in a general manner, allowing the player to customize them with specific detail when you play the scene out.

In the case of a new installment of an ongoing series, when you run the scene, invite the player to explain how this new Problem came to bedevil the detective since last time.

## INTRODUCTORY SCENE

Devise an introductory scene that references the detective's ongoing Problem, and then presents him with the case and its fundamental question. Set this in the standard starting location associated with this Investigator — such as that classic opening, “a dame walked into my office” — or switch up the formula to place the meeting with the client somewhere else. The Investigator might be summoned to the office or abode of a wealthy or powerful client; a furtive client might request a meeting on neutral ground, like a coffee shop, nightclub or athletic club. Otherwise, the introductory scene should contain the elements of any other, as detailed below.

## ANATOMY OF A SCENE

Scenes in published *GUMSHOE* scenarios start with header entries to help the GM quickly spot their purpose and place in the flow of the case.

### Scene Types

The Scene Type header entry shows the GM the scene's purpose.

An **Introduction** scene starts the story. It kicks off the case, presents the detective with the question that must be answered, and probably introduces a client. It also contains the elements of a Core scene:

A **Core** scene provides enough information for the detective to move onto another scene, and deeper into the central mystery, so long as the detective asks the right questions and looks in the right place.

An **Alternate** scene presents a colorful, tense, diverting, or otherwise entertaining scene and perhaps some supplementary information, but need not be played out in order for the detective to solve the central mystery. Alternate scenes may allow the detective to skip some scenes designated as Core and still crack the case.

An **Antagonist Reaction** scene describes an event, usually bad, that unfolds in response to the Investigator's actions. Its aftermath can provide information, but doesn't have to. Most often, as the name implies, a villainous or obstructive character is taking action against the hero. On occasion the detective might have to contend with impersonal

or abstract forces, like a storm, or perhaps his own inner demons, as suggested by a Problem card.

Fleshed-out Antagonist Reaction scenes occur whether or not the detective Takes Time. A list of Antagonist Reactions may be found in the quick table format seen on p. 133. These can be used as needed, including when the character Takes Time.

A **Conclusion** scene reveals the answer to the central question.

The **Denouement** wraps up the story. It requires little or no prior writing from you, as its shape depends on events that happen during play. Usually it features the Investigator reporting back to the client, and then a description of the case's grim coda, if any.

### Lead-Ins

This header entry lists other scenes that might precede this one when you play out the case.

### Lead-Outs

This entry lists other scenes its core clues might lead the detective to explore next.

Think of Lead-Ins and Lead-Outs as bookmarks. When running the game, they orient you in relationship to the other scenes. More crucially, when designing the scenario, they remind you to create options for the player. When every scene has only one Lead-In or Lead-Out, you've created a linear storyline that can only unfold in one way. When a scene can be reached, and followed up, in a number of ways, your player has meaningful choices to make.

A few scenes with only one Lead-Out are fine, as the multiple Lead-Outs in other scenes allow the detective to pick up another thread of the investigation.

### Body Text

The body text of your adventure may consist of fully written material. For a scenario you're not planning to show anyone, point-form scrawlings will suffice. The more you write out, the less likely you are to miss a plot hole that might send you scrambling when you run the adventure. That said, the worst scenario is one you never run, because writing it all down feels too much like time-consuming homework.

Within a scene, deal with its basic elements in whatever order you prefer.

Find a quick, evocative way to evoke the setting of each scene. Conjure a mood with details of location and, where applicable, background characters.

Describe the character around whom the scene revolves. Notes on her agenda enable you to decide what she does in response to an unexpected choice by the player. When writing compelling details into a supporting character's backstory, see to it that the player has some way of discovering or somehow interacting with that material. When you are caught up in the flow of adventure creation, this need can be surprisingly easy to forget.

Sometimes, to convey motivation, you have to include facts the witness would never intentionally reveal. Do so sparingly.

Avoid scenes that require the detective to talk to more than one major character at a time. Portraying multiple supporting characters simultaneously as a GM will usually prove taxing for you and confusing for the player.

To include more than one GMC in a scene, break the scene up so that the Investigator interacts with them in sequence, not simultaneously. For an example of this, see the scene "The Alegria", p. 115.

Populate the scene with all the background extras you want. Shoot not for an empty world, but for a story where two-person dialogues predominate.

After setting out the context of the character and locale, segue into the clues the detective will seek in your scene. A bullet-point format for the clues, core and otherwise, enables you to find them quickly during play.

### Clue Delivery

You may find it helpful to arrange clues according to what the character must do in order to discover them.

Some are apparent: the detective always notices them because they're out in the open, staring everyone in the face.

- Mr. Kettering sweats and appears patently jittery.
- The former contents of a wastebasket have been emptied on the desk.
- A body lies sprawled on the sofa, a smoking gun cradled in its lap.

A cooperative witness will volunteer certain facts after the Investigator introduces himself and explains the basic nature of his inquiries. These may be honestly given, or they may be an effort to steer the Investigator toward the witness' agenda.

Other clues are provided if asked: even a cooperative witness doesn't think of every relevant fact. To solve the case the Investigator need merely ask the right question.

Resistant clues require the use of an Investigative Ability. In play you might ask the player to explicitly call them out, or you might just supply them when the player asks. You might also elect to provide them to a player who seems lost in the scene, on the grounds that the character is a more experienced detective than the player.

At any rate, whatever guidance you might find here becomes entirely provisional in the heat of play. The rhythm of information flow that the GM and player establish in the moment, as discussed on p. 36, will always trump how you think things will go as you prepare.

### Clue Types

As previously mentioned, a core scene must include at least one *core clue* — a clue that leads to another scene. Multiple core clues leading to different scenes give players choices to make, so include them where possible.

A clue leading to an alternate scene is, unsurprisingly, an *alternate clue*.

An alternate scene might lead directly to no other scene. Or it might provide a secondary lead-in to a core scene.

Amid the clues, note possible Push benefits, if any. These non-informational benefits become available if the player assents to pay a Push (and has one to pay, natch).

Confine information available from Interpersonal Abilities to those abilities the character has. Investigators can't typically break off an interview to go and fetch a Source who can apply the right kind of persuasion.

A *pipe* clue becomes significant only when combined with another piece of information gathered separately. (The name references screenwriting jargon, where the insertion of exposition that becomes relevant later in the



narrative is referred to as “laying pipe.” The term likens the careful arrangement of narrative information to the work performed by a plumber in building a house).

A *leveraged* clue prompts a witness to spill his guts after being presented with another clue that the detective uncovered earlier. It is usually accompanied by the use of an Interpersonal Ability, like Intimidation or Reassurance.

Exercise care when including core clues that require the Investigator to seek out Sources. These must either allow the Source to discover the information in a subsequent scene, when the Investigator goes to the Source for help, or they must allow the Source to appear in the scene without straining credibility or messing up the pacing.

*You’re creating a scene where Viv discovers a torn page from the Book of Eibon in a victim’s pocket. This core clue leads to the book collector who owned it before it was stolen by the scenario’s cultist bad guys. Identifying it requires Cthulhu Mythos, an ability Viv lacks. For that she has to rely on a Source, Stella Abrams. You want the page to crumble to dust a few moments after it is first handled. But that can’t happen before Stella has a chance to look at it, or Viv will fail to get her core clue, throwing a roadblock across your story. You can either set up the scene so Viv knows ahead of time that she might need Stella to meet her there, or you can change the detail to make sure the page lasts long enough for Viv to show it to Stella.*

### Inserting Challenges

Along with clues, scenes may also include Challenges. Intersperse these among the clues in likely chronological order. Does Wilmer Whateley draw his heater on Langston and then confess to the 19th Street cat killings? Then list the Challenge before the clues. Does he spill the beans, then pull the rod? List the clues, then the Challenge.

Challenge creation requires some detailed attention.

## Building Challenges

Challenges add suspense and uncertainty to your narrative. They give the player the feeling that their narrative is not predetermined, and therefore special. The version of “The Fathomless Sleep” you play out will be your own unique variant on the experience, one shared in absolute detail by no one else. The variations that make it yours arise from the player’s choices, and also from the unpredictability of die results, which player choices can influence but not control.

Even when running published adventures, the GM should expect to improvise Challenges in response to player choices that were not anticipated by the scenario writer.

The Challenge format offers structure, but should not be seen as a straitjacket. Designing them is an art, in which you focus on achieving entertaining results for the player. Start with the structure, but feel free to tinker with it in order to achieve various effects.

When devising a Challenge, imagine the situation at hand and its range of possible outcomes.

In many cases you’ll find that the standard framework serves you well. You can easily envision an Advance, propelling the character toward ultimate success; a Hold, in which he neither betters nor worsens his position; or a Setback, in which the story’s antagonists, or plain bum luck, push back against him.

However, not all situations easily support this pattern.

If all the plausible negative outcomes you can envision lead the story away from a satisfying conclusion, or add a dull stretch of filler action, structure the Challenge so that all of the three outcome types — Advance, Hold, and Setback — allow the detective to succeed and move closer to the goal. Instead, it’s the rewards and the cost of success that differs according to outcome. The Advance grants an Edge, the Hold simply lets the hero proceed, and the Setback saddles the detective with a Problem.

In theory, you could have a situation where all outcomes take the hero in a terrifying direction, but with a countervailing advantage with the Advance and an even worse side-consequence on

a Setback. For example, touching a non-Euclidean mirror could always plunge Langston into the Plateau of Leng, but he retains his weapon on an Advance or twists his ankle on a Setback. Use this sparingly, or not at all, with players who might perceive this as unfair. Note that “The Fathomless Sleep” never uses this technique, tempting as it might be in the case of the moment that gets Dex into the ghoulish cage.

Where you see only two promising story directions, one a good result and the other bad, drop the Hold result, so that the hero can either Advance or suffer a Setback.

Though it has numbers in it, the process of assigning numbers to the three Outcome thresholds is an art rather than a science, involving more creative craft than formulaic arithmetic. Keep these guidelines in mind as you proceed.

Unlike most other roleplaying games, you know the character’s abilities ahead of time and can calibrate accordingly. Challenges of 2-dice abilities can bear higher numbers than those with only 1.

Some Challenges lead more or less in the same story direction, or do not hugely alter the course of the story. Differences in Outcomes determine future consequences: whether the detective gains an Edge, a Problem, or neither. These can bear higher numbers, with Advances of 11+ (for 2 dice abilities) or 5+ (for 1 dice abilities) and Setback thresholds of 3 or 4 respectively.

For other Challenges, the threat of a bad result may be nearly as compelling as the realization of that threat. Results that throw the player’s control over the character into doubt, for example when resisting vices and temptations, generally work best with lower thresholds: Advances of 5 or 6 and Setbacks at 2 or 3.

Climactic Challenges in the scenario’s last few scenes call for higher numbers than those in early scenes, or in scenes that are tangential to the main plot.

Check to see if an adjustment from the baseline feels appropriate. Do this by balancing two considerations. Any single moment worthy of a Challenge should feel to the player, before she rolls, like it could go either way. Yet all of the moments of your scenario, taken together, should feel like a well-wrought, naturally flowing story of its genre.

## CHALLENGE DIFFICULTY TABLE

Story Significance	Baseline (1 Die ability)	Baseline (2 Die ability)
Determines direction of main plotline	<b>Advance 5+</b> <b>Hold 3-4</b> <b>Setback 2 or less</b>	<b>Advance 9+</b> <b>Hold 4-8</b> <b>Setback 3 or less</b>
Evokes the doom of noir and/or cosmic horror	<b>Advance 5+</b> <b>Hold 4</b> <b>Setback 3 or less</b>	<b>Advance 9+</b> <b>Hold 5-8</b> <b>Setback 4 or less</b>
Success certain, costs and gains uncertain	<b>Advance 7+</b> <b>Hold 4-6</b> <b>Setback 3 or less</b>	<b>Advance 13+</b> <b>Hold 5-12</b> <b>Setback 4 or less</b>
Determines if subplot comes into play	<b>Advance 4+</b> <b>Hold 2-3</b> <b>Setback 1 or less</b>	<b>Advance 7+</b> <b>Hold 3-6</b> <b>Setback 2 or less</b>
Threatens player control of character actions	<b>Advance 4+</b> <b>Hold 2-3</b> <b>Setback 1 or less</b>	<b>Advance 8+</b> <b>Hold 3-7</b> <b>Setback 2 or less</b>
Distressing turn (see sidebar for definition)	<b>Advance 6+</b> <b>Hold 4-5</b> <b>Setback 3 or less</b>	<b>Advance 13+</b> <b>Hold 6-12</b> <b>Setback 5 or less</b>
Climactic or pivotal story event (Extra Problem available)	<b>Advance 6+</b> <b>Hold 4-5</b> <b>Setback 3 or less</b>	<b>Advance 10+</b> <b>Hold 6-9</b> <b>Setback 3 or less</b>
Climactic or pivotal story event (Extra Problem unavailable)	<b>Advance 4+</b> <b>Hold 2-3</b> <b>Setback 1 or less</b>	<b>Advance 8+</b> <b>Hold 3-7</b> <b>Setback 2 or less</b>
Easy victory, made all the sweeter by the (slight) chance of failure	<b>Advance 3+</b> <b>Hold 2</b> <b>Setback 1 or less</b>	<b>Advance 5+</b> <b>Hold 2-4</b> <b>Setback 1 or less</b>
Easy victory with bad consequences if you miss	<b>Advance 3+</b> <b>Setback 2 or less</b>	<b>Advance 5+</b> <b>Hold 4</b> <b>Setback 3 or less</b>
Victory will feel like a miracle	<b>Advance 6+</b> <b>Setback 5 or less</b>	<b>Advance 12+</b> <b>Setback 11 or less</b>

## *Distressing Turns*

A distressing turn generally takes place near the end of the scenario but it is not the very last Challenge that establishes whether the hero succeeds or fails. It escalates the stakes into the realm of looming disaster.

Player attitudes toward distressing turns can be paradoxical. The player doesn't want to feel that they were forced into them or had no choice of success.

That same player, however, also doesn't want to feel that she missed the story's most gripping possible branches by staying out of trouble.

Accordingly, the difficulty numbers for a distressing turn (for example "Struggling with Roy" in "The Fathomless Sleep") walk the line between extra-daunting and foregone conclusion.

Both the noir detective and horror traditions allow for more failure than is usual in aspirational, problem-solving fiction. Still, their heroes do not fail so often and so early that the hero is prevented from falling deeper into the action. Nor do their successes cluster together so much that we lose the sense of dread that Chandler described as essential to the pulp crime style.

Accordingly, bend the numbers so that the thing that you'd expect to happen in a hard-boiled detective or cosmic horror story will most likely occur, but is not entirely guaranteed to do so.

In some cases, you will find it more fitting to model a very tough situation by leaving the baseline numbers in place, but imposing a particularly nasty Problem on a Setback. This describes the typical situation where a gang of toughs beats the overly nosy private dick to a pulp.

Where both Hold and Advance move the hero toward his goals, bump up the Advance threshold where a particularly strong Edge is provided, or where the Advance provides both a strong plot advantage and an Edge. Challenges whose Advance results already represent solid story breakthroughs need not grant Edges.

All that being said, making Challenges is a matter of storytelling craft rather than rigid adherence to formula. When you run across a situation

that calls out for a departure from the baseline, by all means depart. For an example of a Challenge that breaks the pattern, see "The Weird Stone", p. 123.

## DESIGNING EDGES

Edges give the player a jolt of positive accomplishment. Receiving one feels good; so does spending it, and so does hanging onto it. In the game design business we call this a win-win-win.

An Edge starts with descriptive text that indicates its relevance and encourages the player to feel an emotional up-note.

Just as all Challenges are not of equal intensity, not all Edges need provide the same degree of benefit. It is more fun to receive a number of Edges that grant similar but slightly variant benefits than many duplicates of the same one.

The least powerful Edges grant a one-time Bonus on a Challenge.

Better Edges grant a free die roll on a Challenge.

An Edge might grant a small bonus applicable to many Challenges, until spent.

Often an Edge grants a bonus to an entire category of General Abilities, or a free roll on a particular one of them, or on members of a related group (like Cool + Stability or Athletics + Fighting).

When stumped for yet another variant, try a variant on "Upper Hand at A. M. Hillyer's" (p. 140), whose benefit is general but tied to a particular scene. Import that card's last line of rules text into yours:

*If you still have this card after leaving the [LOCATION], discard it and any non-Mythos Shock ☉ Problem.*

This saves the Edge from provoking disappointment if the player finds no use for it in the scene to which it ties in.

Edges can provide a story benefit without any impact on Challenges. Some might relate directly to the story, while others might require the player to think up a way to integrate them. In "The Fathomless Sleep" the card "Mickey Owes You" (p. 139) provides an example of the former, as Mickey Cohen features directly in the plot. "Charlie Chaplin Owes You" (p. 139), by contrast acts as an open-ended call to player creativity.

As with any other element of Challenge design, give yourself license to deviate from the general principles when presented with a compelling special case.

## DESIGNING PROBLEMS

Problems deliver emotional down-notes to our dogged detectives as they tread the mean streets in search of hidden horrors. Like Edges, they can and should vary in effect and intensity.

They might impose a penalty on a General Ability, but more often target one of the three classes of General Abilities (Mental, Physical, Manual).

In any scenario, you'll need about twice as many Problems as Edges. Most Challenges allow the player to take on an Extra Problem in exchange for an extra die roll.

Start with a few lines of flavor text. These not only convey an atmosphere of noir-ish dread, but suggest the sorts of story developments the player might try to introduce in order to Counter them.

Where possible, design relatively low-stakes Problems for those Challenges that are likely to occur early on. Overall, you'll want to save the truly nasty ones for the final sequences. Sometimes, though, you'll find it powerful to introduce a cloud of doom in the early part of the story. If the hero strains his heart in the first hour of a session, the player has to sweat the possibility of massive cardiac arrest from then on — unless she can credibly maneuver the character into a surgeon's operating room.

When they offer Extra Problems at all, Challenges that appear during the scenario's climax shouldn't impose short-term penalties, because there are few upcoming Challenges remaining, and therefore few chances to apply the Extra Problems. Instead, they should either not be offered, or they should create a dire situation that might lead to a bleak, noir-ish ending.

A Problem card's text can specifically tell the player how to Counter it, or it can leave the matter open as an exercise in player creativity.

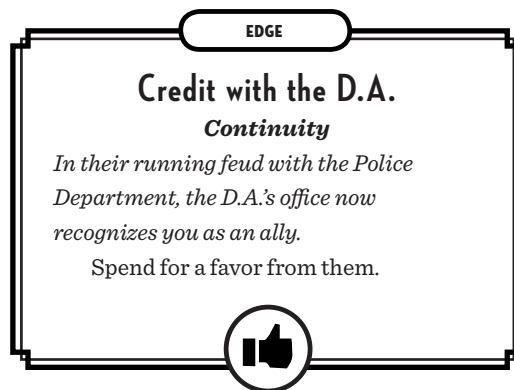
## CONTINUITY CARDS

Where an Edge or Problem sets up a story situation that would break fictional credibility if it were ignored in future scenarios, mark it as a Continuity

card by placing a sub-header to that effect under the title.

Unlike other Edges and Problems, the player does not discard Continuity cards at the end of a scenario.

If you are only running one scenario, you can safely ignore the Continuity tag.



## DESIGNING EXTRA PROBLEMS

On occasion you'll spot a chance to give the detective an Extra Problem that hooks directly into the story at hand. For example:

- **Cool Challenge:** You stay calm when taunted by the big boss, but must take a swipe at the next low-ranking goon who gives you lip.
- **Driving Challenge:** You get away from the dimensional shambler, but hit a dog in front of the district attorney's house. That's right — the same D.A. you'll need a favor from later.
- **Devices Challenge:** If you fix the radio using this ability, it works, but you ignite a spark that burns the documents you need to prove McKenna's guilt to the cops.

Admit no shame in deploying the most obvious class of Extra Problems: those that impose a later penalty to a category of General Abilities. Typically, you'll choose the same category as the ability being tested.

Alternatively, an Extra Problem can strike an entire die from a later Challenge of an ability. Again, most often you'll make this the same ability used in the Challenge.

In some cases you can throw in a bit of variety by making the Extra Problem not a literal additional card, but an immediate extra negative

consequence that occurs during the scene. See “Escape the Shoggoth”, p. 55.


Extra Problems might impede the character’s expenditure or acquisition of a single Push type.

**PROBLEM**

### Surly Demeanor

*Pretending not to despise fools requires mental gasoline — and your fuel gauge is running low.*

Lose a Push, then discard this card. If you don’t have one, lose the next Push you get, then discard.




Another class of all-purpose Extra Problems is the block: a sort of nuisance Problem which must be Countered before the detective can Counter other, more serious Problems. As the word “nuisance” suggests, this is to be used sparingly, when you as scenario designer find yourself stumped and in need of variety.

**PROBLEM**

### Throbbing Forehead Vein

*The V-shaped vein in the center of your forehead won’t stop twitching. It’s driving you crazy.*

Counter this before countering any other Problem that penalizes General/Mental Abilities or your ability to use Pushes.



## STABILITY CHALLENGE GUIDELINES

Like any other Challenge, Difficulties for events that threaten the detective’s emotional and perceptual equilibrium arise from the dramatic situation, and use the Challenge Difficulty Table on p. 291. Like any suspenseful horror yarn, start with small disturbing events and work your way up to the truly soul-shattering. Early Stability Challenges fit in the “evokes the doom of noir” category; later ones might be cast as Distressing Turns or climactic/pivotal events.

The table below gives you a sense of the sorts of incidents that might threaten Stability. When they involve the Mythos, ensuing Problems bear the Mythos Shock notation. Especially severe incidents, whether mundane or Mythos-related, may prove harrowing enough to affect the detective even after the cast at hand resolves. Their ensuing Problems gain the Continuity notation.

### Madness as Genre Conceit

*Cthulhu Confidential* portrays insanity according to the heightened literary conventions of horror literature, especially as it appears in the work of H. P. Lovecraft. These metaphorical flights of dread fancy bear scant resemblance to real-life struggles with mental illness and are not to be taken as a comment on them.

If you think your player might be concerned about pop-culture portrayals of mental illness, discuss the issue beforehand. The player may ask you to treat this central horror motif in a certain way, or may prefer to wait for a *One-2-One* setting that doesn’t touch on it. In this instance you might also to ask whether the player wants the game to depict the era’s generally appalling treatment of the mentally ill as it was, or to push that historical reality far into the background.

### Psychiatry in the 1930s

Where psychologists appear, they use the lingo and theories of their time period. In 1930s Los Angeles the Freudian school has just started to make an impact. An older generation of practitioners still refers to themselves as alienists, rejecting Freud’s emphasis on sexual repression as the root of most neuroses.



**STABILITY CHALLENGE TABLE**

<b>Incident</b>	<b>Mythos Shock</b>	<b>Continuity</b>
<i>You examine documentary evidence suggesting the existence of malign Mythos forces.</i>	<b>YES</b>	<b>NO</b>
<i>You witness acts of torture.</i>	<b>NO</b>	<b>YES</b>
<i>You see a particularly grisly murder or accident scene.</i>	<b>NO</b>	<b>YES</b>
<i>You see a supernatural creature from a distance.</i>	<b>YES</b>	<b>NO</b>
<i>You witness an obviously unnatural — but not necessarily threatening — omen or magical effect: a wall covered in horrible insects for example, or a talking cat, or a bleeding window.</i>	<b>NO</b>	<b>NO</b>
<i>You kill someone in self-defense.</i>	<b>NO</b>	<b>NO</b>
<i>You exhaustively study a major Mythos text, like the Necronomicon, gaining extensive insight into cosmic malignity.</i>	<b>YES</b>	<b>YES</b>
<i>You see dozens of corpses.</i>	<b>NO</b>	<b>YES</b>
<i>You see a supernatural creature up close.</i>	<b>YES</b>	<b>NO</b>
<i>You spend a week in solitary confinement.</i>	<b>NO</b>	<b>NO</b>
<i>You discover the corpse of a friend or loved one.</i>	<b>NO</b>	<b>YES</b>
<i>You are attacked by one or more supernatural creatures.</i>	<b>YES</b>	<b>YES</b>
<i>You witness a clearly supernatural or impossible killing.</i>	<b>YES</b>	<b>YES</b>
<i>You experience a threatening magical effect.</i>	<b>NO</b>	<b>NO</b>
<i>You commit murder or torture.</i>	<b>NO</b>	<b>YES</b>
<i>You see a friend or loved one killed.</i>	<b>NO</b>	<b>YES</b>
<i>You are tortured for an hour or longer.</i>	<b>NO</b>	<b>NO</b>
<i>You discover that you have committed cannibalism.</i>	<b>NO</b>	<b>YES</b>
<i>You are possessed by some outside force, remaining conscious while it operates your body unspeakably.</i>	<b>YES</b>	<b>YES</b>
<i>You speak with a loved one, friend, or close acquaintance whom you know to be dead.</i>	<b>NO</b>	<b>YES</b>
<i>You watch helplessly as a friend or loved one dies in a spectacularly gruesome manner.</i>	<b>NO</b>	<b>YES</b>
<i>You kill a friend or loved one.</i>	<b>NO</b>	<b>YES</b>

**SAMPLE CHALLENGES, BY ABILITY**

This section provides an example Challenge for each ability.

**PULL RABINOWITZ FROM THE BURNING PACKARD**

**Athletics**

**Advance 8+:** You haul Rabinowitz out of the burning vehicle without injury to him, or to yourself. Earn Edge, “You Did Us a Solid.”

**Hold 5–7:** You can’t get him out before the vehicle blows. You can either stand there and get hit with red-hot shrapnel, or avoid injury by diving behind that mailbox over there.

**Setback 4 or less:** You not only fail to get him out, but also scorch your hands badly on the car’s red-hot door handles.

**Extra Problem:** “Burned”

EDGE

**You Did Us a Solid**

Spend to gain the benefit of an Interpersonal Push when dealing with any associate of the Siegel mob.



PROBLEM

**Burned**

*Even after the doc bandages you up, you won’t be doing any fine manipulation with those burned fingers of yours.*

-1 on all General/Manual tests until countered. Counter by taking a one-die penalty on a General/Manual test.



**REMAIN CONSCIOUS**

*You thump to the carpet, overcome by the mickey slipped into your drink. Can you rouse yourself before Horgan’s goons come through the door to haul you off to who knows where?*

**Athletics**

**Advance 6+:** You shake it off after a mere few moments of bleariness. You can now gain the advantage of surprise against Horgan’s boys, who will not expect you to be up and about. This allows you to get the drop on them, cornering them with your revolver.

**Hold 4–5:** You lapse into unconsciousness, just like Horgan wanted.

**Setback 3 or less:** As above, and gain Problem “Muzzy-Headed.”

**Spending Edges:** any to Athletics or General/Physical.

**Extra Problem:** “Liver Damage.”

PROBLEM

**Muzzy-Headed**

*Something in that knock-out potion really did a number on you.*

-1 Penalty to General/Mental tests until countered.



PROBLEM

**Liver Damage**

-2 penalty to Athletics tests until Countered by Taking Time for medical treatment.



## HIDE THE GUN

*You hear thudding footsteps that can only belong to cops heading down the corridor toward your office door. If you want to hide that gun, you'd better do it quick.*

### Athletics

**Advance 9+:** You get the gun into your latest secret compartment. Detective Murphy finds all your previous compartments, but not that one. He looks sheepish, having kicked your door open. Earn Edge, "Overstepped Bounds."

**Hold 4-8:** You don't have time to get the gun away. Guess you'll have to pretend like you planned to turn it over all along.

**Setback 3 or less:** Murphy kicks your door in, catching you in the act. You can tell from his cheesy flatfoot smile that he's going to tell all the boys at the station house what a rat you are. Gain Problem "Tarnished Rep."

**Spending Edges:** Any Edge spendable on Manual General Abilities or Conceal.

**Extra Problem:** "Twinge": In your haste to hide the gun, you re-aggravate an injury you've already suffered during the current case (unavailable if you haven't been hurt yet).

EDGE

### Overstepped Bounds Continuity

*Your biggest adversary in the police department has egg on his face.*

Spend this Edge to gain a free Interpersonal Push against Murphy.



PROBLEM

### Twinge

*That shouldn't have hurt, but it did.*

Until you work out this kinked muscle, -1 penalty on General/Physical tests.



PROBLEM

### Tarnished rep

*This stunt has decreased the value of your stock down at the station.*

Until you Counter this Problem, you can't make Pushes when dealing with cops.



## STAY ON THE ROAD

*The black delivery truck bumps you, trying to send you off the road and onto the rocky shore below.*

### Driving

**Advance 7+:** Your skillful swerve sends the truck careening onto the rocks instead. Do you stop to see the results? If so, you see Max Coe and Hunt Kaiser stumbling from the wreckage, clearly banged up. Earn Edge “Coe and Kaiser Hurt.”

**Hold 2-6:** You get away without incident.

**Setback 1 or less:** They drive you off the road, totaling your car. Gain Problem “Damaged Car.”

**Extra Problem:** “Crushed Bumper.”

EDGE

### Coe and Kaiser Hurt

Spend for an extra die when using Fighting or Athletics against Coe and/or Kaiser.



PROBLEM

### Damaged Car

Take Time to search for someone willing to lend you wheels while your car undergoes major repairs. Depending on who you tap, this may cost you mere pride, or cost you an Interpersonal Push.



PROBLEM

### Crushed Bumper

*Your car remains roadworthy but obviously shows that you suffered a collision.*

Until you Take Time to get the damage to your vehicle fixed, -1 penalty on Driving tests, and you can't make Interpersonal Pushes with people who have seen your vehicle.



## FIX THE RADIO

If you're going to call for help before the boat goes down, you'll have to repair that two-way radio.

### Devices

**Advance 4+:** You fix the radio and a Coast Guard rescue vessel soon appears to haul you to safety. Earn Edge "Handy."

**Hold 2-3:** The radio's shot. You'll need another way of saving your skin from those creatures out in the waves.

**Setback 1 or less:** Not only have you failed to revive the radio, but the creatures have had a chance to sneak up on you while you were futzing with it. -2 in the ensuing Fighting Challenge against them.

**Extra Problem:** "Zapped."

### EDGE

## Handy

*All that time spent poring through Popular Mechanics is starting to pay off.*

Spend for an extra die on Devices or Explosives.



### PROBLEM

## Zapped

*You work with careless speed, shocking yourself.*

-2 penalty to your next test of a General/Manual ability.



## SEAL THE CAVE ENTRANCE

*Blowing up the fissure the creatures use to reach the surface world might not stop them forever, but maybe it will delay their return for a while.*

### Explosives

**Advance 7+:** The cavern collapses just as you planned. Your clever dynamite placement causes the collapse to muffle the explosion. You don't have to worry about Old Man Wilbur showing up with his hunting rifle.

**Hold 3-6:** Your blast only partially collapses the cave entrance. And here comes Old Man Wilbur with his hunting rifle.

**Setback 2 or less:** Your blast only partially collapses the cave entrance. Deafened by its roar, you don't see Old Man Wilbur coming until his hunting rifle is poking into your back. He has the drop on you, costing you the option of overcoming him with force.

**Extra Problem:** "Hit by Debris."

### PROBLEM

## Hit by Debris

*When you detonate the explosion, bits of pulverized rock fly your way, hitting you.*

Lose one die on General/Physical tests until you Take Time to get yourself patched up.



### Fight Example

See p. 29, "Deep One Fight."



## POCKET THE IDOL

*The idol of the strange winged octopus-creature is small enough to fit in your trench-coat pocket. When no one's looking, you try to nab it.*

### Filch

**Advance 5+:** You get the idol. Unless you took on an Extra Problem, the cultists have no idea it was you who stole it. Permits scene "Studying the Idol." Earn Edge: "Easy Pickings."

**Hold 2-4:** Cocktail party revelers spill over into Everingham's study just as you're about to pocket the thing.

**Setback 1 or less:** Cocktail party revelers spill over into the study while the idol is halfway off the table and into your pocket. Two burly men in tuxedos get ready to grab you. Triggers Challenge "Cocktail Party Fight."

**Extra Problem:** "Obvious Suspect."

### EDGE

## Easy Pickings

*This theft gives you a boost of the confidence every sneak thief needs to succeed.*

Spend for an extra die on a Filch test.



### PROBLEM

## Obvious Suspect

*You got away with the idol, but the cultists have to know it was you who took it. It's only a matter of time before they come for you.*

Unless Countered (for example by decisively busting up the cult) may trigger an Antagonist Reaction from the cultists when you least expect it. Discard if and when that happens.



## IMPROVISE A SPLINT

*To get the Professor down off the slopes before nightfall, when the wendigo will surely return, you must secure her leg with a splint.*

### First Aid

**Advance 9+:** You manage to find a suitable branch under the snow and get her to safety.

**Hold 4-7:** None of the lousy pieces of sodden wood you can find are any good. Looks like you'll have to stay and face the wendigo.

**Setback 3 or less:** As per Hold, but the wendigo encounter starts while you're looking for wood. It comes on you by surprise, imposing a -2 penalty on the "Wendigo Attack" Challenge.

**Extra Problem:** Gain Problem "The Yoke of Failure."

### PROBLEM

## The Yoke of Failure

*Finally you thought you'd be able to be able to show your estranged mentor that you did the right thing when you turned your back on academia. But once more you've blown it with her.*

In any subsequent scene the GM can choose an Edge card and force you to discard it. This card is then discarded too.



## ESCAPE THE SHOGGOTH

*A seething mass of undifferentiated tissue surges toward you with murder on its mind. The best way to fight a shoggoth is to run away.*

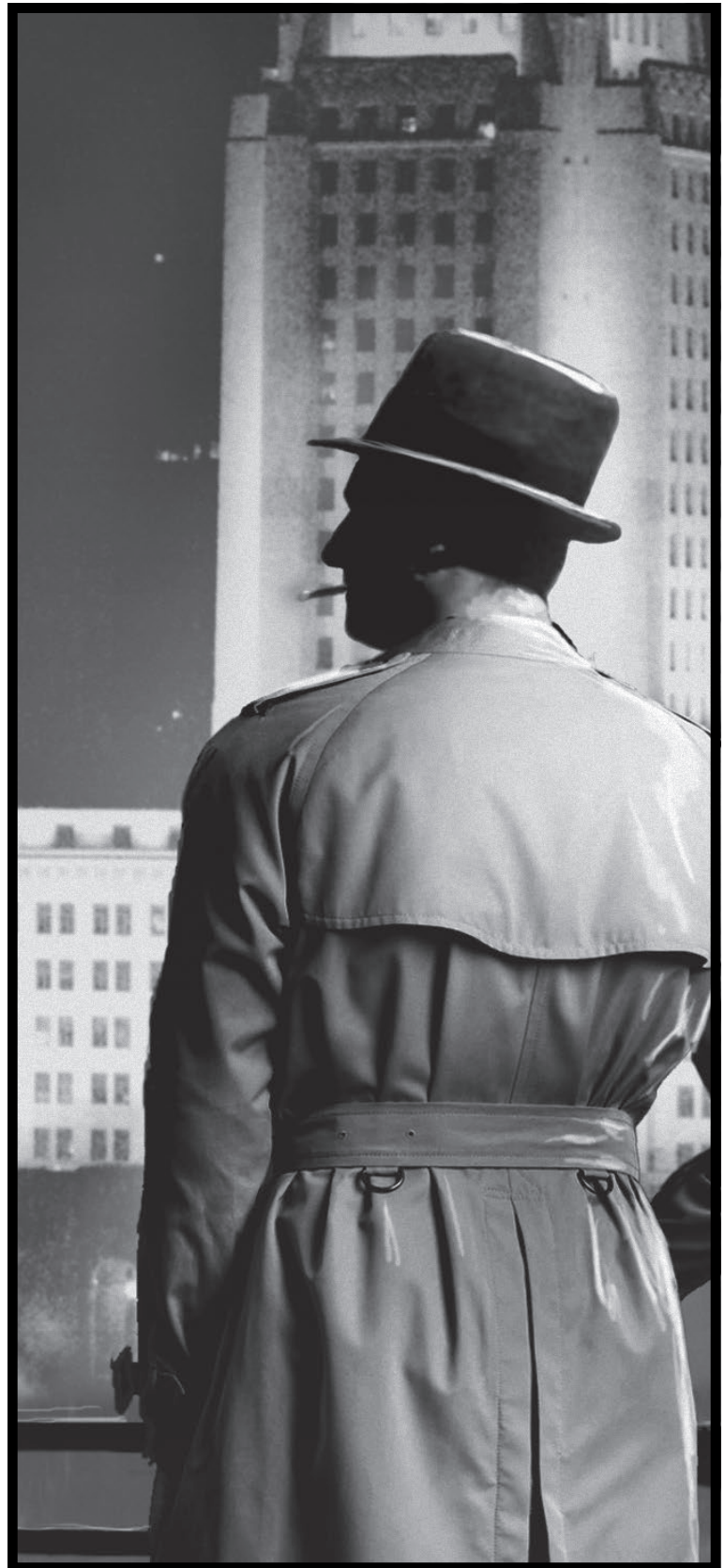
### **Fleeing**

**Advance 12+:** The shoggoth chases you onto the airfield, where it slams into the propellers of the transport plane and is shredded to bits.

**Hold 4–11:** The creature surges from the depths, bursting from the ground all around you. You'll have to try to fight it off. Triggers Challenge "Shoggoth Fight."

**Setback 3 or less:** It not only catches up with you, it wraps a pseudopod around your neck. Challenge "Shoggoth Fight" ensues, at -2 penalty.

**Extra Problem:** If you got that ancient tome you came here for, you now drop it.



## RECOVER ANCESTRAL MEMORY

*Are you really descended from fish-human hybrids, as the amusement park fortune-teller insisted? Maybe a little self-hypnosis will grant you insight into your primordial past.*

### Hypnosis

**Advance 6+:** You realize that you are one hundred per cent homo sapiens after all. That lady carny was just trying to scare you away from the piers. Gain Edge “Unshakable.”

**Hold 4–5:** Trance state eludes you.

**Setback 3 or less:** You experience a nightmarish vision of life under the sea as an inhuman predator, prostrating itself before Dagon. Gain Problem “Deep One Delusions.”

**Extra Problem:** You spur yourself to pierce the barriers of your mind by contemplating the horrors you encountered atop the Boltwood Building. Gain Problem “Awful Recollections.”

Build a spiraling Lovecraftian dread into your scenarios by creating Problem cards like “Deep One Delusions,” which impose penalties that escalate with the number of Mythos Shocks the player has in hand.

EDGE

## Unshakable

*Nothing gets in your head that you didn't put there.*

Spend for an extra die on a Stability or Hypnosis test.



PROBLEM

## Deep One Delusions

*This can't be auto-suggestion. The dread sights were too vivid.*


Take a penalty to Stability tests equal to the number of Mythos Shock Problems you have in hand. (Note that this card does not itself count as a Mythos Shock Problem).



PROBLEM

## Awful Recollections

*Contemplating the horrors you encountered atop the Boltwood Building, you realize the fortune-teller must have been right.*

**Mythos Shock**  You dredged up memories you should have allowed to lay dormant. Now they're mingling with other recent experiences to spark a dreadful epiphany.



## BRANDISH ELDER SIGN

*A formless entity lurches your way, all claws and jaws and purulent flesh. Can you keep it at bay by holding up the strange sigil you found on the professor's corpse?*

### **Magic**

**Penalty:** -1 for each Mythos Shock Problem card you currently hold.

**Advance 11+:** The creature passes you by, surging down into the storm drain system. Earn Edge “Elder Sign Proficiency.”

**Hold 6–10:** The creature passes you by, surging down into the storm drain system. But afterward you're not so sure you could repeat whatever it is you did.

**Setback 5 or less:** The creature passes you by, surging down into the storm drain system. But you get too good a look at its writhing physiognomy as it blasts past you. Its inhuman visage leads you to reconsider everything you knew about reality. Gain Problem “Shattered Reality.”

**Extra Problem:** “That Old Time Religion.”

EDGE

### Elder Sign Proficiency

#### *Continuity*

Spend to counter one Mythos Shock Problem, or for an extra die on Athletics or Fighting Challenges against a Mythos creature.



PROBLEM

### Shattered Reality

#### *Continuity*

*You thought you knew the difference between the real and the unreal. Until you saw that thing.*

**Mythos Shock** Counter by accepting an automatic Setback on any Stability Challenge.



PROBLEM

### Old Time Religion

*You don't know where it came from — deep in the recesses of your memory, or overheard sermons from that evangelical radio station. But suddenly you found yourself babbling Old Testament quotations.*

-1 on Stability tests. Counter by inappropriately invoking fire and brimstone with a client or witness (not a Source) in this case's central cast of characters.



## DID YOU PACK THE NITROGLYCERIN?

### Preparedness

**Advance 8+:** You have perfectly stable nitroglycerin in your valise and can use it to blow up the mine entrance.

**Hold 4-7:** You packed nitroglycerin, but it was the possibly dodgy bottle supplied by an unreliable underworld contact. You can use it to blow up the mine entrance, but must make a Difficulty 4 Athletics Quick Test or take the Problem Card “Smoking Outfit.”

**Setback 3 or less:** Of course you don’t have nitroglycerin. What would a private dick be doing with nitroglycerin in his valise?

**Spending Edges:** any benefit to Preparedness or Physical/Mental

**Extra Problem:** “Finite Valise Contents”

PROBLEM

### Smoking Outfit

*Until you Take Time to replace your clothing, you look like you just got hit by mining debris.*

Any benefit available from an Interpersonal Push instead costs 2 Interpersonal Pushes.



PROBLEM

### Finite Valise Contents

-2 Penalty to next Preparedness Challenge. Then discard.



See how this Challenge plays with the formula. Its Advance grants a story advantage, while the Hold presents the chance of a Problem, avoidable by a Quick Test.

## TALKING THE JONES BOY DOWN

*After Elmer Jones describes the entity he saw materializing during the hillside ritual, he suffers a psychotic break. He grabs a knife and holds it at his mother’s throat, screaming in an unintelligible tongue.*

### Psychoanalysis

**Penalty:** -2 if you ever used Intimidation on him.

**Advance 7+:** You talk him through his burst of heedless rage. He puts down the knife. Already you sense that his mind is protecting him by suppressing the memory you forced him to dredge up.

**Hold 4-6:** You talk him through his burst of heedless rage. He puts down the knife. The poor boy remains in the grip of a deep psychological crisis, but at least he isn’t going to hurt anyone right now.

**Setback 3 or less:** Head-doctor talk is of no use to him now. You can still get him to put down the knife on a Reassurance Push. Otherwise you’ll have to hope you can wrest it from him before he slits his mother’s throat.

**Extra Problem:** You promise to remain involved in the boy’s mental welfare. Gain “Jones Boy on the Brink.”

PROBLEM

### Jones Boy on the Brink

*Unless you Take Time at some point in the scenario to see him again, the Jones boy commits suicide, leaving you guilt-stricken. At least one scene must occur between this one and the time-taking.*

Taking Time to see him allows you to Counter this card.





## NOTICE BROWN JENKIN

*Sense Trouble*

**Penalty:** -2 if you failed the Challenge

“Stay Sober at the Casino.”

**Advance 6+:** You notice the man-faced rat skulking on the windowsill and can act fast enough to hurl a newspaper at it, knock it onto the floor, and capture it beneath your overturned wastebasket. Or you can just shoot it dead. Allows alternate scene “Interrogating Brown Jenkin.”

**Hold 2-5:** You notice the man-faced rat skulking on the windowsill and can act fast enough to shoot it dead. Or you can let it escape.

**Setback 1 or less:** The hairs on the back of your neck writhe as you read the Dalmas file. You look around, but catch only a blur of movement near the windowsill.

**Spending Edges:** any benefit to Sense Trouble or General/Mental.

**Extra Problem:** “Heebie-Jeebies.”

PROBLEM

### Heebie-Jeebies

-2 on Stability tests. The next time you gain an Advance on a Sense Trouble test, this card is Countered.



## TAILING THE ONE-ARMED MAN

*Shadowing*

**Advance 6+:** You follow the One-Armed Man to the chapel on Burlington Avenue, undetected. Allows alternate scene “Assembly of the One-Armed Men.”

**Hold 3-5:** You follow the One-Armed Man for a while, but you think he’s made you. You can choose to either drop back, losing his trail, or find out where he’s going, with him likely aware of you. (Latter choice leads to “Jumped by One-Armed Men.”)

**Setback 2 or less:** You follow the One-Armed Man to the chapel on Burlington Avenue, undetected. (Actually, make that seemingly undetected. Leads to “Jumped by One-Armed Men.”)

**Extra Problem:** “Head Bumped.”

PROBLEM

### Head Bumped

*To remain unseen you ducked behind a sign, bumping your head.*

-2 to your next General Challenge, then discard.



## SNEAK INTO THE EVIDENCE ROOM

### Stealth

**Advance 5+:** You sneak in and out of the evidence room, grabbing the murder weapon, with no one the wiser.

**Hold 2-4:** You get a good look at the murder weapon but have to blow before you can take it with you.

**Setback 1 or less:** Detective Sergeant Murphy, your nemesis on the force, comes into the room as you examine the murder weapon, gun drawn.

**Extra Problem:** “Ted Spots You.”

### PROBLEM

## Ted Spots You

### Continuity

*Ted Gargan, your one true friend in the LAPD, saw you around the station house when you were trying to snag that murder weapon. If it comes up missing, you'll have some explaining to do. Unless you want zero friends in the LAPD.*

## DESIGNING ANTAGONIST REACTIONS

Taking Time to counter Problems is not without cost, especially after the detective has raised hackles, aroused suspicions, and angered dangerous witnesses. It may trigger Antagonist Reactions, events driven by adversary figures you design into your scenario — or at least, it may make the player worry about that this might happen.

Often, a lurking threat proves as effective in building suspense, if not more so, than actually having the terrible consequence occur.

Published scenarios include tables listing possible Antagonist Reactions. Flip to page 133 for an example. You can either fully craft equivalent tables in your scenarios, or trust yourself to improvise them on the fly.

An Antagonist Reaction table entry consists of the following elements:

**Trigger:** The precondition necessary for this reaction to take place;

**Reaction:** Describes what the adversary tries to do, listing the ability tested.

More often than not, the rest of the entry consists of a briefly sketched Challenge.

Instead, it sometimes merely describes an additional plot development that adds complexity to the investigation. In this case, do not cite an ability in the Reaction column.

Antagonist Reactions act as distractions which the Investigator would rather not face, not as opportunities to gather new advantages while accomplishing side-missions. Although Setbacks during these sequences can saddle the detective with Problems, Advances do not typically provide Edges. They can, however, permit the use of Extra Problems.

Rather than use the compact table format, you may prefer to write up Antagonist Reactions in an extended format resembling a full scene, as you would find in a multiplayer *GUMSHOE* scenario. These scenes might or might not also serve as alternate sources of clues.

Cleverly evading an Antagonist Reaction scene counts as overcoming it. Give some thought when designing them to ways for the character to sidestep them. You might specify, for example, a Push that will work if the player proposes it. Frame these so that the player feels smart, and not cowardly, for using them.

## Lucky Breaks

Real-life investigations often turn on a sudden lucky break. In fiction, reliance on coincidence to move key plot events brings scorn down on the head of the writer. Although you should never make the big moments of a case turn on good fortune, now and then you'll encounter minor story branch moments that feel like they ought to depend more on external luck than on the characters' abilities.

- Pursued by a crooked congressman's goons, Langston runs to the edge of the Washington Channel. On a Lucky Break, he comes upon a boat tied to a pier.
- Hiding in a closet in the swank hotel room of a Hungarian sorceress after her target returned too early from the reception in the ballroom, Viv catches a Lucky Break when room service knocks on the door.
- On arrival at the University of California library, Dex gets a Lucky Break: the librarian who threatened to call security the next time he tried to access the stacks is not on duty.

To determine whether a character is lucky or unlucky in such a case, check to see if the player has at least one Push or Edge. If no, the lucky break does not occur.

If yes, ask the player if she wants to spend a Push or Edge to earn a lucky break. She chooses which one. Any Edge suffices; it need not relate thematically to the situation at hand.

Luck acts externally on the character, who is not consciously doing anything to bring it about. You need not explain why the stroke of fortune occurs. That's why they call it luck.

Lucky Breaks make minor coincidences feel earned, while also providing an emotional up-note. Don't depend on them as the only way of moving the story in a key direction, though: the player might not have resources to spend, or might decline to spend them.

## Crafting the Emotional Coda

When the case has been solved and the loose ends of its denouement are tied up, encourage the player to portray the detective's emotional state in

a coda scene.

Invite the player to examine the Problem cards still in hand. If the player has no Problem cards, she is free to describe the detective enjoying a conclusive moment of unsullied triumph.

More likely, though, the player still has several such cards. In that case, ask the player to select the one that suggests the strongest possible downbeat. You might find exceptions, but in general Mythos Shock Problems take priority over others. Have the player describe a closing moment invoking that Problem card.

*Your player completes "The Fathomless Sleep" with the following Problem cards: "Vice Hound", "You Killed a Man", "Something About that Rock" and "Cosmic Horror". The player sets aside "Vice Hound", on the grounds that having a taste for the seamy pales in comparison with the other choices. The last two are both Mythos Shocks, arising from the carvings in the ghoul cavern. The first merely hints at the second, so the player picks that as the big one. She then goes for the additional flourish of having Dex arrested for the killing tied to the card "You Killed a Man." She describes the haunted look on Dex's eyes in the back of the squad car, as his obsession with the cosmic void revealed by the carvings prevents him from addressing his immediate plight.*

Expect most players to get into the spirit of this, creating for themselves an ending more noir-ish than they'd be willing to have you impose on them. A few players might succumb to tactical instincts in this storytelling context, copping out and choosing to focus on one of the less striking Problems from the list at hand. In that case, nudge the player toward a more telling final consequence.

Some players may seek an extra jolt of creative accomplishment by coming up with an ending that incorporates as many Problems in hand as possible. Applaud their storytelling verve.

A few Problems take the choice away from the player by stating outright what happens when they remain in hand at the end of the scenario. These

are often the ones players have the most incentive to get rid of. When the player has more than one such card, pick the worst one, or work with the player to have them all take place, in the order that makes the best sense.

### Discarding Edges and Problems

At scenario's end, the player may choose to hold onto any Problem cards she finds interesting and wants to see incorporated into future scenarios. Players typically take this option to retain the character's starting Problem card, which suggests an ongoing personal flaw. The player must keep all Continuity Problems.

The player discards all Edge cards, except for those labeled as Continuity cards.

### Referencing Previous Codas

In the opening of your next scenario, encourage the player to catch up where events last left the Investigator. This description may indicate how the character has put himself back in a position to solve cases, if the previous coda put that into doubt.

*The opening of your second scenario, you ask the player to explain what has happened to put Dex back in his office, working as a P.I. again. "In a gesture of support, Margaret paid for a good lawyer, who established to the District Attorney that the killing was self-defense. Despite this legal escape, he still realizes the vast insignificance of his own fate amid the screaming of the cosmic void.*

## Using Online Tools

*One-2-One* removes one of the main challenges with online play: the need for the GM to divide attention between multiple players through a narrowed window of communication. It works so well that we were able to run our in-house alpha playtest online.

Online tools change rapidly, so we won't devote much space to specific tools here in the print edition.

Basically you'll be looking for the following:

- Audio communication. Though not strictly es-

sential, most people prefer to add webcam video.

- A die roller.
- A character map with elements that can be hidden from the player until needed. When Viv meets a key figure in the case for the first time, reveal the character's image and name. Where she sees someone but doesn't yet have a name, you could reveal the image of the character but not the name plate.
- Problem and Edge cards saved as image files in a photo album. Create a second photo album shared with the player. When the detective gains a card, go to your master album and then add it to the player's album. When the player spends or counters a card, remove it from the album. *Roll20* also has a card-building capability, earning a thumbs-up from one of our playtesters as a convenient way of handling Problems and Edges.

Assuming both you and the both player have a tablet or laptop, you may find the last two elements useful even in face-to-face play. Presenting all the active cards in a single online image album may be neater to manage and easier to see than a pile of card-sized pieces of paper. A relationship map with revealable characters aids the player enormously in keeping all the moving parts of the case in mind.

Our in-house playtest, conducted in the summer of 2015, employed the *Roll20* virtual tabletop and Google photo albums.



**HARDBOILED**

**L.A.**

featuring

**DEX RAYMOND**

in

**THE FATHOMLESS SLEEP**





# DEX RAYMOND

Archetypal hard-boiled private Investigator Dex Raymond prowls the haunted streets of *Cthulhu Confidential* Los Angeles as an outsider by choice. With his smarts and grit, he could be part of its corrupt establishment. Instead he prefers to operate on its fringes, setting himself up in a crummy office to solve problems the bought-and-sold police department can't be relied on to care about.

Like fictional predecessors Philip Marlowe, Sam Spade, the Continental Op, and Lew Archer, Dex appears here as a bit of a cipher: a detective whose greatest mystery is himself. Unlike our other characters, Viv Sinclair and Langston Wright, he begins his first scene without a predetermined biography, allowing players to develop as much or as little past history for him as they see fit, in the course of play.

Also unlike our other two characters, Dex's fringe existence places him outside the support of a community. In a world that isn't ready to make room for them, Viv and Langston need friends. Maybe that's exactly what Dex fears — that Los Angeles wants to enfold him in its embrace. If he craved the company of others, he'd be partying with the Hollywood elite or using his razor intellect to swing shady deals in the steam room of the L.A. Athletic Club. But either would compromise him.

Dex's roster of Sources already lends him more companionship than we ever see Marlowe, Spade, or the Op taking solace in. And none of them appears to know each other, or spend time with him when he isn't asking for the low-down on some bizarre clue.

Outside of them, he counts one other friend worth mentioning: police contact Ted Gargan.

In a town where you can belong or you can

pursue justice, Dex chooses the latter. Why and how he came to this conclusion remains a matter for the player to decide.

- Did he briefly attend the police academy, quitting when confronted by the brutish quality of his fellow recruits?
- Did he perhaps gain his law enforcement bona fides as a military policeman before embarking on civilian life?
- Did he start with the Pinkerton Detective Agency and then strike out on his own?
- Or did he pick this line of work on some perverse whim?

That's all up for grabs, should the player elect to fill in the blanks. If those questions never come up, the player — consciously or otherwise — has chosen to follow the precedent of the source material, leaving the question of origins to hang over Dex's cases as an unaddressed mystery.

## Friends, Acquaintances, Rivals

### Ted Gargan

Dedicated to finding the truth in a city determined to conceal it, Dex has earned the contempt and distrust of L.A.'s corrupt cops. One notable exception: Detective Sergeant Ted Gargan, world-weary commander of the homicide night shift. Unlike most in the Department, Gargan has kept his hands clean. When he bends the rules, it's to achieve a just result, not to serve the System.

Dex has done favors for him in the past, rooting out facts Gargan wouldn't trust his crooked co-workers with. When you first introduce him, if it fits the flow of the narrative, invite the player to recount the last such favor Dex did for him.

His abilities overlap Dex's, so there's no need



## DEXTER “DEX” RAYMOND

*Hard-boiled Shamus*

### INVESTIGATIVE ABILITIES

- Accounting
- Assess Honesty
- Bargain
- Cop Talk
- Cryptography
- Evidence Collection
- Intimidation
- Inspiration
- Law
- Locksmith
- Photography
- Reassurance
- Research
- Streetwise

### GENERAL ABILITIES

- Athletics
- Cool
- Conceal
- Devices
- Driving
- Filch
- Fighting
- Preparedness
- Sense Trouble
- Shadowing
- Stability
- Stealth

### STARTING PUSHES

3

### STORY

Archetypal hardboiled private investigator Dex Raymond prowls Los Angeles’ haunted streets as an outsider by choice. With his smarts and grit, he could have wormed his way into its corrupt power structure. Instead, he operates on its fringes, writing wrongs for a modest fee, plus expenses. In addition to his contacts, he counts one more key friend—LAPD Detective Sergeant Ted Gargan, a rare honest man in a town where cops can be bought by the barrel.

to treat him as a Source. Many of Dex’s uses of Cop Talk might, however, be directed to Ted. Gargan prefers to meet Dex at **Wilbur’s Pharmacy** (p. 92), where his coziness with an unpopular shamus may go unnoticed.

Gargan might — in a pinch, if the higher-ups haven’t tied his hands — come across with some practical assistance of the kind only a cop could grant. This only goes so far. A family man with two young sons to worry about, Ted can’t afford to stick his neck out the way Dex the loner can. Gargan can help, but Dex must always remain the lone hero who truly cracks the case.

Occasionally Dex needs the kind of undignified or unsavory favors he wouldn’t ask of a straight arrow like Ted. For grubby or menial stuff, he goes

to **Sergeant Len Pollard**, an uninspired desk jockey whose chief hobby is complaining about the weight his doctor has ordered him to lose. While investigating a shady divorce attorney for another case, Dex found out that Len was one of his clients, and that the attorney was sleeping with his wife. For that tip-off, Pollard performs shady favors for Dex like pulling confidential files or fixing traffic tickets. Hardly a valued member of the force, he can’t swing the big stuff or serve Dex as a useful sounding-board.

### L.A. Sources

When in need of outside expertise or a sounding-board to trade theories with, Dex seeks out the following Sources:





**VIRGINIA ASHBURY**

Scientist 



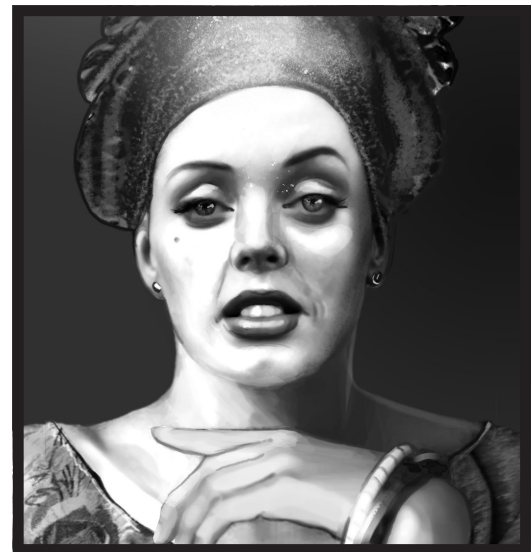
A slim, somewhat birdlike woman typically seen in her white lab coat, Dr. Virginia Ashbury dotes on Dex as she would on a younger brother. In fact, she's a couple of years younger than he is. Navigating a scientific world monopolized by men, she has unconsciously learned to project a sisterly image to her colleagues. This persona doesn't guarantee respect for her solid research, but it puts them at least somewhat on her side. A workaholic obsessed by her cross-disciplinary studies, she spends most of her waking hours in the lab. She first met Dex when he consulted her out of the blue on a case a few years back. Through him, she enjoys a vicarious glimpse at a seamy, dangerous world that would otherwise be as far from her as Pluto, a frequent object of her astronomical observations. After answering Dex's scientific question of the moment, she always takes time to extract some juicy bit of underworld gossip from him. It has never occurred to her to pine pathetically for him, but she might accept a dinner invitation were he ever to extend one. Should Dex ask, her primary field of inquiry has her exploring the mathematics of crystal formation. Like a scientist in the movies, Virginia can speak knowledgeably about many tangentially related disciplines.

**Investigative Abilities:** Astronomy, Biology, Chemistry, Forensics, Geology, Physics.

**MADAME EVA**

Fortune Teller 

Born Peggy Malone, this harmless grifter can assist Dex with information on the world of cults, spiritualism, and hermetic magic. He can find her during business hours at her storefront palm-reading joint on Hollywood Boulevard, steps away from the Musso & Frank Grill and Grauman's Egyptian Theater. As far as Madame Eva is concerned, it is never too early in the morning to knock back a wee snootful of Kentucky bourbon. Ample of figure and enrobed in silks and a colorful turban, she plays her role as mystic with the



flamboyance that L.A. customers demand. She soaks her better-heeled clients, but never swindles the poor: in fact, she might well be a better counselor to them than half the accredited shrinks in town. When advising Dex, she always starts from the position that the occult consists entirely of flim-flammery, though not all of it is as benign as hers. If pressed, she'll concede that she has heard certain stories she can't entirely dismiss, and if pressed further she may admit that on occasion she has felt the nearby presence of malign forces. Especially when it comes to the Cthulhu Mythos, she couches any information she provides to Dex in a protective manner. She gives him what he needs to know, and not a jot more. Eva has seen other minds ruined by contact with the Old Ones, and she doesn't want that to happen to him.

**Investigative Abilities:** Cthulhu Mythos, Occult.



**DR. JEFF "MACK" MACKINTOSH****Shrink** 

Dex met raffish, pipe-smoking psychiatrist Mack Mackintosh in high school. They have been unlikely friends ever since. Sometimes Mack sends business Dex's way, when one of his troubled rich patients

needs a spot of sleuthing done. In return, he's happy to let Dex bounce questions off him, provided he can sit in his chair and puff on his pipe while doing it. At work he must maintain an impassive, professional air, but when kibitzing with Dex he can let his wry sense of humor come out to play.

### *Does Dex Have to Be a Straight White Guy?*

No, he doesn't.

But unlike Viv and Langston's scenarios, we have not carefully flagged sequences that might feel weird if played with a flipped identity.

The thing about SWGs is that they make great punching bags.

And in the source material, noir protagonists get savagely brutalized — physically and otherwise — a lot.

When a corrupt cop or a brutal gangster gives the default version of Dex the works, most players and GMs will see the scene through the lens of those stylized genre tropes. The moment won't take on a symbolic weight it can't support. If you're playing Dex as LGBT, a woman, or a person of color, that same sequence could easily evoke a history of oppression and violence in a way that overwhelms the rest of the narrative.

The Dex scenario in this book, and its coming follow-ups, present a rawer version of the genre that calls for some discussion with your player when representation issues arise. Some playtesters happily turned Dex Raymond into Alexa Raymond, with nary an uncomfortable vibe in sight. Others might have the opposite reaction. Find out how your player feels and adjust the scenario accordingly.

When we talk about broadening the range of protagonists appearing in pop culture genres, we usually think about aspirational genres — superheroes, space opera, fantasy — featuring heroes who face adversity and triumph over impossible odds. If the white dudes get to be awesome, so should everyone else.

Neither the noir or horror genres follow that aspirational pattern. They're fatalistic. Victories

come at great cost, leaving the heroes morally shaken, emotionally damaged, or dead. Their wins represent, at best, temporary truces with a corrupt or malign world.

Does your player want it to proceed in the harsh historical reality of 1930s L.A., or an idealized one? In the abstract, you can construct progressive arguments for and against both choices. In the practical realm of a rewarding game experience, what matters here is your particular player's preferences and expectations.

A barely closeted gay world exists, especially in Hollywood, but its inhabitants fear exposure and blackmail. The men in particular know that everything they've worked for can easily be taken away from them.

Aside from the white male supremacy of the power structure and how you choose to portray it, the main issues in "The Fathomless Sleep" pertain to its possible romantic sub-plot.

When Dex is a woman, find out if the player wants to leave open the possibility of a romantic obsession subplot. If the answer is no, drop the Challenges to avoid falling for Margaret and Helen. If it is yes, find out whether the player wants to portray Alex as straight, lesbian or bi and, if necessary, gender-flip Margaret and/or Helen into Max and Hugh. Adapt plot and character details as needed: Hugh is found not in a bloodied camisole but in a bloodied undershirt and boxer shorts.

Likewise, use Max and Hugh for a gay Dex, or Max and Helen (or Margaret and Hugh) if the player wants him to be bi.



All shrinks train as medical doctors first. Mackintosh didn't confine his work to the theoretical: he put in time in a downtown emergency ward. When he has to dig a bullet out of Dex, he works with a practiced hand. An avid hiker, he habitually prescribes long walks in the woods to Dex as an antidote to the stresses of the concrete jungle.

(Although the slang term "shrink" doesn't enter the lexicon until the 1950s, we're taking the license to use it in 1937. To 21<sup>st</sup> century ears, it feels more hardboiled than any of the alternatives.)

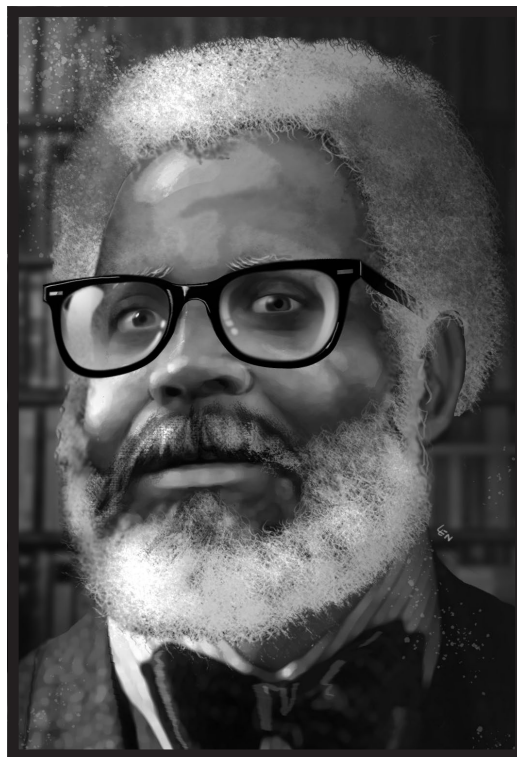
**Investigative Abilities:** Medicine, Outdoorsman, Pharmacy, Psychology.

**ALFRED KELHAM**

**Professor** 

With his thick-framed spectacles and mound of snowy white hair, Professor Alfred Kelham would look the part of a fusty lion of pedagogy even without his telltale tweed jacket. Before Dex dreamed of a life as a private dick, he attended UCLA, where he first met the professor, and his former mentor later came around to consult Dex on a case involving smuggled antiquities. Dex's inquiries exonerated a falsely-accused colleague of Kelham's, earning Dex a standing invitation to come to him when needed. Proudly pedantic and a touch paternalistic, Kelham sees in Dex an echo of

his own son, a soldier killed in WWI. His interests range across a number of academic fields. Unlike others in the English Literature department, he takes a keen and unprejudiced interest in indigenous peoples. He presently divides his time between a study of antiquarianism in the works of Edgar Allan Poe and a treatise on the myths of the Chumash Indians. Should Dex ever require a



consultation with an elder of that nation, Kelham can introduce him to his good friend and co-author, John "Sonny" Megina, Jr.

**Investigative Abilities:** Anthropology, Archaeology, History, Languages, Oral History, Theology.

**MAX WEYL**

**Production Designer** 

Diminutive and impeccably dressed, his hair Brilliantined and topped by a jaunty beret, Max Weyl oversees the visual look of around half-a-dozen films per year for his home studio, Capitol Pictures. Three years ago he worked a similarly busy slate for the UFA studio in Berlin. As a gay Jewish man, he saw the writing on the wall sooner than most and exited for Hollywood. Next year,

when the trickle of exiting talent becomes a flood in the wake of *Kristallnacht*, he'll be ready to help the studios snap them up.

Until then, he's more interested in getting the brocade right for that *Musketeers* picture Capitol is borrowing Constance Bennett for, and finding a new way to shoot that damn jungle set for *Congo Drumbeat*. He's always willing to entertain Dex's questions on the art world or movie gossip, provided he doesn't have to stop moving. When he needs to emphasize a point, he waves his cigarette holder. He always has a cigarette burning but rarely stops to take a puff.

Max can pursue his love life within the knowing confines of the film colony, facing at worst a raised eyebrow or two. This is by no means the case for every gay man in town. Dex helped one of Max's friends out of a blackmail scrape last year, earning his lasting gratitude.

His need to source any object or location at the drop of a hat has equipped him with a wide net of contacts to draw on for favors, from *City Hall* to the *L.A. Times* to the gilded halls of finance.

Max doesn't describe himself as a production designer, a term that won't come into use for a few

years, when William Cameron Menzies uses it to describe his work on *Gone With the Wind*. Instead he uses the less descriptive but period-accurate term, "art director."

**Investigative Abilities:** Architecture, Art, Art History, Bureaucracy, Craft, Flattery.

## Lingo

If you read Chandler and Hammett or watch film noir, you already know plenty of period slang terms. Here are a few more obscure ones to sprinkle into your dialogue.

*Aquaplaning:* water-skiing

*Bindle-stiff:* victim of fatal heroin overdose

*City Hall Gang:* what the System was called during the reign of its former boss, Charlie Crawford

*Couvert charge:* cover charge

*Dust:* scam!

*Footwork:* shadowing someone on foot

*Hello girl:* a telephone operator

*High jingo:* high profile attention. "This case has the high jingo of the LAPD brass."

*Lamp:* spot or notice

*Mahoffs:* within Jewish gang circles, a term for high-ranking bosses

*Nevada gas:* cyanide gas

*Newshawk:* reporter

*Nippers:* handcuffs

*On the belly:* describes a sporting event whose outcome has not been fixed by gamblers

*Paint:* makeup

*Pill:* cigarette

*Rail:* (verb) to line people up the wall at gunpoint as you rob them

*Red-assed:* daring and up for anything; something carousing college students might say about themselves

*Redhot:* professional gunman

*Rooting:* armed robbery

*Rug joint:* a fancy, illegal gambling establishment

*Snowbird:* coke addict

*The System:* local, established organized crime, run by white Anglos, also sometimes called the Combination or the Syndicate

*Vag:* to charge with the crime of vagrancy

*Whips and jingles:* nervous agitation



## Select Bibliography

### FICTION

James M. Cain, *Double Indemnity*, *Mildred Pierce*

Raymond Chandler, *The Big Sleep*, *Farewell My*

*Lovely*, *The Lady in the Lake*, *The Long Good-*  
*bye*, *The Simple Art of Murder*

James Ellroy, *Perfidia*

Dashiell Hammett, *The Maltese Falcon*, *The Dain*

*Curse*, *The Glass Key*

(not set in Los Angeles but flush with noir style)

Walter Mosley, *Devil in a Blue Dress and the rest of*  
*the Easy Rawlins series*

### NONFICTION

Mike Davis, *City of Quartz*

Jim Dawson, *Los Angeles' Bunker Hill*

Herb Lester Associates, *The Raymond Chandler*

*Map of Los Angeles*

Carey McWilliams, *Southern California, An*

*Island On the Land*

Richard Rayner, *A Bright and Guilty Place*

Tere Tereba, *Mickey Cohen*

### FILMS

Robert Aldrich, *Kiss Me Deadly*

John Berry, *Tension*

Curtis Bernhardt, *High Wall*

Joel and Ethan Coen, *Barton Fink*

André de Toth, *Crime Wave*

Edward Dymtryk, *Murder, My Sweet*

Curtis Hanson, *L.A. Confidential*

Howard Hawks, *The Big Sleep*

Joseph L. Manckiewicz, *Somewhere in the Night*

Anthony Mann, *He Walked by Night*

Rudolph Maté, *D.O.A.*

Roman Polanski, *Chinatown*

Martin Scorsese, *The Aviator*

Robert Siodmak, *Criss Cross*





**HARDBOILED**

**L.A.**



*"In America politics is an arm of business and the aim of business is to make money without care for the law, because politics, controlled by business, can change or buy the law. Politics is interested in profit, not municipal prosperity or civic pride. The spirit of graft and lawlessness is the American spirit."*

— *Lincoln Steffens, The Shame of the Cities*

*"Each of us — ancestors and contemporaries — has really done the same thing: 'gotten away with' as much as possible. If anything, our ancestors deserve the more credit, because they 'got away with' more."*

— *HP Lovecraft, letter to Woodburn Harris, Mar 1, 1929*

*"Some literary antiquarian of a rather special type may one day think it worth while to run through the files of the pulp detective magazines which flourished during the late twenties and early thirties, and determine just how and when and by what steps the popular mystery story shed its refined good manners and went native. [...] Possibly it was the smell of fear which these stories managed to generate. Their characters lived in a world gone wrong, a world in which, long before the atom bomb, civilization had created the machinery for its own destruction, and was learning to use it with all the moronic delight of a gangster trying out his first machine gun. The law was something to be manipulated for profit and power. The streets were dark with something more than night."*

— *Raymond Chandler, Introduction, Trouble Is My Business*

# HARDBOILED L.A.

Los Angeles, 1937. Beneath beguiling surfaces, corruption rules. Dig down past that seething layer of human indifference, and the one obsessed enough to keep looking finds a deeper, occulted indifference of cosmic proportions. That obsession belongs to you, a private detective, witness to a coming reckoning. You will walk down insane avenues, and hope not to go insane yourself.

## Cue the Exposition Card

Take the American experience in all its garish, grasping glory, collapse it into a span of less than forty years, and you have the sprawling chaos that is Los Angeles. At the turn of the century you wouldn't call it more than a sleepy cow town. A measly three hundred thousand people lived there — many, incidentally, Spanish speakers.

When the pastures beneath the feet of rich ranching and farming landowners turned up thick reservoirs of oil, these early scions grew wealthier still.

Those reliant on mere crops became sacrifices on the altar of L.A.'s future. In 1913, at the behest of snaky municipal fathers, engineer William Mulholland erected an aqueduct to drain the Owens River Valley of precious water, redirecting it to the city. Since then, the metropolis that sprang from nowhere set the record books ablaze, establishing itself as the fastest-growing city in the world. By 1920 the lure of cash had swelled its population to over half a million people. The roaring twenties more than doubled that figure, as hungry Midwesterners flooded in, trying and failing to cling to prairie virtues against the din of Prohibition boom times. Throw in surrounding

L.A. County, which you might as well because the boundaries of this sprawl mean little to its residents, and the population balloons further, to two and a half million.

Winners won hard and losers lost big as property values increased six-fold from 1920 to 1930.

The rampant gangsterism of the illicit booze era stayed under wraps here — not due to civic virtue, but thanks to its polar opposite. The business establishment, cops, and crooks operated not as a mere alliance but as different arms of the same organization: the System. When Al Capone swanned into town in '27, avuncular local crime kingpin Charlie Crawford sent his favorite LAPD lieutenant, the towering, machine-gun toting Dick Lucas, to have a few words with him. Capone scrambled.


The Depression dealt the town a hard left in the gut. Banks died. Property empires cratered. Foreclosures swept through town like a seismic shock.

Los Angeles shed its rep as an ever-growing utopia to claim a much more dubious honor, as the globe's suicide capital. Death's siren call brought so many defeated souls to throw themselves off Pasadena's Colorado Street Bridge into the abyss of the Arroyo Seco Canyon that everyone calls it Suicide Bridge.

In the land's dark corners dwelt entities much older than any human inhabitants. They stirred, and fed.

When dust storms ravaged the prairies starting in '34, with another wave two years later (and a third two years in the future), desperation sent a new wave of migrants here. They sought fruit-picking jobs, their distended ranks robbing

### Story Hooks

Story hooks in this chapter appear after a  icon. These suggest ways to interweave historical facts with Lovecraft-tinged private investigation cases.

The plot lines suggested in story hooks only become true in your version of the *Cthulhu Confidential* setting when you bring them onstage by turning them into scenarios. The events suggested by the story hooks aren't necessarily all happening at once. So if Dex goes to see the Reverend Robert "Fighting Bob" Shuler during an unrelated case, you needn't feel obligated to play him as being in psychic communion with dholes. Your version of Fighting Bob might be entirely mundane, or he might connect to the Mythos in some completely different way. Focus on maintaining consistency with what you've established to the player during games. Treat everything else as an open option until it comes up in play.

them of bargaining power. When they kicked, labor bosses dispatched men with clubs to beat them into obedience. Nervous city power-brokers sent L.A. cops to the California border, far from their jurisdiction, to turn back the migrant tide. Those who didn't have the dough-re-mi, as Woody Guthrie sang, were forbidden entrance to the tinsel city.

The blue skies hadn't visibly darkened. Palm trees still swayed. But past the shimmer of beauty, entropy tightened its grip. The city's daytime beauty went ink-dark and eerie at night. Raymond Chandler, oil exec turned laureate of crime, caught a whiff. "Outside the bright gardens had a haunted look, as though wild eyes were watching me from behind the bushes, as though the sunshine itself had a mysterious something in the light," narrates his hero, Philip Marlowe, in *The Big Sleep*.

Your hero now confronts a bigger sleep still. A fathomless sleep.

## People

*Trail of Cthulhu* blends history and the Mythos, mixing real people with eldritch horrors. Using historical figures poses the question of what to do when players want to take actions that remove them from the picture sooner than our timeline allows. You can either decide that it's more fun to give your player the freedom to turn your setting into an alternate history, or you can restrict the action to filling in the weird details between the cracks of history as we know it. *One-2-One* rules render the second course easier than in standard *GUMSHOE*. You can frame Challenges to make sure that an Advance does something highly useful for the detective without requiring you to define that victory as killing Mickey Cohen thirty-nine years too early.

The following brief entries give you the basic detail required to present these characters as peripheral figures in Dex Raymond mysteries.

Alternatively, you can do what Raymond Chandler had to at the time. He fictionalized the scandals and syndicate maneuverings of Los Angeles in his short stories and novels. His version of establishment crime lord Guy McAfee gets rubbed out somewhere around 1939, the publication date of his novel *The Big Sleep*. The actual man made it to 1960, felled not by a hail of bullets but from complications after surgery. In his fiction, Chandler sent thinly-veiled versions of local heavy-hitters to satisfying demises, even as their real-life models continued to live and breathe and demonstrate that the bad guys often win.

Entries for historical figures list their ages as of 1937. Ages of birth and death allow you to adjust or accelerate your timeline. *Trail of Cthulhu* focuses on the 1930s, but the noir era is only picking up speed. You could easily span a series of *Cthulhu Confidential* mysteries through the war years, the age of post-war anxiety, and on into the gritty fifties.

### GANGSTERS, COPS AND OTHER POLITICIANS

Atop the 1937 gangland pyramid perches former vice cop **Guy McAfee**, 49, (1888–1960), unaware that his hold on L.A. is about to crumble. Tousled white hair and jug ears play to his aw-shucks manner, which he cops from his predecessor. Nicknames include "Slats", "Stringbean" and "the



Whistler.” The last stems from his cop days, when he would whistle down the phone line to alert criminal cronies of raids in the offing. McAfee rose in the ranks of The System as right-hand man to old-timey crime boss Charlie Crawford, whose career extended back to the Klondike gold rush. In 1931, a hard-charging city prosecutor named Dave Clark fatally shot Crawford and an associate in Crawford’s office. In one of L.A.’s already notoriously circus-like criminal proceedings, Clark claimed self-defense and won acquittal on a retrial. Though McAfee was never charged, everyone assumes he ordered the hit that cleared the way for his ascension. He may wink about it himself. McAfee sees himself as a regular businessman, and in this city he sort of has a point. He believes in politeness, right up the point where he decides someone poses a liability and requires a lead breakfast. Dex Raymond may encounter him during “The Fathomless Sleep”; see “Top of the System,” p. 121. Next year, pushed out by Bugsy Siegel’s eastern gang, he’ll decamp to Las Vegas and a comfortable career as a legit-seeming casino mogul. Siegel gets all the credit for turning Vegas into a gambling mecca, but it’s McAfee who names the Strip, after Los Angeles’ Sunset Strip.

The System has always succeeded in keeping outside rivals at bay. The closest L.A. comes to a classic Mafia don would be **Jack Dragna**: 46, (1891–1956). With his horn-rimmed glasses and weary features, this first-generation immigrant

from Corleone, Sicily looks more like a beleaguered mid-level executive than a fearsome criminal. Overshadowed by the System, he picks up scraps in the town’s small Italian community. He maintains an alliance with New York’s Lucchese family, but that’s mostly a handshake affair, with scant resources flowing his way from back east.

The imminent breaking of the System benefits him only a little; he winds up playing second fiddle to an emergent Mickey Cohen. A heart attack will kill him in 1956.

**J** Like many mobsters, Dragna seeks credibility in his community through regular church attendance. When a new young priest of his local parish is found dead, his kneeling corpse rigid, his eyes burst in their sockets, Dragna sees it as a warning issued by gangland rivals. He arranges for a square-seeming parishioner to hire Dex to investigate. Instead, the trail leads to the priest’s previous posting in Providence, Rhode Island. There he led prayers to ward off the so-called “Haunter of the Dark,” released when a would-be occultist tampered with an artifact called the Shining Trapezohedron. What followed the priest from sleepy Providence to hopped-up Los Angeles? And can Dex put it down?

Only now has an out-of-town threat to the System with true punch materialized. **Benjamin “Bugsy” Siegel**, 31, (1906–1947) has landed in the city, exuding matinee-idol charisma. He serves as the L.A. vanguard for the east coast Genovese crime family, led by expansion-minded racketeers Frank Costello and Meyer Lansky. With number-one goon **Mickey Cohen**, 24, (1913–1976), in tow, he means to replace the close-to-the-vest criminality of Los Angeles with a modern outfit that sends its tribute elsewhere. Siegel and Cohen appear in greater detail in “The Fathomless Sleep”; see p. 122 and p. 124 respectively.

Siegel will catch a rifle bullet to the eye in ’47, after his Vegas dreams take him wildly over budget on his confederates’ money. Cohen will blossom from a thug to the publicity-loving king of L.A. crime, his run ending with a 1961 tax evasion conviction.



Mayor — and crime boss Guy McAfee ally — **Frank L. Shaw**, 60, (1877–1958) surveys these newcomers with a disapproving eye. Frank slaps backs and smokes cigars while his detail-oriented brother Joe collects the graft. Mayoral corruption runs the gamut from the usual kickbacks for no-bid contracts and the sale of government jobs to an organized effort to strip the dead of their valuables at funeral homes.

**J** A client hires Dex to find a precious family heirloom, an amulet of ancient but uncertain provenance. It was last seen at the funeral home, but the client wants it back, no questions asked. The client knows this sounds crazy, so won't say anything about it to Dex unless pressed. A doom will fall upon all who falsely try to claim it, and the world won't be safe until it is back in the coffin, around the neck of its rightful owner.

In January of 1938, private investigator Harry Raymond, a former Venice, CA, police chief and Charlie Crawford enforcer, will survive a car-bombing attempt. Raymond knows too much about Frank's corrupt 1933 election, and has been sleuthing for reform activist and cafeteria owner Clifford Clinton. Forensics on the bomb fragments will lead to Police Captain Earle Kynette, a Shaw ally. The resulting scandal will lead to a recall election, whisking Shaw from office. He will return to private life, becoming a prolific filer of defamation suits.

**J** Everybody knew Shaw won that election underhandedly: that's like saying it was a municipal election in a big American city in the thirties. He really ordered that bomb planted on Raymond when the cop-turned-dick uncovered details of the Shaws' trafficking in black lotus extract, a drug imported from a plateau in Thibet. They say black lotus makes cocaine look like baby powder.

When Shaw requires muscle, he calls LAPD police chief **James Edgar Davis**, 48, (1889–1949) better known as "Two Gun" Davis. Burly, grim-faced and imposing, Davis dishes out the strong-arm stuff with sadistic enthusiasm. Viciously anti-labor, he

particularly delights in busting up unionization efforts. He loves to pose with guns drawn — with or without accompanying bathing beauties — and will talk your ear off about his program to improve marksmanship in his unruly, semi-competent force. Davis commands the effort to keep dust bowl migrants out of California.

His role in the Harry Raymond bombing will force Davis from his post in 1938.

**J** While in office, Davis covertly runs a vast wiretap network, listening in on political threats to the Shaw regime. Those under surveillance include politicians, judges, and other law enforcement officials. Any deep secret of the city's power structure might be found on those recordings — and might come Dex's way, if he's willing to owe a favor to Two Gun Davis.

L.A. County Sheriff **Eugene Biscailuz**, 54, (1883–1969) is the quieter, smarter version of Two Gun Davis: the one who either is as blameless as his admirers say, or the one who never gets caught. Round-faced, on the short side, and peering out from behind horn-rimmed spectacles, his mild look puts a pleasant face on his authority. His jurisdiction, the state's largest and most populous county, surrounds the city. Biscailuz accrues influence by issuing thousands of honorary deputy sheriff's badges to high-powered friends, allowing them to pack heat and score low-interest loans legally. When the 1938 corruption scandals bring an honest mayor and police chief to the city proper, Biscailuz's county will remain wide open to mob activity. Raymond Chandler fictionalizes him in *The Long Goodbye* as the dim but clean Sheriff Peterson. James Ellroy's novels depict him as integral to L.A. corruption. You make the call!

Biscailuz will retire in 1958, fêted with the lifetime title of sheriff emeritus, and will die in 1969.

**J** Auto dealership mogul Joe Rieth calls Dex after he shoots a prowler on one of his lots out in the county. Rieth could swear that the mug he shot was prancing around naked, and had goatish legs and glowing yellow eyes. Whatever he looked like, Biscailuz's men whisked the body away right quick. Rieth's gun links to the



Honorary Deputy badge the Sheriff gave him, which probably accounts for Eugene's desire to hush this up fast. But Joe needs to know whether he's losing his mind. Because last night he heard the same strange shuffling in the weeds surrounding his dealership.

L.A. County District Attorney **Buron Fitts**, 42, (1895–1973) first elected in 1928, once stood as a bulwark against the System's crooked dealings. His campaign for office enjoyed the blessing of news mogul Harry Chandler (below). Tightly-wound, prickly, and aflame with his own righteousness, Fitts may prove slow to acknowledge the lonely morality of an incorruptible private dick like Dex. His deeply-set eyes and commanding nose lend him an expressive repertoire of expressions ranging from intense to doleful. Fitts walks with a limp, which he owes to a bullet to the knee caught in WWI's Battle of the Argonne. He won election to the D.A.'s post after acting as special prosecutor in a bribery case against the then-holder of that very same office. Years in Los Angeles have tarnished his halo. In '34 he accepted a big bribe to clear the millionaire beneficiary of a statutory rape ring.

In March of '37 bullets shatter his car windshield, wounding him. No one has been (or will be) charged with that crime.

He will step down as D.A. in 1940 and serve in the Pacific as an Army Air Corps intelligence officer. In 1973, aged 78, Fitts will shoot himself fatally in the head.

**J** Who had those shots fired into Fitts' vehicle, and why?

Mayors and police chiefs come and go, while above it all power-broker **Harry Chandler**, 73, (1864–1944) pulls the strings. As a real estate mogul he took a crucial role in transforming the city from cow town to metropolis. As publisher of the Los Angeles Times he burnishes the reputation of his allies and harries his foes. White-haired, slim, and bespectacled, he embodies respectability and decides who else can be considered respectable. Nearly every local corporate board of any importance counts him as a member. Like many of his breed, Chandler hates Reds and tolerates

gangsters, for whom crime is the continuation of capitalism by other means. Chandler, at one time America's largest landowner, owes his success to his voracious acquisition of properties located on ley lines. The long list of projects he helped realize include such landmarks as the Los Angeles Coliseum, Hollywood Bowl, Ambassador Hotel, and the property development that the Hollywood sign was built to advertise. All these and others occupy land of high geomantic significance. The symptoms of his pulmonary tuberculosis went into remission the moment his father-in-law, the late tycoon General Harrison Gray Otis, hooked him up to the earth magic grid. A committed eugenicist, Chandler fears a resurgence by partial humans whose veins pulse with primordial blood. He must remain forever alert, lest their presence pollute his ley energy and plunge him back into infirmity.

**J** Dex investigates the death of ex-cop Kurtz Hansen, an old-time legbreaker for whom he had an inexplicable soft spot. It seems that the killing ties into the cover-up of a migrant massacre out in the sticks. Was someone making sure that persons with the wrong blood in their veins couldn't mess up the Chandler hoodoo?

Chandler will die of a heart attack in 1944, no doubt as something unearthly slinks across a crucial L.A. ley line.

## PROPHETS AND CULTISTS

Los Angeles' tumultuous uncertainties and appetite for reinvention combine to make it a center of newfangled religion. It boasts more sprouting sects per square mile than any other city in America. Competing chapels with names like Open Door Higher Life, Blue Flame, Maz-Daz-Lan and the Agabeg Occult Church promise radical health secrets, numerological mastery, and above all the Truth with a capital T.

1937 finds pioneering broadcast evangelist **Aimee Semple McPherson**, 47, (1890–1944) far past the peak of her fame, her Angelus Temple sinking in debt. Though diminished, she still attracts a die-hard following. At her height in the 20s her theatrical, some say sex-tinged, sermons made her an ecclesiastical superstar. She wore

filmy dresses, told the hungry-hearted that God's love awaited them, and chased a costumed devil with a prop pitchfork. Notoriously in 1926, McPherson disappeared, an apparent kidnapping victim. She showed up in Arizona with a young ex-employee Kenneth Ormiston. D.A. Asa Keyes (the predecessor Buron Fitts prosecuted) initiated — and then took a bribe to throw — a grand jury inquiry against McPherson, her mother, and others.

McPherson will die in Oakland in 1944, from a barbituate overdose. Authorities will rule it accidental.

**J** Keyes took a bribe all right. The Ormiston story was just another layer of the real cover-up. Blond-haired aliens swept McPherson from the earth to warn her of an impending invasion by the greys, fungal crustacean entities from the planet Yuggoth. Four years after Semple's return to earth, astronomer Clyde Tombaugh discovered Yuggoth — or Pluto, as he called it — at the Lowell Observatory in Flagstaff, Arizona. Yes, Arizona, right where the aliens dropped her off. Since then the evangelist has been covertly preparing for the invasion, damage to her reputation be damned. When Dex encounters alien evidence, McPherson stands ready to assist — the great knight the space blonds predicted has surely arrived on her doorstep!

Those looking for more brimstone than divine love once sought McPherson's chief rival, the Reverend **Robert Pierce Shuler**, 57, (1880–1965). His sermons, earning him the sobriquet "Fighting Bob", inveigh against city corruption, naming names and putting the System in the holy hotseat. Like many reformers he hails from elsewhere, in this case Tennessee's Blue Ridge mountains. He emphasizes his homespun origins, playing to a congregation likewise made up of rural transplants outraged by big city ways. Back in the Charlie Crawford days he used his radio station, KGEF, as a gossipy thorn in the side of the mighty. He combines reformism with nativism, which naturally includes a considerable dollop of anti-Semitism. In 1929 he

got his favored candidate, ex-Klansman John C. Porter, elected mayor. Other recipients of Shuler's support include Buron Fitts (above), who rewards him with scoops to print in his muckraking pamphlets. Shuler is down but not out after losing a 1932 Senate campaign, after which he pronounced a curse on the state of California.

He will retire from the pulpit in 1953 with a departing sermon condemning materialism and German rationalism.

**J** Rumor has it that Shuler's curse caused the 1933 Long Beach earthquake, which reverberated through southern California, scoring a 6.4 on the Richter scale and taking 115 lives. For once, rumor has it right. Growing up in the Blue Ridge mountains, Shuler made mental contact with dholes, enormous subterranean worms usually unable to manifest in this dimension. Intentionally or not, he reestablished that link during his post-election funk, causing the quake. Frightened by the result, Shuler has yet to attempt it again. But if his righteous wrath gets out of control again, he might shake the city to its foundations. The one man in Shuler's organization who heard him confess to this has just washed up dead on Venice Beach, and Dex has been hired to find out why.

Amid the evangelistic ferment Archbishop **John Joseph Cantwell**, 63, (1874–1947) raises his voice for that most traditionalist of denominations. This Limerick-born church father makes strides in embracing the diocese's primarily Mexican-American flock, albeit through a thick gauze of condescension about simple folk and their simple ways. He shelters Mexican bishops fleeing anti-clerical revolutionaries back home. His mass demonstrations against the hated Reds extend to rallying cries in support of Franco and Mussolini. Cantwell cows studio heads with threats that the National Legion of Decency will condemn their films. Dex can make an appointment to speak with him at the Cathedral of St. Vibiana, 214 S Main Street, downtown.

Imposing Canadian **Manly Palmer Hall**, 36, (1901–1990), opened the headquarters of the

Philosophical Research Society at 3910 Los Feliz Boulevard three years ago. Designed by Robert Stacy Judd, an architect steeped in esoteric Mayan wisdom, its paradoxical, anciently-modern exterior and warm, wooden book-womb interior offer the finest occult library a private detective could desire. Hall himself, charismatic beyond his years, still briskly sells copies of his lavishly produced 1928 tome *The Secret Teachings of All Ages*. It purports to translate the esoteric knowledge of the ancients for use by ordinary people today. At pains to at all times project a public image of utmost probity, Hall's acolytes keep very mum indeed about his unhappy marriage to wife Fay.



A wealthy client asks Dex to check on the background of a woman to whom his son intends to propose. A habitu  of the PRS library, the beautiful half-Russian, half-Egyptian Aida Poltavtseva claims to be both a descendant and the reincarnation of an ancient queen named Nitocris. The client's son loves talk of ancient mysteries, and his father finds that detail eccentric but acceptable. Really he just wants to be sure she isn't a grifter. The most routine assignment imaginable, he says....

Sex magick rules at the Agape Lodge, an Ordo Templi Orientis outfit presided over by turbaned Thelemite **Wilfred Talbot Smith**, 52, (1885–1957). Undoubtedly to his credit, Smith gets along poorly with OTO grand magus Aleister Crowley, disregarding his mailed edicts. He runs the lodge in conjunction with silent screen actress **Jane Wolfe**, 62, (1875–1958), best known for appearing next to Mary Pickford in *Rebecca of Sunnybrook Farm*. Smith and Wolfe keep it strictly platonic – aside from the sex they have during rituals, of course. Smith's employers at the Southern California Gas Company recently learned of his occult activities and demoted him, leading him to suspend ritual activities at the lodge. Before then hangers-on at his events included actor and future horror staple John Carradine.

With his wife Edna, **Guy Ballard**, 59, (1878–1939), a.k.a Godfr  Ray King, promulgates the IAM Activity from their highly perfumed, terracotta-roofed tabernacle at 1320 Hope Street, downtown.

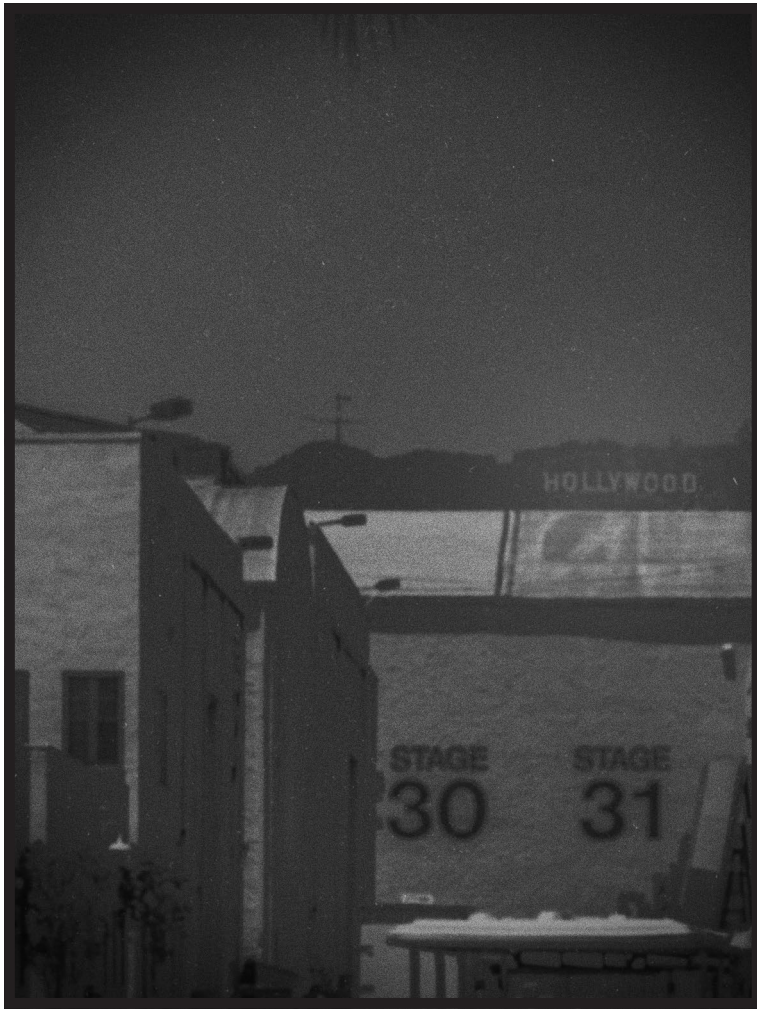
His bestselling book *Unveiled Mysteries* tells of his meeting on California's Mount Shasta with the freshly materialized immortal mystic Saint-Germain. The way he tells it, Saint-Germain fed him a wafer of pure electronic essence, taking him on an astral tour of the world. The count taught him that truth of the universal godhead within us all can be learned from god-like Ascended Masters who transcend life and death. The Ballards instruct followers in the manipulation of the universe's twin forces, energy and wealth. They augment their own share of the latter by accepting love offerings and selling such merchandise as mystical cold creams and electrical devices. The Ballards buy regular radio time and claim nearly a million followers across the nation. An Investigator meeting Ballard notes his unfocused stare and cultivated resemblance to the actor Bela Lugosi.

**Arthur Bell**, 37, (1900-?) of the anti-war Mankind United cult lives on the Sunset Strip, in the splendor due an omnipotent being. His cosmology pits the oppressive Hidden Rulers against the benevolent Sponsors, who will rescue mankind from drudgery. When enough people sign up in the cult registry, the Sponsors will make themselves known and institute a four-hour work day. A captivating speaker as well as a deep-dyed paranoid, Bell claims to run a network of seven doubles to divert attacks from the Hidden Masters. His pacifist bent will result in sedition charges after Pearl Harbor, but for the moment he's ably separating a modest following from its cash. In 1951, lawsuits closing in on him, Bell will vanish forever. Will he run out of doubles?

## TINSELTOWN

Opposed aristocracies rule Los Angeles. The establishment of wealthy ranchers and wealthier developers who sprang up at the beginning of the century see themselves as the social  lite. As far as they're concerned, movie idols are nothing more than circus people with sudden money: decadent, flashy, and trashy.

But in the eyes of the nation, Hollywood's stars far exceed the stature of mere local businessmen. The new cult of celebrity elevates them to the status of shimmering, silvery deities. Or, since the debut of *Becky Sharp* two years ago, in semi-



glorious three-strip Technicolor, garishly full-spectrum deities.

Financial tremors aside, the classic Hollywood studio era continues in full swing. Bosses keep stars under contract, loaning their services to one another as casting demands. Each employs a house dick to keep watch over the lives of their more wayward talents. When the boys downtown need greasing to keep peccadilloes out of the scandal rags, they access studio funds set aside for the purpose.

MGM specializes in glamor and star power. Its roster, including Norma Shearer, Spencer Tracy, Joan Crawford, and Clark Gable, justifies its famous slogan: “More Stars Than There Are In Heaven.” The early death of *wunderkind* head of production Irving Thalberg last year has the place reeling still. Studio head **Louis B. Mayer**, 53,

(1884–1957) exercises a paternal control over the lives of his stars, which some of them appreciate and others resist. He insists on a wholesome product and public face for the company.

Paramount went bust a couple of years ago; its chairman **Adolph Zukor**, 61, (1873–1976), now steers it out of receivership. More polished and quieter than his counterparts, he belies the image of the blustering studio head. The studio’s best recent successes have been in comedy, whether the sophisticated efforts of director Ernst Lubitsch or the lunacy of the Marx Brothers.

Gritty realism and social awareness characterize the films of Warner Brothers. Of all the studios, its films most acknowledge the dark reality of the city of their manufacture. In addition to gangster pictures featuring James Cagney, George Raft, Edgar G. Robinson, and up-and-comer Humphrey Bogart, they turn out historical pictures and Errol Flynn swashbucklers. Top actresses Bette Davis and Barbara Stanwyck specialize in playing steely women. Colleagues find studio head **Jack Warner**, 45, (1892–1978) a loyal Republican whose company makes liberal movies, tough to pin down. Executive producer, **Hal B. Wallis**, 39, (1898–1986) exerts more creative influence than he does. Level-headed and hardworking, he gives the scandal sheets nothing to chew on.

When you think of studio heads waving cigars around, it’s probably because of **Darryl F. Zanuck**, 35, (1902–1979) who started 20<sup>th</sup> Century Fox four years ago in wake of a salary tiff with Jack Warner. Since then he’s knocked out a string of hits, thanks in large part to child superstar Shirley Temple. Should he appear in a scene, have him say his most famous line: “Writers are idiots with Underwoods.” (Underwood was a brand of typewriter. Typewriters were... oh never mind).

Astaire and Rogers musicals topline the output of RKO Pictures. Production chief **Pandoro S. Berman**, 32, (1905–1996) — Pan for short — saw their potential and kept them together over Astaire’s objections. He projects a charming, no-nonsense gruffness stars like Katherine Hepburn admire.

After a string of horror movie hits in the early thirties, Universal Studios has hit the rocks, over-investing in a lavish production of the musical *Showboat*.



**J** Kindly and erudite actor **Boris Karloff**, 50, (1887–1969) can't help but be amazed by the number of people who confuse role with reality. A surprising percentage of his fan mail seeks his advice on occult matters. He has always ignored this foolishness, until now. He shows Dex a missive from a young woman convinced that her parents are trying to turn her into a snake woman. In chilling detail it describes the writer's growing appetite for mutilation and murder. Though Karloff supposes the matter does not truly concern him, he wishes to hire Dex to seek out the girl and get her the help she so evidently needs.

Columbia Pictures' **Harry Cohn** (1891-1958) keeps a picture of Mussolini on his desk and reigns through intimidation and browbeating. He orders his actresses to service him sexually, punishing them if they refuse. Columbia keeps fewer stars under contract than other studios, borrowing their services when necessary. Other studio heads threaten their stars with the prospect of a Columbia loan-out. Its chief 30s hits are the sentimental populist comedies of star director Frank Capra and the eye-gouging antics of the Three Stooges.

In 1937 **Walt Disney**, 36, (1901–1966), later known for his kindly public persona and union-busting arch-conservatism, produces cartoon shorts distributed by RKO. He has bet his shirt on a nutty idea, a full-length animated feature called *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs*. If it doesn't do business, he's ruined.

Your detective's best chance of meeting **Charlie Chaplin**, 48, (1889–1977) still the most famous man in the world, may be in the courtroom. Charlie loves a spectacular trial, and can always expect the bailiffs to set aside a seat for him.

Surrealist painter **Salvador Dalí**, 33, (1904–1989) has just started coming to Los Angeles from his Paris home. This commences a lifelong love affair with the place, whose flair for reinvention suits him to the bone. Fluent in lightning-speed broken English, he spends time with new Hollywood friend **Harpo Marx**, 49, (1888–1964),

bonded by their shared anarchic spirit. His fierce Russian-born wife and business manager **Gala**, 43, (1894–1982) keeps as tight a rein on him as she can while also pursuing her propensity for affairs and gambling. They don't talk about it to just anyone, but both wield formidable occult power in the Dreamlands, a nightmare reflection of the waking world accessible only in one's sleep.

Today we tend to think of **Howard Hughes**, 32, (1905–1976) as an aviation tycoon who later dabbled in Hollywood. In fact he got his entertainment career off the ground early, producing pivotal 30s hits *Hell's Angels*, *The Front Page* and *Scarface*. Last July he struck and killed a pedestrian. Hughes and his passenger said he was sober and driving slowly, and that the man walked in front of him. A witness said otherwise, but completely reversed the story in time for the coroner's inquest. Early in 1937 Hughes broke the transcontinental airspeed record in his Hughes H1 Racer, a plane he helped to build. He makes passes at every actress he works with, some of them successful. At present he registers as merely driven and ambitious, like nearly everyone at the top of the L.A. heap. Sure, maybe he's got this weird thing about sorting his peas by size before eating them. And he uses a specially designed pea-sorting fork to do it. What of it? Everyone has quirks.

**J** What did Hughes see in the sky while breaking a previous airspeed record in 1935? Did it spark the symptoms that will later erupt into full-blown conspiratorial paranoia? Dex may have reason to find out when Gabriel S. Meyer, of the Meyer & Holler architectural firm, hires him for a strange investigation. He meets Dex outside Grauman's Egyptian Theater, a Meyer design. Over the past two years, three men named Gabriel Meyer have met sudden, violent ends. One of these was the man Howard Hughes hit with his car. The acclaimed architect knows it sound crazy, but wants Dex to find out if he's the next Gabriel Meyer on the list.



## Psychogeography

Add flavor to your mysteries by staging scenes in locations invoking the city's myth-drenched psychogeography. Section order goes roughly from north to south and east to west.

### GRIFFITH PARK

In 1896, mining journalist turned millionaire consultant Griffith J. Griffith and his wife Christina made a Christmas present to the city, in the form of a 3,000 acres of parkland. The city responded by naming it after them.

Six years later, in a paranoid, drunken rage, Griffith shot Christina in the head, costing her the use of her right eye. After a divorce and brief stint in San Quentin, Griffith made a second Christmas present to the city: funds to build a Greek theater in the park.

Griffith died in 1919, leaving behind a will calling for the construction of an observatory to bring astronomical knowledge to the urban masses. The Griffith Observatory opened four years ago, in 1933. Visitors most remark upon its prominently displayed, deco-styled Foucault's pendulum, a device demonstrating the Earth's rotation.



A client fronting for the mob hires Dex to authenticate an antique document, supposedly written by André de Montbard, a 12<sup>th</sup> century knight and fifth Grand Master of the Knights Templar. Its owner insisted it was valuable and would pay off his gambling debts to them. This fellow got, uh, a little roughed up along the way and is no longer able to explain just how it is worth what he owed. What the document's new owners don't suspect is that French cultists have arrived in L.A. and are more than ready to kill to get it back. Once they have the document, they intend to use its secrets of telluric energy, in combination with the Griffith Observatory pendulum, to effect a world-shaking great working.

Legend attributes a rash of misfortunes and untimely deaths in the park to Doña Petrenilla, a ghostly young woman in a white 19<sup>th</sup>-century dress who patrols it on misty nights. She's been sore

ever since, in true Los Angeles fashion, someone cheated her out of this land in an inheritance grift. Some say that when Griffith J. Griffith shot his wife, he thought he was aiming at Petrenilla.

A beacon shines from a tower in the park. At night, should he find himself groggily returning to consciousness in the northern part of the city sprawl, your Investigator can use its light to orient himself.

Sightings of green, man-like beings in the park suggest it also contains an outlet for a subterranean ghoulish corridor.

### PASADENA

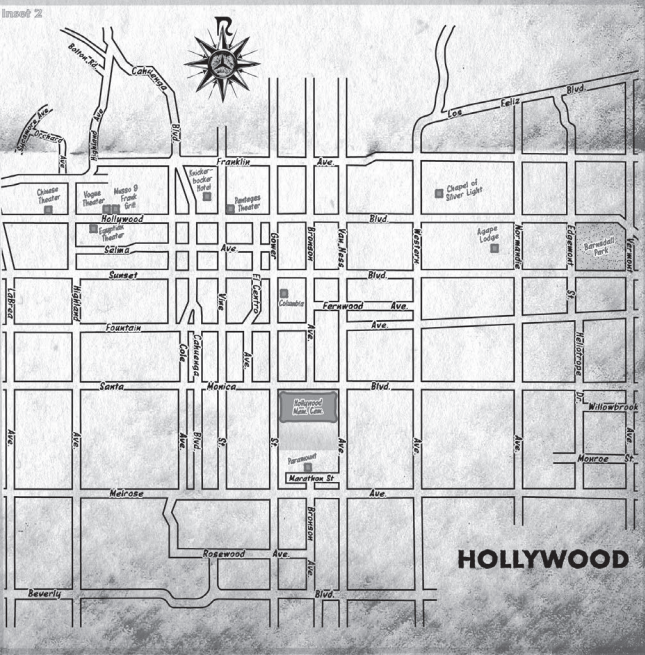
The sleepy exurb of Pasadena interests us mostly due to the presence of the California Institute of Technology. Here, dimension-piercing inquiries into impossible physics allow the Mythos' science-fiction elements to escape and run rampant across Los Angeles.

Caltech owes its status as a breeding ground for advanced research largely to the efforts of pioneering solar astronomer **George Ellery Hale**, 68. Hale suffers from a range of neurasthenic disorders. Ever since his childhood, people around him described him as spurred by a weird internal energy they called "the Demon." Now the demon has spent its force; Hale has less than a year to live. In tandem with top physics man **Robert A. Millikan** 69, (1868–1953), the discoverer of cosmic rays, Hale fashioned Caltech as an indivisible alliance between science and business. The very model of the silver-haired patrician scientist, Millikan sees the campus as pivotal to southern California, and the world's foremost outpost of Nordic superiority.

Racial supremacy likely does not come up much in his conversations with another Caltech star, Budapest-born, Jewish aerodynamics physicist Theodore von Kármán, 56, (1881–1963). Kármán directs Caltech's Guggenheim Aeronautical Laboratory, which he will later help to transform into the Jet Propulsion Laboratory. His dashing, science-fiction-crazed protégé **Jack Parsons**, 23, (1914–1952), has just formed its Rocket Research Group. Together they perform experiments at the Devil's Gate Test Range, named for a nearby rock formation that looks like a demonic face and was

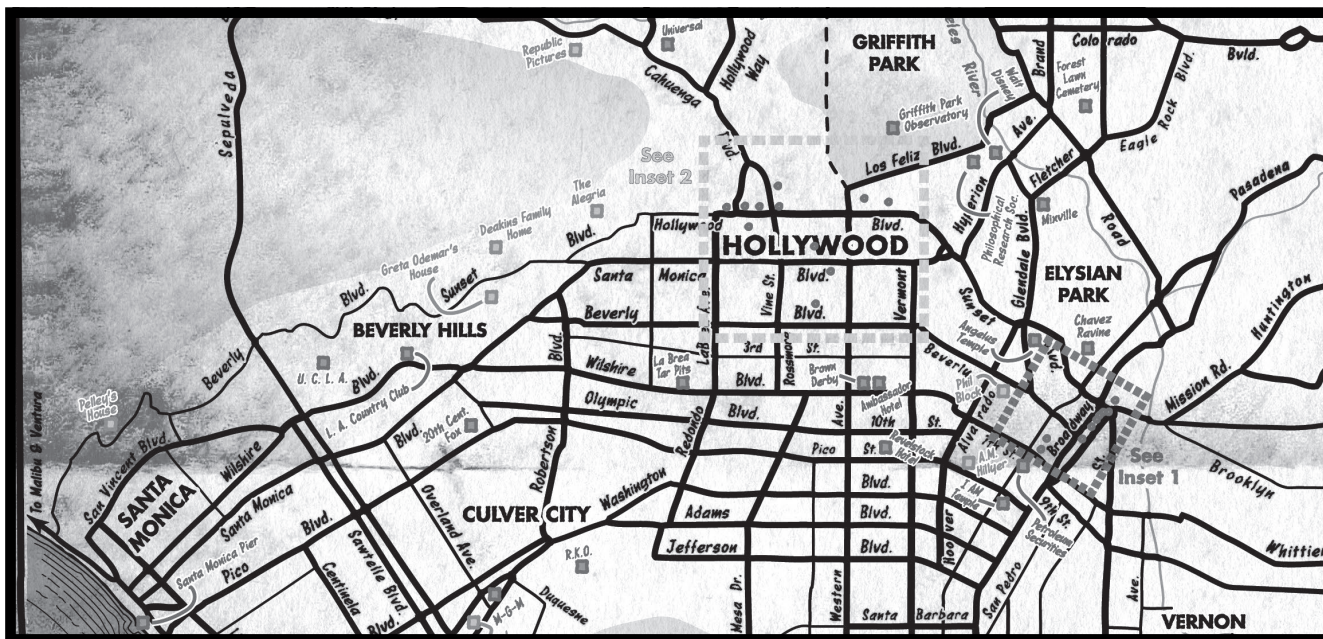


# LOS ANGELES, 'CITY OF ANGELS'



'CTHULHU CONFIDENTIAL'





avoided by the Chumash Indians as haunted. The strange vibrations it gives off are slowly eating away at Parsons' Marxist materialism. In a few years he'll be joining and then taking over Wilfred Talbot Smith's OTO lodge (p. 81) and relocating it to his palatial Pasadena home at 1003 S. Grove Avenue. (For a multiplayer *Trail of Cthulhu* scenario featuring Jack Parsons in 1952, see "The Big Hoodoo" in Pelgrane's *Out of Time*).

Once relocated, the temple might pick up ill vibrations from the **Colorado Street Bridge**, alias the Suicide Bridge. More people have plunged to their chosen deaths here than off any other concrete arch bridge in the world.

**BEL AIR**

Contiguous to Beverly Hills and just as exclusive, Bel Air gives you another neighborhood to name when you're tired of saying "Beverly Hills." An early gated community, its zoning forbids multifamily dwellings.

The **UCLA Campus** borders it.

**BEVERLY HILLS**

Movie stars, film executives and magnates of industry call the mansions of this most exclusive of neighborhoods home. Dex may come here to interview clients or poke into the dangerous lives

of the rich and idle.

Beverly Hills maintains its own police department, but they're more glorified security guards than dedicated crime-busters. When a tough or nasty case comes along, they stick their hands in their pockets and whistle absently until someone in the D.A.'s office shows up to take over.

**HOLLYWOOD**

When seeking L.A.'s current temple of Crowleyian sex magick, head to the **Agape Lodge**, home of local chapter leader Wilfred Talbot Smith (p. 81) at 1746 Winona Boulevard. A large sapota tree shades the backyard of this rambling two story structure.

The **Ambassador Hotel**, at 3400 Wilshire Boulevard, houses Hollywood's swankest night club, the Cocomat Grove. Note the period spelling. It draws moviedom's biggest stars and well-heeled glamor-seekers hoping to gawp at them. Fake palm trees decorate its cavernous interior. Show you're in the know by calling it simply "the Grove."

The hat-shaped **Brown Derby** restaurant has just been moved from its original location to 3377 Wilshire Boulevard. Its sister restaurant, with a less iconic mission-style facade, sits at Hollywood and Vine and is actually the one where all the

movie stars congregate. When Dex wants to trade gossip he has for gossip he needs, he'll come here in search of rival columnists **Louella Parsons**, 56, (1881–1972) and **Hedda Hopper**, 52, (1885–1966.) Both creatures of the studio system, they won't print the truly crazy truths, but they can use them for leverage anyhow. (For those in the mood to stickle, Hopper's column doesn't start until early 1938.)

**Grauman's Chinese Theater** (6925 Hollywood Boulevard) opened in 1927. Mary Pickford and Douglas Fairbanks invested in the project. It eclipsed its immediate predecessor (below) with a closer proximity to the studios and the deathless gimmick of commemorating movie star hand- and footprints in cement. The theater's guardian lions act as passive Elder Signs, thus making Grauman's Chinese the truest sanctuary from Mythos horrors in all of Los Angeles.

The diggings of archaeologist Howard Carter inspired the 1922 construction of **Grauman's Egyptian Theater** (6706 Hollywood Boulevard). A movie palace in every sense of the word, its overblown décor includes an outdoor courtyard used to host premiere parties.

⌋ No halfway educated occultist would look to the faux designs of the Egyptian theater for esoteric truths. But bumpkins from the rural heartland, who learned all about Nyarlathotep at knees of their inbred sister-mothers, might make its gilded walls the first stop in a yokel kill spree. This in turn will excite the attention of the System, which has no more tolerance for rampaging Whateleys than it did for swaggering Capones. When somebody Dex cares about gets caught in the crossfire, the case gets personal.

The **Hollywood Memorial Cemetery** at 6000 Santa Monica Boulevard contains the highest star wattage of any city graveyard. Bugsy Siegel has been looking into maybe buying some space here.

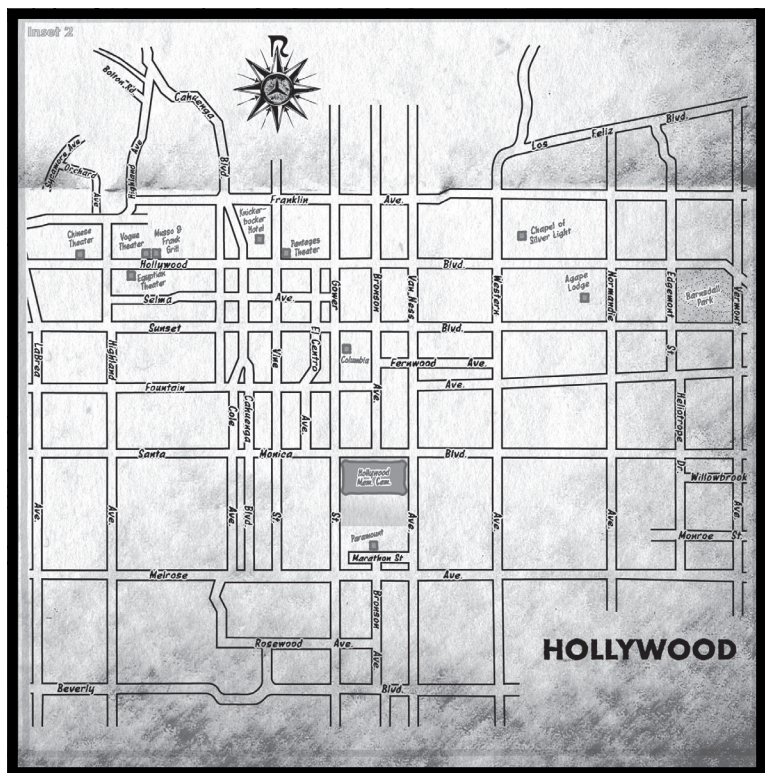
Much star misbehavior occurs at the swank **Knickerbocker Hotel** (1714 Ivar Avenue). For the last nine years, Harry Houdini's widow Bess has conducted a Halloween séance on its rooftop, attempting to contact him. If the noted skeptic

doesn't show himself this year, she's going to consider his point made and give up.

The **La Brea Tar Pits** (5801 Wilshire Boulevard) have been known since pre-Contact times, when Chumash Indians used its pools of naturally occurring bitumen to seal their canoes. Prehistoric bones were first found there at the turn of the century. A viewing bridge allows the curious to gaze down into the largest of the pools, called the Lake Pit.

⌋ A boxer's manager hires Dex to watch over his fighter, who won't yield to pressure from gamblers to throw a fight. All the dumb palooka can talk about is the damn tar pits, which fascinate him. He says he once saw something moving around in there. Somebody clocks Dex from behind. When he wakes up, the kid is gone. Later that night, cops find his body in the Lake Pit.

Classic New York style restaurant **Musso & Frank Grill** (6667-9 Hollywood Boulevard) has just expanded to take over the building next door,





a large space that will forever after be known as the New Room. Let the red-coated waiters serve you a quality steak, or splurge on the lobster thermidor. The restaurant owes its lasting fame to its status as a literary hangout. After a case, Dex can head here for shrimp cocktail and attempt to convince James M. Cain, Dashiell Hammett, or Raymond Chandler to fictionalize it — minus the occult stuff — for a wider readership. Alternately, he can try to out-drink William Faulkner, out-quip Dorothy Parker, or out-gloom Nathaniel West.

The **Pantages Theater** at Hollywood and Vine opened seven years ago as one of the last great vaudeville houses, and converted to a movie theater not long after. When Dex ambles by it deep in the night, he may hear the mournful tones of its famous singing ghost.

Plenty of ghosts roam the **Vogue Theater** (6675 Hollywood Boulevard) after the projectionist shuts down for the night. The problem is, none of the legends that explain them, like a supposed burned-down school on the site, check out.

**J** While pursuing an unrelated case, Dex meets a witness who claims to have seen through a window that appeared in space in the Vogue’s lobby. She claims to have seen through time, to have seen a gang of crazed, long-haired, futuristically-dressed, young people commit a ritual slaughter in a Benedict Canyon home. The witness went so far as to drive out there, but no house stands on the lot she is sure she saw through the time portal.

**CHAVEZ RAVINE**

East of Silver Lake lies the city’s Mexican-American ghetto, comprising the communities of La Loma, Palo Verde, and Bishop. The city’s Jim Crow regime applies as much to its Latino residents as it does African-Americans. Housing discrimination keeps the Latinos squeezed out of the Old Plaza barrio on Olvera Street (p. 91) by Harry Chandler’s boys from relocating anywhere else but here.

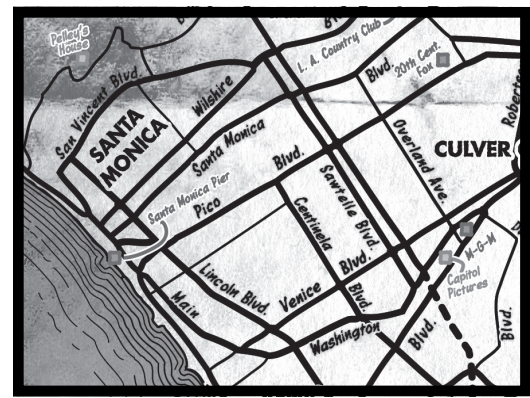
You won’t find the Chavez Ravine on Google Maps, by the way. It was flattened to make way for Dodgers Stadium.

**ECHO PARK**

When your detective goes to talk to radio evangelist Aimee Semple McPherson, he’ll find her at her **Angelus Temple**, (1100 Glendale Boulevard). Her domed, stadium-like church seats 5,300. In the late thirties not all of the seats will be filled.

**MALIBU**

A beachfront community guarded by a gate framed by the Santa Monica Mountains. Rich entertainment figures of a liberal bent cluster here, making it a target of pseudo-populist mockery in wealthy conservative circles.



**SANTA MONICA**

Santa Monica’s beaches made it an ideal resort town, as symbolized by the carnivalesque **Santa Monica Pier**, with amusements, games, and a famous carousel housed in its hippodrome. The Depression slapped Santa Monica hard, transforming into a seedy labyrinth of stilled rides and shuttered restaurants.

**J** Does the enigmatic young woman who performs as a sideshow mermaid have Deep One blood? If not, why do her naive young lovers keep dying?

Raymond Chandler played the rest of his area geography straight, but fictionalized Santa Monica as Bay City. He painted it as a special locus of corruption, as if to spare greater Los Angeles the full correlated truth.



## SILVER LAKE

Home to the studios of Walt Disney and past-his-prime cowboy Tom Mix, this neighborhood mixes commercial and residential areas. It takes its name not from a lake but a reservoir: the reservoir is not silver, but it was built by a man named Silver.

## GLENDALE

The San Fernando and San Gabriel valleys converge in Glendale to give birth to a criss-crossing of earthquake faults. Its unstable telluric energies will in the decades to come beckon American Nazis and Hillside Stranglers. But for the moment, it owes its iconic resonance to the **Forest Lawn Cemetery**, where Hollywood's fallen finest lay buried. Forest Lawn's guiding light, Hubert Eaton, 56, (1881–1966) believes that graveyards must eschew the dolorous, instead presenting themselves as joyous celebrations of life. His famous funerary achievement has done away with upright stones, but it does have a replica of Michelangelo's David. Infant burials occur in a special area called Babyland; older children, in Slumberland. No blacks, Jews, or Chinese, please.

## BUNKER HILL

The original home of the city's elite, this multi-level district is now regarded as a shambles — not least by the real-estate moguls intent on razing and replacing it. Its decaying Victorian manors conjure the spirit of Edgar Allan Poe. Need a place for a crumbling Gothic household inhabited by a mad old family? That's Bunker Hill. Many of its old houses have been cut up into flophouses and tenement apartments. When Dex tracks a down-and-outer, he'll likely find him here, though perhaps not registered under his real name. You'll need a vintage map to find Bunker Hill — the developers got their way in the 50s and 60s.

The **Angel's Flight Incline Railway** (Hill Street and Third) shuttles workers from the upper to lower levels of the neighborhood, but mainly serves tourists in search of the picturesque. Its two funicular cable cars counter-balance each other, allowing riders to traverse a distance of 325 feet. A second incline railway three blocks to the north, Court Flight, connects northern Bunker Hill to a

past site of the County Courthouse.

Occult resonances may linger at **Heindel House** (315 South Bunker Hill Avenue), one of many former large family residences since converted to apartments. Its namesake former resident, the Danish-American mystic Max Heindel (1865–1919) adapted Theosophy to plain-spoken American tastes in his magnum opus *The Rosicrucian Cosmo-Conception*. It combined Christianity, esoteric wisdom, then-current science, and the usual hefty portion of racial essentialism.



Heindel warned in his writings against the dangers of straying into black magic. This inspires would-be mob torpedo and all-around punk Darryl Fesler to conclude that Heindel must have fought evil sorcerers and hidden their accouterments in his home. The cops don't care much when Fesler knocks off the nice old lady who lives in one of the Heindel House apartments, but Dex's client does. Dex tracks Fesler as he attempts magical initiation by treating hits ordered by the mob as ritual sacrifices.

## CENTRAL AVENUE CORRIDOR

The city's black population lives in a segregated belt west of downtown, around north-south Central Avenue. It suffers the expected social ills of any zone of concentrated poverty and stunted prospects. A development squeeze leaves residents in a bind. Property magnates want to force them out, converting urban blight into cash. When they try to go elsewhere, they bump up against the protests of White Homeowners Associations and the gleeful violence of KKK vigilantes.

Decades from now, the term for this area will mutate slightly, to South Central.

## DOWNTOWN

Apparently an ordinary — if strikingly beautiful — office structure (304 South Broadway at West 3<sup>rd</sup> Street), the **Bradbury Building** was built at the partial behest of a ghost. In 1892, gold magnate Lewis L. Bradbury engaged the firm of architect Sumner Hunt to construct a building inspired by the 1887 science-fiction novel *Looking Backward*. It described the perfect utopia of the year 2000.



At the last minute, Bradbury took an inexplicable shine to Hunt's inexperienced draftsman George Wyman and asked him to take the lead on the project. An uncertain Wyman affixed a pencil to an Ouija planchette and consulted his dead brother, who wrote a note urging him to accept the assignment. The building was then constructed in gorgeous Renaissance revival style, though its beauty cost Bradbury his very life force — he dropped dead before its completion. A monument to Euclidean order, it helps to counter and drain the insane energies of the Mythos gods who have taken up increasing residence in the minds of city inhabitants. By the late 30s, frayed around the edges, the building is mostly occupied by fabric wholesalers. Dex may note that its elevator operator, an older lady named **Minnie Epp**, watches for trouble with striking alertness. She may know more than she's telling about the building's true role in maintaining the city's arcane balance.

Wyman's note from beyond eventually passed into the possession of his grandson, the foundational purveyor of monster culture Forrest J. Ackerman. The Bradbury Building regularly appears in movies, including film noir titles *Shockproof* (1949), *D.O.A.* (1950), and *Blade Runner* (1982).

As described below, the city's original **Chinatown** used to be further south, until Harry Chandler decided it impeded his access to Olvera Street ley energy. When some residents dug in their heels and refused to leave, he trumped up a phony smallpox epidemic. His preservationist ally Christine Sterling now puts the finishing touches on a beautifying project called China City, which will open next year. It surrounds the Chinese community with a picturesque, tourist-friendly wall. What goes better together than China and walls? In a spirit of clever parsimony, parts of the wall incorporate leftover set pieces from the movie *The Good Earth*, featuring such celebrated Chinese actors as Paul Muni and Louise Rainer. The fact that this dampens the powers of the community's virtuous red magicians must be a coincidence. Right, Mister Chandler?



Ted Soo, a respected figure in his community, hires Dex to find some boxes shipped in from Shanghai that have gone missing. He neglects to mention that they're coffins, ordered by an embittered businessman whose fortunes went to hell after the displacement. The man's contacts in China have ties to the Five Watchers who dwell beneath the Bayan Kara Shan mountains. The coffins contain *gyonshi*, hopping vampires controllable by incantation. Someone with connections in the System intercepted the shipment. The errant businessman will be dealt with internally: Soo needs Dex to find and destroy the *gyonshi* before their presence can be used to trigger reprisals against his people.

Your detective will find himself making extensive use of Cop Talk, plus a little Bureaucracy, at the **Hall of Justice** (210 West Temple at Spring).

Taking up an entire city block, the Hall needs no address, just a zip code. Built in 1925, this Beaux-Art tower reverses Dante's circles of hell, with gold-coffered lobbies below and the dismal City Jail on its top three floors. In addition to the jail, it houses the County Courts (eighth floor, with jury and press rooms on the ninth), the County Sheriff's HQ, the District Attorney's Office (sixth and seventh floors), and the Coroner's office.

To sit in the sauna with the Anglo elite, visit the **L.A. Athletic Club** (431 West 7th St.). Reassure them by letting them win at racquetball, or inspire them by convincing them the information you need will help them keep local power in the hands of the WASP establishment where it belongs.

In 1937 **LAPD headquarters** occupies part of City Hall (below), using an entrance through an oft-filmed side laneway with small sign pointing to the Detective Bureau.

**Los Angeles City Hall** (200 North Spring Street) looms above the city like a bone-white colossus. On the advice of ley-obsessed Harry Chandler (p. 79), zoning rules prohibit any other building from exceeding its height. Architects modeled its neoclassical lines on the Mausoleum at Halicarnassus, built in honor of the 4<sup>th</sup> Century BCE Hellenistic Persian satrap Mausolus by his sister and widow Artemesia. The two rulers built their city from nearly nothing and absorbed vast quantities of wealth in doing so. Such was the splendor of Artemesia's structure that her husband-brother became the namesake for monuments to the dead. By sympathetically evoking their spirits, City Hall grants its occupants subliminal occult power to arrogate resources from the citizenry and win approval for their development projects. It shares this influence with the chief Masonic temple in the nation's capital.



An archaeological consultant to the building project with curiously clear insights into the ancient Middle East left behind a gift for its occupants. When anyone gets too close to understanding the structure's occult import, invisible spirit projections of the consultant's two attendant panthers stalk them. Ghost cat attack victims appear to die from brain aneurysms.

As a side effect of City Hall's resonance, sensitive, withdrawn women across the city sometimes dream of panthers, or even come to believe that they are transforming into big cats. City Hall's magical emanations may also be responsible for the city's statistically anomalous incidence of brother-sister incest cases.

Consult with newshawks, or confront big man Harry Chandler himself, at the **Los Angeles Times Building** (202 West 1<sup>st</sup> Street, at Spring). Art deco at its most imposing, this edifice went up only two years ago. In keeping with Chandler's greed for geomantic motherlodes, it occupies the site of two previous city halls.

**Olvera Street**, historic town center of the city's original Spanish settlers, served as point of first contact for poor immigrants from Mexico, Sicily, and China. In the late 20s, a heritage preservationist named Christine Sterling approached Harry Chandler with a redevelopment plan. In a turn that will not surprise anyone who has read this far, the restoration of Hispanic history entailed the wholesale displacement of its current immigrant residents. Chandler, eager to get his geomantic fingerprints all over this numinous region of the city, supported the plan at a crucial moment by picking up the phone to Police Chief Two Gun Davis. He rounded up the prison labor necessary to fix up a key structure, the 1818 **Avila Adobe**, saving it from condemnation and getting his foot in the redevelopment door. That was in 1930. The preservationists got their tourist trap Mexican-themed marketplace, Chandler hooked it into his ley-line grid, and residents had to find new homes in the Chavez Ravine. Noticing a Chinese neighborhood across the street, Chandler fretted that its geomancers would use feng shui techniques to divert his hard-won ley force, so he, Sterling, and Chandler decided to put a train station there. In 1937, Union Station is still a construction site; it will open in '39.

The stunning art deco office block called the **Petroleum Securities Building** (714 West Olympic Boulevard, between Figueroa and Flower) provides a plush locale to buttonhole business magnates. A plaque celebrates its builder, recently

deceased oil tycoon E. L. Doheny, a key figure in the Teapot Dome bribery scandal and the inspiration for *The Big Sleep's* General Sternwood and *There Will Be Blood's* Daniel Plainview.

L.A.'s all-night drugstores not only serve as pharmacies, but also sell a wide range of products including liquor. Their lunch counters sling diner food and coffee twenty-four hours a day. Dex meets with his LAPD contact Ted Gargan (p. 65) at **Wilbur's Pharmacy** near the corner of Main and Temple.

### **DOWNEY**

This small burg to the south of Los Angeles proper houses one institution of prime interest to *Cthulhu Confidential* shamuses, the **Rancho Los Amigos Hospital**. It started its career as a poor-house, then branched out into occupational therapy in the 20s. The secure wing for the most damaged patients takes on a Gothic quality even in daylight, an artifact of its meager funding. At night, not all the screams emanate from the living.

Rich patients go to exclusive private clinics near Bel Air or over in Palm Springs, none of them old enough to be haunted.





**THE  
FATHOMLESS  
SLEEP**





# THE FATHOMLESS SLEEP

How exactly did fast-living society girl Helen Deakin come down with a case of catatonia? Her sultry sister pays you, hard-boiled private detective Dex Raymond, to find out. Prepare yourself to untangle a web of blackmail, gangster politics, and weird mysticism.

## Cast

- Helen Deakin:** 25, a ruined beauty. Heiress to a real estate fortune, her mind shattered by an unknown event.
- Margaret Deakin:** 29, sharp-tongued, alluring. She's inherited her father's nose for business along with the responsibilities he's shucked aside. She hires our protagonist, private investigator Dex Raymond, to work the case.
- Roscoe Deakin:** 65, short and balding. A modern King Lear, he gave away management of his real estate empire in order to enjoy life to the fullest, leaving it to his daughters Margaret and Helen.
- Whitey Alexander:** 53, florid-faced, ham-fisted. Casino owner and mid-level rackets figure who pays his tribute money to Guy McAfee. Kept Helen Deakin as a mistress, using her father's the gambling debts as a point of leverage over her.
- Guy McAfee:** 49, (b. 1888), jug-eared, folksy businessman, ex-cop and current head of the System, the city's well-connected dominant criminal gang.
- Benjamin "Bugsy" Siegel:** 31, (b. 1906), dapper, charming. Founding member of Murder Incorporated, protégé of Meyer Lansky and Lucky Luciano. A fresh arrival in Los Angeles, he's looking to displace Guy McAfee and the old-line Syndicate.
- Budd Barron:** 42, pencil-mustached, fast-talking. Older brother of a more successful Chicago gambling kingpin who's come out west to reverse his fortunes as a captain for Bugsy Siegel. Among his assignments he's been ordered to lean on Whitey for a cut of his action, east coast style — or better yet, force him out and take over.
- Mickey Cohen:** 23 (b. 1913), energetic, overtly thuggish, has the flattened nose of an ex-pugilist. Bodyguard to Siegel. An eager delinquent as a child, he has yet to learn to read or do math.
- Roy Bedacht:** 41, sadistic operator of a crooked garage in the boonies outside L.A. He refits stolen automobiles and, as a sideline, disposes of corpses for Mickey Cohen.
- Phil Block:** 34, a squirrely shrimp in an oversized suit. Mob accountant who does the books for Whitey's casino.
- Clara Nebel:** 39, turbaned, grandiose. Pyramidologist, seer and fortune-teller to the Hollywood rich and famous. Helen turned to her as a spiritual guru. Clara tapped the Deakin fortune to line the pockets of her political mentor, William Dudley Pelley.
- William Dudley Pelley:** 47, (b. 1890), goateed, forbidding. Mystic, screenwriter, Protestant militant, Hitler admirer, and founder of the fascist Silver Legion. Ran for President last year as a fringe candidate under the banner of his Christian Party. Recipient of donations brokered by Clara from her elite client list.
- Marshall Daly:** 27, short, dark and handsome. B-movie screenwriter and paramour to

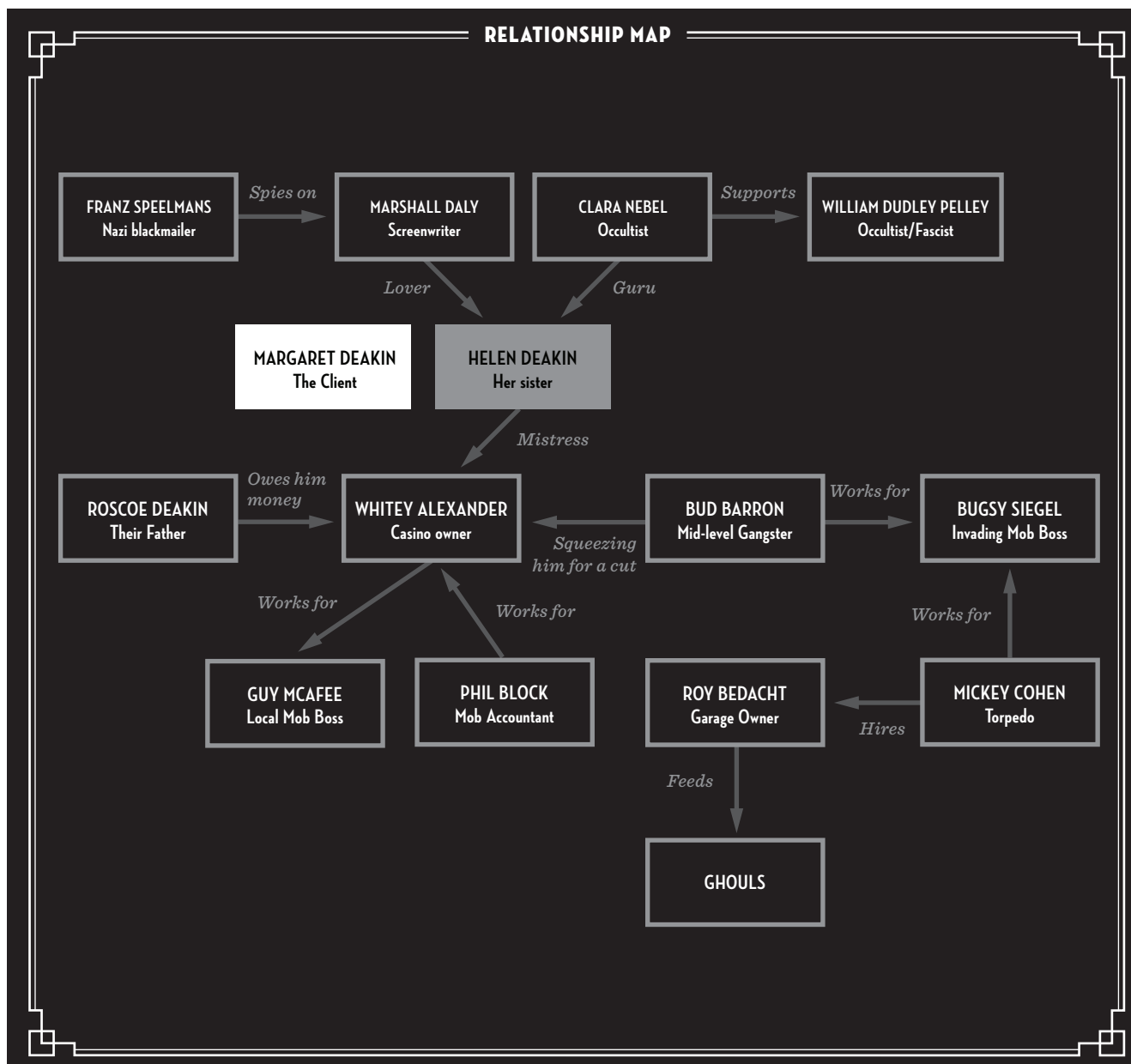
Helen. Real name: Max Poffenberger. He fears revelation of his Communist Party affiliations, leaving him open to blackmail from Franz Speelmans.

**Franz Speelmans:** 59, obese, wheezy, squints as if holding in an imaginary monocle. A Nazi spy posing as a journalist, he seeks dirt on Hollywood writers and directors whose movies feature anti-Nazi themes. A dedicated voyeur, Speelmans pursues sexual information with sweaty fervor.

## What Happened

After his wife passed, Roscoe Deakin went astray. Sinking deeper into gambling mania, he placed his real-estate development firm in the hands of his daughters Helen and Margaret. While Margaret showed the necessary steel to keep the company afloat, Helen indulged the wild streak she inherited from her father.

Roscoe got himself deep into debt with casino boss Whitey Alexander. Margaret paid the first





## TIMELINE OF PAST EVENTS



- 2 years ago:** Margaret and Helen's mother dies.
- A year and a half ago:** Their grief-stricken father Roscoe spirals into a dissolute life of gambling and drinking.
- 270 days ago:** Margaret pays off his debts — chiefly to Whitey Alexander — and cuts him off.
- 200 days ago:** Roscoe is back in debt again. To protect him, Helen becomes Whitey's girl. She pretends to break it off with screenwriter Marshall Daly, but carries on their affair in secret.
- 110 days ago:** In casual conversation with Phil Block, Helen realizes that Whitey has been skimming cash from the casino that is supposed to go to his boss, Guy McAfee. She mentally files this information for future reference.
- 100 days ago:** Budd Barron starts putting the squeeze on Whitey.
- 95 days ago:** Seeking dope on the invading east coast mob, Guy McAfee hires ex-cop Ed Palais to shadow Mickey Cohen.
- 93 days ago:** Ed Palais trails Mickey to Roy's garage. He photographs Cohen meeting with Roy.
- 92 days ago:** Palais leaves the negatives with his photo lab guy and heads out to pick up Cohen's trail again. Mickey gets the drop on him, beats him, and takes him to Roy's garage for disposal. Roy decides to have a little fun with him before finishing him off, and lowers him into the ghoulish cave alive. Palais emerges with his mind shattered.
- 90 days ago:** After another threatening message from Barron, Whitey lashes out at Helen, leaving her in fear for her life.
- 85 days ago:** Feeling increasingly trapped with Whitey, Helen conceives a plan to get rid of him.
- 84 days ago:** Budd visits the Alegria casino to lean on Whitey some more. Helen approaches him. Unwilling to talk with her at the Alegria, he tells her to wait for him outside the Brown Derby later that night. Mickey picks her up there and drives her to Roy Bedacht's garage, where she pitches her plan to him.
- 83 days ago:** Mickey takes the plan to Bugsy, who gives the go-ahead. He relays this news by phone to Helen.
- 80 days ago:** Helen starts making eyes at Phil Block.
- 77 days ago:** Mickey discovers that Ed Palais is still alive, but with his memory gone. Roy attributes this effect to a special formulation of the moonshine he cooks up in the garage.
- 75 days ago:** Succumbing to Helen's charm campaign, Phil starts copying a new set of books so he can steal the originals and give them to her.
- 70 days ago:** Helen and Phil meet up in a hotel; he gives her the books.
- 69 days ago:** Helen calls Mickey, who meets her at Roy's. He takes the books.
- 68 days ago:** Mickey gives the books to Bugsy, who says he'll move on Whitey when he's good and ready.
- 46 days ago:** Helen attends a spiritual talk at Clara Nebel's Order of Argent Light. This is the last time Clara sees her.
- 43 days ago:** Helen and Marshall Daly canoodle in his office on the studio backlot — the last time he sees her.
- 42 days ago:** An impatient Helen tries to reach Bugsy's table at the Cocomanut Grove to demand to know why he hasn't acted against Whitey. Mickey spots and grabs her before she can make a scene, driving her to Roy's. Mickey tells him to use his special moonshine on her.
- 41 days ago:** Margaret notices that Helen has not been home since sometime the previous day. Helen sometimes disappears for a few days without telling anyone, so Margaret does not panic immediately.
- 37 days ago:** Now truly worried, Margaret calls the police and files a missing person report.
- 33 days ago:** Marshall Daly goes to the Deakin house looking for Helen. Margaret tells him that she's missing but doesn't encourage him to stick around.
- 30 days ago:** Police find Helen downtown, identify her from Margaret's report, and take her home.
- Yesterday:** Giving up hope of Helen improving on her own, Margaret decides to go ahead and contact a private eye.
- Today:** Commence scene "A Dame Comes into Your Office"



***Dex Knows the L.A. Underworld***

As soon as it becomes apparent that the L.A. mob scene takes a role in this mystery, tell the player that Dex, as a longtime resident of the city with the Streetwise ability, already knows the local underworld in detail. Particularly when introducing real-life figures Guy McAfee, Bugsy Siegel and Mickey Cohen, supply their basic stories freely.

Remind the player that she can gain information about the mob scene simply by invoking Streetwise, and without having to hear it from Sources or other GMCs.

Obviously, though, Dex doesn't enter the scenario knowing anything that any of these figures has carefully kept secret.

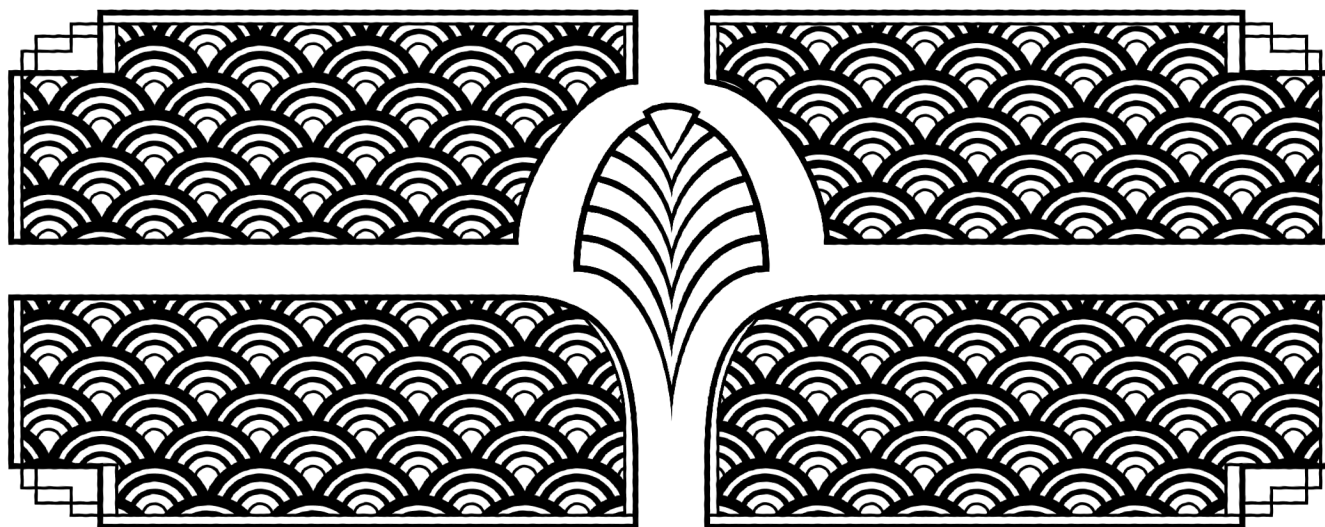
Also indicate that Dex realizes that any truly difficult case likely requires him to deal with L.A.'s mob scene and/or the city's corrupt power structure — which are really two parts of the same beast. Despite the risks, he knows it and can navigate it confidently. In playtest, players who were not steeped in the noir genre sometimes thought they could solve the case without talking to gangsters. If the "How to Solve a Case" handout (p. 293) doesn't go far enough to establish the correct genre expectations, reinforce them as needed.

batch of IOUs, then cut her father off. When he sank into debt again, Whitey threatened to hurt him. Helen became Whitey's mistress. Though she liked him at first, she mostly did it to keep him from harming her father.

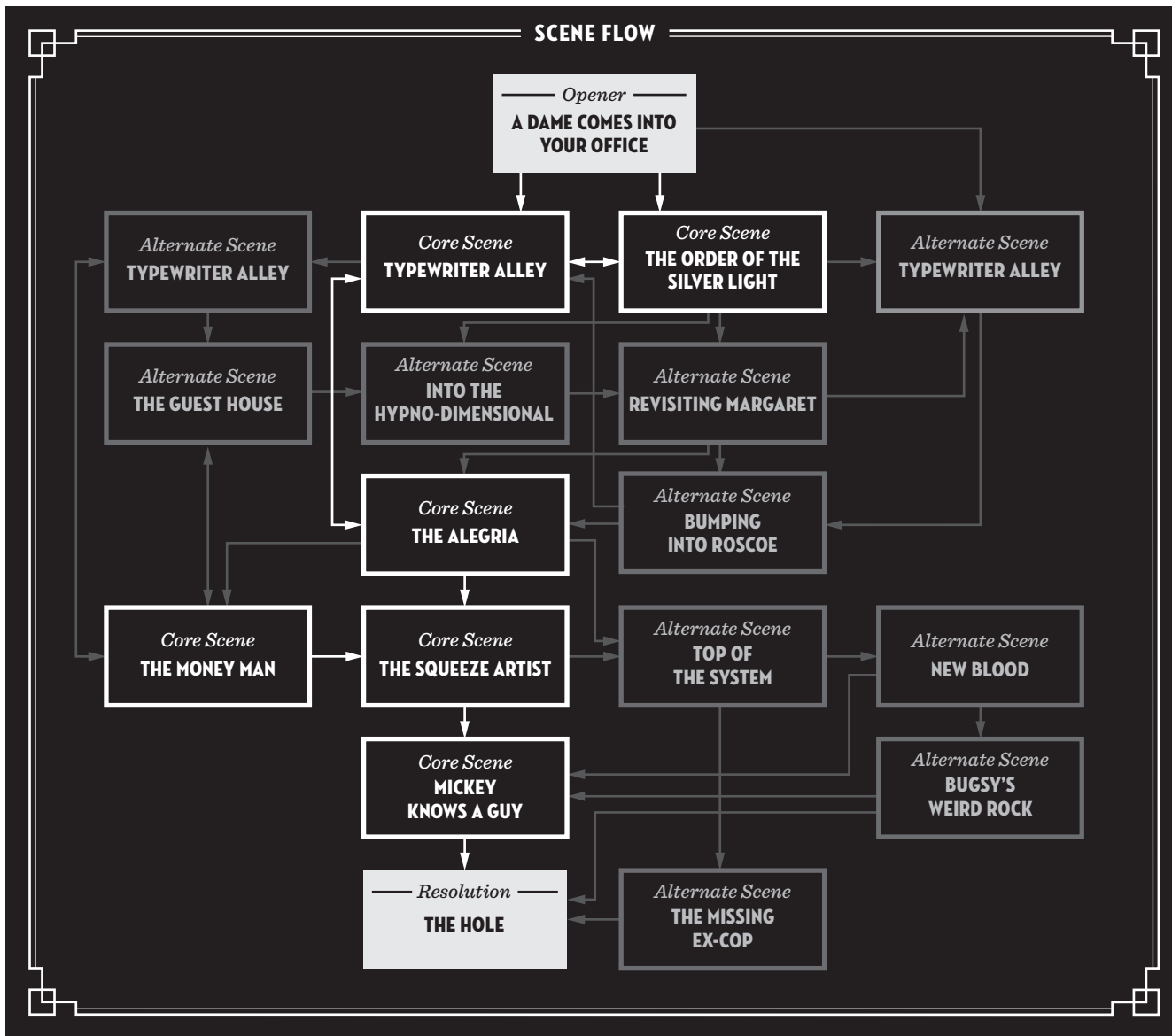
Meanwhile she kept up a more satisfying physical dalliance with screenwriter Marshall Daly and continued her spiritual dabbings with guru Clara Nebel.

Then Budd Barron started coming around, putting the squeeze on Whitey to pay protection to Bugsy Siegel instead of McAfee. The pressure got to Whitey and he took it out on Helen, starting to knock her around. That she couldn't tolerate, so she hatched a scheme. She went to Barron and offered him a deal: Helen would employ her wiles on Whitey's accountant, Phil Block, securing a copy of the casino's books. These would prove that Whitey was skimming from McAfee, which they could use to justify their move against him. Unsure of this offer, Budd passed it on to Siegel bodyguard Mickey Cohen. In return for the books, Mickey promised two things: to clear Roscoe's gambling debts, and to get rid of Whitey.

When an impatient Helen nearly embarrassed Siegel at the Coconut Grove, Mickey found a solution that did not require her murder. He turned her over to Roy Bedacht, a crooked garage owner who had a way to cleanse folks of inconvenient memories. After the treatment, Bedacht dropped her off in the city, alive but unable to tell her tale.







### ALTERNATE SOLUTIONS

Before starting, ask your player if she prefers to solve a mystery whose answer you've locked down in advance, or whether she would be just as happy to have you adjust the details for maximum entertainment value as you go along.

If she's open to a flexible solution, you might intuit in mid-game that it will be more fitting for any of the following to have happened:

- Whitey caught Helen with his books, and took her to the Hole to have Roy Bedacht destroy her mind. In this version, it's McAfee who controls Roy and his useful tunnel full of ghouls.
- Clara Nebel destroyed her mind by conjuring a vision of R'lyeh. She did this when Helen discovered her true occult powers.
- Speelmans had something truly incriminating on Marshall Daly. In this version Roy became a committed Communist in the pen and met Daly through the local party leadership.

Switch to an alternate solution only if it can be logically squared with the facts the detective has discovered so far. You might do this because the player seems more interested in a red herring than in the planned solution, or because she decides right away that Bugsy and Mickey did it.

## Scenes

### A DAME COMES INTO YOUR OFFICE

*Scene Type:* Opener

*Lead-Outs:* The Girl with Death in her Eyes, Typewriter Alley, The Order of Argent Light

The action begins in the dingy Bunker Hill office of Dex Raymond’s one-man private detective agency.

Ask the player to select one of the following opening Problems. These appear as the first four Problem cards in the set that accompanies this scenario, as found on p. 134: “What Killed the Cat,” “Lonely,” “Broke,” and “Vice Hound.” Let the player read the text of all four cards before choosing.

Ask the player to describe one item that makes Dex’s office stand out from a default down-at-the-heels P.I.’s office, and to explain its significance.

These two choices allow the player to personalize Dex quickly, developing him from the default detective of noir tropes into an individualized creation.

That achieved, describe Margaret Deakin entering Dex’s office. Play her as cool, sultry, and whip-smart. She says that something terrible happened to her sister, and she wants Dex to find out what.

If Dex asks why she’s chosen him, she says she’s asked around. Word on the street has it that Dex doesn’t back down and can’t be bribed to drop a case once he’s promised to see it to the end.

On this note, or at another suitable moment, she asks him to light her cigarette.

“Will you see this to the end, Dex?”

A player holding the Problem card “Lonely” can



## KEEPING IT PROFESSIONAL WITH MARGARET

### Cool

**Advance 4+:** You can see why a hundred guys would fall in love with a woman this glamorous and smart. Fortunately for you, you’re not one of those guys. Gain Edge 1, “Self-Possessed.”

**Hold 2–3:** You can’t deny that Margaret has something special about her. But you’re not about to go all goo-goo eyed at the first sight of her.

**Setback 1 or less:** You fall for her, hard and sudden. Gain Problem 5, “Smitten with Margaret.”

**Extra Problem:** Gain Problem 6, “Sourpuss.”

choose to skip this Challenge by trading it for the Problem card “Smitten with Margaret.”

Margaret wants to learn what happened to Helen without exposing her father Roscoe to further humiliation. So the story she tells omits some details. Her opening explanation goes like this:

- Six weeks ago, her sister Helen went missing.
- Four weeks ago, Helen turned up, wandering the downtown streets late at night, clad only in a blood-stained, dirty camisole and slip. The cops picked her up and, recognizing a missing heiress from an influential family, discreetly took her home.
- On arrival, Helen did not seem to recognize her sister. She has been all but mute and nearly catatonic ever since, despite receiving the best care money can buy.
- The police performed a half-hearted investigation but turned up nothing useful. Margaret didn’t push them. If Helen had gotten mixed up in something scandalous, she’d rather have that information under her control, not the cops’.
- Margaret admits she might have waited too long to take action. She was hoping her sister



would show signs of recovery. Now, as she increasingly fears that she'll never get the story from Helen, she realizes she really does want to get the sons of bitches who did this.

- Helen suffered superficial cuts and scrapes during her mysterious ordeal, but no serious physical injuries.
- Someone knows something about this. Margaret suspects that somebody did this to her on purpose, but that's just a hunch. That's why she's hiring Dex — to find out if this was so. And if it was, to do something about it.

Dex can call on his existing background knowledge for the following. Give the player time to draw on them, but provide them as an example of the sorts of questions she should be asking if she's new to investigative roleplaying and hasn't quite caught on yet.

**Accounting:** Despite her youth, Margaret runs the day-to-day operations of her father's real estate development firm. Word has it that she's a tough cookie, routinely outmaneuvering local business tycoons who underestimate her on account of her youth and sex.

**Cop Talk:** A well-connected rich girl like Helen could get into a lot of trouble and count on the police to help keep it all quiet.

In response to specific questions, Margaret supplies the following additional information:

- She, Helen, and her father, plus a few key servants, live in the manor. None of the family members spend prolonged time together these days.
- After Margaret's mother died about two years ago, her father retired to pursue his personal interests.
- Helen has always been a little wild. Margaret has to take the role of the responsible one time and again.
- Margaret confesses that she has not always been able to conceal her disapproval of Helen's waywardness. Helen stopped confiding in her years ago.
- (Core, "Order of the Argent Light") When their mother became ill, Helen started talking nonsense about auras and Secret Masters and pyramids. Margaret doesn't know who dragged her into that nonsense, but she does remember

repeatedly hearing the phrase "Argent Light."

- Helen seemed to be juggling several men.
- (Core, "Typewriter Alley") The only man Margaret can name is Marshall Daly, a screenwriter at Capitol Pictures. Margaret only met him a few times. He struck her as handsome and angry, and probably the jealous type.
- The last time Margaret saw him was... oh, it must have been five weeks ago. He came to the house asking after Helen. This was back when she was still missing. Trying to see if he might be involved, she stayed tight-lipped.
- If Dex asks to interview Helen directly, Margaret expresses reluctance. "You won't get anything out of her. At best, you'll throw her into one of her fits." A Reassurance Push impels Margaret to relent, leading to "The Girl with Death in Her Eyes." Otherwise, Dex will have to do more digging first, and then convince Margaret that he's hit a dead end, before she'll allow him to talk to her sister.
- Regarding Helen's condition when she reappeared, Margaret says whatever injuries caused the bloodstains on the camisole had already healed by that time. The doctor found no trace of significant wounds, just some bruises and superficial cuts.

If asked, Margaret arranges to deliver the camisole Helen was wearing when she reappeared. Asking his scientific source Virginia Ashbury to run a Forensics reveals that the blood doesn't match Helen's blood type. To make the match, Dex can get Helen's medical records from her sister.

## TYPEWRITER ALLEY

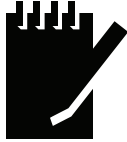
**Scene Type:** Core

**Lead-Ins:** A Dame Comes into Your Office, The Order of the Argent Light, The Alegria

**Lead-Outs:** The Order of the Argent Light, Franz's Spiel, The Alegria

Dashing screenwriter Marshall Daly could double as a matinee idol — if he was willing to get out of bed as early as a movie actor has to. Author of pseudonymous paperback thrillers and a rising





screenwriter at Capitol Pictures, he staggers into the studio writer's complex, nicknamed Typewriter Alley, in the early afternoon every weekday.

Typewriter Alley resembles a one-story motel, with a line of offices connected by a long wooden porch under a terracotta-tiled awning. Although security guards protect the studio's soundstages and outdoor standing sets from overeager fans and stalkers, no one cares about the boring office areas. Dex can slip in unnoticed without resistance — or simply stride confidently in as if he has business here.

If Dex shadows Marshall before approaching him, he automatically gets a load of his procrastination-heavy work routine. Marshall talks up a storm with other writers, either catching them as they smoke and pace on their shared walkway or knocking on doors until someone lets him in. After exhausting their willingness to procrastinate alongside him, he grudgingly stumbles into his own office to knock out shallow photoplays that never take the trouble to stray from convention. When finished, he drives an evasive path, looking over his shoulder the whole time, to a late-night meeting of his Communist Party cell. Call for a Difficulty 4 Shadowing Quick Test. Dex follows Marshall either way, but on a failure is briefly spotted, making the Challenge below more likely.

Meetings take place at the modest homes of various other middle-ranking screenwriters. Dex can peep through a window as Marshall argues fine points of doctrine with fellow idealists and hot-heads. Each evening ends with the agreement that by making Hitler's Germany look bad in their movie scripts, they're striking a great blow for the Cause.

Wherever it occurs, Dex's initial encounter with Marshall gets off on the wrong foot. Marshall accuses Dex of being with "whoever those damn scoundrels are who are following me all the time." Unless Dex makes a Reassurance Push (impossible if he was spotted while Shadowing Marshall), the handsome Marxist takes a poke at him.

## MARSHALL TAKES A POKE

### *Sense Trouble*

**Advance 6+:** You sidestep Marshall and put him in a hold. Invite the player to describe the exact move. This secures Marshall's cooperation. Earn Edge 2, "Quick Reactions."

**Hold 3-5:** Marshall socks you. You sock him harder, knocking him off his feet. This secures Marshall's cooperation.

**Setback 2 or less:** As above, but the exchange leaves you with a black eye that makes you look like a chump. Gain Problem 5, "Shiner." Dex must use Reassurance, or make the use of another Interpersonal ability seem credible, to earn Marshall's cooperation. You can't now use Intimidation on him.

**Extra Problem:** Edge 6, "Pulled Muscle."

After Dex secures his cooperation, Marshall reveals the following, in response to specific questions.

- Until about six weeks ago, Daly received regular visits from Helen. She would drop in on him at work or in his suite at the Chateau Marmont, enjoy a quick tumble, and leave. Marshall always wanted more, but she kept him at arm's length.
- Marshall last saw Helen here, in his office. He had no reason to take exact note of the date.
- He had no idea Helen was missing until she didn't come around for over a week. Concerned, he went to her house looking for her. Marshall already knew her sister to be a "forbidding battle-axe dressed in cute kitten's clothing" and wasn't anxious to talk to her again. She came off as worried but whatever was going on, she sure wasn't about to talk to him about it.
- Until Dex tells him, he has no idea that Helen has been found. He reacts with a mixture of relief, and anger — the latter directed at Margaret, for not even bothering to inform him.
- News of Helen's condition, if Dex supplies it, shocks him.

- Marshall didn't do anything to hurt Helen, and never would. She kept him at arm's length, but he understood that was the arrangement all along. He had a girl or two on the side as well.
- Marshall has no idea who is following him or why, but someone sure is. A jealous husband maybe? When he finds out, they're in for the thrashing of their lives.
- (Core, "Order of the Argent Light") Helen once tried to get him to attend a meeting of a group called the Order of the Argent Light, run by some woman named Clara Nebel. He laughed so hard she never brought it up to him again.
- (Core, "The Alegria") Another time he found high-dollar chips from a casino called The Alegria in Helen's clutch. He tried to get her to go there with him and gamble together, but she reacted like he'd run over her cat.

If the player portrays Dex as attracted to men, Dex may be smitten with Marshal. This section assumes that Marshall is straight, but you can make him bi if the player seems to want that to be the case.

Marshall might very well go for a female Dex's show of interest.

Follow the player's lead on this: it could lead to a quickly-mentioned roll in the hay, or to a distracting doomed romance. Use an adapted version of the "Keeping it Professional with Margaret" Challenge only if you know the player will be up for it.

**Assess Honesty** suggests that Marshall is being cagey about something. Spending a Push reveals that this is a lie of omission, and that what he has been willing to say is likely truthful. (He's covering his Communist party activity).

If Dex does get Marshall to admit his political affiliations, **Cop Talk** suggests that Marshall probably fears exposure to the LAPD's notorious Red Squad. It functions as a corrupt shakedown and political intimidation unit, maintaining its posture of legitimacy by rousting the occasional actual Communist.

Should Dex make an effort to befriend Marshal and give him the impression that Helen was deliberately hurt, is still in some kind of danger, or can be cured, the player gains Edge 3, "Marshall Offers Aid."

### FRANZ'S SPIEL

**Scene Type:** Alternate

**Lead-In:** Typewriter Alley

**Lead-Out:** The Guest House

After the encounter with Marshal, Dex faces the following Challenge to realize that he's being shadowed by Franz Speelmans. This happens on foot if Dex is hoofing it, or in cars if he's driving.

## SPOT SPEELMANS

### **Sense Trouble**

**Advance 5+:** You sees that you're being tailed, and can choose to chase him.

Bonuses apply in next Challenges, "Chase Speelmans" and "Shadow Speelmans."

**Hold 4 or less:** You do not see Speelmans, who continues tailing you, allowing a repeat of this Challenge after a later scene. The player knows that something is amiss, but not what it is, and must play Dex as unsuspecting.

**Extra Problem:** Problem 7, "Paranoia."

After Dex sees that someone is shadowing him, the player will likely want to either try to intercept Speelmans or evade him, turn the tables on him, and shadow him to his haunt.



## CATCH SPEELMANS

**Athletics** (on foot, if not trying to conceal his pursuit)

**Shadowing** (on foot, if seeking into a hiding spot from which to get the jump on him)

**Driving** (in cars)

**Advance 3+:** You either chase Speelmans down on foot and jam him up against a secluded wall or box his car in. You can talk to Speelmans, with his intimidated cooperation.

**Hold 2:** Speelmans gets away. Now skittish, he stops tailing you.

Setback 1: As per Hold, plus: on foot, gain Problem 8, “Sprained Ankle;” if driving, gain Problem 9, “Smashed Headlight.”

**Extra Problem:** Problem 10, “White Knuckles.”

Whether Dex catches him now, or talks to him later, Speelmans reveals the following. In the latter instance, this requires Intimidation. Lies appear in italics. The real story appears in square brackets at the end of each bullet point. With **Assess Honesty**, Dex can tell that Speelmans is weaving in and out of the truth. On a Push, he can tell, from Speelmans’ speeded-up facial tics, which specific claims don’t wash. Speelmans’ English is lightly accented with German.

- He is a naturalized citizen and has lived here for many years. He *has no relationship with the current German government*, though he approves of its strong stance against Reds. [Speelmans is as a Nazi spy on assignment from Joseph Goebbels’ Reich’s Ministry of Public Enlightenment and Propaganda.]
- Speelmans is a *freelance reporter*. [Technically true, but really a cover for his actual role.]
- He is researching a piece on Red subversion of the Hollywood movie industry. He doesn’t have a client for it yet, but when he puts it all together, all the papers in town will be begging to print it. [Optimistic, but not a lie *per se*.]

- Marshall Daly belongs to a Communist cell.
- Speelmans followed Dex in case he turned out to be a Commie, too. Obviously on closer inspection, Dex checks out as 100 per cent all-American.
- (Core, “The Alegria”) Through a skirt named Helen Deakin, Daly is somehow mixed up with a crooked accountant called Phil Block. He works at a rug joint (fancy illicit casino) called The Alegria. *He’s a rough customer; if you talk to him, you’d better go in with your gun out.* [Speelmans originally thought that Block belonged to Daly’s commie ring. When he tried to squeeze Block, he discovered instead that he was tied to the mob. Speelmans wants no trouble with gangsters and fears that Block might send some boys after him. He skews his information on Block hoping Dex will scare him into silence — maybe even accidentally shoot him.]

Should Dex frisk Speelmans, he finds a long flick-knife sheathed on his right calf.

If he humiliates Speelmans, the spy might come back at Dex later and try to stab him, in an Antagonist Reaction that occurs after he Takes Time. This happens even if Dex confiscates the blade: Franz has more at home.

## FRANZ TAKES A STAB

**Fighting**

**Advance 5+:** You disarm Speelmans easily, socking him into submission. Gain Edge 2, “Quick Reactions.”

**Hold 4:** The only way to avoid injury is to take his knife and fatally stab him. If you choose to do so, take Problem 11, “You Killed a Man.” Otherwise, take Problem 12, “Stabbed.”

**Setback 3 or less:** He stabs you. Take Problem 12, “Stabbed.”

**Extra Problem:** Problem 6, “Pulled Muscle.”

## SHADOWING SPEELMANS

### Shadowing

**Advance 4+:** You watch Speelmans drive to his home, and can come back later to sniff around while he's out. Grants access to the "The Guest House" scene.

**Hold 3:** You have a choice. 1) You find Speelmans' place, but also let him see that you're trailing him. 2) You back off, letting him drive away.

In the first case, this scene leads into "The Guest House" but the GM, without telling the player, notes that Speelmans will later try to stab him (see above).

**Setback 2 or less:** Speelmans realizes he's being tailed and gives Dex the slip. Later he will try to stab him (as above).

**Extra Problem:** N/A

Should Speelmans give Dex the slip, Cop Talk allows him to contact an unusually friendly cop (perhaps Ted Gargan; see sidebar) to run his license plate. However, it yields an out-of-date address, which is scarcely unusual in the restless, highly mobile world of Los Angeles.

### THE GUEST HOUSE

**Scene Type:** Alternate

**Lead-Ins:** Franz's Spiel, The Money Man

**Lead-Outs:** The Money Man

Franz lives in the guest house of second-string starlet and recent immigrant Greta Odemar, whom he is blackmailing with Sapphic photographs snapped back in Berlin.

Adjust as needed should Dex head right in to confront Speelmans in the guest house.

Among the Beverley Hills and Bel Air elite, having a guest house does not mean anything so unglamorous as running a bed and breakfast for

paying guests: heavens, no. The guest house is a small, free-standing structure somewhere on the owner's property, where one's guest can stay without getting too close. (You or your player might recall that Kato Kaelin became a witness in the O.J. Simpson case because he was staying in Simpson's guest house.)

As written, the scene assumes that Dex has waited for Speelmans to leave and then gone in to search the guest house. If so, Speelmans is absent, and Greta is in the main house.


Dex might try to sneak into the guest house, although if discovered he finds Greta indifferent to his intrusion. Only too happy to see someone hostile to this hateful parasite and rifling through his possessions, Greta will hand Dex the key if he asks. In fact, she offers Dex two hundred bucks to kill Speelmans and dump his body in the river. Killing Speelmans for money allows Dex to counter the Problem "Broke," but gains him much worse other potential trouble, as represented by Problem 14, "Murder for Hire." Few players will elect to do this.

Greta won't discuss why she lets Speelmans stay in her guest house without a **Reassurance** Spend. Then she says, "We knew each other in Berlin. He has photographs. I am not ashamed of whom I choose to love, but these photographs, they are... intimate, exposing. They would ruin me." In response to specific questions, Greta supplies these facts:

- Speelmans kept nasty friends back in Germany.
- He claims to be a reporter but is probably still working for those same nasty friends. (Greta will hint at his Nazi connections but is still so afraid of the people she fled that she'll never come out and say the exact words.)
- Speelmans carries a knife and has been known to use it.

The guest house consists of one living area with a small separate washroom. Its main features are a pull-down bed, a desk with chair, a love seat, and a stand-alone wardrobe. A search turns up the following:

**Evidence Collection** locates burned photographs in the fireplace. Otherwise a thorough search finds no photos or negatives.

 If Dex gives the ashes to Virginia Ashbery, she can, after about a day's work in her lab,



reconstitute the photos. They depict Helen and an older man ducking into a room together at a fancy-looking establishment.

(Core clue, “The Alegria”) Dex’s **Streetwise** IDs the man as Whitey Alexander, and the décor as belonging to his rug joint, the Alegria.

*[If confronted about this later, Speelmans might be cajoled or pressured into admitting that he planned to shake down the man in the photo, until he found out who he was. A high-powered gangster like Whitey wouldn’t pay a blackmailer — he’d have him rubbed out. That’s why Speelmans destroyed the photos: he was afraid of the trouble they might get him into.]*

**Evidence Collection** also turns up a key hidden behind a chunk of loose mortar between the fireplace’s bricks. Dex’s **Accounting** knowledge tells him that this key opens a safe deposit box, and that its numbering identifies this as from the Security First National Bank in the city’s Spring Street financial district. Later, Dex can go to the bank and use the key to open the safe deposit box. It contains not just explicit photographic negatives of Greta and her former girlfriend back in Berlin, but similarly voyeuristic images of Helen with Marshall Daly. Images of Helen leaving a hotel with an unidentified, mousy-looking man accompany them. (Dex may or may not have seen him already; this is Phil Block.) The box contains blackmail photos of three other lower-rung Hollywood types, all of them Communists or garden-variety liberals.

Greta will pay Dex for the negatives of her, allowing the player to counter the “Broke” Problem card. (The player might decide that’s not so sympathetic and simply give them to her.)

The desk drawer is locked. If asked for the key, Greta expresses surprise that Franz had the gall to have a lock installed in her desk without her permission. A little jimmying, using **Locksmith**, grants Dex access to its contents: a set of letters, postmarked Berlin, evidently in code. Dex can use **Cryptography** to put the letters in order. A simple perusal identifies them as written in German, which Dex doesn’t read.

But, of course, Greta does.

Dex might be sneaking in, in which case he can go to his professor Source, Alfred Kelham, to translate it for him, or use **Streetwise** to

know Karl Landgut, a friendly bartender at a German beer-garden located within a Washington Boulevard athletic club.

In any case, the letters come from the German propaganda ministry, scolding Speelmans for finding compromising material only on a handful of small fry. (Greta, if she’s the one translating, can’t help but seem a little offended by that label.) The letters betray a particular hunger for lewd pics of Charlie Chaplin, a critic of the Nazi regime they describe as a “known pervert” and “cradle robber.”

If Dex goes to warn Chaplin, the beloved comedian expresses gratitude and says he perhaps ought to make a movie poking fun at Hitler. Dex gains Edge 4, “Charlie Chaplin Owes You.”

(Alternate Core, “Into the Hypno-Dimensional”) One of the letters advises Speelmans to contact someone named Pelley, a “man sympathetic to the Cause” who might be willing to provide embarrassing information about “participants in his strange rituals.” Dex knows this must refer to a well-known Los Angeles figure, William Dudley Pelley.

**Streetwise** puts Dex in mind of Mickey Cohen, who is known to have one solitary redeeming quality: a spirit of volunteerism when it comes to stomping Nazis. Dex gains Edge 5, “Mickey Owes You” if he goes to tell him about Speelmans’ true affiliations. Shortly thereafter, Franz vanishes and is never seen again.

## THE ORDER OF ARGENT LIGHT

**Scene Type:** Core

**Lead-Ins:** A Dame Comes into your Office, Typewriter Alley

**Lead-Outs:** Into the Hypno-Dimensional, Revisiting Margaret

L.A.’s heedless unpredictability makes it a fertile breeding ground for spiritual questers. Sects and cults abound here, ranging from ascetic Christians to corn-fed Rosicrucians to the precursors of the New Age movement. For every sincere adept there waits a charlatan to separate the spiritually avid from their Depression-era bank accounts.

Clara Nebel combines both sides of the



mystical coin. She wields true supernatural insight, which she mostly uses to fleece the seekers it attracts.

Dex finds her at her chapel, a pueblo-style bungalow refitted for Hermetic spiritualism on Loma Linda Avenue in Hollywood.

A confident woman who armors herself in middle-aged glamour, Clara can't resist the challenge offered by a good-looking cynic come to ask her questions. She does her best to steer

discussion to her mystical beliefs, which are Theosophist sprinkled with touches of the Mythos. According to her, secret masters rule the world, connecting to the silver light of Nodens, benign force of the cosmos. The violence and confusion of the modern life arise from the actions of the dark races, who conspire with ancient deities with names like Yig and Shub-Niggurath to plunge mankind into an eternal dark age. Only by empowering the secret masters with the resources

to restore the planet to their stern command can the forces of entropy be banished. To do this people must open their awareness to the argent light.

Certainly, Clara requires her spiritual apprentices to support the order with generous donations: one cannot do good in the world with only good intentions, she explains. Throughout this esoteric filibuster she also tries to probe Dex's weak points. Clara quickly intuits his main source of emotional crisis, which probably corresponds to a Problem card such as "Disillusioned," "Lonely," or "Smitten with Helen." Seeking conversational dominance over Dex, Clara does her best to weave her read on him into her mystical discourse. His best play might be to seem receptive, as though she has a shot at drawing him into her cult.

Clara Nebel provides the following information, in response to specific questions:

- Helen joined the Argent Order about two years ago. She came with some other silly girls, but only Helen stuck around.
- (Core, "Revisiting Margaret") Until she found the order, the poor girl could not find a place for herself. Clara attributes her spiritual disorientation to the sudden death of her mother, and the uselessness of her gambling wastrel of a father.
- (Core, "The Alegria") Perhaps to compensate for the weakness of her father, Helen has always been drawn to older men with the resolve Roscoe Deakin used to have — the worst of them being the gangster Whitey Alexander.
- (Pipe clue, "The Hole") Clara last saw Helen a week before her disappearance. A dark cloud hung over her. When Clara mentioned this to Helen, the girl asked her to read her aura. Clara detected "the spoor of ancient, gnawing evil" on her: something she had walked over, unsuspecting. Clara also beheld a vision of "a great lever, once alive, but now stilled." She offered to conduct a protective rite for Helen, but naturally needed the girl to pay for the expensive ritual supplies. Helen said she would, but never came through.
- In fact, Helen has been unable to donate to the order for the last six months or so. Clara suspects that the poor girl's sister, who she describes as "sadly close-minded" has tightened

control of the purse-strings. Clara finds this quite unfortunate, as there are great workings to be done to forestall disaster in a darkening world.

- (Core, "Into the Hypno-Dimensional") If Dex has taken the trouble to seem the least bit gullible or receptive, Clara confesses she does know one of the secret masters. He maintains one of his homes right here in Los Angeles. This would be the well-known author William Dudley Pelley. He has written of the near-death experience he had in 1928, when he entered the presence of God and Christ. They bestowed mystical powers on him and urgently laid out a plan to combat the dark forces. In fact, Clara confidentially reveals, it was Nodens he met. Pelley changed this detail in his public writings in order to cushion the shock his revelations would otherwise cause to the unprepared.
- Helen took little interest in other seekers, who behind her back spoke of her as standoffish and self-centered. She wished as much as possible to speak with Clara one-to-one. Even at group meetings, she addressed her spiritual peers only when spoken to. She did not reveal much of her life, but it was easy to see that great troubles and complexities raged within her.

Dex can still spot the Pelley connection even if he betrays skepticism, by noting that he is the author most prominently displayed in the Order's small bookshop, and that all of the copies are signed.

Clara concludes by begging Dex to convince Margaret to let her see Helen. "She has suffered a mystical injury, and cannot be healed by the doctrines of blind science. I can heal her, but her sister will not let me see her."

Should Dex choose to trail Clara around the city, he finds her an unsuspecting target. He automatically succeeds in following her as she conducts decidedly non-occult errands like buying groceries, picking up dry cleaning, and dropping a typewriter off for repair.

Dex may present himself to Clara as a spiritual seeker, playing his role so close to the vest that he can't ask key questions. Should this happen, remind the player of the investigative principles from "How to Solve a Case", p. 293.



**INTO THE HYPNO-DIMENSIONAL**

*Scene Type:* Alternate

*Lead-Ins:* The Order of Argent Light, The Guest House

*Lead-Outs:* Revisiting Margaret

Preparatory **Research** refreshes Dex’s memories of William Dudley Pelley, a controversial public figure:

- In case Clara’s talk of “dark races” wasn’t clear enough, Pelley’s writings confirm him as an avowed racist and anti-Semite.
- Before his mystical period (see above), Pelley wrote short stories and then screenplays in Hollywood, including a couple of Lon Chaney films.
- He runs his own spiritual training outfit, called Galahad College, in Asheville, South Carolina.
- After Hitler assumed the chancellorship of Germany in 1933, Pelley positioned himself for a similar rise in America by forming the Silver Legion. (Note the distinction between the Silver Legion, the actual historical fascist group, and its fictional occult offshoot, the Order of Argent Light.)
- They’re basically the Brownshirts reconceived with a Saturday-morning serial aesthetic.
- Despite Clara’s talk of Nodens, Pelley publicly presents himself as a militant Christian. He ran for President last year under the banner of his Christian Party.
- Pelley says his near-death moment took him into the Hypno-Dimensional realm. In addition to revealing his sacred birthright as ruler of America, the experience granted him the powers of X-ray vision, levitation, and astral projection. Pelley claims to be able to teach these to his top students at Galahad College.

If Dex is coming here without meeting Clara Nebel in “The Order of Argent Light,” **Research** also reveals the facts given there about Pelley.

Pelley used to live in Los Angeles full-time, but now claims to have put the corrupt, ignorant place behind him. Yet he maintains a residence here, in order to keep Clara’s attention focused on him. If he stayed away too long, he fears that she’d find

another secret master to receive her followers’ donations.

Attempts to shadow Pelley before or after Dex’s initial contact with him show that he rarely leaves his house. Instead, his followers run his errands for him. Dex automatically succeeds in following them for as long as he can stand the boredom. Their trip to a gun store for hunting knives and ammunition might seem momentarily promising, but overall they’re shopping for food, picking up a new shipment of uniforms, going to the print shop to have pamphlets printed, and otherwise affirming Pelley’s red-herring-ness.

Should Dex ring Pelley’s doorbell, he comes to the door with a wary, hawk-like expression on his stern, goateed face. He sports a silver paramilitary uniform, speaks in theatrical tones, and generally projects the image of an aspiring homegrown Führer. To no great avail, he tries to block Dex’s view of the meeting taking place in his parlor. A group of five men, all young, gangly and exuding the distinctive tang of the angry misfit, sit in a circle, perched on metal folding chairs. Clad in silver lamé fascist uniforms, they practice their Hitlerian glowers.

Despite his flamboyantly villainous presentation, Pelley had nothing to do with Helen Deakin’s condition. Accordingly, he speaks to Dex with the confident openness of a man with nothing to hide. He supplies the following answers to specific questions Dex poses.

- Pelley only met Helen Deakin once. He thought her a “nothing creature,” but out of respect for Clara, who seemed to like the girl, did not share this impression with her.
- Helen came to his lecture accompanied by a loathsome young man whose name he forgets. They had words afterwards, in which the fellow’s purulent vocabulary revealed him as a dirty Red. (If shown a picture of Marshall Daly, Pelley confirms that it’s him.)
- Pelley had nothing to do with Helen’s condition, and has no idea what caused it.
- If Clara thinks she can cure Helen, he would not contradict her.
- Clara has supplied essential funding for Galahad College, proving herself indispensable to the cause.
- Pelley did meet once with Franz Speelmans. He



describes him as a “contemptible insect” bearing none of the signal qualities of the German people.

- If asked to speculate on who might have harmed the girl, Pelley tells Dex to “look for the Jews.” Although it coincidentally happens that she was driven mad at the behest of Jewish mobsters, Pelley is drawing strictly on his prejudices, and not on any supernatural insight.

It’s up to you whether Pelley in your version of the *Cthulhu Confidential* setting wields true supernatural powers, like Clara, or is delusional. You may not have to determine that here, leaving the question open for his possible reappearance in a sequel.

If Dex’s actions lead Pelley to regard him as a threat, he sends the boys in silver to waylay him. See “Antagonist Reactions,” p. 133.

### THE GIRL WITH DEATH IN HER EYES

**Scene Type:** Alternate

**Lead-In:** A Dame Comes into your Office, The Order of Argent Light, Revisiting Margaret

**Lead-Outs:** Bumping into Roscoe

Margaret says she’ll only allow Dex to meet with Helen once, and urges him to make the interview quick and gentle. Ideally, she’d like him to solve the case without ever talking to her, but she realizes that might be expecting too much.

Dex can, however, persuade Margaret to agree to further interviews with her sister, at an escalating cost in Reassurance Pushes: 1 for the second encounter, 2 for the third, 3 for the fourth, and so on.

Margaret makes sure that Helen never leaves the Deakin family manor, a large three-story neo-Classical structure in Beverly Hills. A butler, Wheatcroft, greets Dex stiffly at the door and asks him to wait in the manor’s capacious foyer while he summons Margaret. Under no circumstances does Wheatcroft ever reveal anything of use or interest — not even his own first name.

Margaret unlocks the door to her sister’s room to let Dex in. She and Helen’s nurse, an alert, collected,

young, black woman named Ella Perreau, remain in the room, ready to intervene at any moment.

The room has been stripped of almost all

### *Helen’s Effects: The Moonshine Jar*

If Dex asks to look through the items Margaret had removed from her sister’s room, one item stands out: a jar of clear liquid labeled with a strip of masking tape. In a shaky hand, the tape bears a date just over three months old.

**Evidence Collection:** The writing on the tape is nothing like the various samples of Helen’s handwriting that can be found throughout the house. Spend a Push: it is almost certainly that of a man, and one with limited formal schooling.

A whiff indicates — and a taste confirms — that the liquid is a potent moonshine. **Streetwise** identifies this as the low-grade stuff made and sold in rural areas during Prohibition. With booze’s return to legality you don’t see this much anymore, as even the down-and-out can easily get their hands on low-cost, commercially-produced spirits.

The container is nearly full. If anyone drank any of it, they must have stopped after a single swig.

**Cop Talk** tells Dex that getting print matches from the jar would be a lengthy process.

**Forensics** Source Virginia Ashbury can lift prints from the jar, isolating three sets of them (four if Dex touched the jar). If provided with another object that only Helen touched, Virginia can identify one set of prints as Helen’s. It takes her a day to find the time to do this.

Ted Gargan requires serious persuasion, in the form of a Cop Talk Push, to assign a civilian police employee to manually search the department’s records for matching prints. This takes no less than three days (not counting Virginia’s time); he estimates that it will take a week. The call from Gargan does not occur until after Dex plays out the scene “The Alegria.” It identifies one other set of prints as belonging to Mickey Cohen, and the third to an ex-convict with no known current address, Roy Bedacht. (His name appears on the business license for his garage, but that’s filed in the San Bernadino County Hall of Records, and Dex has no way of knowing that’s where he needs to go to employ Research). Still, this points Dex to “Mickey Knows a Guy”, if he hasn’t already triggered that scene.

furniture and ornament. Its adjoining bathroom has no mirror, no scissors, no nail files — nothing Helen could use to hurt herself.

Helen sits on the edge of a bed, wearing a clean new housecoat Ella has wrapped her in for the occasion. When the robe falls open, revealing a modest lace nightdress, Margaret steps in to fold it closed again. Helen’s hair, still wet from recent shampooing, hangs in a disordered mess. She stares straight ahead, moving her lips as if mumbling, but making no sound.

Unless presented with certain stimuli listed below, Helen does not react at all to Dex’s questions.

Ask the player if Dex makes eye contact with her.

If so, he feels a vertiginous sense that he’s falling into her eyes, as if the madness they contain reaches out to pull him into its depths.

## FALLING INTO HELEN’S EYES

### *Stability*

**Penalty:** -2 if you brought up the dread deities Clara mentioned.

**Advance 8+:** You snap out of it, only momentarily shaken. Gain Edge 6, “Bedrock Skepticism.”

**Hold 5–7:** An eerie feeling haunts you for a few hours, but then you’re able to put it out of your mind.

**Setback 4 or less:** The feeling sticks with you. Something is wrong not only with Helen, but with you. And maybe with the universe. Gain Problem 15, “The Horror in Helen’s Eyes.”

**Extra Problem:** 16, “Cold-Blooded.”

If Dex passes that test, he must immediately make another. He also makes this second test if he avoided full eye contact with Helen.

## DAMSEL IN DISTRESS

### *Cool*

**Bonus:** +1 if Dex has Problem 5, “Smitten with Margaret.”

**Penalty:** -2 if Dex has Problem 2, “Lonely.”

**Advance 5+:** You see why someone might fall in love with this beautiful, damaged waif. That someone would consider himself her white knight, and swear to revive her from her troubled sleep, so he could live forever with her in a magical castle. Fortunately, you’re not that kind of someone. Gain Edge 1, “Self-Possessed.”

**Hold 3–4:** You see why someone might fall in love with this beautiful, damaged waif. For an instant, you feel that urge yourself. Then you see the place on her wrist where she tried to slice herself open, and realize that she’s not the only one who’d be better off without an impulse for self-destruction.

**Setback 2 or less:** Dammit, here it comes again. A beautiful, damaged waif, just the thing to stir up your white knight complex. Here you go again, Dex Raymond. In love with a troubled girl. And in love with trouble. Gain Problem 17, “Smitten with Helen.”

**Extra Problem:** 18, “Bad Memories.”

Mostly this scene establishes the severity of the psychic crime committed against Helen. Dex does not have to gather any information from it in order to move forward. Helen remains unresponsive to most questions.

Dex might have Ed Palais’ photos (p. 122) or he might have snapped one of Roy or his garage himself on a preliminary casing of the garage in “The Hole” (p. 126).

(Core, “The Hole”) Shown a picture of Roy Bedacht, of a lever-style oil derrick, or of Bedacht’s garage, Helen goes berserk, flinging herself at the window in a futile effort to escape. Ella restrains

her but she can't be consoled, her agitation effectively ending the interview.

Mentions of other Mythos entities increase Helen's agitation, but not to the same extent.

Leaving Helen after an uneventful, largely fruitless interview leads out to "Bumping into Roscoe."

### Bringing in Dr. Mackintosh

Dex may choose to consult his psychologist source, Dr. Jeff "Mack" Mackintosh, on Helen's condition. Mackintosh first insists on conferring with Helen's psychiatrist, Dr. Daniel Mainwaring. When Mackintosh does examine Helen, he can only confirm Mainwaring's vague diagnosis: she has suffered a devastating nervous breakdown, due to a severe but unknowable traumatic event. Mackintosh agrees with Mainwaring that hers is one of the more serious cases he's ever seen.

Dr. Mackintosh, a devout opponent of all occult foolery, leaves in a huff if Dex tries to combine his visit and Clara's (below).

### Bringing in Clara

If Dex asks her to let Clara Nebel see Helen, Margaret resists. She wonders if Nebel's mystical hoodoo isn't somehow to blame for her sister's condition. Dex can persuade Margaret to allow this meeting by spending a Reassurance Push. This is in addition to any Pushes required for subsequent visitation, as mentioned above.

Charging the player to have this scene occur is something of a dirty trick, because bringing in Clara makes matters worse for Dex and all concerned. That's noir for you!

Should this scene occur, Clara swans in, exchanges frosty pleasantries with Margaret, and suffers the cold glances of a protective Ella. Helen relaxes a little as Clara enters her room, apparently comforted by her familiar presence. Clara places her hands on Helen's face, looks into her eyes, and then staggers back, her medium's senses flooded. Trembling, eyes wide, she relives Helen's experience in the Hole, shrieking incoherent phrases: "The tumbling eons! The hungry jaws! No, no, Nodens, no!"

Describe this as quickly as you can, or better yet give the player chances to become involved.

Otherwise you're just describing the supporting characters as they interact, which is always tedious in a roleplaying game.

Then ask the player if Dex is carrying a gun.

If so, this Challenge occurs:

## CLARA GOES FOR DEX'S GUN

### *Athletics*

**Advance 10+:** You prevent Clara from grabbing your gun. Gain Edge 7, "Whew."

**Hold 5–9:** Clara grabs the gun, but you wrestle it out of her hands again before she can use it.

**Setback 4 or less:** Clara grabs the gun, shoves the barrel in her mouth, and blows her brains all over Margaret, Helen, and Ella.

**Extra Problem:** Problem 19, "Wrenched Back."

If there is no gun to grab, or if Dex gets it away from her, Clara, still seized by mania, looks for some other dramatic way to off herself. Depending on measures Dex takes to thwart this, she might:

- find Roscoe's den, pull a pistol from his proudly-displayed case of hunting weapons, and blow her head off. (Isn't that just like foolish Roscoe, to keep loaded firearms on display?)
- rush to the manor's top floor and leap from a balcony.
- leap into her vehicle and drive headlong into a truck, resulting in a fiery conflagration that consumes her and the innocent truck driver as well.



In each case, adapt the above Challenge to allow Dex a chance of physically stopping her. Use this Challenge if he fails:

Should Dex thwart Clara's suicide attempt, he can calm her by spending a Reassurance Push. (Without this Push he later discovers that she committed suicide at her chapel. That may sadden him, but it does not call for a Stability Challenge.)

Assuming that Dex does calm her, the terrifying images from Helen's torment in the ghoulish tunnels recede all too quickly from Clara's mind. But she can describe a few elements before they disappear. She says she saw:

- "hairless, wolf-faced creatures, dashing at the bars of a cage"
- "horrible hieroglyphics, which for a terrible moment I understood"

If asked to describe anything from the vision that relied on other senses, she also recalls hearing a distant metallic banging. If further asked to pinpoint it, she says "above."

On an **Inspiration** Push, Dex impels her to concentrate harder and come up with one more detail: "the creatures. They do not desire the flesh of the living. He wins their approach through a ruse!" This exhausts her; she faints. When she wakes up, she remembers nothing of her ill-advised telepathic reading, except to say that the terror has receded for her, but Helen lives it every

waking second of the day. Both Margaret and Clara become extremely upset if Dex suggests that Clara re-attempt contact. Neither can be convinced to cooperate on this.

## REVISITING MARGARET

**Scene Type:** Alternate

**Lead-Ins:** The Order of Argent Light, Typewriter Alley, The Alegria, The Girl with Death in her Eyes

**Lead-Outs:** The Alegria

After some poking around, Dex may learn enough about the situation to induce Margaret to discuss what she tried to keep private: the shame of their father's behavior. Should Dex go back to her and mention the Alegria or Whitey Alexander, she explains the circumstances of Roscoe's retirement and present troubles. Use the description of her home from "The Girl with Death in her Eyes," p. 111.

- Roscoe's father was strict, a stern Lutheran who forced him to slave away his younger years for the family firm.
- Two years ago, after Helen and Margaret's mother died, their father changed. He decided he had worked hard enough and announced he would, in his old age, enjoy the adolescence he had missed.
- He put the company in Margaret and Helen's hands, spending most of his time at gambling joints, and probably at worse places.
- Really, that means Margaret's hands. Even before this incident, Helen had more than her share of the family wild streak.
- Roscoe got so far in hock to casino owner Whitey Alexander that his life was in danger. This was six months ago.
- Margaret paid his debts but warned him he would be responsible for any further trouble he got himself into. The company must live up to its responsibility to other shareholders, and can't become a bottomless piggy bank for Roscoe's excesses.
- According to him, he learned his lesson and has only been gambling amounts he can afford to lose.



If Dex presses Margaret on this point, she admits that it sounds unlikely. But it has been what she has been choosing to believe, in order to focus on the firm's affairs. The worst of the Depression may be over, but you can't make money in your sleep anymore, not like in the crazy days of the teens and twenties.

### **BUMPING INTO ROSCOE**

**Scene Type:** Alternate

**Lead-Ins:** The Girl with Death in her Eyes, The Alegria, Revisiting Margaret

**Lead-Outs:** The Alegria, Typewriter Alley, The Order of Argent Light

Dex might bump into Roscoe in the hallway of his home, after a visit to Margaret or to Helen. Or he could find him in the Alegria.

Portly, balding Roscoe Deakin presents himself as a jolly, rib-nudging rascal, always up for a bit of fun. He knows what Helen has been doing for him since Margaret cut him off, when he got right back into debt with Whitey Alexander. The power of a foolish old man's denial allows him to mostly forget this, especially when drunk, or in the arms of a prostitute, or feverishly watching the ball bounce at Whitey's roulette table. With Helen now unable to shield him, Roscoe's not sure how he's going to wiggle out of his predicament. Win big at Whitey's tables, he supposes. Ashamed and afraid, he does not readily admit to the extent of his troubles, or to what his daughter did to keep him breathing.

He responds to Dex's questions by trying to misdirect him to one of the case's dead ends. First he says that he claims to have heard that Marshall Daly was involved in "strange doings down in Mexico." **Assess Honesty** pegs this as downright dishonest. Should that fail to send Dex on a wild goose chase, he mentions "those crazy Argyle Star people who hypnotized her, I think to embezzle our money." With **Assess Honesty** Dex can guess that it is truthful but misleading.

(Core, "The Alegria") Subjected to **Reassurance**, Roscoe confesses that he's in trouble again and that his main creditor is Whitey Alexander. He asks Dex not to tell Margaret, but

gives no hint of Helen's sacrifice on her behalf.

If Dex instead uses **Intimidation**, the weak-minded Roscoe not only reveals the above, but confesses that he was letting Helen protect him by sleeping with Whitey.

### **THE ALEGRIA**

**Scene Type:** Core

**Lead-Ins:** Typewriter Alley, Franz's Spiel, The Order of Argent Light, Revisiting Margaret, Bumping into Roscoe

**Lead-Outs:** Typewriter Alley, The Money Man, The Squeeze Artist

At the end of a long, sloping road in the suburb of Burbank, not so far from the Warner's, Universal and Disney studios, nestles a sprawling ranch-style house run as an illegal casino called the Alegria.

The player may ask what Dex's Streetwise tells him about the Alegria before he goes there. He knows plenty:

- A guy named Whitey Alexander runs it. Whitey answers to the System, the old-line, white-shoe Anglo mob run by former vice cop turned crime lord Guy McAfee. That means his former colleagues in the LAPD have been well paid to look the other way.
- Whitey enjoys a reputation as a mobster you can depend on to treat you right. Provided, of course, that you're either lining his pockets or not standing between him and his profit margin.

Offer the player the opportunity to spend a Streetwise Push to have a pre-established, respectful relationship with him. Dex and Whitey can't be called pals by any means, but Whitey trusts him enough to talk to him, and respond in a relatively forthcoming manner. Sum up his attitude as: "For a dick you're all right, Raymond." Invite the player to explain what Dex once did for Whitey to foster this relative comfort level.

The place only opens at the supper hour, so Dex knows there's no point snooping around until it's hopping.

The Alegria is one swank joint. As Dex comes in, he passes Chico Marx, genially grousing about

his losses as he flirts with the hat-check girl. In an effort to charm her, Marx uses his character's trademark Italian accent.

A chanteuse in a slinky silk evening gown warbles Cole Porter's "In the Still of the Night" in a lounge adjoining the main hall. Bing Crosby nods appreciatively in the big room as he throws dice at the craps tables. Roulette and blackjack games play out all around him.

Wide-shouldered watchers stand throughout the room, guns bulging beneath their tuxedo jackets.

**Streetwise:** Whitey has greatly reinforced his security since the last time he was here. Looks like he's expecting trouble.

The scene "Bumping into Roscoe" (p. 115) might be inserted here, if it hasn't happened already.

If Dex made the Streetwise Push, he spots Burl Treehorn, a casino functionary he knows. When Dex requests a meeting with Whitey, Burl heads back to Whitey's back office to ask if the boss wants to chat. Otherwise, Dex gets a curt reception from any watcher he approaches, and has to work harder for access.

Either way, he has to cool his heels for a while, leading to the following Challenge:

## AVOID THE TABLES

*Cool*

**Penalty:** -2 if Dex has Problem 4, "Vice Hound."

**Advance 7+:** Gambling is for suckers. And you're not a sucker. So you watch the other fiends set their money on fire and wait patiently to talk to Whitey. Gain Edge 1, "Self-Possessed."

**Hold 4-6:** You play a couple of hands, but don't get in deep.

**Setback 3 or less:** A few hands couldn't hurt, could they? Before you know it, you're in the hole for more than you can afford. Gain Problem 24, "Gambling Debt."

**Extra Problem:** Problem 21, "Tempted."

Core, "The Money Man") When escorted down the corridor to Whitey's office, Dex passes a nervous, pin-striped shrimp carrying a folder bulging with adding-machine tapes. The man checks his watch and speeds his pace. His nervous look and a dollop of **Streetwise** tells Dex this guy knows something. But if tries to intercept him right this minute, the casino employee taking him to Whitey grabs his arm and says, "Whitey don't like to be kept waiting."

This is Phil Block. Dex might know him already from the burned photos in Speelmans' fireplace. Even so, **Streetwise** tells him that he'll have to catch up with this guy later. Should he pursue Phil nonetheless, any subsequent conversation with an offended Whitey starts strained and might go much worse. Improvise repercussions accordingly.

Hunting trophies, oak furniture, and a rifle rack lend Whitey's office an air of rustic manliness. He paces impatiently as Dex enters. Play him as a man with things on his mind, who wants to end this unscheduled chin-wag as quickly as possible. In response to questions posed by the player, he provides the following information:

- Yeah, Helen was his girl. He ain't been up to see her because she wanted their affair kept on the hush-hush. Her degenerate father may spend his days glued to the walls here, but Whitey still had to sneak around to see his daughter.
- Whitey sure does love that gal. If he knew what to do for her, he would do it.
- Although he did suspend collection of Roscoe's gambling debts, Whitey never thought of Helen's seeing him as a *quid pro quo* arrangement. He becomes hurt and offended if Dex suggests it. Continuing the conversation then requires a Reassurance Push. Without it, he has Dex tossed out of the joint, just in time to see Bing Crosby's car blow up in the parking lot (see below).
- Whitey attributes Helen's mental breakdown to that witch of a sister of hers. "Do you know she once barged in here and made a scene trying to haul Helen out?"
- Or maybe it was those crazy cultists Helen got mixed up with. Whitey doesn't believe in such nonsense but people say they do black magic rituals under the full moon, near the

Hollywood sign. “You know, where that starlet offed herself a few years back.” (Later, Dex can employ **Research** to pinpoint Whitey’s reference: actress Peg Entwistle committed suicide by leaping off the “H” in 1932. Her demise has no bearing on this case.)

- Maybe, eventually, Whitey will try to bust Helen out of that house, where they’re pretty much keeping her prisoner. But for the moment he’s in a bit of a spot himself and probably her family home is the safest place for her.
- (Core, “The Squeeze Artist”) His current troubles are nothing Whitey can’t handle. Some bum from the east, name of Budd Barron, has been squeezing him on behalf of Bugsy Siegel. He keeps offices in a magazine warehouse, of all things. (**Streetwise**: Dex has been hearing rumors that magazine company called A. M. Hillyer’s has become a mob front.)
- Things might get bumpy for a while, but it’s nothing to worry about. Guy will run those interlopers out of town just like his predecessor, good old Charlie Crawford, did to Capone in ’27. (**Streetwise**: Whitey he says it like they were all buddies, but it was probably McAfee who had Crawford bumped off.)
- He reddens with anger if asked if he ever laid a hand on her. “Not a hair on her head, ever,” he insists. **Assess Honesty** says he’s lying.
- Asked about the guy who just left his office, Whitey bristles. “Who wants to know?”

After the interview Dex might try to look for the nervous guy. Burl or another casino functionary identifies him as Phil Block, Whitey’s bookkeeper. He went home immediately after talking to Whitey.

## The Car Bombing

Just as Dex leaves the Alegria and enters the parking lot, a bomb blows up under one of the cars. An orange fireball throws the car up into the air. It lands on its back, crushing a couple of other vehicles. Fiery debris comes hurtling at him.

### DODGE DEBRIS

#### *Athletics*

**Advance 10+:** You duck behind a car and are completely unscathed. Gain Edge 9, “State of Alarm.”

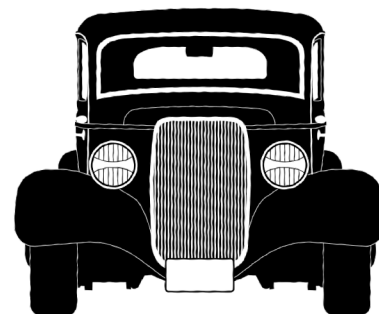
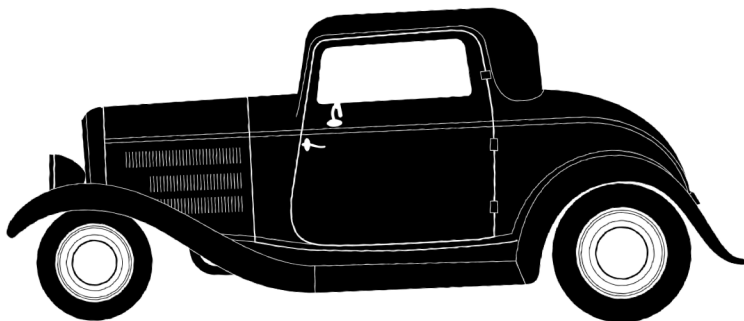
**Hold 4–9:** You aren’t hurt, but your clothes are singed. Expect smart-aleck remarks about this until you go home to change into a new suit.

**Setback 3 or less:** A chunk of hot shrapnel hits and burns you. Gain Problem 23, “Burned.”

**Extra Problem:** Problem 40, “Object of Ridicule.”

Dex spots two men sitting in the front seat of a dinged-up Ford coupe. Unlike everyone else spilling from the casino into the parking lot, they remain cool as cucumbers. Moments after noticing them, the driver turns the ignition key and starts to drive off.

(Core, “The Squeeze Artist”) On a **Streetwise Push**, Dex has run across them before, milling around A. M. Hillyer and Co., a magazine and newspaper warehouse down on Pico Street near



Grand. He clocked them because a lot of shady characters have been gravitating to its loading docks over the last year or so. (If Dex knows about Hillyer’s, skip any redundant info here.)

Absent the **Streetwise** Push, Dex has a choice of sticking around and witnessing the explosion’s aftermath, or shadowing the presumed bombers in his car. The Challenge for the latter goes like this:

Should Dex stick around at the Alegria after

## FOLLOWING THE BOMBERS

### Shadowing

**Advance 11+:** You follow the car to a magazine warehouse downtown called A. M. Hillyer and Co. They give no indication that they saw you following them. Earn Edge 10, “Upper Hand at A. M. Hillyer’s.”

**Hold 5-10:** The driver of the car realizes you’re following him and tries to lose you. You remain on his trail and finally drive past the two men as they get out at A. M. Hillyer’s. They reach into their jackets for guns, but by then you’re long gone.

**Setback 4 or less:** As above, but they actually shoot at you. Gain Problem 26, “The Bombers Saw You.”

**Extra Problem:** Problem 25, “Obsessive Pursuit.”

the bombing, he sees Bing Crosby come rushing out of the casino, along with many others, to see what’s happened. He groans in horror to see that it was his car that got blown up. Whitey and Burl flank him, grabbing him as his knees give out. Dex hears Whitey tell him “This wasn’t aimed at you, Mr. Crosby. It’s a message for me.” Whitey then promises Bing he’ll be kept out of this. Burl ushers a still-shaky Crosby to his own vehicle and whisks him away.

The incident finds Whitey in no mood for further talk with Dex. If Dex pushes his luck, Whitey warns him to stay out of it. Whitey isn’t saying so, but clearly he underestimated how far Budd Barron was willing to go.

## THE MONEY MAN

**Scene Type:** Alternate

**Lead-Ins:** The Guest House, The Alegria

**Lead-Outs:** The Guest House

If Dex knows he’s looking for Whitey’s bookkeeper but doesn’t know his name, he can find it out by engaging in Cop Talk with an LAPD officer willing to give him the time of day — most likely Ted Gargan (p. 65).

Once Dex has Phil Block’s name, **Research** yields the address of his drab Echo Park apartment.

**Intimidation** gets Dex inside his door, as Phil, a quivering doormat of a man, mutters in helpless protest.

From Phil’s point of view, the story goes like this. Avoid monologuing by leaving places for the player to ask questions and prompt him to keep going.

- The boss’ twist, Helen Deakin, got hot and heavy for Phil. He should have had the strength of mind to keep her at bay. But when else would a man like him have a chance to be with a woman like that? One so far out of his league she might as well be from the moon.
- So even though Whitey would have him rubbed out if he found out, he gave in and agreed to meet her in a hotel room. That’s when he found out what she wanted — a copy of Whitey’s books. Again, yes, he shoulda said no. But by that time she was like heroin to him. So he agreed and on a later meeting gave her the books.
- Once she had them it was like he no longer existed. And that was the last time he ever saw her.
- Should Dex ask how Whitey treated Helen, Phil says that he saw bruises on her. He asked if Whitey was smacking her around, and she said no. Phil didn’t believe her but didn’t press the issue.
- A couple of days after he gave Helen the books, this kraut, Speelmans, shows up with photos of him and Helen leaving the hotel that one time. If Whitey saw that, he was dead, but somehow Phil put a scare into the creep. He let Speelmans know who he worked for. And the dummy didn’t even twig to the fact that Whitey was the



one person Phil was most terrified of being rattled out to.

- Speelmans seemed to think Phil was mixed up with Commies. Phil has no idea how he reached that conclusion.
- Phil had other things on his mind than what Helen wanted the books for. He assumes she planned to get one over on Whitey by proving to Guy McAfee that he was skimming from him. He can't see why she'd give the books to Mickey Cohen. *As he fumbles through this answer, you might drop hints helping a confused player make the connection — Bugsy wants to show them to Guy, justifying their takeover of the place without a fight.*
- (Alternate lead-in, "The Guest House") Taking another crazy risk, Phil found out where Speelmans lives by following him home after their meeting. He lives in the guest house of an up-and-coming actress, Greta Odemar. Another kraut.
- He's sure it was Speelmans who drove Helen to her breakdown. Based on other photos Speelmans showed him, of Helen with some other young boyfriend type, the man was clearly a pervert of some variety. Speelmans must have attacked her, shattering her confused, fragile, beautiful mind.

### THE SQUEEZE ARTIST

**Scene Type:** Core

**Lead-Ins:** The Alegria, The Money Man

**Lead-Outs:** Top of the System,  
Mickey Knows a Guy

A. M. Hillyer's, a crooked nationwide magazine and newspaper distribution company, recently took on east-coast mob tycoon Meyer Lansky as a silent partner. He forces its local manager to let his people use it as an unobtrusive meeting place. Ben Siegel finds it too unglamorous to bother with, but Mickey Cohen sometimes swings by, and Budd Barron treats it as his main base of operations.

Exploring the warehouse, Dex finds its central floor space divided by high shelves into narrow pathways. The shelves support the weight of boxes of magazines and paperbacks, along with out-of-

town newspapers held together by wraparound metal bundlers.

The place holds two kinds of clues. He can:

- gain information by talking to Barron (below)
- acquire less crucial physical clues elsewhere in the building (p. 120)

Dex may enter openly or sneak in.

### Walking in during Business Hours

A sign posted by the door says: Wholesale Business. Closed to the Public. No receptionist or other gatekeeper waits by the doorway. Dex can waltz right in with the air of someone who has reason to be here. As he cases the joint, someone challenges him: either one of Barron's men, who use the place as a hangout, or an actual warehouse worker.

**If Dex has Problem 26, "The Bombers Saw You,"** one of the bombers sees him wandering around, pulls a gun on him, and marches him into Barron's office. Tell the player that with Dex's Streetwise he knows that his best option for the moment is to play along.

**Without Problem 26, and with a Lucky Break** (p. 61) Dex encounters an actual warehouse worker. The bored and indifferent employee accepts any reasonable pretense, such as a muttered "I'm here to see the boss." He points to Barron's office and goes about his business.

**Without Problem 26, and without a Lucky Break:** Dex encounters one of the bombers, who doesn't recognize him — or a different crook if the bombers are already out of the picture for some reason. He moves to escort Dex from the building. Ways to get him to take Dex to Budd include:

- **Intimidation:** acting as if it will mean trouble for the goon if he doesn't let Dex through
- **Reassurance:** seeming like a harmless civilian whose reasons for wanting to talk to Budd are magazine-related
- **Streetwise:** pretending he has connections to Budd

Absent one of these tactics, or something else credible, the goon pulls a gun on him and marches him into Budd's office.

### Talking to Barron

If Dex arrives with a gun at his back, Barron, who styles himself as a smooth-talking slickster, tries

to smooth things over until he can figure out what's going on. Siegel and Cohen might enjoy the rough stuff, but he'd rather buy his way out of trouble than have to dirty his hands digging makeshift graves. He apologizes for his employee's over-eagerness. "We've had a number of break-ins lately. Though I think it's just kids looking to pinch fitness magazines."

**(Streetwise:** Dex knows that certain fitness magazines are better known for their racy cheesecake and beefcake images than for health tips.)

When discussing his affairs Budd couches his statements as if he's in the magazine business: "In periodical distribution, sometimes you got to be a little tough on the competitors, see?"

A bit of a dandy, he cut his teeth on confidence schemes and floating gambling games in Pittsburgh. When that town got too hot for him, he threw in with Lansky, Frank Costello, and their new protégé, Benjamin Siegel.

Dex can use **Intimidation** to get Budd to talk, by claiming he has proof that Barron's men blew up Bing Crosby's car and is prepared to take it to the police.

Or he can use **Bargain**, offering to protect Budd if the System wins the gang war, by putting in a good word with his friend Guy McAfee.

Or **Reassurance** will also work — a promise that Dex only cares what happened to Helen, isn't foolish enough to make trouble for Siegel, and won't let on that it was Budd who pointed him in the right direction.

As always, a different Interpersonal Ability and credible approach will work just as well. Whatever the angle, make the player work for it.

Barron reveals the following:

- (Core, "New Blood") Yeah, he works for Ben Siegel, who wanted him to lean on Whitey, shifting his protection money from the System to the east coast crowd.
- Then this Deakin broad, Whitey's twist, pulls him aside right on the casino floor, in full view of everyone. Well, no one saw, but they could have. She said she had a way for them to snatch the casino away from Whitey, with Guy's permission. This was more than they could have hoped.
- She was making eyes at him, like he figures she probably does with any man who can do her a favor.

- (Core, "Mickey Knows a Guy") Well, Budd Barron knows you don't mess with another connected guy's woman. So instead she fobbed him off on Mickey, arranging for a meeting between the two of them. Let crazy Mickey handle her. If it amounts to anything, Budd gets the credit for making contact with the girl. If it blows up, it's Cohen's fault.
- Next thing Budd hears, she's given the books to Mickey and he's passed them to Ben, but Ben's biding his time, trying to decide whether Helen's scheme is harebrained or genius.
- Then Helen goes missing. Budd figures it's none of his business. Then she turns up again, with amnesia. Also none of his business. "And remember, you didn't hear none of this from me." If the conversation goes hideously wrong, Budd decides words won't suffice and orders his guys to deliver a decisive beating. That, he thinks, is how you shut up a nosy private dick.

## WAREHOUSE BEATING

### *Fighting*

**Hold 7+:** When confronted by multiple, experienced goons, the best you can hope for is a clean escape.

**Setback 6 or less:** Barron's goons give you an expert thrashing and dump you in an alleyway. Gain Problem 26, "Beaten Black and Blue."

**Extra Problem:** Problem 27, "Flight, Not Fight."

### Poking Around the Warehouse

**At night:** Dex might want to explore A. M. Hillyer's when neither Budd nor his workers are present. Posted hours on the warehouse door announce that it's open between 4 am and 10 pm. Only an elderly night watchman patrols the place outside of those hours. On a Difficulty 3 Stealth Quick Test, Dex gets in and can shine his flashlight around without arousing the man's attention. If the test fails, Dex

realizes that he is about to be caught out and can withdraw without being confronted.

**During business hours:** Streetwise warns Dex that sneaking in right away, when the place is still open and crawling with workers and loafers, is a long shot to say the least. Should the player try anyway, the Advance on that Quick Test shoots up to 12. On a failure, a goon pulls his gun on Dex and marches him into Budd's office, as above.

After successfully sneaking in, Dex finds the account books of the magazine business. During business hours, they're in an empty office that Dex realizes could be re-occupied at any moment. **Accounting** reveals that the day-to-day affairs of the warehouse run more or less honestly.

**Streetwise** says that the magazine business traditionally involves a certain amount of strong-arming of newsstands and sabotage against rivals, which would not be reflected in the ledgers.

One item which may stand out if Dex found the moonshine jar amid Helen's effects: several empty jars containing moonshine residue lie in a wastepaper basket in a chair-strewn corner of the building that the warehouse guys use as their break area. These also bear makeshift masking tape labels. **Forensics** matches the scrawled handwriting to the jar found at the Deakin home.

### TOP OF THE SYSTEM

**Scene Type:** Alternate

**Lead-Ins:** The Alegria, The Squeeze Artist

**Lead-Outs:** New Blood, The Missing Ex-Cop, Mickey Knows a Guy

To solve this case, Dex does not have to meet with L.A.'s reigning mob boss. Streetwise warns him, in fact, that a face-to-face with Guy McAfee might bring him a brighter spotlight than is safe for any gumshoe's health.

To come up on McAfee uninvited and then fail to observe the niceties is to ask for a beating, perhaps delivered soon afterwards by masked LAPD officers. Use the Warehouse Fight Challenge (p. 120) as needed, adjusting flavor text accordingly.

If the player insists, Dex can arrange a meet

with McAfee by using a Streetwise Push on an intermediary, most likely Whitey Alexander or Burl Treehorn. Guy meets Dex on his favorite golf course, at the Los Angeles Country Club on Wilshire Boulevard.

McAfee projects the image of an amiable businessman. He never admits to engagement in illegal activities, though with a wink may concede that he knows a thing or two about commercialized vice.

The player can invoke **Streetwise** to get the biographical info seen on p. 76.

**Assess Honesty** shows that Guy is telling the truth when he professes to know nothing about Helen's condition, her affair with Whitey, or Roscoe's debts. He readily admits to having done real-estate deals with Roscoe before his retirement, and says he looks forward to working with Margaret in the future.

Regarding Siegel and Cohen, he shrugs. "We conduct ourselves a certain way in Los Angeles. Some people from outside will never understand that."

(Alternate, "Mickey Knows a Guy") If Dex makes himself seem particularly sympathetic or potentially useful, or opens the door to the subject in some other way, McAfee says that he could use someone to shadow Cohen for him. Never follow the boss, McAfee says — follow the one who does the boss' dirty work. He had someone to do it, but he took a powder.

(Alternate, "The Missing Ex-Cop") Pressed further, McAfee identifies the missing hireling as ex-cop Ed Palais. He hired him about three months ago and never heard back. Palais was a boozer, so he probably crawled into a bottle somewhere and didn't have the guts come back and admit it. Try to make it apparent through Guy's demeanor that he's not the sort of person it's safe come to with an admission of failure.

Depending on how Dex plays this, Guy may offer him the job he gave Palais. **Streetwise** indicates that you never become just a little enmeshed with an operator like Guy.

On the matter of crime in general, McAfee argues that tourists come to Los Angeles looking for pleasure. The rich will find a way to purchase it wherever they go. Better to have what they

seek, safely provided in a quiet way, than to try and stamp it out. Do the reformers just want that money going to Santa Monica or Agua Caliente?

*The player, if not the character, may realize that McAfee has just articulated the rationale for Las Vegas, which Siegel will later develop, and where McAfee will move, founding the Golden Nugget after getting pushed out of L.A.*

### THE MISSING EX-COP

**Scene Type:** Alternate

**Lead-Ins:** Top of the System

**Lead-Outs:** The Hole

**Cop Talk** and a phone call to a contact in the department elicits Ed's last known address.

(As this favor feels a little grubby for Ted Gargan, this may be the time to tell the player about Len Pollard, p. 66.)

Ed lives in a decaying Bunker Hill rooming house. No one stops Dex from heading up to his third floor apartment door.

Sleepy landlady Esther Bruce doesn't care if Dex goes through Ed's mailbox in the front lobby. He needn't even ask; **Locksmith** lets him pop its simple lock, and nobody here cares to interfere. It contains only overdue notices for his accounts at various department and clothing stores, and an overdue summons to jury duty.

**Locksmith:** Slid under the door, Dex finds a manila envelope full of black and white photos. Several depict a desolate garage in the middle of nowhere. One shows Mickey and a squirrely-looking mechanic meeting at the garage.

(Alternate, "The Hole") Based on the quality of the light, **Photography** tells Dex that these shots were probably taken around dusk near the Mojave Desert. An oil derrick in the background narrows it down further. With these two pieces of visual information, Dex can find the garage by driving around the area for half a day.

### NEW BLOOD

**Scene Type:** Alternate

**Lead-Ins:** The Squeeze Artist,  
Mickey Knows a Guy

**Lead-Outs:** Mickey Knows a Guy,  
Bugsy's Weird Rock

This alternate scene adds dimension to the changing criminal ecosystem Dex may deal with in further adventures you devise.

Streetwise supplies whatever of the following facts have yet to come up:

- Siegel and his gang, supported by major mobsters from out east, are taking another run at the task his old friend and ally Al Capone failed at ten years ago: muscling into the L.A. rackets.
- Taking the role of chief muscle is Mickey Cohen, a brutish recent import from Brooklyn.
- No one waltzes in to find Siegel in an office somewhere. But he fancies the Hollywood night life, so it might be possible to approach him for a few minutes at a famous club like the Coconut Grove (p. 86).
- However, this will require careful handling — Siegel's mask of suavity conceals a propensity for sudden violence outstripping even that of the obviously thuggish Cohen.
- And if you don't want to see that side of him, never call him "Bugsy" to his face. (Should Dex do this intentionally, Siegel decides to have Dex killed later. The player gets Problem card 28, "You Called Him Bugsy." Before handing out this card, though, make sure the player meant for the character to say it. Don't treat it as a "gotcha" if the player slips and says it unintentionally).

As usual, encourage the player to ask questions by drawing on Dex's knowledge, rather than just narrating an undigested lump of exposition.

Siegel has not been in town long enough for Dex to spend an Interpersonal Push to already know him well, as is possible with Whitey Alexander.

**Bargaining**, in the form of a big tip, induces a waiter to reveal Siegel's preferred table at the Grove, allowing Dex to stake it out unobtrusively until his quarry appears. If Dex waits long enough,



he'll find Siegel taking his usual table. Anonymous goons protect the boss, not including Siegel's putative bodyguard Cohen.

Siegel doesn't admit to being anything other than a strikingly handsome ordinary citizen, in town to pursue a possible acting career. (He's not kidding about his movie-star ambitions, either.) However, with **Reassurance** he will dance around the truth, in response to specific prompts:

- He never met Helen Deakin and doesn't know what drove her crazy. (True, but carefully phrased. He knows Mickey promised to shut her up, and then she lost her mind.)
- He heard she was a fast girl. He hasn't been here long, but he does know that if you're fast and not careful, this place chews you up.
- The way Los Angeles does business will have to get with the times.
- Guy McAfee is slipping. He doesn't know that Whitey Alexander is robbing him blind.
- Sure, Siegel does business with Budd Barron. Hell of a guy.

Midway through the conversation (acting it out if you're playing face-to-face), show the player that Buggy has been fidgeting with a small object. An especially large d20 will suffice. Describe it as a chalky piece of stone covered with unusual markings.

Asked about it, Siegel reacts in surprise, as if not realizing that he has been absentmindedly turning it around in his fingers. He drops it like a hot potato, letting it skitter over the table toward Dex. If the player already has a Mythos Shock Problem card in hand, Dex must undertake this Challenge:

## THE WEIRD STONE

### Cool

**Advance 5+:** The stone gives you a sinking feeling in the pit of your stomach. But that's not enough to stop you from taking it, if you can convince Buggy to let it go.

**Hold 3-4:** As above, except you know that taking the stone will take a psychic toll on you. Gain Problem 29, "Something About That Rock."

**Setback 2 or less:** You not only can't pick up the rock, you have to get out of there, now. Before you faint dead away in front of everyone at the Cocoanut Grove.

**Spending Edges:** Any benefit to Cool, Stability, or General/Mental.

**Extra Problem:** Problem 30, "Strain Your Ticker."

Buggy doesn't remember exactly where the rock came from, if asked. "Somebody gave it to me and I guess I've been fooling with it. Mickey, maybe? Nah, why would he give me a stupid rock?" Once he lets go of it, Siegel is all too happy to let Dex take it away. He blinks, as if a fog on his brain has suddenly lifted.


### BUGSY'S WEIRD ROCK


**Scene Type:** Alternate

**Lead-Ins:** New Blood

**Lead-Outs:** Mickey Knows a Guy,  
The Hole

These fact-finding scenes make the carvings in "The Hole" less of a surprise, but they are not necessary to crack the case.

 Should Dex take the stone to Virginia Ashbury, his science contact, she analyzes it using Geology and determines that it's an oddity, matching no known rock. It resembles a harder sandstone, but is flecked with trace metals she can't identify.

 On a similar note, Dex's professor Source, Alfred Kelham, makes no headway with the hieroglyphic symbols on the stone. They resemble no known human symbol system. He's not even sure how they were produced. They were incised into the rock, but bear resemblance to the way a stylus would part wet clay.

If Dex leaves the rock with one of them longer than the day per Source required to conduct the examination, Ashbury or Kelham (whoever it is) can't resist the urge to take the sample and

pulverize it into dust with a hammer. The Source apologizes profusely and can't explain what moved him or her to this extreme and inexplicable act.

**MICKEY KNOWS A GUY**

*Scene Type:* Core

*Lead-Ins:* The Alegria, The Squeeze Artist, New Blood

*Lead-Outs:* The Hole

Mickey Cohen keeps moving and is in no hurry to be found. Streetwise allows Dex to cruise underworld hang-outs in search of him, or stake out the magazine warehouse until he shows up. Should you need a touch of excitement at this point, you could throw in an Antagonist Reaction as though the player were Taking Time. Otherwise, you can describe the search for Mickey as tedious, then jump the story ahead in time to the interesting part.

Not so long from now, from the late 40s through the 60s, Mickey Cohen will become Los Angeles' most influential gangster. During that time he will develop savvy and a disarming swagger. In 1937, though, he's an illiterate thug: insecure, afflicted with gonorrhea, and hungry to prove himself. With clever handling, Dex can trick him or cajole him into revealing who he used to sideline Helen.

Mickey doesn't think what he did was so bad and is not as guarded as he might be, provided Dex wheedles it out of him with a smart tactic like:

- Using what he learned from Budd and/or Bugsy to give Mickey Reassurance that they consider Dex on the level and it's okay to talk. If this seems too easy, require a Push.
- Strike a Bargain with information about some Jew-hating fascists — that is, Pelley's Silver Legion types (p. 107), who are in need of a good beating. This might seem more believable if Dex gives Mickey the lowdown on Pelley's men first, and then comes back later for the return favor of information on Helen.
- With proof of Franz's work as a Nazi agent, Dex might swap in Speelmans for Pelley. If Dex shows him the letters from Berlin, remember that Mickey can't read, but won't admit it. He finds an excuse to have Dex read them to him.

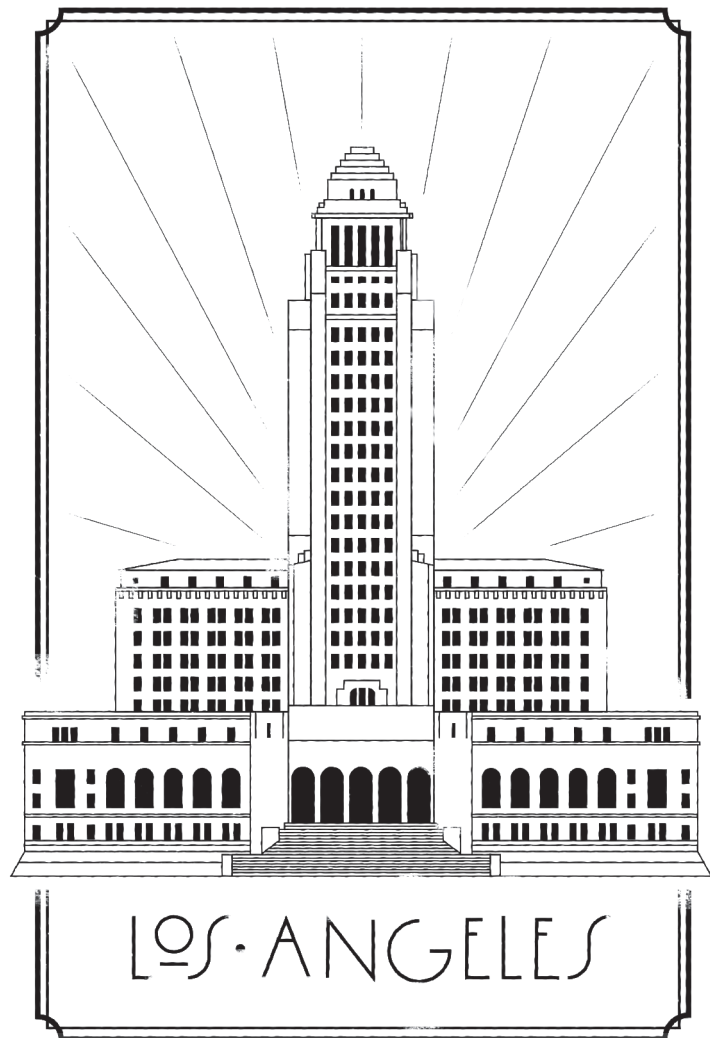
- A description of the various weird details that contradict the moonshine story, with a promise (**Reassurance**) that Dex will find out if Roy betrayed Mickey, and not tell Siegel if it turns out that the wild-eyed hick played Mickey for a sucker.
- **Intimidation** works only if the player contrives to make it seem very credible that this version of Dex could frighten this consummate bully-boy. Also requires a Push. Dex must draw the story, as far as Mickey understands it, from him by asking relevant questions.
  - Helen first made contact with Budd Barron at the Alegria. But Budd, not exactly the boldest mover in the organization, didn't want to get mixed up with her directly. He needed Mickey to take a hand. Everybody needs a guy like Mickey sooner or later.
  - So he met with Helen at an associate's garage, two or three times depending on how you look at it. The first time they worked out the details of their trade: Whitey's books in exchange for a hit on Whitey and forgiveness of Roscoe's debts. The second time, Helen gave Mickey the books. Bugsy put them away, waiting for the right moment to strike. He wants to move carefully, so he doesn't get run out of town the way Capone did. His mention of the third time is a veiled reference to an admission he will make later in the questioning, that he took Helen to Roy for memory removal. Mickey is not yet ready to admit that at this point in his account.
  - (Core, "The Hole") They met at the garage because it's out of the way, in San Bernadino on the edge of the desert. You can't miss it — there's an abandoned oil derrick on the property.
  - The garage owner is a guy name of Roy Bedacht. A California cousin of Mickey's met Roy in the joint, when Roy was serving a two-year stretch as an accessory to grand theft auto. On the cousin's advice, Mickey looked him up when he arrived in town. He started using Roy's garage as an out-of-the-way spot for hush-hush meetings, and also had him chop some stolen automobiles.
  - (Unless Dex makes an Interpersonal Push backed up by a credible line of argument,

Mickey does not admit that Roy's main job for the gang is as its corpse disposal guy.)

- Roy turns out to have another useful talent — making a moonshine that puts your memories to sleep.
- Mickey gave Helen some of Roy's moonshine — the regular throat-ripping stuff, not the forgetfulness potion — because she seemed interested in it. It appealed to her rich girl wild streak. Mickey doubted she would drink more than a swig of it.
- He also supplied some of the regular moonshine to the boys at the magazine warehouse. They were not as choosy about liquor as Helen was.
- One night, out of the blue, Helen tried to make a scene by approaching Bugsy directly at the Coconut Grove. Mickey intercepted her and drove her to Roy's so he could dose her with his memory-stealing booze.
- That was the last Mickey saw of her.
- When Roy was good and sure Helen couldn't rat on them, he followed instructions, dropping her off in the middle of downtown.
- If Helen had confronted Bugsy, embarrassing him in front of his Hollywood friends, he would have had her snuffed. Why, Mickey saved the girl's life! Her family ought to give him a medal. "We wouldn'a had to go that far, if we coulda trusted her to keep her trap shut. Like we can trust you, right, Raymond?"
- The girl will recover eventually, he assumes. By then Bugsy will have shoved Whitey aside, and she can squawk all she likes for all the good it will do her. No harm done.
- The odd bit of carved rock Bugsy was fidgeting with? Oh, Roy had it as a paperweight on his desk and when Mickey spotted it and suddenly wanted it. Roy looked at him weird when he picked it up. It seemed like an antique or what have you, and Mickey thought Bugsy, with all his smarts and such, might find it interesting. Mickey has no clue what it means; Roy told him he dug it up in the desert.

### If Things Go South with Mickey

In the event that unwisely Dex says something that ought to send Mickey into a psychopathic rage, give the player every opportunity to de-escalate. Start conveying hints in character, by playing Mickey as twitching with barely suppressed fury. Most players will back-pedal as soon as you do this. Failing that, Dex knows better even if the player doesn't. Suggest that every ounce of **Streetwise** in his body tells him to back off and cool Mickey down. (If the player has a Push left, you might reasonably require that she spend it on this use of **Reassurance**.) Failing this, give the player Problem 44, "Mickey Don't Like You."



### *If This Occurs Before “The Alegria”*

It is unlikely, but possible, that Dex will reach this point before heading to the Alegria. This requires him to talk to Guy McAfee almost right away, getting photographs of the garage in “The Missing Ex-Cop,” and then cruising around the edge of the Mojave until he finds the place.

In this case Roy does not attack him, because Burl Treehorn isn’t yet dying in his garage and he does not fear exposure. Instead, Roy fobs him off. **Assess Honesty** leaves Dex suspicious, but **Cop Talk** tells him this is the kind of lead to follow up later, once he knows more. Should the player seem reluctant to put a pin in this, you might:

- have Mickey pass him on the road and pull him over to demand to know why he’s snooping around
- have Speelmans follow him here, redirecting his suspicions to the Marshall Daly angle
- introduce a distracting Antagonist Reaction

hours watching Dex waiting for him, Roy loses his patience and comes out to ask why he’s sitting parked there. Dex can then take a photo and drive off, returning after triggering the scene “The Girl with Death in her Eyes” (p. 111) and then return here.

At first the place looks like any old, remote body shop, covered with dust from the nearby Mojave Desert. A pair of wooden doors, their paint peeling, presumably lead to an apartment above the body shop.

Dex presumably sneaks in, which seems to succeed automatically. Soon, though, he’ll discover that the opposite is true: the maniacally alert Roy has heard or seen his car approach. The garage sits on a treeless expanse that offers neither cover nor the usual sounds of nature to mask movement.

In one corner, a drop-cloth covers Roy’s still. If Dex inspects it, Evidence Collection points to no obvious differences from an ordinary moonshine set-up.

Whether he spends more time on the still or starts poking around in the disordered contents of Roy’s desk, Dex eventually hears a low moaning emanating from the trunk of a dented Nash Rambler. Should he open the trunk, he finds Burl Treehorn (or if necessary a different Whitey Alexander subordinate) inside it, barely clinging to life. Blood soaks the linen bedsheet he’s been wrapped in. Burl has been so badly beaten he’s nearly unrecognizable. Exposed brain tissue pulses below a fissure in his shattered skull. The sight requires a Stability Challenge even from a hard-boiled soul like Dex.

#### THE HOLE

**Scene Type:** Conclusion

**Lead-In:** Mickey Knows a Guy

**Lead-Out:** The Girl with Death in her Eyes, Reporting to Margaret

*This section’s main text assumes that “The Alegria” has already occurred. If not, see sidebar.*

The Hole, a cavern connected to a tunnel network and an abandoned oil well, lies beneath an illicit garage. Oil men gave up on the derrick in terrified haste when exploratory drilling broke down into caverns inhabited by ghouls, who until then had been feasting undisturbed on the newly interred inhabitants of a nearby Spanish cemetery.

When Dex reaches Roy’s garage he finds it apparently deserted. In fact Roy has seen him coming and is lying in wait. (For reasons explained below, every now and then he waylays and kills a hapless customer who wanders into his garage alone.)

A cautious Dex may choose to snap a photo of Roy and take it back to show Helen before proceeding any further. In this case, after several

### SEEING BURL

#### **Stability**

**Advance 11+:** The sight ain’t pretty, but by now you’re numbed to this sort of thing. Earn Edge 11, “Gallows Humor.”

**Hold 4–10:** You stagger back in horror. You can’t help yourself. Anyone would. -3 penalty on the upcoming Sense Trouble test.

**Setback 3 or less:** As per Hold, but also gain Problem 20, “Rattled.”

**Extra Problem:** Gain Problem 16, “Cold-Blooded.”



While Dex reacts to Burl (or at another suitable point if Dex refuses to investigate the noise in the trunk), Roy creeps up behind him in an attempt to brain him with a wrench.

## AVOIDING ROY'S WRENCH

### *Sense Trouble*

**Penalty:** as per “Seeing Burl”, immediately above

**Advance 13+:** You wheel around just in time as Roy tries to brain you. +2 bonus on the subsequent test, “Struggling with Roy.”

**Hold 7-12:** Roy clips you with the wrench, but he doesn't knock you out cold. -2 Penalty on subsequent test, “Struggling with Roy.”

**Setback 6 or less:** Roy clocks you and the lights go out. Go to “In the Ghoul Cage”, below.

**Extra Problem:** N/A

## STRUGGLING WITH ROY

### *Fighting*

**Penalty:** as per “Avoiding Roy's Wrench”, immediately above

**Advance 13+:** You overpower Roy, knocking him to the floor. You have the upper hand in your interaction with him, as he begs you not to hit him any more. If the GM agrees that you have a Problem card that might logically be Countered by defeating an assailant, you can Counter it now. The scene plays out under the conditions given in “Roy Floored.”

**Hold 6-12:** You overpower Roy, knocking him to the floor. You have the upper hand in your interaction with him, as he begs you not to hit him any more.

**Setback 5 or less:** Roy clocks you. The scene plays out under the conditions from “In the Ghoul Cage”, below.

**Extra Problem:** N/A

## Roy's Story

This section lays out what Roy knows about the situation, which is plenty. Depending on the outcome of that last Challenge, he might shout it all down gleefully to Dex in “In the Ghoul Cage” or have it coaxed out of him in “Roy Floored.”

Roy came to Los Angeles as a young man, part of the great flood of Midwesterners who came seeking opportunity only to slam headlong into the town's swirling madness. Already inculcated in the ways of the Cthulhu cult by his abusive father and stepmother, he arrived with a nose for supernatural weirdness. That's why he chose to build his garage in this godforsaken place — he could sense vibrations, which would give him power. Soon he discovered the ghoul tunnels running beneath the place. Throughout Prohibition he operated a small bootlegging gang, selling his own joy juice. When he had to dispose of a rival or a troublemaking lawman, he fed the bodies to the ghouls. To keep them happy between times, he sometimes waylays and kills a hapless customer who wanders in alone and looks like he ain't from around here.

Ghouls won't eat the living without prompting. A sadistic fella, Roy occasionally toyed with his victims by dousing them in blood and lowering them down into the ghoul hole. For this purpose he uses a cage attached to a winch, which he welded himself. The ghouls would drive his prisoners mad, lunging unrelentingly at the cage. Roy found that awful funny.

A small-timer at heart, Roy stayed well clear of the System. After a sentence for dealing in stolen autos, he met a cousin of Mickey's in the hoosegow. Upon release, Mickey was waiting for him with a proposition to serve as Mickey's one-man corpse disposal effort. As the experienced Lovecraftian will already have deduced, Roy tosses the bodies Mickey brings down into the Hole for the ghouls to eat.

Roy never told Mickey about the ghouls, or about the strange carvings they gathered for him as tribute. Nor does he mention the imminent reclamation of the world by the Great Sleeping God. He figured if he talked too big, Siegel's mob would take his ghouls away from him. So when boasting of his memory-killing treatment, he bent

the truth a touch, claiming it was a by-product of a special brew he can cook up in his still. As far as they're aware, all he did to Helen was subject her to an extended moonshine regimen.

### Roy Floored

If Dex overcomes Roy, the demented mechanic explains as much of the above as he must to seem cooperative, while also trying to lure Dex into the ghoul cage. Until he either succeeds at that or realizes that he has no chance of success, he naturally omits all mentions of ghouls or the Mythos. He might admit that the weird rock Siegel was toying with came from a cavern beneath his place, and invite Dex to explore it.

Roy might also twig to the fact that Dex will feel compelled to see what's down in his basement, and tell him more than that.

The elevator-like cage resembles a medieval-style cage gibbet, but with a solid floor. It is suspended on a chain attached to an automated winch mechanism. Should Roy convince Dex to step into the elevator-like cage, he slams the door closed and snaps shut its bolt lock mechanism. Though it can be opened from the inside, this takes time, giving Roy time to do the following: he walks over to Burl, sees that he has finally expired, and severs one of his hands with a hacksaw; then he tosses the hand through the cage bars, spattering Dex with Burl's blood.

## HAND SEVERING REACTION

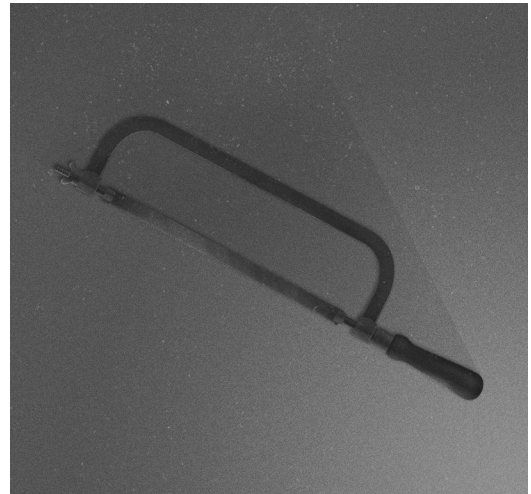
### *Stability*

**Advance 9+:** This is a sight you wouldn't have chosen to witness. You realize, however, that survival depends on your putting its horror out of your mind. Earn Edge 17, "Emotional Armor."

**Hold 4-8:** As above, but without the Edge.

**Setback 3 or less:** This sight will haunt you for a long time to come. Gain Problem 31, "Indelible Image."

**Extra Problem:** Problem 16, "Cold-Blooded."



The scene then unfolds much like "In the Ghoul Cage", but with much of Roy's confession already provided. Now he adds the Mythos-related dope as he hops up and down in glee, anticipating the arrival of the ghouls.

If Roy can't maneuver an unwilling Dex into the cage, our hero likely still wants to see what's down there, but on his own terms. Dex can step into the cage — without locking it, natch — and then reach out to hit its big push button. See "Exploring the Cavern."

### In the Ghoul Cage

In this version of the scene, Dex returns to head-splitting consciousness accompanied by the rattling of the winch as Roy lowers the locked cage. He has been wrapped in the bloody sheet that covered Burl's body. Roy stands over him, chortling in sadistic anticipation. As they wait for the ghouls to arrive, Roy gleefully answers any questions Dex may shout at him. After all, he's about to be driven mad, and won't be able to communicate anything he sees here to anyone else.

The ghouls arrive, drawn by the smell of Burl's blood. Hunched humanoids with rubbery skin and tusked, semi-canine snouts, they gather tightly around the cage, banging it and growling. Jostling together, they appear as one writhing pack. If the player asks, Dex counts somewhere between seven and nine of them. Maddened by the lack of a corpse to eat, the ghouls bang at the cage, snarling in rage. This adrenaline-pulsing sight sent Helen spiraling into her waking coma.

## A FACE FULL OF GHOULS

### *Stability*

**Bonus:** +2 if Dex has figured out that ghouls won't eat the living

**Advance 9+:** The sight of these creatures raging inches from your face is enough to rattle anybody. If you tell anybody about this, they'll think you're crazy. But you're a lot stronger than Helen, and you're not about to crack. Gain Edge 12, "Strange, Not Maddening."

**Hold 4–8:** The sight of these creatures raging inches from your face is enough to rattle anybody. You nearly crack from the mental pressure, but then find a reserve of inner strength that pulls you from the brink of permanent madness.

**Setback 3 or less:** You feel your self-control, your sanity, your very identity cracking beneath you. You might have a few moments of conscious volition left, before you succumb to the very experience that cost Helen her mind. Gain Problem 32, "Imminent Catatonia." -3 Penalty on "Fighting the Ghouls."

**Extra Problem:** N/A

Dex can escape the cage by spending a few minutes' effort unjamming the bolt. Few players will have him do this while the ghouls are still present. As aggressive as they seem, these ghouls will not attack a living person whom they do not perceive as threatening. Attacking an entire pack of them should not seem like a wise move. For players who can't take hints, we present the following Challenge.

## FIGHTING THE GHOULS

### *Fighting*

**Penalty:** -3 on a Setback in "A Face Full of Ghouls."

**Advance 14+:** Despite all odds, animated

by primal rage, you push and pummel your way into the ghouls. You kill two of them, sending the rest of them on a howling retreat into the cavern's tunnel entrance. Gain Edge 13, "Monsters Bleed."

**Setback 13 or less:** The creatures swarm you, overwhelming and killing you. Congratulations! You solved the mystery before making the choice that got you ripped limb from limb.

**Extra Problem:** Gain Problem 33, "Mortal Wound."

Does Dex perhaps still have a gun, so well hidden that Roy did not find and remove it before putting him in the cage? If the player suggests and passes a Preparedness Quick Test (Advance 4), he does. He can then shoot Roy as he prances maniacally above. Roy collapses, bleeding to death. The ghouls watch in fascination. When he dies, the lithest of them clambers up the cage, then ascends the chain. It tosses Roy's corpse down into the hole. Showing the politesse hungry ghouls are famed for, the others restrain themselves until the climber returns. Then they tuck into the corpse, devouring him. Dex can avert his eyes, or undergo the following test:

## WATCHING ROY GET EATEN

### *Stability*

**Advance 5+:** As the ghouls tear into the garage man's eviscerated corpse, you realize that perhaps you ought to be averting your eyes. Fortunately, you know that there is enough gin in the world to help you mostly forget you saw this.

**Setback 4 or less:** You stare in horrified fascination, unable to avert your gaze. Gain Problem 31, "Indelible Image."

**Spending Edges:** any benefit to Stability or General/Mental.

**Extra Problem:** Problem 32, "Twitchy."

The ghouls depart after eating Roy, leaving Dex to “Explore the Cavern”, below.

Should Dex not shoot Roy, the ghouls finally relent, snarling up at Roy in frustration. They slink off into the darkness of a tunnel that opens into the cavern. Roy checks to see if Dex appears visibly dazed.

He does if the player is holding the “Imminent Catatonia” Problem card, or if Dex has cleverly chosen to fake it. In this case, Roy hauls up the winch, planning to drive an addled Dex into the city to drop off on the street somewhere. He checks

Dex’s wallet for a likely address. Dex can either continue faking until Roy releases him, or deck him on the spot:

Permanently sidelining Roy might consist of:

- finding the copious evidence of mundane crimes he’s committed in his garage, and turning him over to L.A. County police. Soon afterwards, Dex will hear that Roy was fatally stabbed in jail. **Streetwise** suggests that Buggy likely arranged it, to prevent him from talking.
- showing Mickey Cohen the ghoul cavern, and thus the forces he was dragging an unwitting Siegel operation into. Mickey takes care of the rest.
- mortally wounding Roy and leaving him for the ghouls to finish off. If Dex sticks around to witness this, invoke the “Watching Roy Get Eaten” Challenge.

If Dex maintains the upper hand over Roy and refuses to go into the tunnel or deal with the ghouls at all, any of these should provide a satisfyingly conclusive ending.

If the player’s genre-defying caution thwarts all attempts to make the scene feel like a climax, ensure a properly downbeat coda by handing out Problem 41, “Haunted Imaginings.”

## DECKING ROY

### *Fighting*

**Advance 5+:** You send Roy sprawling.

Now that he’s helpless, you can deliver him to any kind of justice you find appropriate. If you use this opportunity to permanently sideline Roy, gain Edge 14, “Fist of Justice.”

**Hold 4 or less:** As per Advance, but without the Edge.

**Spending Edges:** Any benefit to Fighting or General/Physical.

### Exploring the Cavern

With Roy taken care of one way or the other, and the ghouls dispersed, Dex can explore the cavern, discovering the following:

- This appears to be part of an extensive tunnel network, apparently clawed from the earth by the ghouls themselves.
- Human bones litter the human floor. It would take careful cataloging of the bones by the medical examiner or Virginia Ashbury to arrive at a precise number, but **Evidence Collection** allows a rough guess that these belong to as many as two dozen people. Most have been here for more than a decade.
- Large fragments of hieroglyphic carvings stand against the walls. It looks like the ghouls found these and brought them to Roy as an offering. They match the fragment Buggy was fidgeting with, if Dex saw that. Studying them at any length occasions this Challenge:



## STUDYING THE CARVINGS

### *Stability*

**Advance 9+:** Suddenly, as if contacted by a mind from vanished aeons, you find yourself able to read the symbols. They tell of an ancient civilization of non-humans that... no, no, that's crazy. You suppress the thought, whatever it was. You'll never understand these carvings, thank goodness. Gain Edge 15, "Refusal To Correlate."

**Hold 5–8:** Yep, those are weird carvings all right. Some ancient writing still eludes even the experts. Maybe someday the lab coats in the archaeology lab will figure out what they mean.

**Setback 4 or less:** Suddenly, as if contacted by a mind from vanished aeons, you find yourself able to read the symbols. The records of an ancient civilization capable of casting itself forwards and backwards in time, they detail a history that contravenes science's pathetic attempts to comprehend the past. Earth is older than anyone admits, and over the course of immeasurable time it was inhabited by various races of intelligent beings who rose, struggled, and were then expunged. The ones who wrote these hieroglyphs were conical, clawed invertebrates who lived once and will live again. But before that happens, monstrous gods will ravage the Earth. Against this vast backdrop of cosmic meaninglessness, the problems of little humanity don't amount to a hill of beans. Gain Problem 33, "Cosmic Horror."

**Extra Problem:** Problem 32, "Tremor."

If Dex knows about Ed Palais, he finds him here in the tunnel, chained to a wall, emaciated from near-starvation, and utterly catatonic. If not, omit this detail.

The ghouls came from the southwest. Moving through the tunnel to the northeast leads Dex to a way out — shinnying up the drill from the derelict oil derrick, then contorting himself through its mechanism to reach the patch of earth behind the garage.

Should Dex turn the carvings over to either his professor or scientist Sources, he hears nothing more about them. When he later inquires, he discovers that the recipient decided they were better off smashed to tiny pieces. The chosen Source refuses to speak further of the truths they contained.

Or Dex can use **Streetwise** to find a safecracker who can supply enough dynamite for him to blow the entire place to hell. Doing this allows gives Dex Edge 16, "Tided Up." Having explosives already in the car requires a Difficulty 5 Preparedness Quick Test — or Edge 18, "Spare Bomb."

### REPORTING TO MARGARET

*Scene Type:* Denouement

*Lead-In:* The Hole

**Streetwise** tells Dex there is little point in trying to pursue the matter against Bugsy or Mickey further. Even if he can convince a cop to arrest them, they'll find a way to beat the case in the city's flagrantly corruptible courts. Besides, a wise man ought not to get between Siegel and McAfee now.

When he gets back to town, blaring headlines announce the inexplicable disappearance of Whitey Alexander. Further poking around with **Streetwise** informs Dex that McAfee has turned management of the Alegria over to Siegel.

Having learned what happened to Helen, Dex can report to Margaret, closing the case. If he arranged to have the Hole collapsed, she reports that Helen has begun to show modest signs of recovery. Though no longer the vivacious person she was, and unable to remember her ordeal or the events leading up to it, Helen regains her speech



and a tentative capacity to interact with others. Maybe one day she'll even feel ready to leave the house again.

Margaret pays Dex, allowing him to counter the "Broke" Problem card. (The player can always choose it again at the beginning of a further scenario.)

If Dex is smitten with either Margaret or Helen, Margaret indicates that to protect Helen's still-fragile sanity, it would be best if neither of them ever sees him again. In the first case, Dex senses that Margaret might otherwise be attracted to him, intensifying the melancholy of the case's conclusion. In the second, he might get a tantalizing last glimpse of Helen from a high window of the manor as he leaves its grounds.

Either of these moments might serve as an appropriate outcome for the story.

Otherwise, use the procedure outlined on p. 61 to help the player craft a suitable final coda for the case.

## ANTAGONIST REACTIONS

Trigger	Reaction	Setback	Hold	Advance	Extra Problem
Pelley feels Dex has threatened or humiliated him	Silver Shirts try to Jump Dex. <i>Fighting</i>	1 or less: Problem 7, “Shiner”	2–4: Dex gets away	5+: Dex drives them off	21, “Wrenched Back”
Mickey or Bugsy feel Dex has threatened or humiliated them	Siegel goons jump Dex. <i>Fighting</i>	2 or less: Problem 21, “Beaten Black and Blue”	3–5: Dex gets away	6+: Dex scares them off	29, “Fight, Not Flight”
Dex’s questions to Whitey implicated Phil Block	Dex learns that Phil has been bumped off	No Challenge per se, but Dex may distract himself from Helen’s case trying to figure out whether it was Whitey or Bugsy who did it. (It was Whitey.)			
Dex’s questions to Speelmans implicated Bugsy	Speelmans is found in Helen’s condition	Raises stakes, causes additional legwork, can provide information leading to “New Blood”, “Mickey Knows a Guy” or “The Hole” if pacing warrants			
Whitey feels that Dex is nosing into his business	While Dex is driving somewhere, his men roar past to fire warning shots. <i>Driving</i>	3 or less: Problem 26, “Bullet Ridden Car”	4–5: All they shoot out is the rearview mirror	6+: Dex evades them, recognizes Whitey’s men	11, “Smashed Headlight”
“The Alegria” scene happened more than one scene ago	Learns Burl Treehorn has gone missing	Whitey summons Dex in to accuse him of having something to do with it			
Dex has Problem “The Bombers Saw You” and the bombers remain at large	Looking to get rid of a witness, they plant a bomb in his car or office. <i>Devices</i>	1 or less: Gains Problem 42 “Exploded Office” or 43 “Blown Up Car”, as appropriate	2–4: Dex finds the bomb before it goes off.	5+: As Hold, but gain Edge 18 “Spare Bomb”	25, “Burned”
Dex has Problem “Vice Hound”	Drives past his old favorite opium den and feels tempted. <i>Cool</i>	1 or less: he goes in, gains Problem 39, “Opium Habit”	2–5: Dex resists but is shaken; -2 on next Cool or Stability test	6+: Dex resists easily; +1 on next Cool or Stability test	N/A
Dex Has Problem “Lonely”	Becomes enthralled with forlorn looking waitress. <i>Cool</i>	1 or less: she calls her beefy boyfriend to rough him up	2–5: she threatens him with beefy boyfriend	6+: she beds him but asks never to see him again	N/A
Dex Has Problem “Broke”	Repo man tries to take Dex’s car. <i>Driving</i>	1 or less: Dex must spend Interpersonal Push to get car back	2–5: Dex gets away	6+: Dex gets away; repo company doesn’t try again this scenario.	N/A
Dex Has Problem “What Killed the Cat”	Confronted by angry past client	Bar owner Shep Barwyn hired him to investigate the background of a would-be investor, then got cold feet. Dex looked into it further; found the man was sleeping with Shep’s wife, which Shep did not want to know. This event hits Dex with a moment of distracting stress, preferably in front of a key figure in this case.			

# Fathomless Sleep Problem Cards

PROBLEM 1

## What Killed the Cat *Continuity*

Even when you shouldn't look, or have no reason to want to know something, you can't not look, can't stop probing. You worry problems like a terrier worries a rat.



PROBLEM 2

## Lonely *Continuity*

You should have gotten over her by now. She's gone, and gone for good. It's time you moved on, found someone new. Maybe someone who won't play you for a sap this time. Oh hell, who are you kidding?



PROBLEM 3

## Broke *Continuity*

*Nobody could ever accuse you of loving money. You wouldn't be an honest private eye if that were the case. But a man needs to eat, and keep the lights on. And you're on the verge of being evicted from both your apartment and your office.*



PROBLEM 4

## Vice Hound *Continuity*

*Gambling, whores, the opium pipe. You've kicked all those vices before. So if you slip a bit and indulge one or more of your compulsions, you can straighten yourself up again, right? Right?*



PROBLEM 5

## Smitten with Margaret

*Uh-oh. Looks like you're in love again. You can feel your judgment getting interfered with already.*



PROBLEM 6

## Sourpuss

*You tried to stay cool, but you overplayed your hand. Instead you made yourself out to look like a hostile chump. So much for your good mood.*

Until you haul off and clock someone, you can't spend Pushes on Interpersonal abilities.



PROBLEM 7

## Shiner

*You took a sucker punch. You know what that makes you look like? A sucker.*

Discard after two days elapse in Dex's fictional reality. Until then, you can't make Bargaining, Intimidation, or Reassurance Pushes.



PROBLEM 8

## Pulled Muscle

*You wrenched something.*

Take a -2 penalty to your next General/Physical test and -1 to the one after that. Then discard this card.



PROBLEM 9

## Paranoia

*Once you realize that one person is really watching you, you can't shake the feeling that everyone is.*

-2 on your next Stability test, then discard.



## PROBLEM 10

**Twisted Ankle**

You wrongfooted the pavement.  
-2 on next General/Physical test, then discard.



## PROBLEM 11

**Smashed Headlight**

Until countered, Driving Challenges undertaken at night automatically result in Setbacks. Counter by Taking Time with a trip to the garage.



## PROBLEM 12

**White Knuckles**

*A little bit of rage can be motivating. But once out of the bottle, that genie might not go back in so easily.*

When someone makes you sore, you must make a Cool test not to let fly with fists or an unwise quip. Take Time with a relaxing activity.



## PROBLEM 13

**You Killed a Man****Continuity**

*Sure, it was self-defense. But the people who don't like you will be happy to make it look like murder. Counter by Bargaining with the authorities (requires a strong negotiating position and a Push) or by disposing of the corpse.*



## PROBLEM 14

**Stabbed**

*You take a knife wound to the abdomen. It may attract unwanted cop attention.*

-3 to your next General/Physical test; -2 to all subsequent General/Physical tests. Counter by Taking Time at a hospital or doctor's office. If you're still holding this at the end of the story, you die of internal bleeding.



## PROBLEM 15

**Not Your Best Day**

*You're having a bad day, and it's wearing your temper thin.*

The next time someone tries to get under your skin, make a Difficulty 5 Cool Quick Test. On a failure, you get lippy with them, and they decide to make trouble for you.



## PROBLEM 16


**Murder for Hire****Continuity**

*You just murdered a man for money. Not only have you compromised your moral code, but this will hang over you for the rest of your life. If you haven't irrevocably hung the crime on someone else by scenario's end, you'll go up the river — or get the chair.*



## PROBLEM 17

**The Horror in Helen's Eyes**

**Mythos Shock** : *You saw something in Helen's eyes that threatens your entire worldview. Whatever drove her mad is real, far outside your ordinary understanding. If you keep going, it will claim you, too.*



## PROBLEM 18

**Cold-Blooded**

*You maintain your sanity by cutting off your empathy for others.*

When you spend a Push on Reassurance, roll a die. On an odd result, you do not gain the benefit of the Push, and you discard this card.



PROBLEM 19

### Smitten with Helen

*Never mind her near-catatonia. You feel a powerful attraction for poor damaged Helen. Maybe after you save her, the two of you can be together.*

If you also have the Problem card "Smitten with Margaret," make a Cool Quick Test. On a 3 or better, you may discard that card, keeping this one.



PROBLEM 20

### Bad Memories

*To prevent yourself from making a dumb mistake, you stirred up recollections of a similar blunder you made in the past. That opened up feelings you thought you'd buried long ago.*

-2 penalty on your next Cool test, -1 on the one after that, then discard this card.



PROBLEM 21

### Wrenched Back

*You twisted a muscle and now it hurts to move.*

-2 on your next General/Physical test, -1 on the test after that, then discard.



PROBLEM 22

### Rattled

*That thing you just saw (or learned) leaves you shaky and off your game.*

Until you counter by Taking Time, take a -2 penalty on all Cool and Stability tests.



PROBLEM 23

### Tempted

*Resisting that old vice of yours took more out of you than you'd prefer to admit.*

Until you Take Time to indulge this or another weakness, you take a -2 Penalty on all Cool and Stability tests.



PROBLEM 24

### Gambling Debt Continuity

*You owe more than you can pay to someone who never forgives a debt. If you can't come up with the money, you'll have to find a big something else to counter this Problem card.*



PROBLEM 25

### Burned

-2 Penalty on all General/Physical tests and -1 on all other tests until you Take Time to get your burns treated.



PROBLEM 26

### The Bombers saw You

*The mugs who bombed the Alegria know what you look like.*



PROBLEM 27

### Obsessive Pursuit

*You're pushing yourself to the point where your frayed nerves have frayed nerves.*

-1 on General/Mental tests until you Take Time to calm yourself down.





## PROBLEM 28

**Beaten Black and Blue**

*You've been beaten within an inch of your life.*

Until you Take Time to recuperate, all General tests result in automatic Setbacks. Even after that, all General/Physical tests take a -1 Penalty. Discard at end of scenario.



## PROBLEM 29

**Fight, Not Flight**

*To escape that scrape, you called on the terrified animal deep inside you. Desperation that stark isn't easy to forget.*

-2 Penalty on Cool or Stability tests. Discard after your next Fighting test.



## PROBLEM 30


**You Called him Buggy**

*Unless you somehow earn his forgiveness for this usually unpardonable slight, the story ends with a hit ordered against you by Bugsy Siegel. Everyone told you not to.*



## PROBLEM 31

**Something about that Rock**

**Mythos Shock** : *A little piece of stone with some weird hieroglyphs on it shouldn't chill your blood to ice. But it does. In a way you can't pretend to understand, you sense it will drop you out of this world, and into the terrible awareness that lurks just below it.*



## PROBLEM 32

**Strain your Ticker**

*You made yourself do something every fiber of your being told you not to. You've flooded yourself with adrenaline and can't calm down.*

Counter by accepting a -4 Penalty on any Challenge. If still in your hand at end of case, you suffer a heart attack.



## PROBLEM 33

**Indelible Image**


*You saw something you sure wish you hadn't. Now you can't get it out of your mind.*

Counter by accepting a -4 Penalty on any Challenge. If still in your hand at end of case, you suffer a heart attack.



## PROBLEM 34

**Imminent Catatonia**

**Mythos Shock** : *Rather than truly correlate the significance of what you just witnessed, your mind is about to shut itself down. Maybe for good.*



## PROBLEM 35

**Mortal Wound**

You just took an injury that cooked your goose for good. You have maybe an hour left to tie up loose ends. Then you're dead.



## PROBLEM 36

**Twitchy Continuity**


*If you are still holding this card at the end of the case, you develop a permanent nervous tic.*

If you have this card in hand at the beginning of a case, lose 1 Push.



PROBLEM 37

### Cosmic Horror

**Mythos Shock** : *The tale of the universe is one of cosmic indifference at best, monstrous eternal entropy at worst. Nothing means anything. The corruption of L.A. is but a pale reflection of universal entropy.*

Any time you use the Inspiration ability, you suffer a -2 penalty on your immediately subsequent Challenge.



PROBLEM 38

### Tremor

*You acquire a gross motor tremor that afflicts you in times of stress.*

-2 Penalty on all General/Manual Challenges.



PROBLEM 39

### Opium Habit Continuity

*You thought you'd left the poppy behind but it's caught up with you again.*


When given a choice between moving forward on the case and hitting the gong around, make a quick Cool test, Difficulty 4, to avoid the latter. Counter by spending an Edge card granting a benefit to Cool or Stability.



PROBLEM 41

### Haunted Imaginings

#### Continuity

**Mythos Shock** : *You were supposed to find out what happened, but when you had the chance, fear stopped you cold. Now you keep imagining what you would have seen — each image more horrifying than the last. Your failure leaves you wondering what kind of detective you really are.*

-2 Penalty on all Cool and Stability tests. Counter by taking a risk to confront a supernatural threat.



PROBLEM 42

### Exploded Office

*Your office has been gutted. You're going to have do some fancy explaining to get another landlord to rent to you. And there goes your reference library.*

Lose a Push the next time you use an Academic ability to gain information, and discard this card. If you have no Push, you lose the next Push you gain, and discard this card.



PROBLEM 40

### Object of Ridicule

*Your awkward jump out of the way saved your skin, but tarnished your reputation for staying cool under pressure.*

When you spend a Push on Intimidation, roll a die. On an odd result, you do not gain the benefit of the Push, and you discard this card.



PROBLEM 43

### Blown-up Car

*Too bad you didn't spot that bomb. An L.A. private eye without a car is like fly without wings.*

Lose a Push and discard this card the next time you move from one location to another. Explain who you talked into lending you a replacement vehicle. If you have no Push, keep this card until you do, then lose the Push and discard this card.



PROBLEM 44

### Mickey Don't Like You

*Your last meeting with Mickey Cohen ended with him looking at you like he wanted to kill you with his bare hands. Maybe you want to do something about that before he comes at you with a tire iron. No one wields a tire iron like Mickey.*




# Fathomless Sleep Edge Cards

EDGE 1

## Self-Possessed

*A show of self-control gives you the confidence you'll need if this case gets hairy.*

Spend for an extra die on Cool or Stability, or for a +2 bonus to any other General/Mental test.



EDGE 2

## Quick Reactions

Spend for an extra die on any Athletics, Driving or Fighting test.



EDGE 3

## Marshall Offers Aid

*Marshall Daly has agreed to help you, even if it's dangerous, if it means getting back whoever hurt Helen.*



EDGE 4

## Charlie Chaplin Owes You

**Continuity**

*A grateful Charlie Chaplin appreciates your looking out for him.*




EDGE 5

## Mickey Owes You

**Continuity**

*Mickey Cohen might be a brutal thug, but never let it be said that he forgets when someone does him a solid.*

Discard if you gain Problem 44, "Mickey Don't Like You."



EDGE 6

## Bedrock Skepticism

*The supernatural? Malign deities? What a load of hogwash! You'll never fall for that bunkum.*

Spend to Counter a Mythos Shock Problem.




EDGE 7

## Whew

*You caught a lucky break just now. Maybe you're riding a hot streak for once.*

Spend for a Push of any kind, or an extra die on any test.




EDGE 8

## Hard-boiled

*You've injured yourself to shocking situations that would send civilians to the psychiatrist's couch.*

Spend to Counter a Problem that penalizes any General/Mental ability, (Mythos Shocks excluded.)



EDGE 9

## State of Alarm

*You keep a part of yourself on constant alert.*

+1 to all Sense Trouble tests until you spend this Edge. If you made a Sense Trouble test in the current scene, spend this Edge for an extra die on an Athletics, Fighting or Fleeing test.



EDGE 10

### Upper Hand at A. M. Hillyer's

At any time in or around the magazine warehouse, gain a free Push or an extra die on any test, then discard.

While in the warehouse, you get Lucky Breaks at no cost, without discarding this card.

If you still have this card after leaving the warehouse, discard it and any non-Mythos Shock Problem.



EDGE 11

### Gallows Humor

*What shocks and repulses others prompts you to crack wise.*

Make a dark wisecrack appropriate to any scene, then discard this card to gain a free Push on any Interpersonal ability.



EDGE 12

### Strange, not Maddening

*You've seen the so-called supernatural up close, and it hasn't cooked your noggin. Sure, it's monstrous, and surprising, but it still has to have a logical explanation.*

Spend to counter a Mythos Shock Problem.



EDGE 13

### Monsters Bleed

*You met a creature that wasn't supposed to exist, and killed it. Guess the supernatural ain't so tough, after all.*

Spend to counter a Mythos Shock Problem.



EDGE 14

### Fist of Justice

*In L.A., justice is doled out in tiny increments. But today, at least one bad guy has been taken care of. By you.*

Counter any non-Mythos Shock Problem that penalizes General/Mental abilities or Interpersonal Pushes.



EDGE 15

### Refusal to Correlate

*Some mysteries man was not meant to solve. When it comes to those, your brain is too smart to try.*

Counter any Mythos Shock Problem.



EDGE 16

### Tidied Up

*Thanks to you, that nest of madness has been destroyed. No one else will stumble across it.*

Spend to Counter one Problem acquired during "The Fathomless Sleep."



EDGE 17

### Emotional Armor Continuity

*People talk about repression like it's a bad thing.*

Discard to Counter any Problem with text mentioning Interpersonal or General/Mental abilities.



EDGE 18

### Spare Bomb

*Others might be disturbed by a failed bombing attempt. You think, "Hey, free bomb!"*

When you want to have a bomb on hand, spend this Edge for a success on a Preparedness Quick test, or for an Advance on a Preparedness Challenge.





**HARDBOILED**

**NEW  
YORK**

featuring

**VIVIAN SINCLAIR**

in

**FATAL FREQUENCIES**





# VIVIAN SINCLAIR

Combining Nellie Bly’s nerve and Dorothy Kilgallen’s adventurous spirit, Vivian Sinclair epitomizes *Trail of Cthulhu’s* Journalist. In her investigations for the New York Herald Tribune, she encounters things she’d never imagined — and tries to convince herself don’t exist. While her profession and gender may keep Viv from experiencing the same raw violence as Dex or Langston, they don’t immunize Viv from the repercussions of her work. Viv may not wind up in a hospital with two broken legs and missing teeth (see “Kneecapping the Lady Detective”), but when she takes on Problems, elements of cases that she can’t fix haunt her, those her stories exposed stalk her, unhappy editors threaten her livelihood, and people around her get hurt.

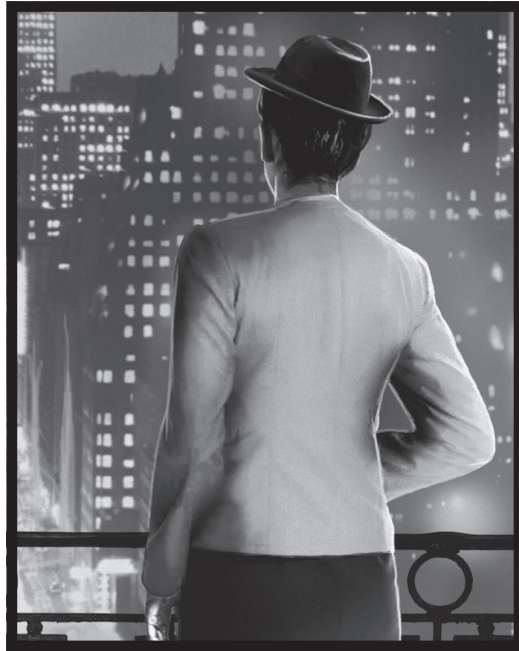
When Viv’s colleagues and targets throw around the term “bloodhound,” it carries an undertone of grudging respect. Other descriptors that spring to the tongue: “determined,” “meddling,” “snoop,” and “sharp as a tack.” When she found work as a columnist at the *New York Herald Tribune* in 1926, after spending several years as a stenographer and freelance journalist, Viv soon grew bored of covering fashion and society. So, with the dedication she continues to show to her profession, she doubled her efforts, bringing in both timely columns and unassigned scoops.

Sharp-dressing, straight-talking, and with over five years of proven track record, Viv now works as one of the *Herald Tribune’s* primary investigative

## *Lady Detective, Not Femme Fatale*

While detective fiction contains legions of Sam Spade knockoffs, the 1930s noir lady detective is a rarer and mostly forgotten species. Between genre rules about hurting women — unless it motivates a man — and sexist assumptions about their competence, lady detectives saw much lower page counts than their male counterparts and rarely made it onto the silver screen. Yet the modern noir lady P.I. has her legacy in the same era as Philip Marlowe and Nick Charles. Zelda Popkin’s Mary Carner works as a genuine department store dick. Rex Stout’s Dol Bonner and Hugh Pentecost’s Carole Trevor run their own detective agencies, although Stout only features Bonner as his protagonist once and Pentecost’s stories typify screwball as much as noir.

For player, GM, and writer, the lack of definitive examples means we draw on elements of the genre, the few characters that do exist, and other sorts of lady detectives to cobble together a 1930s noir lady detective who’s fun to play in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Vivian Sinclair offers one approach. If the player would rather play a female version of Dex or Langston, she could easily do so — consulting the Investigative sections on gender and noir and asking that the GM incorporate or disregard as she desires. Take inspiration from Jessica Jones or Lisabeth Salander, who suffer significant physical and emotional damage. Or she might rather play a Viv without the noir edges — a sharp journalist who solves crimes and uncovers cultists at some peril but without the lasting damage, inspired by Kerry Greenwood’s Phryne Fisher or Nora Charles from the Thin Man movies. In *GUMSHOE One-2-One*, only the two voices at the table matter when deciding the “right” way to play through the adventures.



journalists. Pad and pencil in hand, she tracks down leads, grills witnesses, develops sources, and turns in hair-raising stories of corruption, crime, and parts of the city’s underbelly most would rather not see. Like any journalist, she works on sufferance. If a story she turns in ruffles too many feathers upstairs or with the wrong people in the city, she may find herself back on the fashion beat or even out on the street.

Through her work, Viv has become an amateur detective, although she doesn’t generally think of herself as such. What others consider cases, Viv considers stories. Sometimes people ask her to employ her skills after hours for some extra money, or for the chance of a good story — and of course she says yes. Decide on and describe Viv’s biggest scoop of the last year to the GM. What challenges did she face, and how did the public receive her article? Or did her editors squash it? A few possibilities for players paralyzed by indecision:

- an investigative report on working conditions among the city’s longshoremen
- proving the innocence of a socialite heiress accused of murdering her father for her inheritance
- exposing the pseudo-kidnapping of an actress’s child as a bid to regain the public’s attention

## Investigative Abilities and Gender in the 1930s

... or: “Now see here, little lady.”

Investigative Abilities represent competence. The world presumes incompetence. Such is the bind of any talented lady detective — or any woman whose aptitudes lie outside those prescribed to her gender, such as a talented female journalist in a newsroom full of men. Female players (and GMs) experience this even now. Replicating the depth and breadth of 1930s sexism at the table rarely provides a satisfying gaming experience. Before game play, GM and player may discuss and tailor the degree of sexism the female character experiences. Several options present themselves.

First, Vivian Sinclair perseveres through sexism to achieve her goals. Precedent certainly exists. Allan Pinkerton employed a “Female Detective Bureau” 70 years before Vivian Sinclair’s stories take place. Pioneer of investigative journalism Nellie Bly, one of Viv’s inspirations, died around the time Viv began her work (albeit at the young age of 57). With dogged determination and an adequate support network of people who recognize her abilities, she navigates barriers set up to keep her out. Her whiteness (see Langston’s material on playing a black male Investigator and combine with gender to set up the one-two punch for a non-white female Investigator) assists her in this, but she still faces material opposition as well as sexist commentary. She may need to come up with creative plans which get her around these obstacles instead of smashing straight through.

In many cases, ways around obstacles parallel the alternatives that Dex might use as well, particularly when he’s acquired Problem cards that make his life more difficult. When the police guard won’t let some “tabloid broad” examine a crime scene or see photographs, Viv uses her knowledge of Evidence Collection (for Viv, Flattery also works here) on the junior officer until he proudly mentions some important piece of evidence that the others would never have found if he hadn’t spotted it. One commonly sees this approach in literature and film, both for the sake of verisimilitude and so the audience can admire the

lady detective's cleverness. However, it may prove draining at the table and the player may quickly tire of hearing, "No, you're a woman; they wouldn't let you do \_\_\_\_," particularly if she hears versions in everyday life. This leads us to a second option.

Sexism still exists, but in muted form. Particularly difficult or evil characters still throw out sexist opinions and hassle Viv. The rest may occasionally make comments. The player chooses whether to make this treatment of Viv the exception or the rule for other women. While the concept "not like other girls" plays out toxically in the real world, allowing women around her to experience sexism while she remains unscathed may keep the story from feeling entirely unreal.

Or player and Keeper may agree upon a third approach, removing sexism entirely from the equation. Viv's challenges never stem from her gender, only from her being an interfering snoop, same as any P.I. Class still exists and complicates or smooths her investigation.

By default, adventures presume that Viv experiences a degree of sexism from some GMCs and suggest alternatives for overcoming a particularly hostile or patronizing GMC as well as a straightforward approach. The GM then chooses how to narrate the situation based on the player's preferences and his own comfort level in roleplaying hostile sexism toward the player. As mentioned in "Lady Detective, not Femme Fatale," the player chooses the kind of Viv she wants to play. If she sees Viv as a woman constantly punching sexist assumptions in the face, she may want more sexism thrown in so she can experience a "girl power" thrill in overcoming them. GM should model additional confrontations off the ones already presented.

## Kneecapping the Lady Detective

Even egalitarian sensibilities recoil at the thought of Vivian Sinclair tossed onto the street with two broken legs. Perhaps it's an effect of genre conventions, or perhaps the trope itself is one of those horrors to which we grow accustomed through repetition. Decades of novels and films in which half-dead male protagonists stagger into the final scene have us expecting to see Dex suffer. No

### *Bisexuality in 1930s New York City*

In an era which threw around words like "invert" more than "bisexual," Viv considers herself susceptible to pretty faces or charming personalities regardless of gender (if she holds Problem "Sucker for a Pretty Face," her susceptibility often gets her in jams). When dating women, she may patronize New York's underground lesbian bar scene, with likely mob connections and possible plot hooks or Problems. Even if caught in a raid, she probably escapes unscathed — police in the 1930s focused almost exclusively on men when enforcing anti-homosexuality laws. However, her gender would not protect her from psychiatric confinement and expensive attempted "cures" if those in her family considered her flexibility in taking lovers to be more than a harmless eccentricity.

parallel exists for the traditional lady detective. This should not mean that Viv is immune to violence or even debilitating violence. But in traditions of noir and lady detectives, she deals damage and experiences brutality differently than her male counterparts.

*GUMSHOE One-2-One* uses the flexible General Ability Fighting to handle all kinds of combat. When she's not actively Fleeing, a different ability, Viv's 2 dice in Fighting may operate in quite a few ways. Fighting isn't always right hooks; sometimes it's being the nimbler party in the scuffle or knowing when to take advantage of another's surprise — a quick punch to the nose of a goon who wasn't expecting to encounter a dame. When someone attempts to grab her, Viv stabs her stiletto heel into an opponent's foot or twists neatly out of his hands (if dodging and ducking don't sound like fighting, put down this book and watch a few rounds of boxing). In direr situations, Viv gets 2 dice worth of her purse-sized derringer, either convincing an opponent to allow her to leave or dealing some serious damage. If the player would rather see Viv regularly throwing punches or flipping surprised opponents over her shoulder,



she may explain how Viv belongs to a small society of female boxers, studied judo or jujutsu (both known in 1930s America) in special classes at the YWCA, or otherwise acquired the necessary skills.

On a Setback, can a villain or thug shoot Viv? If it advances the plot. Much violence against women in noir follows the same formula: put the woman in peril, allow peril to do dirty work, force protagonist to choose between rescuing her and some other need, allow protagonist to derive motivation/pain from her death if he sacrifices her. This trope goes against the player-facing ethos of the game. Just as it does with Dex, adventure moves forward on success or failure, allowing the player opportunities to extricate herself or dig in deeper, not wait for help. If goons overpower Viv as she breaks into the crime boss' warehouse, she wakes up in his office, recovering from a nasty blow to the head or a dose of chloroform. In situations of less narrative import, where thugs might give Langston a sound beating before dumping him on the street, the same thugs pick up Viv, drop her on the pavement outside, and slam the door, damaging only her dignity and her dress.

So, is there an equivalent to the kind of punishment that forces Dex to visit a doctor before he can move on with the adventure? Absolutely. Viv's ability to write forms the basis of her career and her investigative work. Anything which prevents her from getting her story turned in imperils the adventure and forces her to visit a doctor or take a detour, whether it's the theft of her notebook, hands too swollen from rope bindings to write or type, or a strange drug that won't let her think clearly.

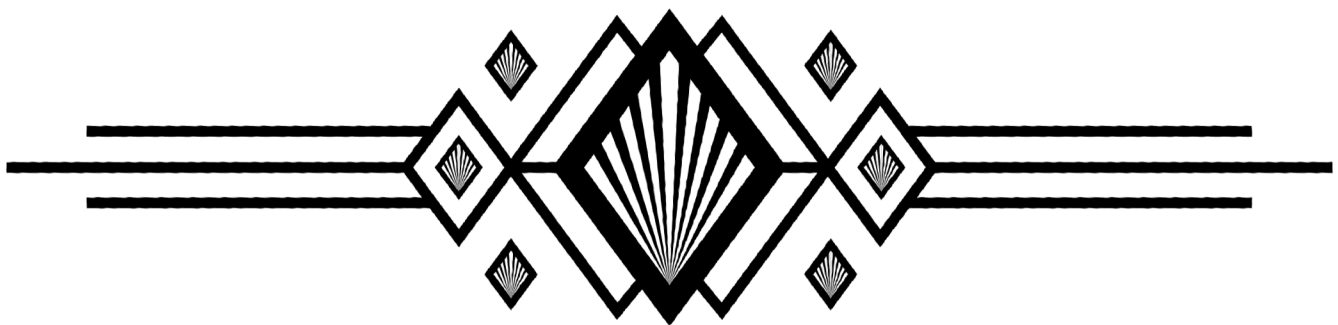
### *Sexual Violence*

For a lady detective, the explicit or implicit threat of sexual violence is often par for the course. However, though few authors follow through on such threats, many GMs and players may not wish to encounter this aspect of life in any form at the table. Consider alternative threats which still provide adequate menace. "This company has very deep pockets, Miss Sinclair. Do you think any newspaper in the country would hire you once we won a libel suit that cost the *Herald Tribune* thousands?"

(Sample problem: **Fingers Like Sausages.**

When those thugs tied your hands, they damaged the circulation. With rest and ice water it'll go down by morning, but you can't file your column on your own.)

Viv plays for the same stakes as Dex and Langston. At the end of the adventure, she may face lethal peril or the loss of her sanity. If she dies at the hands of gangsters or cultists or ends up in her Source Louisa's sanitarium, the tabloids gleefully print the tragedy of a young woman who didn't know her place. Society loves nothing more than to see its outliers get a comeuppance.









## VIVIAN SINCLAIR

*Investigative Journalist*

### INVESTIGATIVE ABILITIES

- Accounting
- Assess Honesty
- Bargain
- Bureaucracy
- Cryptography
- Evidence Collection
- Flattery
- History
- Inspiration
- Locksmith
- Oral History
- Photography
- Reassurance
- Research
- Streetwise

### GENERAL ABILITIES

- Athletics
- Cool
- Disguise
- Driving
- Fighting
- Filch
- First Aid
- Fleeing
- Preparedness
- Sense Trouble
- Shadowing
- Stability
- Stealth

### STORY

Pad and pencil in hand, journalist Vivian Sinclair tracks down leads, grills witnesses, and turns in hair-raising stories of corruption, crime, and parts of the city’s underbelly most would rather not see. Where a detective sees a case, Viv sees a story. She’ll follow it relentlessly to its conclusion, even putting her life in danger to get at the truth.

## Connections and Complications

Unlike the classic loner P.I. of noir fiction, the journalist’s daily routine involves bustling newsrooms and networks of friendly (and rival) professional connections. When not working on a big story, she pays her rent by covering stories for overwhelmed departments, whether politics, arts, or general news, always with an ear cocked for her next scoop. At times Viv feels as though she cannot get away from people — friends, colleagues, family.

The nature of her work, and of the noir genre, reveals the fragility of this normal life. Players and GMs should consider introducing non-Source characters in her work or social life who embody the “everyday,” both as counterpoints to the darker

veins of her investigations and as cat’s-paws for the GM to imperil. A few suggested characters for the GM to consider using as non-Source GMCs:

**Lawrence Ames, Rival Journalist at the Times:** When not looking over her shoulder for angry subjects of her stories, Viv’s keeping an eye out for Lawrence. She respects him as a fellow journalist in dogged pursuit of the truth but plans to get a fuller, better write-up of that truth printed the day before his goes to press. Several years ago, the two had an ill-conceived affair sparked by adrenaline and elation after a narrow escape from bootleggers, but the past stays in the past — probably.

**Emma Sinclair Lowell, Aunt:** While Viv

comes from the middle class of the early 1900s, her father's sister married quite well. The wealthy widow would dominate the lives of her children, if she had any. Instead, she focuses that energy on her nieces and nephews. Luckily for Viv, Aunt Emma spends months of the year on fossil-hunting expeditions from the American West to the Gobi Desert. She dedicates a room in her expansive Manhattan home to the souvenirs that she bulldozed expedition directors into letting her keep, primarily fossilized trilobites. She uses a friendship with Viv's Source Esteban Manuel Aragon Gonzalez to keep apprised of her niece's exploits.

**Catherine Evans, Roommate:** The money that a female investigative journalist, even a good one, earns in the 1930s doesn't enable Viv to live easily on her own. To avoid financial strain, Viv shares a small apartment in Greenwich Village with Catherine Evans. Catherine works as a shop-girl at Gimbels department store in Herald Square. She brings a dash of normalcy to her roommate's life, but Viv's work may put her in danger.

## Sources

### ASTELLE "STELLA" ABRAMS

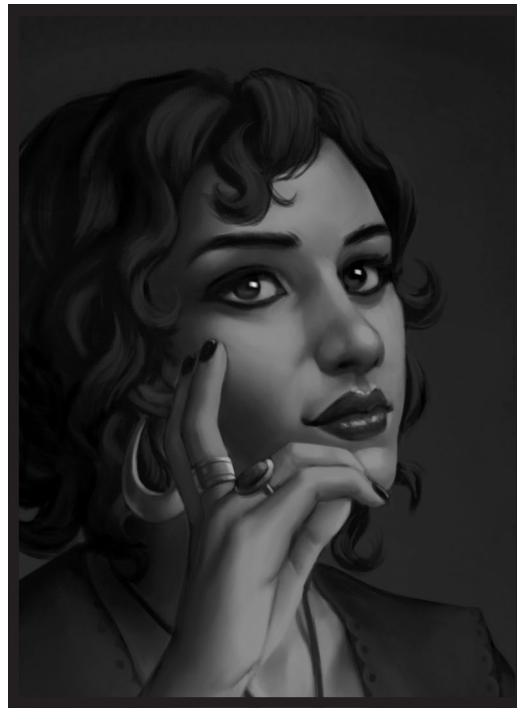
#### Amateur Occultist ☆

Astelle "My spirit is more of a Stella" Abrams flits between mediums and mediums. Whether deciding to focus on sculpting or join the Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn, she's passionate about it — until she isn't. Despite her apparent religious frivolity, she never discards books the way she does beliefs and can be called upon for theological as well as occult questions. At night, her heavy kohl makeup, bangles, and robe-like dresses quickly identify her as an acolyte with aspirations. By day, she works as a low-level draftsman in her father's architectural firm. In return, her father funds summer-long artists' retreats and tolerates her forays into occultism. He's waiting for her to give up her wild streak and put her obvious talent to use in the family trade. If you catch her in the studio, she's likely got paint, iron filings, or plaster in her tousled brown curls, depending on her current "period."

Viv fell for Stella during an undercover investigation of a drug-smuggling ring passing

itself off as a yogic sect. Even after their fling ended, Vivian stayed close with the vivacious bohemian, who will happily expound on current and former passions, or on architecture if she must. Stella's ebullient personality doesn't lend itself to limiting the flow of information, but her earnest, schoolchild's manner when explaining Mythos matters means that hearing about Cthulhu's eventual rise doesn't scare Viv as much as it might, coming from someone else.

**Investigative Abilities:** Architecture, Craft, Cthulhu Mythos, Occult, Theology



### LT. JOSEPH O'CONNOR

#### Detective 🕵️

Viv first saw police lieutenant Joseph O'Connor in 1931's Seabury Hearings (see p. 158), as he testified about the corrupt judicial system along with over a thousand victims, lawyers, judges, and even a few other honest police officers. He stood out to Viv as an honest man trying to do the right thing even if it jeopardized his future with the department, or even his life. When, shortly afterward, she ran across him during one of her own investigations, Viv impressed the bulb-nosed, middle-aged detective with her determination to get to the truth.



They sometimes meet in the field as they investigate the same crimes, but Lt. O'Connor also welcomes Viv's visits or calls to his cramped 7<sup>th</sup> Precinct office on the Lower East Side. He understands your average street criminal's motivations and methods, but appreciates Viv's journalistic insights on big business or the rich and famous. In return, he may shake up one of her suspects or even bring them in for questioning if she makes a good enough argument. He slept better at night after the hearings, but made plenty of enemies on the force and in the judicial system.

**Investigative Abilities:** Cop Talk, Forensics, Intimidation, Law, Streetwise

**ESTEBAN MANUEL ARAGON GONZALEZ**

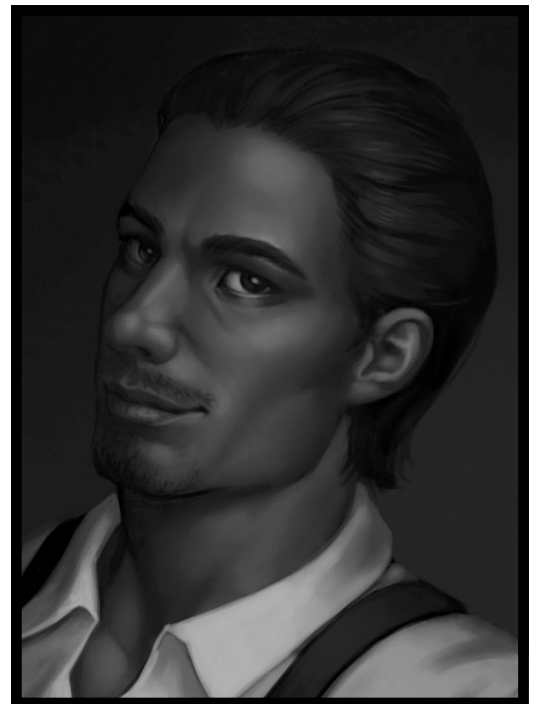
**Explorer** ✨

The son of Cuban immigrants who arrived in New York City after the Spanish-American war, Esteban Manuel Aragon Gonzalez discovered a passion for archaeology in his 20s, when he took a summer off from his work blazing trails and fighting fires in Yellowstone to take a trip to the American Southwest. Returning to New York, he found night work and studied Art History and Archaeology at Columbia College. Now he hangs out his shingle as guide for amateur archaeological

expeditions, which he leads to places such as Egypt, China, Peru, and the American Southwest.

Between treks, Esteban provides curatorial guidance at the American Museum of Natural History. There, he specializes in pre-Columbian artifacts of Western, Central, and South America. With his free time, Esteban hikes the Long Trail in Vermont or blazes segments of New York's newly-proposed Long Path toward Albany. A man can never get too much fresh air, sunshine, or exercise.

Esteban met Viv several years ago on an expedition he led for the National Geographic Society — he came for the archaeology, Viv for the story. They developed the friendship of kindred



spirits who choose a never-ending quest for adventure over white picket fences or dinners at six-thirty sharp. When in the city, he enjoys dining out with Viv to share stories of their latest exploits. He's happy to hazard the cultural history of a peculiar idol she's discovered, or identify a strange set of tracks.

**Investigative Abilities:** Anthropology, Archaeology, Art History, Geology, Outdoorsman



### LOUISA REYNOLDS

Nurse 

Louisa Reynolds was born a Sinclair, third cousin to Vivian on a wealthier branch of the family tree: the kind of branch that keeps track of its third cousins. Inspired by stories of Florence Nightingale and Edith Cavell, she rejected a “proper” lady’s education and entered nursing school instead. When she married prominent psychologist Arthur Reynolds, everyone expected Louisa to retire from her hospital position and hold fundraisers for his sanitarium, join a few boards of charitable institutions, and finally start behaving like the Sinclair she was born to be. Instead, her husband hired her as the sanitarium’s chief nurse and she used his library as a starting point for an extensive study of psychiatry.

Ten years younger than her distant cousin, Viv first sought out Louisa while working on one of her first stories, investigating conditions at sanitariums and asylums around the city. She found Reynolds’ methods refreshingly modern and humane (albeit from her 1930s perspective) and formed a friendship with the older Louisa. Now a stern, no-nonsense woman in her mid-40s, Louisa disapproves of the risks Viv takes in her work, but can’t argue with the results. While neither a

psychiatrist nor a doctor, she’s absorbed a vast practical knowledge of medicine, pharmacy, and psychology through her work and self-education. If she doesn’t have an answer for Viv, she consults her husband’s library and matter-of-factly dispenses more information than Viv ever cared to know on a topic.

**Investigative Abilities:** Medicine, Pharmacy, Psychology

### ANNETTE “NETTIE” RICE

Professor 

If, during her time at Hunter College, someone had asked Viv which professor she’d be closest friends with in a decade, she’d never have named Nettie Rice. The kindly, tweed-clad woman who taught her Natural Science course managed to make the subjects interesting but didn’t woo her into the sciences. Viv had nearly forgotten her until she found herself in need of scientific assistance in one of her investigations. Viv admires Nettie’s energy — as the new chair of the Department of Natural Sciences at Hunter College, she’s always buried in paperwork, yet she always manages to teach the introductory classes and spend time meeting with students. The constant activity takes a toll, though, and there’s no secret to the source





of her energy: empty coffee cans litter Nettie's office and apartment. Viv may notice her friend's hands shaking from over-caffeination, or Nettie may suddenly exclaim that she'd entirely forgotten dinner; she made a cup of coffee at 4 p.m. so she could wait, then another at 6, and now it's 9:30.

From Nettie's point of view, Viv's investigations could benefit from a better application of the scientific method, and she's happy to teach it. Because her position keeps her out of the lab, she jumps at chances to answer Viv's questions, particularly if it gives her a chance to look at specimens or do some actual science. Nettie knows a lot about a particular field of science and a little about the rest. Consider assigning her a specialty and having her use her authority as chair to know the rest — by chance, she was just talking with Dr. McIntyre about the very thing Viv mentions, and can supply the broad outlines easily.

**Investigative Abilities:** Astronomy, Biology, Chemistry, Languages, Physics

## Select Bibliography

### FICTION

- Brian Michael Bendis, *Alias* (28-issue comic series featuring Jessica Jones)
- Kerry Greenwood, Phryne Fisher series
- Zelda Popkin, Mary Carner series
- Dorothy L. Sayers, *Strong Poison*, *Have His Carcase*, *Gaudy Night*, *Busman's Honeymoon*

### FILMS AND TELEVISION

- Lloyd Bacon, *Marked Woman*
- Deb Cox and Fiona Eagger, *Miss Fisher's Murder Mysteries* (TV series) (set in Australia, but provides inspiration for a lighter version of the Investigator)
- Andy De Emmony, Jamie Payne, Sarah Harding, *The Bletchley Circle* (TV series) (set in England, but appropriately dark and tense without being noir)
- Henry Hathaway, *Call Northside 777*
- Howard Hawks, *His Girl Friday*
- Elia Kazan, *On the Waterfront*
- Fritz Lang, *Scarlet Street* (set in Massachusetts, but with a flavor that would work well for Long Island)
- Christopher Markus, Stephen McFeely, *Agent Carter* (TV series)
- Tim Robbins, *Cradle Will Rock*
- Melissa Rosenberg, *Jessica Jones* (TV series)
- John Sturges, *Mystery Street*
- W.S. Van Dyke, *The Thin Man*

### NONFICTION

- Deborah Blum, *The Poisoner's Handbook*
- Federal Writers' Project (N.Y.), *New York city guide; a comprehensive guide to the five boroughs of the metropolis: Manhattan, Brooklyn, the Bronx, Queens, and Richmond*
- Jason Marks, *Around the World in 72 Days: The race between Pulitzer's Nellie Bly and Cosmopolitan's Elizabeth Bisland*
- Lee Israel, *Kilgallen*
- Selwyn Raab, *Five Families: The Rise, Decline, and Resurgence of America's Most Powerful Mafia Empires*



**HARDBOILED  
NEW YORK**

*“Whoever is born in New York is ill-equipped to deal with any other city: all other cities seem, at best, a mistake, and, at worst, a fraud. No other city is so spitefully incoherent.”*

*— James Baldwin*

*“New York, you are an Egypt! But an Egypt turned inside out. For she erected pyramids of slavery to death, and you erect pyramids of democracy with the vertical organ-pipes of your skyscrapers all meeting at the point of infinity of liberty!”*

*— Salvador Dalí*

*“When Kleiner showed me the sky-line of New York I told him that man is like the coral insect — designed to build vast, beautiful, mineral things for the moon to delight in after he is dead.”*

*— H. P. Lovecraft*

# HARDBOILED NEW YORK

In the Roaring Twenties, New York City roared loudest. Jazz Age nightclubs flourished, Wall Street boomed, and it seemed that the city, like its newest wave of architecture, had nowhere to go but up. The political machine, Tammany Hall, loathed Prohibition, allowing bootleggers to operate virtually unchallenged — in exchange for a fee. Unafraid of the corrupt cops, gangs slaughtered each other in the streets, each trying to get the biggest piece of the market. But as long as the booze flowed freely, revelers overlooked its bloody cost.

Then it all went bust.

At first, the city tried to pretend nothing had really changed. Just two weeks after the crash, they re-elected Tammany mayor Jimmy Walker, a fast-living playboy, hoping that if they closed their eyes it'd all go back to the way things were. Wall Street bankers echoed the president's reassurances — prosperity was just around the corner. But bank after bank closed, Wall Street fought against any kind of regulation, and, unable to sell their goods, factories shuttered. By early 1932 the city (and country) approached an unemployment rate of 25%.

Even as jobs vanished, the city's population poised to hit the seven million mark in the 1930s, nearly half of that immigrants or first-generation Americans. Many of those who stepped off the boat under Lady Liberty's gaze simply remained, packing into tenements, working in the city's many factories, and bringing with them millennia-old cults and myths from their homelands. Each square mile houses an average of 23,000 people. "Hooverilles," constructed of cardboard, scrap metal, and anything squatters could get their hands

on, spring up in the city's parks and open stretches like the waterfront. Residents fight evictions with sandbags and barbed wire.

Under the New Deal, the city attempts to put its people to work, constructing a series of improvements — to transit, infrastructure, and housing. Modern project housing aimed at working families replaces tenements and slums, leaving the poorest nowhere to go. The Lincoln Tunnel, constructed from 1934 to 1937, pipes commuter traffic from New Jersey directly into Midtown. Private industry throws its money behind construction as well, racing to build the tallest skyscraper in the world and constructing hybrid cultural-business complexes such as the Rockefeller Center.

Yet inside these gleaming new buildings, the Big Apple still runs rotten to the core. The Mafia grows more powerful than ever under the guidance of Lucky Luciano and the city's Five Families. Fusion party mayor Fiorello La Guardia finds himself fighting the mob on one side and the entrenched Tammany Hall on the other, or sometimes the two together. In an effort to uproot Tammany, the mayor consolidates power in his own office and agencies, gradually turning authoritarian as he begins targeting establishments which offend his own scruples.

This is the New York of breadlines, the New York of gangland shootings, the New York turned vertical by skyscrapers, the New York in which shadowy, trench-coated figures dodge streetlights. This is 1937 in the city that never sleeps.



## Denizens

### BIG APPLE, BIG PERSONALITY

Even during the Depression, New York remained a center of creative output, pulling in those who knew their star could shine a little more brightly in the Big Apple. Pulp writers bang out stories for a cent or a half-cent per word, hoping someday a publisher will pick up the Great American Novel that consumes their off-hours. Gossip columnists air the dirty laundry of the rich and famous, distracting the masses at least temporarily

from their own worries. Journalists one-up each other in stunts and daring investigations. And on Broadway, a new generation of actors, writers, and directors who will later go on to revolutionize the silver screen makes its debut. To make it in New York, one must have a personality the size of the city itself.

Gossip columnist and radio phenomenon **Walter Winchell**, 40, (1897–1972) was picked up by the New York Daily Mirror in 1929, where he publishes “On Broadway.” Soon after, he got radio





syndication and proved a powerhouse in both formats. Winchell initially cozied up to major mob figures, but soon realized that their kind of gossip could get a man killed. He will call on those old allegiances one last time in 1939, negotiating the surrender of mob hit man Lepke Buchalter to his new pal J. Edgar Hoover. Viv can find him at Table 50 of Manhattan's Stork Club, where he holds court and broadcasts his show. He's willing to trade in information, but his nose for news makes him a dangerous man to get close to. Winchell almost certainly provided the inspiration for gossip columnist and broadcaster Waldo Lydecker in the 1944 noir movie *Laura*.

**Lillian Hellman**, 32, (1905–1984) playwright-screenwriter and political activist, divides her time between New York City and Hollywood. Broadway audiences flock to her smash hit about accusations of lesbianism, *The Children's Hour*, but Hollywood can't make it fly under the Production Code. In 1937, Hellman will fly to Spain and radios back anti-Franco broadcasts as bombs fall around her. After returning, she will raise funds for Spanish Republicans and push for an anti-fascist political alliance with the USSR, a kind of "premature anti-fascism" which will lead later to her being blacklisted by the House Un-American Activities Committee. When she finds time, Hellman has an off-and-on relationship with Dashiell Hammett.

By 1931, Elsa Maxwell, 54, (1883–1963) holds such influence as a celebrity hostess that, when the Waldorf-Astoria opened in 1931, they invited her to live rent-free in hopes she'd attract some of the rich and famous with whom she fraternizes. She started off with neither wealth nor beauty, but her charm, wit, and talent for planning engaging parties bought her the kind of friendships that don't disappear when money runs out or beauty fades. Earning Elsa's friendship opens the way for all kinds of introductions — to Hollywood stars, European royalty, and of course, to New York's elite. Though Elsa goes on to put others' lives on display as a gossip columnist, she manages to hide her half-century-long partnership with heiress Dorothy "Dickie" Fellowes-Gordon from the general public. Viv has encountered the pair more than once enjoying the floor show at the Howdy Club (see p. 166).

**Orson Welles**, 22, (1915–1985) bursts onto the New York City theatrical scene as a compelling actor, writer, and director. His company, the Mercury Theatre, makes waves in performance after performance. He stages *Macbeth* in Harlem with an entirely black cast in 1936; he uses *Julius Caesar* to highlight parallels between Caesar's and Hitler's rises to power in 1937; his pro-union musical *The Cradle Will Rock* gets shut down by the feds in 1937 (though it will re-open a year later), and his 1938 radio broadcast of *The War of the Worlds* will cause a panic.



Welles can't recall the name of the broad who suggested he rewrite *The War of the Worlds* as a news broadcast. Who would want to cause a panic the night before Halloween — an occultist whose working required a strong psychic disturbance or a gangster who wanted police distracted while they pulled off a heist?

While the 1930s saw many actors leave Broadway for the silver screen, Russian actress, **Alla Nazimova**, 58, (1879–1945) reversed the trend. Leaving behind her "Garden of Alla" hotel and returning to the legitimate stage, she built a Long Island villa, modeled on her childhood home in Russia, for herself and partner Glesca Marshall. More than one guest has found themselves disoriented when attempting to walk its halls at night, as though the walls meet at strange angles.

One of the most influential forces in science fiction publishing in the late '30s, *Astounding Science Fiction* editor **John W. Campbell**, 27, (1910–1971) runs his magazine out of publisher Street & Smith's headquarters at 79 7<sup>th</sup> Avenue. The hawk-nosed Campbell, never seen without a cigarette, shapes modern science fiction from stories of invasions and abductions to stories which imagine humanity living in the stars and address social issues through fiction. Always interested in what science has yet to discover, Campbell encourages writers interested in ESP and other mental powers.

Psychic investigator **Hereward Carrington**, 57, (1880–1958) and his wife **Marie Sweet Carrington** conduct experiments on those who claim to possess paranormal powers at their

American Psychological Institute. Hereward began his career as a skeptic, but desperately wants to believe. Critics accuse him of ignoring well-known tricks in the few psychics he declares genuine.

**J** Marie Sweet Carrington invites Viv and several other reporters and writers to witness a private demonstration by a woman she believes possesses true powers of extrasensory perception. When the psychic doesn't show up, everyone assumes she's a fraud who fears exposure. Later that night, Carrington calls Viv with the horrible news — she found the psychic dead in her apartment. What secret did someone murder her to protect? Clues may come in the form of the psychic's research notes — if she didn't possess genuine powers — or a dream journal.

#### FROM TAMMANY TO LA GUARDIA

New York City in the 1930s straddles two very different eras of government. Incumbent mayor **Jimmy Walker**, 56, (1881–1946) the playboy Tammany candidate, won re-election in 1929, mere weeks after the market crashed. Only a year into his new administration, the political machine that elected him suffered a tremendous blow when the Hofstadter Committee came down from Albany to investigate corruption in the city. Nominated by Senator Samuel Hofstadter, reformist judge **Samuel Seabury**, 64, (1873–1958) heard thousands of witnesses over two years — those wronged by the system, those inside the system willing to stand up, and those who refused to admit any wrongdoing.

Seabury exposed a pattern of framing working-class individuals with trumped-up charges and false witnesses. A defendant might face jail or simply pay a fine, hire the right lawyer, or otherwise turn over their life savings (or money they didn't have) to representatives of the justice system. Journalists covering the story, including Viv, portrayed working-class men and women who lost their life savings, their jobs, and their reputations in the middle of the Depression, just so those within the system could line their pockets. The writers earned a few enemies, as do all those

who testify against the system, but public opinion shifted irreversibly against Mayor Walker and the political machine.

On the eve of his presidential campaign, New York governor **Franklin D. Roosevelt**, 55, (1882–1945) had to balance his need for support within his own party with the questions he knew he'd face during his campaign over his inability to control a single city in his state. In 1932, as the presidential election neared, Roosevelt gave Walker an ultimatum and declared a special election for mayor. Walker went quietly, running off to Europe with a Ziegfeld dancer and leaving his wife behind. State representative **Fiorello La Guardia**, 55, (1882–1947) a Republican who lost to Walker in 1929, won the mayoral election on a Fusion ticket. He enjoyed the cross-party support not only of Roosevelt but of Democratic judge Samuel Seabury, whose investigations prompted Walker's removal.

An Italian-American himself, La Guardia despises the image of the Italian-American mobster. He appointed **Lewis J. Valentine**, 55, (1882–1946) a longtime member of the "confidential squad," charged with rooting out graft (or as some would say, longtime rat), as police commissioner. Commissioner Valentine promises to reward any officer who beats up or hauls in gangsters, but demotes or fires those who get caught on the take. During his 13 years in office, Valentine fires hundreds of officers, fining and officially reprimanding thousands more.

La Guardia supported Roosevelt's agenda to repeal Prohibition, but otherwise cultivates a hard-line, Puritanical approach to government. A polar opposite of his predecessor, he successfully closes burlesque theaters. He shoots propaganda newsreels in which he's filmed taking a sledgehammer to mob-owned slot machines and throwing them into the Hudson. The mayor's critics call him heavy-handed and authoritarian, even while admitting his administration's improvements over the Tammany years.

Though Tammany lost the mayoral office, their members infest the city so thoroughly that La Guardia and his officials can't entirely uproot the old system. Valentine may arrest mobsters, but his work doesn't mean much if the

prosecution goes soft. Tammany leftover, D.A. William C. Dodge, spent eleven months conducting a gambling investigation so badly that his grand jury went rogue, complaining in open court and to newspapers.

In 1935, Democratic governor Herbert H. Lehman appointed Republican **Thomas E. Dewey**, 35, (1902–1971) as special prosecutor to follow through in taking down racketeering organizations. Dewey managed to bring down the head of one of New York’s Five Families — Lucky Luciano — although he almost certainly used false testimony to do so. He also took on Wall Street, sending the haughty post-crash president of the Stock Exchange, Richard Whitney, to Sing Sing for embezzlement. Dewey will go on to become New York’s governor and defeat Truman, at least in a headline.

### THE CHANGING FACE OF ORGANIZED CRIME

During the 1930s, the Sicilian mob, or *Cosa Nostra*, transforms from a bunch of families and independent gangs smuggling booze into a well-organized post-Prohibition racket. Though Federal authorities scoff at the idea of any serious criminal organization, those in New York City feel the effect of the local Five Families. The Mafia worms its way into enterprises at all ends of the socioeconomic spectrum, from the waterfronts and the unions (and non-union shops) which it holds in a tight fist to lavish hotels and restaurants which factor protection money into their cost of doing business.

The decade opened with a bloody “Castellammarese War” between Sicilian families — the Maranzanos and the Masserias — to determine the city’s *capo di tutti capi* (“boss of all the bosses”). Rising Masseria lieutenant **Charles “Lucky” Luciano**, 40, (1897–1962) switched sides in 1931, assuring the victory of Salvatore Maranzano. After receiving the Masseria empire as a reward, Luciano sent a squad of Jewish and Italian hit men to take out Maranzano, thus eliminating both sides in the fight.


Unlike the older Mafiosi who cared deeply about Sicilian blood and total control, Luciano immigrated young and belongs to a generation of broad-minded American crime bosses. He sees the benefits of collaborating for profit

and in employing talented outsiders from the Irish and Jewish mobs, as well as non-Sicilian Italians. Luciano proposes the creation of **the Commission**, in which seven Italian families from New York, Buffalo, and Chicago form a board of directors to guarantee peace. The New York contingent consists of what become known as the “Five Families:” the Luciano, Bonanno, Gambino, Profaci, and Gagliano families. With Prohibition about to end, the families used the capital and organizational skills they’d developed in bootlegging to get into a dozen other criminal rackets. Their racketeering includes playing both sides of unions, running numbers games, charging protection money, and “investing” in everything from dockside enterprise to classy restaurants.

In the new Commission, the heads of the Five Families may be equal, but Luciano is a little more equal than the rest. His droopy eye and various facial scars testify to the multiple beatings and attempted assassinations, including a throat-cutting, he survived even before becoming the most powerful crime boss in New York City. In 1936, the law caught up to Luciano in the form of a pandering charge. Special Prosecutor Thomas Dewey (whose life Luciano had saved: see “Dutch Schultz” below) raided brothels connected to the family. He finds three workers willing to testify about Luciano’s direct involvement in the business. Considering the number of interests Luciano controlled by this point, the entire affair came off as shady, but the jury convicted anyway. After losing appeals, Luciano went upstate. When WWII breaks out, he will lend some covert assistance to the Allies and get early release on the condition he return to Italy. Although he will spend several years in Cuba, Lucky will never re-enter the United States or regain control of his organization.

**Frank Costello**, 46, (1891–1973) spends much of the ’30s as Luciano’s *consigliere*. He dresses immaculately, but the street-learned mix of Italian and English he speaks embarrasses him by betraying his origins. While working for Luciano, he successfully runs his own businesses on the side. The 25,000 slot machines he littered throughout New York brought in millions annually until La Guardia dumped them in the Hudson in 1934. Undeterred, Costello rebuilt his slot network

in Louisiana, this time working with the approval of the governor himself. A capable man who prefers to avoid war, in the mid-'40s Costello will turn over control of the family to former Luciano muscle **Vito Genovese** and live to old age. Later hearings will reveal his one weakness — a desire for recognition by the equally rich and famous in more respectable echelons of New York society.

 In his quest for respectability, Costello plans to purchase a magnificent diamond to rival the Hope, and loan it to the American Museum of Natural History for display. But he's heard it carries with it a curse — the last two owners apparently committed suicide. Through an agent, he hires Viv to investigate the stone's history. Costello's right to worry. The stone serves as bait for a cunning shan, which takes particular delight in destroying the minds of the rich and powerful. For now, the shan bides its time in the mind of the stone's dealer, who may start exhibiting strange behaviors.

One advantage the Commission offers its families is a decentralized arm which conducts its hits with plausible deniability. Dubbed **Murder Incorporated** by reporter Harry Feeney, the outfit fits its weapon to the task, using everything from machine guns to ice picks. Meyer Lansky and Bugsy Siegel, Jewish mobsters and associates of Luciano, receive credit for conceiving the organization, which may have sprung from their Prohibition-era gang. The slight, unassuming **Louis "Lepke" Buchalter**, 40, (1897–1944) and thickset **Albert Anastasia**, 35, (1902–1957) control day-to-day operations and carry out many of the major assassinations. The Commission will give up the unlucky Buchalter to the authorities after Dewey and Valentine's manhunt becomes too great a liability. Buchalter's August 1939 surrender will turn to farce, with gossip commentator Walter Winchell accompanying J. Edgar Hoover to guarantee the prisoner's safety.


Nothing sticks to **Meyer Lansky**, 35, (1902–1983) a longtime ally of Luciano and a powerhouse in his own right. In a world of killers, Lansky's mathematical mind sets him apart from the rest — nobody fudges the books if they'll pass under

Lansky's eyes. One step ahead of the game in everything from honest-but-profitable casinos to taxes, Lansky builds a gambling empire outside of his New York stomping ground and funnels the profits into hefty Swiss bank accounts. As the '30s progress, Lansky turns his attentions and his men to taking down Nazis and their sympathizers. He starts small, breaking up pro-Nazi rallies in German neighborhoods, but he will go on to secure Luciano's release in exchange for assistance with the war effort, and to play a key role in Operation Underworld.

Lansky's friend, protégé, and partner in Murder, Incorporated, the charismatic **Benjamin "Bugsy" Siegel**, 31, (1902–1947) is a clever hit man with potential. In 1936, he leaves the East Coast to cause trouble in Dex's Los Angeles stomping ground. After World War II, he will move on to Las Vegas, where he will leave his most memorable legacy.

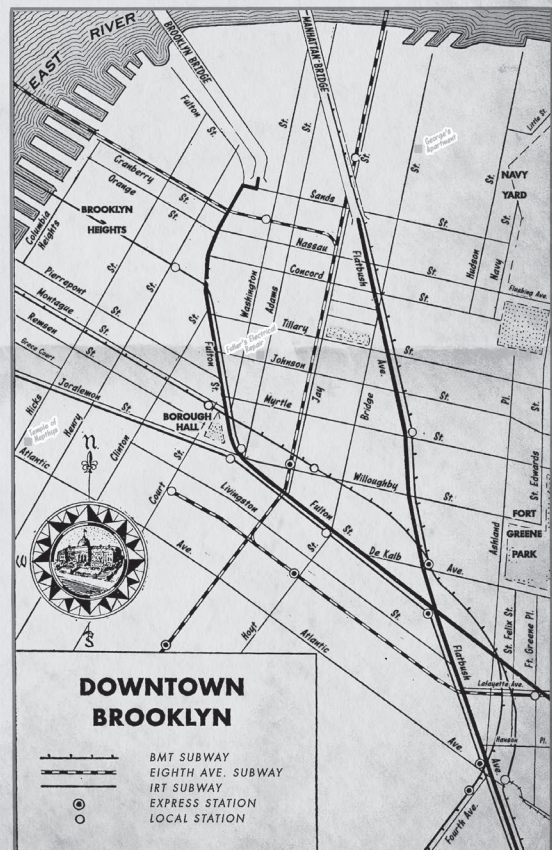
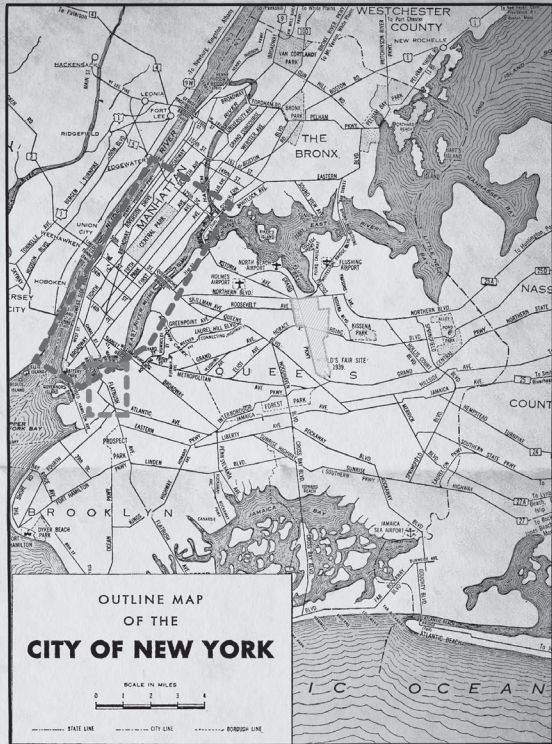
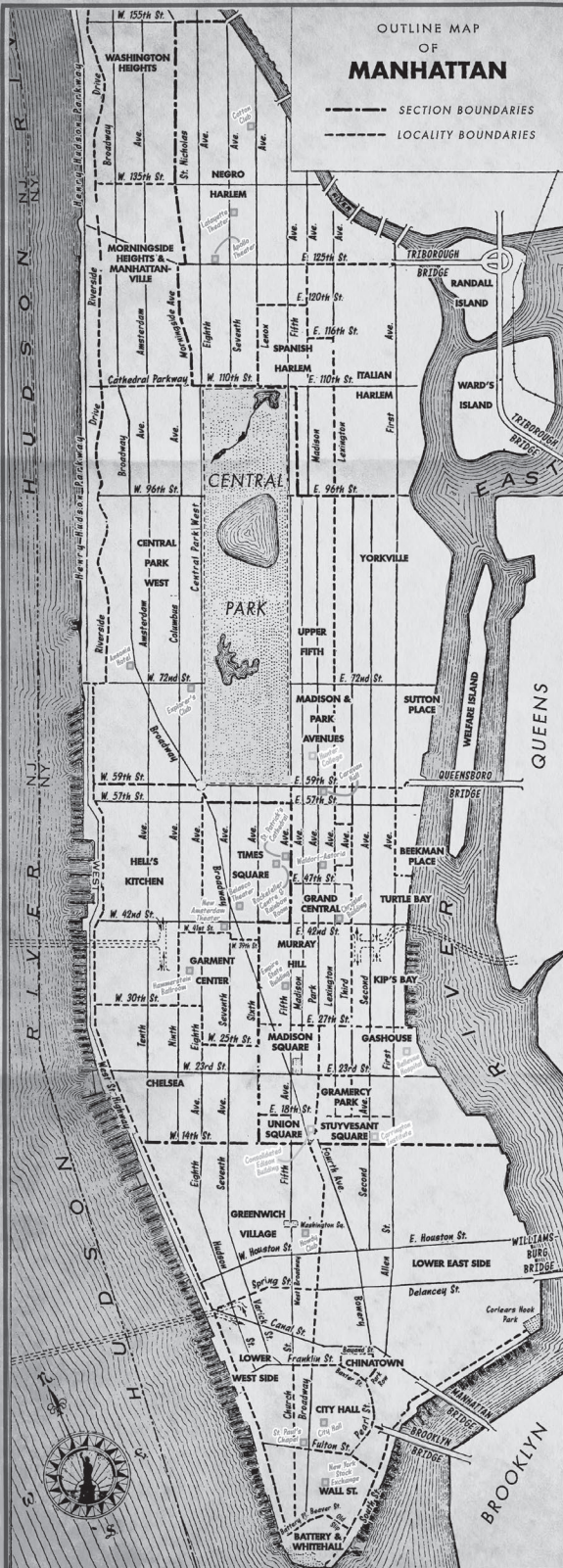
Working side by side, the Five Families drove out or subsumed the city's Jewish and Irish mobs, who'd often rivaled them during Prohibition. Some, like Lansky and Siegel, found themselves working closely with the Italian mob — kept out of the inner sanctum, but still trusted with large operations. Mobsters **Dutch Schultz** (1902–1935) and **Owney Madden**, 46, (1891–1965) on the other hand, weren't so successful.

After Prohibition ended, Schultz took up racketeering alongside the Italians. But when he found himself the first target of Special Prosecutor Dewey and facing a prison sentence like Capone's, Schultz panicked. He refused to abide by the Commission's ruling against Dewey's assassination. The Commission, displeased by his disrespect for their decision, called in Murder, Inc., to whack Schultz. Members of the underworld whisper that Schultz drove upstate shortly before his death and buried a safe full of millions somewhere in the Catskills. In death, Schultz might have taken satisfaction in Dewey's later coups — putting Lucky Luciano behind bars and sending Lepke Buchalter to the electric chair.

 For nearly a day after the hit, Schultz fought for his life in Newark City Hospital. Law enforcement covered up the real circumstances of his death — an attendant

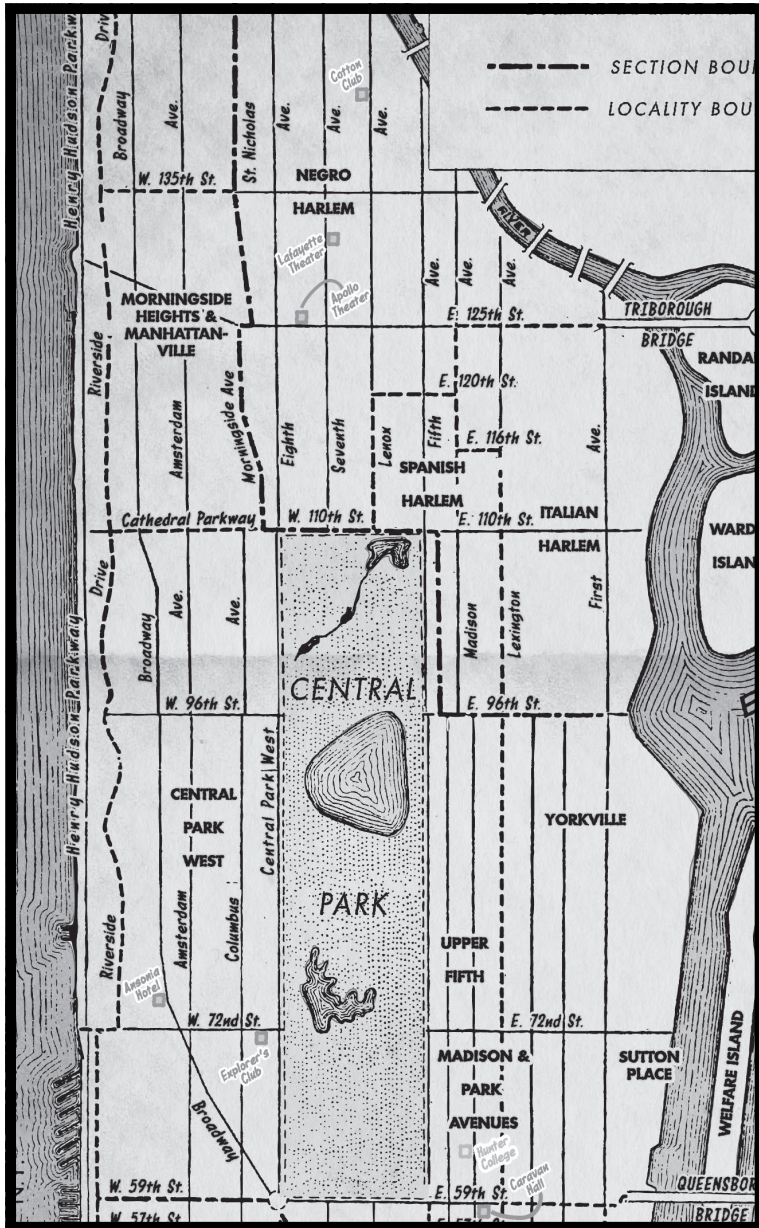


# NEW YORK CITY, 'THE POISON APPLE'



'CTHULHU CONFIDENTIAL'





street gangs, he used his bootlegging operation to supply liquor to his own string of nightclubs, including the famous Cotton Club in Harlem. As Prohibition ended and the glamour faded from his nightclubs, Madden reinvented himself a boxing promoter. But with reporters calling his fixed fights and the Italian mob deciding five-to-one odds outweigh the one-to-one of the pre-Commission era, Madden felt the heat in New York. He absconded in 1935 to set up an operation in Hot Springs, Arkansas.

## Gotham

Sprawling across five boroughs and 304 square miles, New York City offers a plethora of locations for use in scenarios. This overview focuses on the 23 square miles of Manhattan, a more manageable portion, but popular culture and the Internet offer many inroads into weird or plot-infused places in the other four boroughs. The following description runs essentially north to south, subdividing into neighborhoods where relevant.

### UPTOWN MANHATTAN

#### Harlem

During the Great Migration, black Southerners flooded north in search of jobs and to escape an upswing in lynchings and KKK violence in their home states. Harlem offered a comparatively safe haven and eventually gave birth to a musical, literary, religious, artistic, and theatrical renaissance. Between 1910 and 1930, the demographics of Harlem shifted from around 10% black to 70%. Despite the shift, much of the area, including cultural centers, remained owned by white landlords and only began integrating (or didn't) in the '30s.

The whites-only **Cotton Club** at 142<sup>nd</sup> Street and Lenox Avenue in Harlem (until 1935) and then Midtown (until 1940) is the best and probably the only place to see famous black performers of the time. On any night, one might catch performances by Duke Ellington (38), Billie Holiday (22), Lena Horne (20), Louis Armstrong (36), Count Basie (33), Cab Calloway (30), Sister Rosetta Tharpe (22), or Ethel Waters (41), just to name a few, as well as occasional showcase of

who swore he left the room for “only a moment” came back to find Schultz dead and his brain cleanly removed. If Viv gets wind of the real circumstances of Schultz’s death, she may wish to look more closely into the Catskills connection. Whom did Schultz meet in those mountains, and what kind of escape did they promise him?

Madden’s story ends happily, at least for him. An Anglo-Irish mobster who built his reputation in

white performers such as Irving Berlin (49), Al Jolson (51), Mae West (44), and Fanny Brice (46). Despite its Harlem location and black all-stars, the club's manager, gangster Owney Madden, maintained a policy of strict racial segregation, which his successors have continued. If Viv wants to converse with one of these luminaries of the Harlem Renaissance, she'd do better to catch them backstage or in the building next door, where they are rumored to let off steam after shows.

In 1913, the **Lafayette Theater**, 2225 7<sup>th</sup> Avenue, became the first major theater in the city to desegregate. One might catch some of the same performers showcased at the Cotton Club in a decidedly less hostile atmosphere. Orson Welles and the Federal Theatre Project's Negro Theatre Unit stage an all-black version of *Macbeth* (sometimes called the "Voodoo *Macbeth*") at the Lafayette in 1936.

Eleven days after being one of the only critics to pan *Macbeth*, **Percy Hammond** of the *Herald Tribune* drops dead. The lead drummer in the performance, **Asadata Dafora**, approaches Viv with a problem — he joked about casting a voodoo curse on Hammond, and now the police are asking questions and threatening to send him back to Sierra Leone. Dafora needs Viv to prove that he didn't kill the journalist, which requires finding the real killer. What other secrets in the world of entertainment did Percy poke his nose into, and who forced his own lungs to drown him before he could print his story?

A little behind the Lafayette, Hurtig & Seamon's Burlesque Theater at 235 West 125<sup>th</sup> Street integrated in 1934 and rebranded itself as the iconic **Apollo Theater**. Here, instead of swing and "legitimate theater," one might catch popular vaudeville acts, Gospel, soul, and jazz.

In 1935, Harlem experienced what historians call "the first modern race riot" (perhaps forgetting the 1921 white race riot in Tulsa which destroyed the city's "Black Wall Street" and led to nearly 40 deaths). Rumors of a shoplifter being beaten to death by a white shopkeeper unleashed barely contained tensions, and a day of rioting ended with

three dead. La Guardia appointed a multiracial committee to investigate the incident. The only surprising part of the committee's report was its honest assessment of the situation — the black residents of Harlem face nearly 50% unemployment and find themselves the last in line for any jobs that do open up. They chafe under segregation and suffer police brutality. The riot appeared to have been purely spontaneous, with understandable causes that the city would do well to address before it happens again.

### Upper East Side

The **Explorers Club**, located at 10 West 72<sup>nd</sup> Street, gathers like-minded men who seek to promote exploration and discovery. Charter members include the first men to the North and South Poles, and future members will include Edmund Hillary and Neil Armstrong. While the club won't allow women to join for another fifty years or so, Viv's Source Esteban Manuel Aragon Gonzalez is almost certainly a member and may provide introductions. The club sponsors weekly lectures and programs open to the general public. If Viv tries hard enough, she may be able to track down the more elusive **Adventurer's Club**, which prioritizes thrilling adventures over discoveries and firsts. Despite its monthly newsletter, nobody outside the club's members knows where it meets.

Explorers Club member **Bernt Balchen** was one of the first four people to fly over the South Pole. He never told anyone what he saw there — or what looked back at him. Now, several years later, he suddenly develops intense nightmares and a paranoid feeling that something is watching him. Another Antarctic expedition has recently docked in New York's harbor, but that wouldn't have anything to do with it — would it?

When the residential **Ansonia Hotel** at 2109 Broadway opened in 1904, it boasted a rooftop farm and live seals in the lobby fountain. By the 1930s, the economy (and the Board of Health) had forced it to lose such animal excesses, but it still boasted lavish accommodations for residents who could afford to ignore the Depression. Celebrities



from musicians to actors to Yankees star Babe Ruth make their home here. Scions of wealthy Innsmouth industrialists appreciate the Turkish baths, conveniently located in the basement.

The largest green space in New York City, **Central Park** covers nearly 850 acres of middle-upper Manhattan, on the East and West Sides. At the beginning of the 1930s, however, it's better known as the site of a Hooverville — a shanty town occupied by jobless New Yorkers, or those whose wages have been so badly cut that they can no longer afford New York's rents.

Two nights in a row, something has terrorized the park's residents. They report the sound of leathery wings just before a great shadowy thing swoops down from the sky and carries off a victim chosen seemingly at random. If Viv wants to find out who's using a nightgaunt to gather bodies for their ritual, she may have to convince the beast to take her next time.

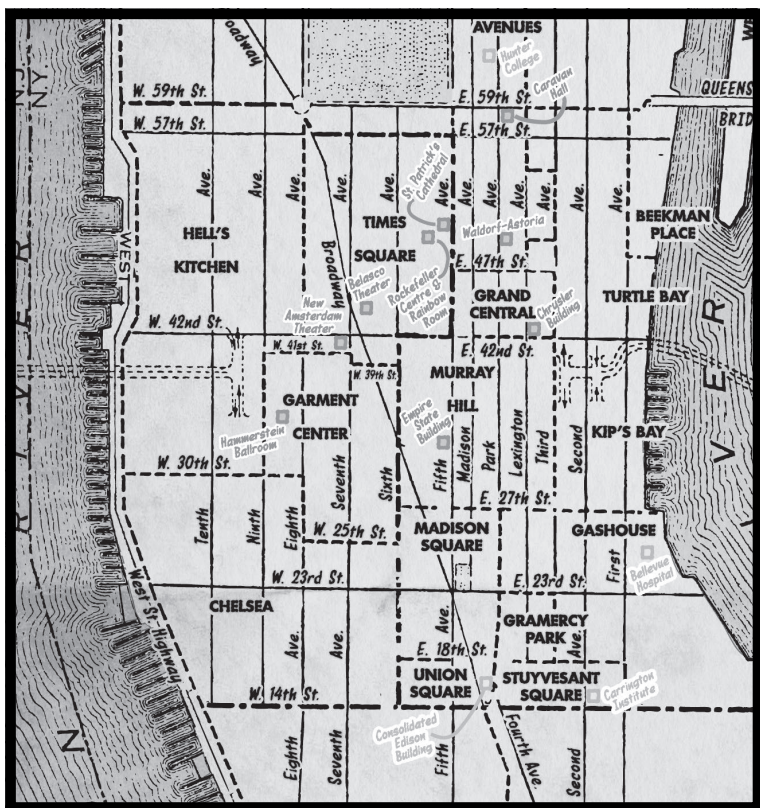
## MIDTOWN MANHATTAN

In building the **Rockefeller Center**, oilman John D. attempted to create a "city within a city." Iconic concepts such as the Christmas tree lighting ceremony (1931) and the skating rink (1936) open the center to the pedestrian soul. High on the 65<sup>th</sup> floor of its flagship building, 30 Rockefeller Plaza, the less pedestrian souls enjoy fine dining in the Rainbow Room (1934) — known for decades as the highest restaurant in the world. If Viv can afford the fare, she can listen to Cole Porter play and watch Ginger Rogers foxtrot effortlessly with the awkward Howard Hughes.

1934. Nelson Rockefeller hires Diego Rivera to paint a modernist triumph — *Man at the Crossroads* — then suddenly changes his mind and orders its destruction, supposedly because it included Lenin. Why is he still paying Rivera the full amount? Why does Rivera vow to use that money to paint and repaint the mural around the world? Why do rumors suggest that Rockefeller walled up the painting but did not destroy it?

**St. Patrick's Cathedral** on 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue, just across from Rockefeller Center, inspires the soul with its neo-Gothic arches and stained glass. Despite their financial difficulties, Church officials recently decided to dig up the main altar area. What was buried there during its post-Civil War construction, and why are the priests so desperate to get rid of it?

New Yorkers like things tall, and the 47-story **Waldorf-Astoria**, 301 Park Avenue, will hold the record as the world's tallest hotel for three decades after its 1931 opening. Conceived in the years before the Depression, it takes nearly a decade for the hotel's operators to make the place popular. In the meantime, they offer residence in many luxury suites to those whom they think might draw paying customers. Charles Ross, as the tenant of the Waldorf Tower's apartment 39C calls himself, took pleasure in paying the rent his fellow residents cannot afford. Only in 1936, when law enforcement surrounded the building to take him in, did some of his neighbors realize that they have been living alongside Charles "Lucky" Luciano.



While the **Empire State Building**, 350 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue, commands the best view of the city from its outdoor observation decks, it can't seem to catch a break otherwise. Built just a year too late to snap up the 1929 crash's survivors, it earns the nickname "Empty State Building" and brings in as much from tourists as it does from rent. If only it could solve that pesky suicide problem.

### Turtle Bay

Though the **Chrysler Building**, 405 Lexington Avenue, only held the record of tallest in the world from May 1930 to May 1931, its art deco style, busy offices, and ground floor auto show still outshine its Empire State rival, which can't find enough tenants to fill most of its floors. On the 61<sup>st</sup> floor, Viv might stop by **Margaret Bourke-White's** office for an interview or, with enough brass, to ask for photography tips. Or with the right invitation from the right man (and yes, it must be a man), she might lunch among New York's industrial executives in the elite, though architecturally confused, Cloud Club (66<sup>th</sup> through 68<sup>th</sup> floors). And before leaving, she could head up to the observation room, or "Celestial," and pay fifty-five cents to look out its angled windows over the entire city.



Everyone recognizes the Chrysler building's gargoyles and motifs as its own radiator caps and hood ornaments writ large. Fewer perceive the occult significance in the way these symbols combine with the decorative crown and spire of the upper stories, or ascribe the building's frantic pace of construction to an attempt to outrun the onset of the Depression. The average New Yorker considers it a symbol of Chrysler's continued success, not the cause. When covering the apparently senseless destruction of a gargoyle, Viv stumbles into a web of powerful businessmen using unnatural forces to secure their market share.

### Theatre District

In the early 1930s, the rooftop garden of the **New Amsterdam Theatre**, 214 W 42<sup>nd</sup> Street, was the place to catch a racier show than the theater

proper would host. Its main stage, by contrast, was the place to catch a ghost. Silent film star Olive Thomas, who had performed at the theater during her early career, overdosed on her husband's syphilis medication in Paris, but somehow manages to haunt backstage here in New York City. Her phantasmal figure clutches the that bottle her husband swore she drank by accident.

After 1931, the **Belasco Theatre** at 111 W 44<sup>th</sup> Street, enjoys a similar specter — the ghost of owner David Belasco. Belasco's ghost wears the trademark clerical collar and cassock he favored in life: an odd choice for the Jewish playwright. When he appears, he acts as though nothing has changed, giving cast members feedback on performances, pinching actress' bottoms, and leaving behind lingering cigar smoke.

At **Sardi's**, 234 W 44<sup>th</sup> Street, Viv may try to get in on the "Cheese Club" lunch — an informal daily gathering of journalists, gossip columnists, and press agents. To crack the boys' club mentality, Viv had better bring a particularly juicy tidbit to trade.

### Hell's Kitchen

Viv may find herself visiting the **Hammerstein Ballroom** at 311 West 34<sup>th</sup> Street for anything from a union meeting to speeches by the Community Party. Or, she might use those as cover to investigate unusual rites carried out by an unconventional chapter of Freemasons, who purchased the building from Oscar Hammerstein I, the impresario grandfather of the famous lyricist, after he failed to turn it into a successful theater.

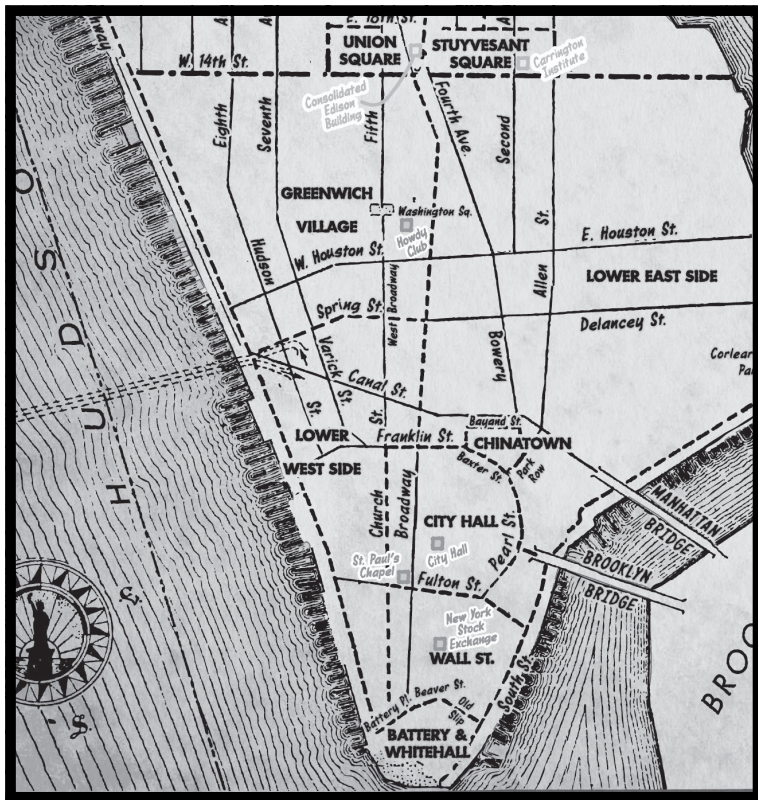
### UNION SQUARE

Above the four illuminated clocks of the **Consolidated Edison Building** at 4 Irving Place (Consolidated Gas until 1936), stands the "Tower of Light." Supposedly, it honors over 3,000 employees who served in WWI and the 70 or so who died. Yet there are many conventional ways to honor the fallen that don't involve recessed stone temples and 38-foot bronze lanterns, set 26 stories above the ground and inaccessible to all but company elite.

### KIPS BAY

The **Bellevue Hospital** opened to the public in 1736, and open to the public it has remained. The





two-story hospital ballooned into twenty-five buildings containing over a hundred wards build on donated farmland — about twelve square city blocks sprawling from East 26<sup>th</sup> to East 30<sup>th</sup> Streets and 1<sup>st</sup> Avenue almost to the water front. Bellevue’s charter as a public institution does not allow it to turn aside a patient or corpse, and over a hundred thousand bodies enter the hospital every day. Not all walk out again.

Besides surgeries, specialist departments, and outpatient clinics, the hospital includes an alcoholic ward, a prison ward, a school for emotionally disturbed children (1935), a psychiatric ward (1936), and the city morgue. If Viv suspects the use of poison in a case, she can visit the Office of Chief Medical Examiner on the third floor of the morgue building and consult the father of American forensic toxicology **Alexander Gettler**, 52 (1883–1968). She’d recognize the greying chemist from his testimony at decades of court cases involving poisons and accidental toxic deaths.

Legends of the **Black Bottle of Bellevue** have sifted through hospital staff and patients. Some say that unscrupulous medical students bring it out when they wish to dissect a patient who stubbornly refuses to die. Others maintain that nurses employ it on the more troublesome occupants of their wards. One broken-down panhandler outside the *Herald Tribune*’s building claims to be “the only man to have survived the bottle,” entreats the journalists to buy him a drink for his story. He hints at dark bargains made at the founding of the city, and ulterior motives for the hospital’s generous mandate.

### DOWNTOWN MANHATTAN Greenwich Village

The bohemian reputation Greenwich Village developed after the Great War fades toward the end of the 1930s. Its low rents, which had first drawn the bohemian set, increase as more and more white-collar workers move into the neighborhood. Yet while the famous move on, one might find those drawn by tales of the Twenties and seeking to find their own inspiration.

At the **Howdy Club**, 47 West 3<sup>rd</sup> Street, one might catch the city’s only lesbian burlesque — by ladies, for ladies. Not that the club has banned gentlemen, but the Howdy carries a reputation as a place where gals could be more than just pals and hires lesbian entertainers, including those billing themselves as “male impersonators.” Its lineup of chorus boys suggests that the Howdy counts gay men among its patrons as well. The club faces crackdowns from La Guardia’s vice squads, bent on stamping out burlesque, and will eventually close in the ’40s. A robbery, gunfight, and the shooting of a policeman in 1938 will bring it unwelcome scrutiny.

**Washington Square Park**’s 9.75 acres sprawl across a tenth of Greenwich Village. Its lush greenery and magnificent stone arch hide the land’s charnel past. A “potter’s field” from the 1790s to the 1820s, it serves as final resting place for around twenty thousand corpses who could not afford proper burial — the poor, the convict, the stranger, and those enslaved by New Yorkers. During that period, it also served as a place of execution. Locals

argue about which trees, still standing, hangmen used to carry out their grisly duty.



Viv investigates the murder of Philippa Kingsley, an up-and-coming activist who's been papering Viv's block with fliers opposing the installation of what Kingsley called a "grotesque" piece of modern art in the park. Its strange design reminds Viv of photographs her source Esteban Manuel Aragon Gonzalez took of a painting fragment he found in an Aztec temple. What does it have to do with the psychic resonance of those thousands buried beneath the park's placid lawn, and why has its mysterious donor given miniature copies of the sculpture to the mayor and city councilmen?

### Chinatown

Though far more Chinese immigrated to the West Coast, New York's Chinatown is one of the oldest in the country. Most attribute Chinatown's founding to Cantonese businessman Ah Ken, who found the area a good place to sell cigars. Because of the explicitly-named Chinese Exclusion Act, most of Chinatown's settlers, through the thirties, had already immigrated and moved to New York for greater opportunity, compared to many immigrants who first arrived in New York and never left. A majority were men, who were unable to bring over wives or families — the 1900 census recorded seven thousand Chinese men living in New York and less than 150 women.

The Tongs provide a combination of civic association and enforcement. They offer new immigrants loans to start businesses, provide the protection white police won't, and, like Italian families in the twenties, have fights amongst themselves. Even though Chinatown bordered Little Italy, the Chinese gangs had fewer run-ins with the Mafia than the Jewish and Irish gangs, perhaps because the Italian Mafia didn't consider Chinatown a place where they could make a profit.

In a barber shop tucked between a tobacco emporium and tattoo parlor, makeup artist **Rocks Grillo** practices a rather unusual trade. Between haircuts and shaves, he paints over the shiners of those who wish to look less conspicuous.

Gangsters, district attorneys, dock workers, actors, and abused women — the "thick-set, black-haired" Rocks has seen it all. For just 50 cents, your detective can employ his services to cover a black eye. If she chooses to cultivate an acquaintance with Rocks, she may pick up gangland dirt or something a little more unusual.



Rocks may not like to talk about customers, but he comes to Viv when a client gets dragged out of his chair mid-makeup job. It's happened before, but there was something fishy about the men who hauled him off. Not just strange, they actually smelled... fishy.

### Financial District

George Post, the architect of the **New York Stock Exchange** at 11 Wall Street, attempted to use numerology in its 1903 neoclassical design. The building's seven entrances represent the number of divine perfection. Unfortunately, this contrasts with six pillars, the number of humanity or fallen imperfection. Post miscalculated the importance of these six pillars and the psychic weight they'd give the structure. Just four years after moving to the new building, the Exchange suffered its first panic. Years after the crash of 1929, an occultist recommended the Exchange seal two of its seven entrances, leaving five — the number of grace.

### LOWER MANHATTAN

Completed in 1812, **City Hall** blends a French Renaissance exterior with an American-Georgian interior. After completing the Tweed Courthouse, which stands behind it, the Tammany administration proposed tearing down the city hall and building a sprawling edifice worthy of the city, but the state stepped in to forbid its demolition. After so many decades of Tammany occupation, New Yorkers have difficulty separating the building from the corruption it long symbolized.

The city hall complex includes the **Tweed Courthouse**, completed in 1872 by infamous Tammany leader Boss Tweed. A perfect symbol of corruption in the heart of the city, the magnificent building cost twelve million dollars, in contrast to the two million spent on St. Patrick's Cathedral

in the same era. No one knows exactly how much went back into Tweed's pockets.

Southeast of city hall, **St. Paul's Chapel** at 209 Broadway, the oldest surviving church in the borough, turns its back on the road — Broadway mattered less when it was built. In the early 1800s, actor George Frederick Cooke left his head to the stage, where it played Yorick while the rest of him ended up in the graveyard of St. Paul's. His ghost regrets that decision, floating among the tombstones in search of its missing dome.

### QUEENS

Though outside the borough of Manhattan, one cannot represent the New York of the Thirties without mentioning the World's Fair of 1939, which will be held in the **Flushing Meadows** region of Queens, Long Island. From 1935 to 1939, the Corona Ash Dumps (F. Scott Fitzgerald's "valley of ashes") is being transformed into a 1,200-acre park, suitable for representing New York to the world. The 1939 World's Fair will break from previous

fairs by taking a futuristic approach: "Building the Better World of Tomorrow." Westinghouse will sponsor a time capsule, not to be opened for five thousand years. Among the items deposited inside will be a Micro-File containing over ten million words to represent the world of 1939, and instructions for making a machine to view it.



Unfortunately, no one on the committee at the time realized that the ash dumps covered the entrance to an underground network of the Great Race of Yith, still inhabited by flying polyps. The earliest inhabitants of the region had shunned the area, and settlers followed suit, eventually converting it to a garbage dump. The deaths of a few workers who opened the gateway once they'd uncovered it are covered up as construction accidents, and the entrance is sealed in concrete.



**FATAL  
FREQUENCIES**



# FATAL FREQUENCIES

---

## THE STORY SO FAR

---

In 1800, William Herschel discovered the first known light beyond our visible spectrum: infrared. What if there were far more that the human eye couldn't see? What if ghosts and other strange or spectral phenomena really existed, but at wavelengths just on the edge of human perception? What if mediums and the spiritually sensitive simply have sharper visual and aural acuity than the rest of the population? Hoping to answer these questions, electrician and amateur inventor George Preston built a "sympathetic resonator" which emits frequencies altering the wavelengths of light and sound. On the moonless night of (Wednesday) May 1<sup>st</sup>, 1935, he threw the switch.

Unfortunately, Preston's invention worked too well. Rather than manipulate the edges of human perception, it exposed dimensions which overlap with our own — and exposed those within its influence to the creatures of that dimension. In his darkened room, Preston remained out of sight. Others in the building did not fare so well. A scream from his neighbor's apartment brought Preston out of his reverie, but he switched off the machine too late. One man lay half-eaten, others fought to retain their stability. No one could explain the appearance of the hideous apparitions or their sudden disappearance — or no one chose to.

Stricken with guilt, Preston vowed to end it in the only way he felt he deserved — offering himself up to those same beasts in a grotesque penance. Unable to enlist the aid of his closest friend, Charlie Fitzpatrick, he called on his employer, Howard Fuller, to witness

his death and destroy the infernal device (Thursday). From the shadows of the machine shop's upper-floor office, Fuller observed his employee's gruesome demise. But the lure of profit, albeit with a thin veneer of patriotism, stopped him from destroying the machine.

Fuller believes recent news of Germany's rearmament can only lead to one thing. But he could be the man who saves America and makes a mint from the Department of War, if only he can recover the plans. Fuller removes the schematics from Preston's workbench and locks them in the safe in his office. However, what he retrieves only shows part of the device. If Fuller wants to sell this device, he'll have to reverse-engineer the rest or get his hands on the complete schematics.

Of course, Preston's disappearance has not gone unnoticed. Police find its timing suspicious, considering the mysterious death that occurred in his building the day before. His fiancée, Sadie Cain, refuses to believe George had anything to do with it and enlists Viv's aid in finding him and proving his innocence.

Another group seeks Preston as well, or at least his plans. Madame Isis Neferi (Bertha Cook), medium and leader of the Temple of Nephthys, might have started out as a charlatan, but the earnest young inventor with his talk of spirits, spectrums, and enhancing human perception sparked her interest. If his machine works, her profession will change forever. And if she gets her hands on the first model?

**Timeline in Brief:**

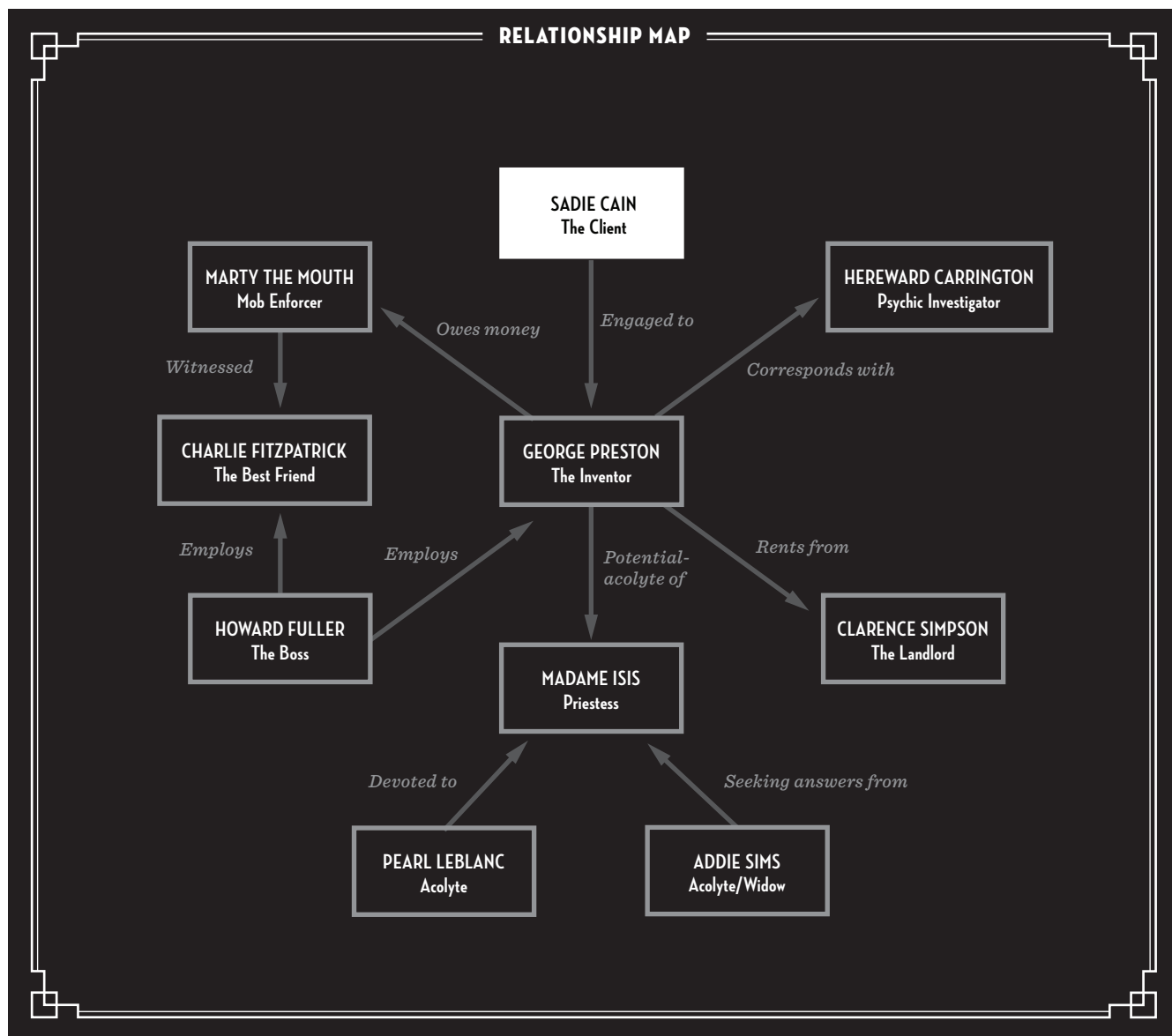
- Wednesday, May 1, 1937 — George Preston tests his device, accidentally causing the death of neighbor Myron Fink.
- Thursday, May 11 — Preston commits suicide with Fuller as witness.
- Friday, May 12 — Police seek Preston after his landlord notifies them that he didn't return home Thursday night.
- Monday, May 14 — Preston's fiancée, Sadie Cain, approaches Viv for help.

**Cast**

**Sadie Cain**, 21, the client. A garment worker engaged to George Preston. She believes that while the course of true love may not always run smooth, love still prevails.

**George Preston**, 23 (deceased), the victim/fiancé. Always a tinkerer, he sought to unlock the secrets of the human brain. Unfortunately, his “sympathetic resonator” proved fatal in a way he never anticipated.

**Charlie (Charlene) Fitzpatrick**, 23, the victim's



best friend since childhood, a hard-eyed, talented woman working as an electrician alongside George. Charlie feels guilt and anxiety over having brushed off George the night he disappeared.

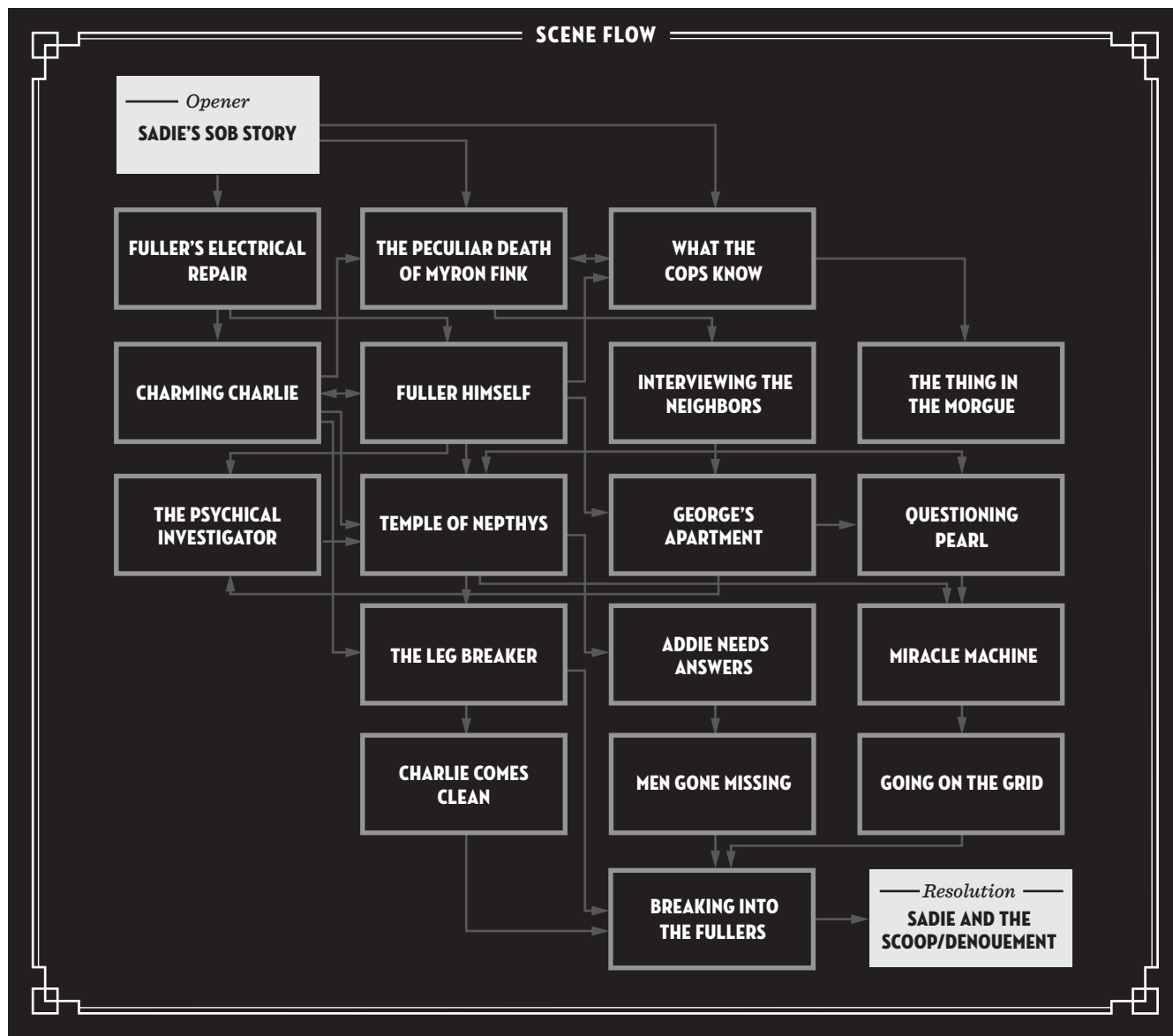
**Howard Fuller**, 47, owner of Fuller’s Electrical Repair. Ruthlessly cut-throat in business matters, Fuller spends his days in an upper-floor office overlooking his men’s work. He could answer the riddle of Preston’s disappearance, but doing so would force him to reveal the true creator of the machine he hopes to pass off as his own invention. It might also raise questions about subsequent disappearances.

**Clarence Simpson**, 68, George Preston’s thin,

beak-nosed landlord. Generally lazy, and can go for months without needing to do any real business for the apartment-house other than collecting monthly rents. Extremely put out by the death and by having the police in his building.

**Pearl LeBlanc**, 18, a stenographer and devout acolyte of the Temple of Nephthys. Pearl would do anything for Madame Isis, who channels the ghost of her beloved elder sister Louisa any time Pearl’s devotion seems to flag.

**Madame Isis Neferi**, 52, priestess of the Temple of Nephthys. A quick hand with a cold read, medium Bertha Cook formed her own church to add a veneer of respectability to her old sideshow act. Now, as Madame Isis Neferi, she



holds public séances three nights a week and by private appointment along with a syncretic Sunday service combining pseudo-Egyptian mythology with American spiritualism.

**Hereward Carrington**, 55 (1880–1958), investigator of psychic phenomena and frequent debunker of fraudulent mediums. Like Houdini, Carrington’s researches and publications suggest that he wants to believe in the possibility of psychic phenomena. Some contemporaries criticize him for occasional credulity despite his many debunkings.

**Marty the Mouth**, 43, low-level enforcer for the Luciano crime family. Affable enough in a tough-guy way, unless you cross his boss or start poking your nose somewhere it doesn’t belong.

**Addie Sims**, 36, anxious client of Madame Isis and wife of one of Fuller’s victims.

## Scenes

### SADIE’S SOB STORY

*Scene Type:* Introduction

*Lead-Outs:* What the Cops Know, Fuller’s Electrical Repair, The Peculiar Death of Myron Fink

The scenario starts off for Vivian Sinclair on a Monday morning after she’s turned in her most recent story. Invite the player to describe it, if she likes. She may rest on her laurels and joke around with the guys in the Herald Tribune’s newsroom, or she may already be scouring a pile of newspaper clippings and notes for her next lead. Around 9 a.m., she gets a telephone call from downstairs.

Use this as an opportunity to establish Viv’s newsroom and how she meets with interested parties. Does she have the receptionist send them up to her desk in a smoky room full of (mostly) men bent over typewriters and paper-strewn desks? Or does she meet with her Sources and sometime-clients in another location, such as a restaurant across the street? Have the player take a moment to describe something important that Viv keeps at her desk in the newsroom, or her regular order at

the restaurant.

The player begins with one Problem card in hand (“Sucker for a Pretty Face,” “Hand-to-Mouth,” “Anything for a Story,” or “Hot-Tempered,” see p. 202). If this is the player’s first *One-2-One* session, explain how the acquisition and Countering of Problem cards works.

Viv’s visitor is a fragile, waif-like girl. Sadie Cain speaks in the soft, defensive tone of someone who has gone through her story several times already. She’s cried too long to have any tears left. Instead, her eyes reflect a quiet blankness.

Sadie’s fiancé, George Preston, disappeared three days ago under mysterious circumstances. She thinks the police are framing him for a murder, just like those articles Viv wrote about police frame-ups a few years ago (see “Samuel Seabury,” p. 158). She wants Viv to find him and to prove him innocent. She explains the situation as follows:

- Someone in George’s apartment building was murdered the day before he disappeared. She gives an address and third-story apartment number near the Brooklyn Navy Yard.
- George went to work the next day, but no one’s seen him since. That was Thursday. He didn’t come to work Friday and wasn’t in his building.
- She didn’t learn any of this until the police tore her place apart on Saturday, then came to her work and grilled her about George and where he might have gone. She’s been looking for him ever since.
- As “nobody important, just a garment worker... or I was until the police told the floor manager my fiancé was a murderer” Sadie doesn’t have the money to hire one of those private investigators.

**Assess Honesty:** Viv’s encountered types who try to get their loved ones a trial in the press before it ever goes to court. Most of the time, they know the guy did it. This girl seems utterly convinced of her fiancé’s innocence.

**Streetwise:** The police rarely care about getting the right guy when both victim and suspect come from the lower strata. If this case looks open and shut to them, they’ll arrest George as soon as they find him and call it a day.

In response to specific questions, Sadie responds with the following information:



- She met George at the New York Public Library. She loves George because she found him entirely different from your ordinary Joe. He read books about the human brain and the spirit world and all kinds of things. He thought a lot. George would have gone to college, only his family couldn't afford it.
- (Core, "Fuller's Electrical Repair") George works as an electrical repairman at Fuller's Electrical Repair, just a couple blocks north of Fulton Street in downtown Brooklyn.
- Sadie admits she doesn't see George every night, which the police took to mean he two-times her. They just don't understand George. Someday you'll hear about him as a famous inventor. At night, he works on building his machine and Mr. Fuller lets him use the workbench. Some nights, he comes by her place but others he works so late that he just sleeps at the shop. She mostly sees him on weekends.
- George was on the verge of an amazing breakthrough: a machine that was going to change everything. If asked what the machine does, Sadie falters. George never actually told her; he said she'd have to see for herself.
- (Core, "Charming Charlie") George didn't have a lot of friends, but he grew up with one of his coworkers — Charlie Fitzpatrick. As kids, they'd planned to travel the world together.
- (Core, "The Peculiar Death of Myron Fink") George rents a one-room apartment in one of the decrepit older buildings up by the Navy Yard. "Just until we have enough money for one of the nicer new apartments." The landlord, Mr. Simpson, won't let her into his room.
- Everyone persecuted George just for coming from a poor family, but he was going to make something of himself, Sadie knows it.
- If asked, she produces a photograph of a gangling young man with light hair and eyes, but seems reluctant to let it go. He seems to look at something beyond the photographer.
- (Alternate, "What the Cops Know") The police questioned her several times, but all she knows is what they told her — someone in George's building got killed. And they insist George did it. Sadie gives a Brooklyn address on the seedier side of Prospect Park where she can be reached.

**Research:** In the newsroom's archives, the only stories Viv can find about Fuller involve a 1929 lawsuit in which a competitor charged him with monopolistic practices. The competitor folded in the aftermath of the Crash, and dropped the suit.

### FULLER'S ELECTRICAL REPAIR

**Scene Type:** Core

**Lead-In:** Sadie's Sob Story

**Lead-Outs:** Fuller Himself,  
Charming Charlie

Several blocks north of Fulton, the main business street of downtown Brooklyn, Fuller's Electrical Repair occupies a two-story brick warehouse. Whether visiting Fuller or Fitzpatrick first, when Viv approaches Fuller's, she sees a small crowd of men waiting outside. Even in the city, work for electricians comes in piecemeal and more infrequently as the Depression worsens. A job with Fuller's guarantees a steady meal ticket. Once word got out that one of Fuller's employees has gone AWOL, several dozen men began lingering outside the shop in hopes of catching the big man's attention when he steps outside. If Viv stops to listen to the men talk, she learns that, the last few days, Fuller has asked one or two men to show him their skills. He must have high standards, however, as those men haven't come back.

Apart from a tidy desk in the front, the inside of Fuller's reflects its warehouse origins. A small mezzanine office, accessible by iron staircase and walkway, sits on top of a storage room at the back. On the high-ceilinged main floor, a dozen men work at individual benches over an assortment of smaller items (radios, sewing machines, irons) and a few large appliances (refrigerators, vacuum cleaners, washing machines). Most don't look up, but one or two glance her way. If Viv asks about Charlie Fitzpatrick immediately, a nearby worker indicates a shorter, broad-shouldered figure in a cap working near the back of the room. Otherwise, Mr. Fuller's secretary, Petunia Adams, comes bustling forward to meet her. A well-scrubbed young woman of about 25 in a sensible cotton print

frock, Petunia maintains an immaculate bun and an all-business attitude “to keep the boys at bay.” She considers herself a kind of “den mother” to the “boys” in the shop, even those a decade older than herself.

- She always thought George different from the other boys. Bit of a dreamer. Sometimes used to just stare off into space. Why, one time she thought she saw him squinting as though he were trying to see something just out of view.
- Yes, George worked on a machine after hours. Several of the boys have pet projects, and Mr. Fuller kindly lets them use his space.
- She doesn’t know about George’s device. Oh, but Richard was trying to build a bicycle-powered electric washer because his mother’s farm doesn’t yet have electricity. Something about generators. She thought that sounded very practical.
- George’s looked more like a phonograph, or perhaps a projector like at the movies.
- No, he must have taken it with him because it’s not here now.

### FULLER HIMSELF

**Scene Type:** Core

**Lead-Ins:** Sadie’s Sob Story, Fuller’s Electrical Repair, Charming Charlie

**Lead-Outs:** Charming Charlie, Temple of Nephthys, George’s Apartment, What the Cops Know, The Psychological Investigator

Like many of those he now employs, Howard Fuller once dreamed of inventing something as revolutionary as the electric icebox or razor. Once he realized the insufficiency of his genius, he focused on something only slightly easier to achieve: making his business a success. He hires only the best, keeps them working from eight to six, and guarantees repaired items “as good as new or your money back.”

The window of Fuller’s office gives him a full view of the goings-on below. A set of large switches above duplicates those on the floor below, each with a surname written on tape under them. Viv may learn, or deduce, that these control the power

to an electrician’s desk in case of electrocution. A microphone and switch on Fuller’s desk allow him to broadcast to the electricians downstairs. Fuller varies his posture between overlooking his domain, arms akimbo, and smoking a pipe with his feet on the desk.

When she enters the room, Fuller assumes Viv has come with a concern or to find out whether his shop could take an unusual repair job. Before she can get out her first question, he boasts about the quality of work his men provide and assures her that, no matter how big or small, they’ll have it back to her in a week or her money back. “Fuller [chuckle] quality than your everyday repairman. Tell a friend, save 15% on your next repair!”

Whether or not he respects Viv’s work as an investigative journalist, Howard Fuller respects the power of the press. Prompted by questions, he provides the following information:

- He last saw George four nights ago when he, Fuller, locked up. The boy stayed late to work on his device, same as always. But Fuller clarifies he doesn’t play favorites: George supplies his own materials and must replace any tools he breaks.
- He locks up around 8 p.m. But several of the boys have keys, including George.
- (Core, “Charming Charlie”) If she wants to know more about George, she should talk to Charlie Fitzpatrick. Fuller indicates her on the floor below. Those two grew up together, and are still thick as thieves. It was George who talked him into hiring Charlie.
- (Alternate, “What the Cops Know”) Had he thought of George as a murderer? No, but you know those sensitive types and the police make a good case. Why else would he have run off?
- (Core “George’s Apartment”) George never leaves the device here; he must have taken it home to his apartment.
- He thinks the machine has something to do with radio waves, but doesn’t know very much about it. George played his hand close to his chest. [Not entirely false. He’s on the hunt for schematics.]
- (Core, “Temple of Nephthys”) Either prompted by Viv’s questioning him about the dame Charlie mentions, or remembering just as Viv turns

to leave the office, Fuller brings up the other girl who came by on Saturday asking about George. “Pearl something-or-other. She gave me a card. Ah, there it is.” From under a heap on his desk, he produces a card bearing the name *Madame Isis Neferi*, a phone number, a street address in Brooklyn Heights, and *Temple of Nephthys*. “Madame Isis, that wasn’t her, but she begged me to call her if George came back or I got a lead on what she called his ‘miracle machine.’ Strange girl.”

His statements about the machine, if he’s asked, set off Viv’s **Assess Honesty** mildly, but rather than expand on them further, he encourages her to talk to Charlie. “Maybe there’s another dame in his life. She’d know. She always knew about George’s dames.”

If Viv brings up the question of George’s replacement and what she heard from the men outside, he launches into a speech on the standards of Fuller’s repair. These men may have met some people’s standards, but not Howard Fuller’s.

Despite the best efforts of Petunia Adams, Fuller litters his desk with letters, receipts, invoices, and newspapers. Viv notices an opened envelope addressed to George Preston, with “Personal” written across the top in a neat hand (if the player asks, **Evidence Collection** notices that neat hand on other envelopes, suggesting Petunia opens and sorts the mail). She may make a **Filch** test to slip the letter off his desk and into her purse while Fuller enjoys the sound of his own voice, or Push **Bargain** to suggest that George’s fiancée should have the letter.

## OTHER PEOPLE’S MAIL

### **Filch**

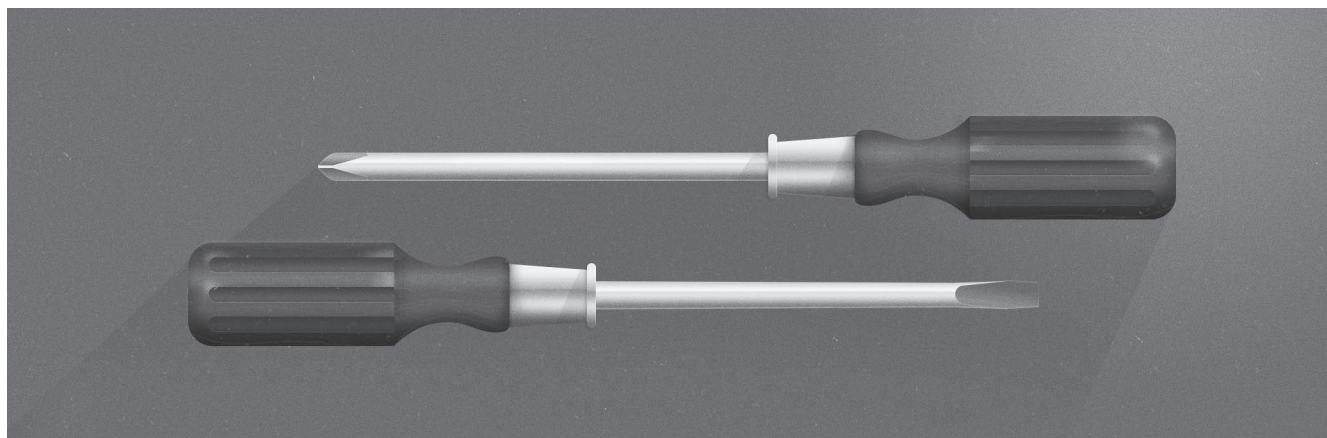
**Advance 4+:** You successfully purloin the letter.

**Immediate Advantage:** Grants access to alternate scene “The Psychological Investigator”.

**Hold 2-3:** As your fingers brush the edge of the letter, Fuller makes eye contact and his eyes begin to move downward. If you decide to play it off by deliberately noticing the letter’s address, you may spend a Push to convince him you’ll give the letter to Preston’s fiancée. He demurs to this suggestion, but may later change his mind. Same result as above.

**Setback 1 or less:** Fuller sees you tip the letter into your handbag. After snatching it back, he roughly escorts you out of the building and threatens to call the police if you set foot inside again. If you have not yet spoken to Charlie Fitzpatrick, she follows you onto the street to see if you know something about George.

**Extra Problem:** Problem 5, “Fuller Becomes Suspicious”



## CHARMING CHARLIE

**Scene Type:** Core

**Lead-Ins:** Sadie's Sob Story, Fuller's Electrical Repair, Fuller Himself

**Lead-Outs:** Fuller Himself, The Peculiar Death of Myron Fink

Tall and practical, Charlie (Charlene) Fitzpatrick always threw the dreamer George into relief. From early in the morning until 6 p.m. or so, Monday through Saturday, Viv can find Charlie hunkered down at her workbench working on a radio set, sewing machine, or other problem of the day. She puts in longer hours than any of the men in the shop, except George, whose work on his own device doesn't count toward his paycheck. Like the men, she wears a shapeless, many-pocketed smock, but it doesn't protect her from the perpetual grease smudges she gets wiping her forehead. Charlie cuts her hair in a "mannish" short style and ironically tips her cap and winks when Viv approaches, cheekily anticipating any surprise her gender creates.

## FOCUS ON THE STORY, NOT THE SMILE

**Cool**

**Penalty:** -2 with Problem "Sucker for a Pretty Face"

**Advance 5+:** When you interview enough women with charm and grit, you develop immunity to the type.

Earn an Edge: Edge 1, "Ice Queen"

**Hold 3-4:** Cute and you might even want to buy her a drink sometime, but you've got to treat Charlie like any other source — with a bit of distance and a grain of salt.

**Setback 2 or less:** She's someone special all right. Whether your heart's beating faster or you're just surprised and impressed by finding her here, you've sure got a soft spot for her. Gain Problem 6, "Soft Spot."

**Extra Problem:** Problem 7, "Big Talker"

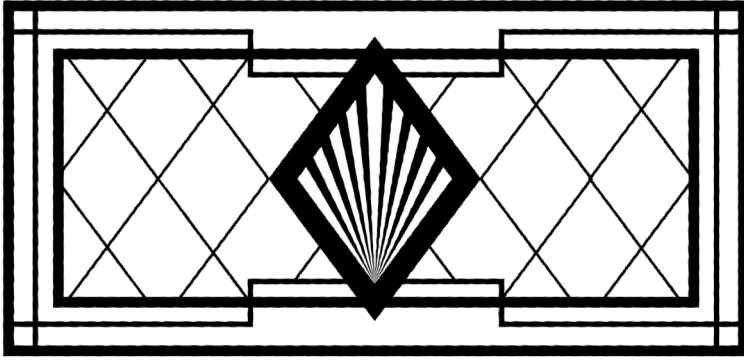
Once Charlie learns Viv's mission, she shows eagerness to help, though with an undercurrent of guilt. She reveals the basics of George's request and her own need to "keep a date":

- George asked her to stay late the last night anyone saw him, seemed down in the dumps, but Charlie had a date and figured on talking to him Friday morning. George's depressed mood came on suddenly. Just the day before, he had "the same look he got when he first heard voices on his crystal radio set!" Charlie assumed the glum mug meant he had been on the wrong track after all.
- (Core, "Fuller Himself") Mr. Fuller would have seen George last, as far as she knows. George normally lets himself out with his own key, maybe around midnight? Surely Mr. Fuller would have said something if he'd seen him. Charlie chastises herself again for not coming in. — She shows her copy of the key and explains that sometimes she'd stop off after a date, just to make sure George had left.
- She has known George since they were kids together. He practically forced Fuller to hire her — she secretly did all George's repairs for a week, at least as fast and as well as any of the men. She and George worked here since before the Crash. They couldn't pull a stunt like that now, not with so many men looking for work. Charlie doesn't like Fuller much, but at least he's the one man to have the business sense to hire her and he hasn't used the Crash to lower wages (much) or replace them with cheaper unemployed workers.
- Charlie evades pinning down an alibi for the night of George's disappearance, simply saying she spent the evening out and got to bed early.

She also discloses the following in response to specific questions:

- She thinks George might have run off. Maybe he cracked when his machine wouldn't work and jumped off the Brooklyn Bridge.
- (Pipe, "The Leg-Breaker") No, George wouldn't kill anyone, but he's sensitive. A murder would have upset him. Charlie reluctantly admits she would believe it more readily if George had robbed someone. Building his machine cost him a lot of money he doesn't have. She hints





that George may have borrowed unwisely.

- (Core, “The Peculiar Death of Myron Fink”) She tried taking Sadie, “sweet kid,” by George’s apartment, but the landlord has a bee in his bonnet about not letting anyone in. Charlie thinks this irrational, as the police stopped posting a guard there over a day ago.
- (Pipe, “Temple of Nephthys”) Viv isn’t the first lady to come by asking questions about George, but she seems a lot more cool-headed than the other. “Little, awkward girl, not more than 18 or 19” came by the shop Saturday looking for George. She’d seen this girl talking to George outside recently, but doesn’t think George is the type to play around. When the girl heard no one had seen George that day or the day before, she became upset and asked to see his “miracle machine.” Upon hearing the device had disappeared too, the girl turned frantic and accused them all of stealing it. Mr. Fuller took her up to his office and gave her some brandy to calm her nerves.

**Assess Honesty** notices that any questions about what Charlie did that night make her nervous. Viv may use **Reassurance** to convince her she only cares about what happened to George, not what Charlie does with her free time. Charlie discloses that she sometimes does work for “other clients” at night to earn a little cash. **Bureaucracy** guesses that at least some of it is home wiring — for which she would need an additional license she doesn’t have, and which could cause her some trouble later on. Charlie gets defensive, claiming that Fuller keeps wages low by pointing out he could replace all of them tomorrow with unemployed men who’d be happy to get half what they make. “The men here aren’t the only ones with family to support!”


### WHAT THE COPS KNOW

**Scene Type:** Alternate

**Lead-Ins:** Sadie’s Sob Story, The Peculiar Death of Myron Fink, Fuller Himself

**Lead-Outs:** The Thing in the Morgue, The Peculiar Death of Myron Fink

Between police distrust of journalists as a type and of Viv in particular, Viv knows better than to approach the investigating officer for information. Instead, when she wants to know what the police know, she approaches her Source, Lt. O’Connor. The two rarely meet at the station, preferring instead to get burned coffee at one of the nearby diners which specialize in helping beat cops burn the midnight oil. If the player wants to establish further backstory of her relationship with O’Connor, invite her to describe the last case where the detective lent Viv a hand.

 Despite his twenty years on the force, O’Connor blanches when Viv mentions the name of the man she’s looking for. He’s seen some shocking murders, but he’s glad that this case didn’t happen in his precinct. He tells Viv the basics he knows of the case:

- (Alternate lead-in, “The Peculiar Death of Myron Fink”) The original call reported a disturbance rather than a death. Several tenants of the same building reported strange sounds and seeing things.
- Because nobody could agree on what happened or whether or not the man screamed, the responding beat cop didn’t break down the door, but it wouldn’t have helped anyway.
- (Alternate lead-in, “The Thing in the Morgue”) As far as he knows, the body hasn’t yet left Bellevue (Bureaucracy: the morgue at Bellevue Hospital, on 29<sup>th</sup> Street).

And in response to specific questions:

- O’Connor describes the officer in charge, James MacAdams, as a hard-liner. Does things by the book, but generally fair. Seems to be pushing for a quick closure on this case, and O’Connor can’t blame him considering what he’s heard.
- This Preston fellow is the natural suspect.

From what he heard, they didn't have any leads until Preston flew the coop.

- (alternate lead-in, "The Thing in the Morgue") He hasn't seen the body, and he doesn't plan on it. Several of the policemen on the case show signs of drinking harder than usual. One hasn't slept since: just keeps drinking coffee to stay awake. If Viv is sure she wants to see it, he might be able to pull some strings and get her in.

## THE PECULIAR DEATH OF MYRON FINK

*Scene Type:* Core

*Lead-Ins:* Sadie's Sob Story, Charming Charlie, What the Cops Know

*Lead-Outs:* George's Apartment, Interviewing the Neighbors, The Thing in the Morgue, What the Cops Know

Preston's apartment building near the Brooklyn Navy Yard stands among a mixture of tenements and whitewashed, "modernized" buildings. It had done service in the 18th century as a large rooming-house for factory workers. Around the turn of the century, new owners transformed it into multi-room apartments with makeshift kitchens, and studio apartments without. Preston could have walked to work and paid a fairly low price without living in one of the slummier buildings.

A thin, craggy man holding his handkerchief to his beaked nose, "[sniff] allergies," Clarence Simpson has managed the apartment building for the last seven years. He likes tenants who keep themselves to themselves. He had prided himself on his ability to weed out bad apples, and finds this whole business very upsetting. The recent unpleasantness in his building has him on high alert, so no matter when Viv arrives at the building, he pops his head out of the door to see whether she's a tenant or an intruder.

When he learns George's fiancée hired her, Simpson tells Viv that she can tell that Preston when she finds him that even if he beats the murder rap, he can't live here anymore. He can't tell her anything more than he's told the police

(Alternate, "What the Cops Know") and as for what the other tenants report seeing and hearing (Alternate, "Interviewing the Neighbors"), Simpson chalks it up to mass hysteria from hearing Fink's death-scream and whatever fight preceded it.

Viv may Push Bargain to persuade Simpson to show her up to the apartments in question. When doing so, he hangs around, watching her and sniffing disapprovingly. Viv may also use a **Cool** Quick Test (Advance 4) to talk him into it or a **Stealth** Quick Test (Advance 4) to make her way unseen to Fink's or Preston's apartment door.

### Fink's Apartment

If Simpson guides her, he leads Viv to Fink's room on the building's third story. "Cops finished with the place, but somebody's got to clean it." Otherwise, Viv knows that Fink's apartment was next door to the number she has for George. If she chooses the apartment to the right, she gets a rather disgruntled housewife who informs her that she does not want to contribute to any charities or convert to any new religions, and slams the door on her. Fink's apartment, on the left, may be entered using Locksmith. The previously made **Stealth** Quick Test still applies unless the Keeper decides Viv has caused enough fuss to call for a new one.

The room contains nothing of note other than an enormous bloodstain on the floor and some splatter on the walls and bed. **Streetwise** tells Viv that the cops have torn it apart (alternate, "What the Cops Know"). As Viv looks around the room, Simpson, if with her, volunteers the following:

- On that fateful night, he had gone to the moving pictures. "Normally, you wouldn't find a quieter convent. I haven't had to stay on the premises all day and night."
- Other tenants in the building reported strange sounds. Then someone in Myron Fink's apartment screamed.
- (Pipe, "The Thing in the Morgue") Nobody could get the door open until he came back from the pictures, which wasn't until after midnight. When he opened it, they found Fink dead. "Couldn't have saved him, though, not in a condition that serious." He immediately called the police. Police didn't even bother

calling a doctor; coroner took him straight to the morgue.

- He had to check on all the tenants. Most inconvenient. Everyone else was accounted for, including Preston. Police didn't take him in that night, but told everyone not to try any funny business. Then Preston doesn't come home, so what's a man to think? Of course he called the police. That's the definition of funny business, after all. Now the police think Preston did it, and why should he contradict them?

**Assess Honesty** can tell he lies by omission here, hoping she won't ask. He provides more information below in response to specific questions:

- (Pipe, "The Thing in the Morgue") Simpson reluctantly admits that nobody can tell yet exactly what killed Fink. Not an ordinary weapon, for sure. But even if Preston didn't shoot him, why would he have run if he didn't kill him somehow?
- Preston wouldn't answer his door, but when Simpson unlocked it they found him curled up in bed, shivering.
- As far as he knows, Fink and Preston had no bad blood between them. Fink worked as an accountant, paid his rent on time, and kept himself to himself. Until this week, Simpson considered them two of his easier tenants.

During their conversation, several other tenants of the building filter into the hall and doorway, clearly eager to share their own versions of what happened that night (core, "Interviewing the Neighbors"). If she is not seeing the room with Simpson, Viv may knock on doors, or encounter them at the GM's discretion — such as after the encounter with Pearl, which draws them out of their rooms.

### INTERVIEWING THE NEIGHBORS

*Scene Type:* Core

*Lead-Ins:* The Peculiar Death of Myron Fink, George's Apartment

*Lead-Out:* The Thing in the Morgue

Like witnesses to even a minor event, Myron Fink's neighbors recount differing versions of what happened that night. Viv gathers the same main elements from any of the three of them (although you need not have each GMC repeat the same facts and may note the similarities instead):

- (Pipe, "Going on the Grid") At first they worried they were in for a blackout. The power kept flickering but never actually went off. The last time this happened, it was because a drugstore down the street had installed an entire refrigeration section in the back which overloaded the grid. (Violet describes this last with the most hand waving; Williams with the least.)
- The sound might have started as soon as the power began flickering, but they didn't notice it until they got used to the weird light.
- Everything stopped a moment after Fink screamed. The lights came up to full brightness and the... things... vanished. See "August Williams" below.
- (Core, "The Thing in the Morgue") Anyone telling her about Fink's body first glances toward Mr. Simpson, if he is present, and lowers their voice to a conspiratorial whisper. Maybe George killed him, but they don't see how, because... he was bitten clean in half! Police couldn't find his midsection or legs anywhere.

### Minnie Boyer

A middle-aged woman trying to hold onto the look



of her youth in a faded, low-waisted dress, Minnie has lived in the building for about four years. She moved here from Albany with her husband Morris. Morris works nights as a bank guard, so Minnie normally sleeps days and tries to have a dinner ready for him when he gets home.

- Minnie lives in the apartment across the hall and down one from Fink, on the other side from George Preston's place.
- Until Mr. Fink screamed, she thought she was falling asleep. It gets lonely in the building at night, if she doesn't go out to the pictures or the diner, and sometimes she just dozes off.
- Strangely, once the power started going, Minnie felt like the whole world had gone silent. No noise of the city, just the buzzing of the electric light. It didn't feel bad, though, just peaceful, but then the sound started.
- The sound made her think of a piano that's gone out of tune. It wasn't like a piano's music, but that way something just feels off and you want to scream or pull out your hair rather than listen to it any more. She had a neighbor in Albany who played her piano day and night, and it grated at her nerves something awful.

### August Williams

A generous estimate puts Williams in his seventies, though his milky blue eyes still hold a canny light. Williams doesn't sleep very much anymore — "Ain't no point at my age; I'll sleep soon enough" — and insists he was wide awake throughout the incident, although *some people*, with a sharp look at the others, accuse him of dreaming things.

- Williams lives across from Minnie Boyer, right on the other side of Myron Fink.
- He heard the sound just like the others say, but that's not all that happened.
- After a few minutes of it, he went out to find Simpson and complain about the problem with the power. People keep inventing all these newfangled devices without thinking about whether there's enough power to go around. Should be a law.
- He couldn't find Simpson, as usual. When he had almost gotten back to his room, he saw the first... thing. It made him think of a living blimp, floating gently. He slammed and locked

the door to his room, but it passed through the wall, almost as though it weren't made of real stuff. For a few minutes, he sat paralyzed on the bed, watching things like the blimp float or mosey by. Then, right before Fink screamed, he saw something else — like a soap bubble but with claws for arms and what looked like tentacles. He'd have screamed too, if he weren't too scared to breathe. Its hideous teeth opened — Fink screamed and it moved through the wall into Fink's room instead. A moment later, it vanished. Everything went back to normal.

Williams feels embarrassed if Viv expresses any skepticism, and mutters something about magic lantern shows and practical jokes and how George probably frightened that Fink boy to death and ran away.

### Violet Blake

Viv first spotted Violet Blake early in her conversation with Mr. Simpson, apparently on her way out of the building. Since then, Violet's changed her dress and put on a smarter hat: Viv has to admit, the girl looks good. The young woman approaches Viv with a hesitation that wouldn't appear so affected if she didn't quickly ask whether Viv had brought one of those newspaper photographers with her.

- Violet lives at the far end of the hall, nearest the stairs. Assess Honesty gets the sense that, other than the problem with the power, she didn't experience much of what the others describe. Instead, she piggybacks off their statement so people will listen to her. Viv has encountered the type before in her work.
- Violet always had George figured for the screwy type. Too quiet, always lost in his own world, never really talked to the other tenants. Probably some sort of crazed sex killer, and that's why he took Fink's lower half with him. Viv hardly needs an Interpersonal ability to interpret this as "he never paid attention to me."
- Growing serious, Violet remarks that she's never seen anything like the expression on Fink's face. Like something scared him to death before... you know. She couldn't sleep all that night just thinking about it.



**GEORGE'S APARTMENT**

*Scene Type:* Core

**Lead-Ins:** The Peculiar Death of Myron Fink, Fuller Himself

**Lead-Outs:** Questioning Pearl, Temple of Nephthys, Miracle Machine, Interviewing the Neighbors, The Psychical Investigator

If Simpson accompanies Viv, he leans against the closed door: arms folded, sniffing, watching. Preston's clothes hang neatly in the closet, but the police detectives who tossed this place left several desk drawers slightly ajar and forced the lock on the center desk drawer.

Viv's Evidence Collection skills lead her to check under the mattress. Clearly whoever did this hadn't worked crime scenes very long, or something about the case kept them from focusing. Taped to the bottom of the mattress, Viv finds a large folder full of schematics. Viv can tell that she's found designs for an electrical device, almost definitely George's mysterious machine. She could ask her Source Dr. Rice to help her decipher them (core, "Miracle Machine"). If Simpson gives her trouble, Viv may fib that they belong to Fuller and she's retrieving them for him.

On the bookshelf, Viv finds a selection of engineering reference books and works on spiritualism and psychic phenomena. Even if she hasn't found the letter, Research recognizes titles by local author Hereward Carrington, *Your Psychic Powers*, and *How to Develop Them and The Physical Phenomena of Spiritualism* (alternate, "The Psychical Investigator").

As Viv leaves the apartment, she (and possibly Simpson) nearly collides with a young woman crouching to pick the lock. The young woman flees. If Viv has gotten Pearl's description from Fuller or Charlie, she realizes that the woman matches it. If Pearl gets away and Viv visits or revisits the temple, you should use the "Temple of Nephthys" sub-scene "The Girl from the Apartment." Her interactions with Pearl may lead into "Interviewing the Neighbors," who come into the hall to investigate the disturbance.

**CATCHING THE WOULD-BE INTRUDER**

**Athletics**

**Advance 5+:** You easily get to the stairs before her and force her to talk to you. Invite the player to describe how she gets the jump on Pearl so easily. Move to "Questioning Pearl."

**Earn an Edge:** Edge 2, "Sure-Footed"

**Hold 3-4:** By the time you catch up to her on the stairs, she's pulled herself together and attempts to grab the schematics you retrieved from Preston's apartment. This may mean snatching your capacious purse or simply wresting the schematics from your hand. Challenge: "Hang onto the Clue."

**Setback 2 or less:** She runs like a gazelle, and you've had a few too many cigarettes lately. She's out the door, and you know you'll never catch her in the maze of alleys.

**Extra Problem:** Problem 8, "Wrenched Ankle"

**HANG ONTO THE CLUE**

**Fighting**

**Advance 7+:** Not today, sister! You twist away the schematics while keeping an iron grip on the young woman's wrist. Move to "Questioning Pearl."

**Earn an Edge:** Edge 3, "Pulled it Together"

**Hold 3-6:** You keep your hold on the schematics, but the girl sprints out the door. You know that you could never find her in the network of alleys around here.

**Setback 2 or less:** The effort knocks you off your feet, and the girl makes off with your prize. Perhaps you'll cross paths with her again.

**Extra Problem:** Problem 9, "Torn Dress."

**QUESTIONING PEARL****Scene Type:** Alternate**Lead-Ins:** George's Apartment,  
Temple of Nephthys**Lead-Outs:** Temple of Nephthys,  
Miracle Machine

If Viv succeeds with Advantage in either of her interactions with Pearl, she drags the girl either back into the apartment or out onto the street (whichever seems narratively appropriate after the fight). She gets in a few questions before her frightened suspect clams up. Pearl LeBlanc appears to be in her late teens. She wears a simple suit, tailored to fit someone slightly larger and sagging slightly around her still-girlish body, and (if Viv caught her) she wobbles slightly in her heels.

After a brief career as a stenographer, Pearl became a devotee and “private secretary” to Madame Isis Neferi. It started ordinarily enough. Pearl's older sister (from whom she inherited the suit) died in childbirth, and the distraught young woman desperately sought any means of contacting her again. That was when she found the fliers for Madame Isis and the Temple of Nephthys. Madame Isis channeled her sister so convincingly that Pearl kept coming back. Now she works for Madame Isis and the temple, handling correspondence, managing private appointments, and running errands. With the right questions, Viv may learn the above as well as the following:

- George had called Madame Isis the afternoon of his disappearance and made an appointment through Pearl to see Madame that evening after work. He sounded very shaky. When he didn't show, Pearl became concerned something had happened.
- Pearl went to Fuller's on Saturday to find him, but the men there were very rude to her and wouldn't tell her where he went.
- (Alternate lead-in, “Miracle Machine”) As far as Pearl knows, George's machine will let ordinary people see spirits. Of course very sensitive people like Madame Isis can already see spirits just like she's heard of people hearing radio music in their fillings. Spirits surround us,

like radio waves, if we only had a machine that would let us see them.

- (Alternate lead-in, “Temple of Nephthys”) She insists that she came here on her own initiative, though **Assess Honesty** suspects she's covering for someone who at least suggested it, to find the machine or at least the plans. If they had this machine at the temple, imagine the people it would draw in! (Knowing Pearl's history with the temple, Viv suspects a very personal motive in the girl's pursuit of the machine.)

Pearl willingly takes Viv to see Madame Isis, begging her not to reveal the actual details of their encounter. Viv may also threaten to use her police connections, drawing on Lt. O'Connor as an absent source of Intimidation, to bully Pearl into bringing her to the temple.

**THE PSYCHICAL INVESTIGATOR****Scene Type:** Alternate**Lead-Ins:** Fuller Himself,  
George's Apartment**Lead-Out:** Temple of Nephthys

The letter Viv may poach off Fuller's desk, or the books she finds in George's apartment, may lead her to consult Hereward Carrington, psychic investigator. That's investigator of psychics, not investigator who solves crime using psychic powers.

**The Letter**

Block letters spell out “American Psychical Institute” at the top of the typewritten letter, dated the day of Preston's disappearance. Carrington thanks Preston for his kind letter. As Preston has deduced from his books, the investigator believes that some psychic phenomena cannot be explained away as mere illusion. He remains open to the possibility of scientific proof. Aren't scientists making new discoveries every year? Yes, Carrington would certainly like to see the invention once Preston finishes it.

In the letter, Carrington pans a “Temple

of Nephthys you mention” and warns Preston against a certain type of predatory medium who has “more in common with the sideshow than the spirit world.” He notes that while a medium might well speak to the dead, the kind of séance Preston describes Madame Isis performing relies primarily on theatrical elements and knowledge of the participants. As it does not involve other forms of psychic phenomena such as raps or telekinesis or even ghostly fingers, he cannot investigate it.

**Hereward Carrington**

**Research:** Viv may find out the following things about Carrington by making a short visit to the New York Public Library or going through the *Herald Tribune’s* archives:

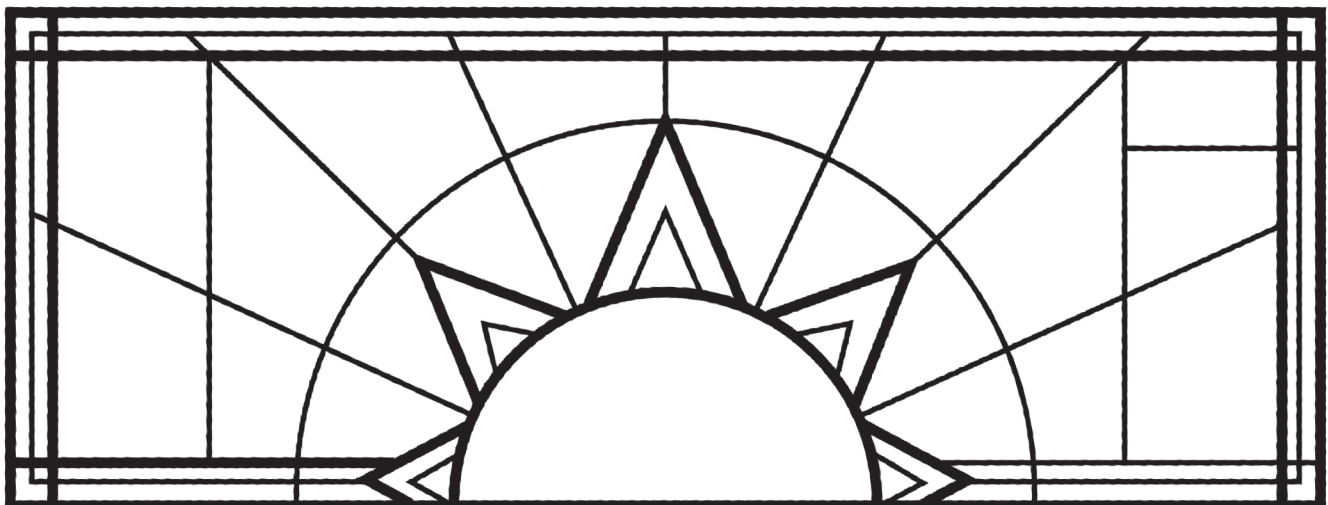
- British by birth, Carrington immigrated to the United States at the turn of the century.
- Carrington has carried on psychical investigations since his late teens. Like many in the profession, he remains open to the idea of psychic phenomena existing. He divided his earliest book, *The Physical Phenomena of Spiritualism*, into two sections: “The Fraudulent” and “The Genuine” (much smaller).
- In 1924, he served along with Harry Houdini on a committee of experts from the *Scientific American* evaluating medium Mina “Margery” Crandon. Carrington remained the lone holdout convinced of the possible veracity of her powers. As a young man, he represented a medium debunked by others but whose

phenomena he could not entirely explain.

- He founded his own American Psychical Institute and Laboratory in the early ’20s, but it closed after a few years. He recently restarted the institute.
- The telephone directory lists an address and phone number for the American Psychical Institute. (Viv may also obtain this from the letter, if she filched it.)

Viv may either arrange to meet Carrington or choose to drop in at the address listed. He receives her graciously, as he hopes she might decide to feature the institute in one of her columns. Despite three-and-a-half decades in the United States, Carrington speaks with a trace of a British accent. His salt-and-pepper hair still waves as jauntily as it did in the author’s photograph on books Viv may have seen. He has the eyes of a magician, deep set and penetrating.

Carrington had not heard of his correspondent’s disappearance or the incident at the apartment building. If Viv tells him of the death at George’s building, the strange sights described by the neighbors, or even George’s disappearance, he expresses unfeigned distress at levels appropriate to information received (e.g., concern if George has simply disappeared, great distress if he learns the neighbors’ stories or a description of the body). Excusing himself a moment, he digs through a folder of letters before extracting one and presenting it to Viv as his only interaction with the young man.



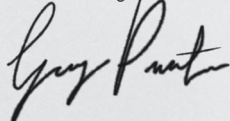
Dear Sir:

I write as an admirer of your work. Though by trade an electrician, I consider myself an inventor in the tradition of Marconi, Morse, and Bell. For several years now, I have worked on a device, which I consider a successor to the radio and the television. Just as we walk daily through waves from a dozen radio stations and now television stations as well, so I believe we are constantly surrounded by the unseen spirits who exist at a frequency most humans cannot perceive. From my readings on psychic phenomena, I conclude that mediums are no different from others who possess such acute hearing that they cannot live in a house with others or such a strong sense of taste that they only eat the blandest of foods. And we average men are like the color-blind who cannot distinguish red from green, only our numbers are far greater. Machines, unlike men, face no such limitations. When complete, my device will amplify light and sound to make visible that which exists at the very edge of what you and I can see and hear.

From your books, I gather that you possess a greater openness to scientific proof of psychic phenomena than many others in your line of work. I would be deeply indebted if you would be willing to discuss my theory with me further and attend the first public unveiling of the device, which I now believe to be in its final stages.

I have recently begun attending psychic ceremonies at the Temple of Nephthys. From my observation, I believe the medium, Madame Isis, possesses a true connection to the spirit world. Unlike others whose séances I have attended, she does not elicit phantasmal raps, conjure glowing hands, or move objects with ghostly fingers as a magician might. Several of her regular attenders with whom I have spoken, including her secretary, attest to the veracity of statements they receive from the departed. I consider such testimonies better proof than showy phenomena. Despite my faith in my own observations, I hope I might ask whether you had visited her on one of your investigations and, if so, whether you observed any fraudulent behavior of the types you describe in your books.

I remain yours sincerely,





He encourages Viv to take the letter with her and wishes her the best in locating the young man.

This scene primarily provides Viv the opportunity to “hear” Preston describing his project in his own words. However, Carrington will answer any questions she puts to him, if he can. Information he may provide:

- Most so-called mediums are no more than charlatans. For such an interesting field, it is unfortunately rife with frauds and hucksters.
- As George said, he remains convinced of the possibility of psychic phenomena: more than a possibility at this point, as some recent experiments with a subject, Eileen Garrett, have settled his doubts.
- If Viv has spoken to George’s neighbors and/or viewed the body, and asks about beings other than ghosts, Carrington looks shaken. He had considered the possibility, of course. His early theories about the existence of psychic phenomena derived from the belief that such widely recorded phenomena must have some basis in reality. Many scriptures speak of “demons,” and he supposes they might exist as well.

### TEMPLE OF NEPHTHYS

**Scene Type:** Core

**Lead-Ins:** Fuller Himself, Questioning Pearl, The Psychological Investigator

**Lead-Outs:** Miracle Machine, Addie Needs Answers, The Leg-Breaker, Questioning Pearl

★ After Viv first hears about the Temple of Nephthys, she may want to phone up or visit her occult Source, Stella Abrams. Stella has attended several of Madame Isis’ “communions” with the dead. While Madame Isis always starts by reading from the *Book of the Dead*, the communion soon devolves into a fairly ordinary séance with Egyptian trappings. Stella gives Viv directions to “what used to be a café” in an artistic neighborhood of Brooklyn Heights.

Either when talking to Stella or drawing on a memory of Esteban Manuel Aragon Gonzalez

giving a lecture on archaeology, Viv recalls the famous story of Isis, Osiris, and Set. The goddess Nephthys, while Set’s sister-consort, assisted her sister Isis in retrieving the fourteen missing pieces of her brother Osiris. Some paintings depict her as a hawk, flying above the Nile on the hunt for parts of Osiris’ body.

The Temple of Nephthys sits among small businesses and neat apartment buildings in a much better area of Brooklyn than George’s apartment building. From the street, it looks like one of the storefront churches popping up in black communities throughout the city. Stenciled letters spell out its name over the door, and decorative ankhs and cartouches on its whitewashed façade ensure even casual passers-by don’t mistake it for an ordinary church. Heavy curtains block any view of the interior, although one can see the word *Café* in light relief despite someone’s best attempts to scrape it off the windows.

If Viv arrives during the day, the temple is locked, although Madame Isis can still be found inside. When she knocks, Madame Isis herself opens it. If the player instead chooses to use Locksmith to open it, it requires a Difficulty 5 **Stealth** test to do so in broad daylight. On failure, Madame Isis hears her fumbling in the lock and jerks the door open, starting the interaction on a hostile footing.

If Viv arrives at night, she discovers a “communion” already under way and may slip into the back (see “Communion with the Dead”).

### Madame Isis Neferi

In a film, Madame Isis Neferi (née Bertha Cook) might be played by an aging Louise Fletcher. Rather than spend her hard-grifted money on the exotic robes and turbans favored by some mediums, she cultivates a simple aesthetic of black dresses accented by a heavy silver ankh necklace. When imparting wisdom, she speaks in what she’d call a “resonant” voice, steeples her fingers, and stares at the supplicant from under her heavy brows.

Though essentially a con artist, Madame has bought enough into her own shtick that she remains open to the existence of spirits: and if a machine really could do what George claims? That would set her up for life, especially if she could

convince George to allow her exclusive use of it. A use of **Oral History** in combination with specific questions gets Madame Isis to reveal the following:

- Madame Isis describes George Preston as a “seeker after truth.” He had questions for her about the afterlife and about how her talent worked. George showed remarkable insight into the nature of gifted individuals such as herself: that it came as naturally as sight or taste. Using **Assess Honesty**, Viv gets the sense that Madame Isis has natural talent — at telling people exactly what they want to hear.
- (Alternate, “The Leg-Breaker”) In her assessment, “and believe me, honey, I’ve met quite a few killers in my day,” George Preston wouldn’t kill anyone. She only saw George raise his voice once — to a tough-looking man who stopped George outside the temple one night last week. While she didn’t overhear the conversation, Madame Isis got a sense it had to do with money. She knows the type.
- Madame Isis attributes her ability to speak with the dead to a spiritual connection with the goddess Nephthys.
- If asked why she calls herself “Isis,” not “Nephthys,” she senses Viv’s **Streetwise** and gives her an honest answer, “Nobody remembers Nephthys, dear. Besides, it would look funny if I had a temple to myself, now wouldn’t it?”
- (Alternate, “Addie Needs Answers”) Now that she thinks of it, there seems to have been a rash of disappearing electricians lately. Just last night, she had a woman in here — one of the type who doesn’t know if the person’s dead or alive — who said her husband hadn’t come home in two days. Electrician too, if she remembers right. If Viv stays for a communion, the woman might come back.
- (Core, “The Miracle Machine”) Madame Isis hopes Viv can find George. His machine would change her line of work forever. She hasn’t seen it in action, but George told her he will have it working this week. If it works, she might help him out with those money problems of his — as long as nobody else gets that machine for a few years. (Interactions with Pearl may change how this answer plays out, but the gist remains the same. She may call Pearl in at this point to

return the schematics and offer to buy them from Viv if she can find the rest.)

- If asked about Carrington, Madame Isis sniffs derisively and makes remarks about people with nothing better to do with their time.

Ask the player whether or not Viv has lost someone in her own life. If so, Madame Isis senses “a spirit floats about you, my dear, wishing to speak” (a guess on her part, but she’s a great cold-reader) and invites her to participate in a “Communion with the Dead,” held nightly. Communions start at 8 p.m. and last around two hours — longer if the spirits feel especially communicative. Otherwise, she indicates that if Viv has any further questions, perhaps she’d like to attend a “communion” tonight.

### Communion with the Dead

Viv’s canny journalist’s eye identifies several different types at the communion: an older widow, a bereaved parent, an idly curious spectator, and a handful of obvious regulars who acknowledge each other before taking their seats. Cloyingly sweet incense fills the room from several braziers. Madame Isis begins the service by reading passages from the Book of the Dead. Some in the audience mutter, “Amen,” probably from force of habit.

Other than the reading, the séance consists of ordinary channeling. Should she have learned that Viv has lost someone, Madame passes on a “message” telling Viv that this person has found peace in the afterlife but there’s something they want Viv to do for them — but she can’t make it out before losing the connection. “Perhaps next time.” If Viv asks to contact the spirit of George Preston, Madame Isis stalls with some patter about not being able to sense George’s spirit among them.

**Streetwise:** Madame’s reputation might survive channeling a living person to a few ordinary clients, but she never forgets Viv’s profession and has no desire to end up on the wrong side of an exposé.

Should Viv decide to question any of the clients before or after the communion, she ends up talking to Addie Sims (alternate, “Addie Needs Answers”). Otherwise, Madame Isis catches Viv’s eye and nods her head significantly in Addie’s direction just as Addie is on the verge of slipping out the door.

### The Girl from the Apartment

If Viv has encountered Pearl at the apartments and the girl escaped — with or without the schematics — Madame Isis calls her into the room and demands she apologize to Viv. Pearl looks shaken. Even if Madame Isis sent her to search Preston’s apartment, she certainly didn’t intend her to get caught while doing so. She returns any purloined schematics, and Madame Isis asks Viv to forgive the young woman’s impetuosity.

Viv may ask the questions from “Questioning Pearl,” under the watchful gaze of Madame Isis. She may have already gleaned some information from her conversations with the medium.

#### ADDIE NEEDS ANSWERS

*Scene Type:* Alternate

*Lead-In:* Temple of Nephthys

*Lead-Out:* Men Going Missing

Time hasn’t treated Addie Sims kindly. Her shabby clothes hang around her thin frame, as though she’s lost weight and hasn’t had the money to buy anything new or the time and energy to take in her old clothes. Viv has seen her type before: women shepherding three children in a breadline while looking as though they never ate enough of the bread themselves. Play Addie as fidgeting, ready to bolt at any instant if she sees someone who knows her and might tell her minister. She’s only come because nobody else could give her answers.

Viv finds her at the Temple of Nephthys, although she doesn’t need to attend a “communion” to do so. Viv can use **Reassurance**, telling her about her investigation into the disappearance of another electrician or simply approach Addie as another seeker after the spiritual. In response to the right questions about her husband’s disappearance, Addie provides the following:

- Max, her husband, hasn’t been home in two days now. Half the time, she thinks he got paid for a job and bought a ticket to run off, leaving her and the kids. The other half, she fears someone jumped him for the money.
- (Alternate, “Men Going Missing”) As far as she knows, Max tried for work at a lot of places.

She remembers him saying Mr. Fuller had lost a man and he might get a permanent job, which would be a mercy. When she went down there the morning he didn’t come home, the men told her Fuller had asked him to work on a per-day basis. Viv might ask them if they know more about it.

- She tried asking Mr. Fuller, but he gave her the brush-off. “Said my Max wasn’t good enough but he hadn’t stiffed him for the day, neither.”
- Addie knows about the Temple of Nephthys because her pastor has preached against its wickedness. Even though talking to spirits is a sin, “like that witch in the Bible,” she believes it could work. “Saul talked to the prophet Samuel, didn’t he?” She wants answers badly enough she’s willing to live under a curse to do so.
- It’s not like Max not to come home. Some guys go on a bender when they get paid for a job, but not her Max. Addie squirms uncomfortably. **Assess Honesty** perceives she doesn’t feel entirely convinced by her own words.
- Yes, she’s visited the city morgue every day. Gruesome. And she has to get a neighbor to watch the children. The neighbor thinks she’s there now. But there’s ways to make a body disappear. It could be in the river with “those cement shoes.”
- No, Addie hasn’t yet gotten a straight answer out of Madame Isis. She says Max’s spirit will talk when he wants to. If he doesn’t talk tonight (or didn’t talk tonight), she thinks she won’t come back. Streetwise: Just like she refuses to answer questions about George Preston, Madame has decided to play it safe in case Max comes home.

When Viv leaves, Addie tells her the address of the tenement where she lives, and begs Viv to tell her if she hears anything about Max. If Viv does so during the denouement, she earns Edge 11, “Good Citizen.”



## THE THING IN THE MORGUE

*Scene Type:* Pipe

*Lead-Ins:* What the Cops Know,  
The Peculiar Death of Myron Fink,  
Interviewing the Neighbors

Besides answering questions about things which occurred before the story started, this scene serves as pipe to establish the horror that Viv will face if things go badly for her. She'll find the body at the official mortuary for the medical examiner, located in Bellevue Hospital's (see p. 165) Pathological Building on East 29th Street. The crowd of over a hundred thousand outpatients that flows in and out of the hospital daily provides her with some anonymity, although it thins out near the morgue.

If Viv spoke to Lt. O'Connor in "What the Cops Know," she may persuade him to pull some strings with the police coroner, Phil Lenz, for her to get in and see the body. If not, she'll need to come at night and break into the morgue's vault. Provided

she passes a **Stealth** Quick Test to make it to the doors of the morgue, a simple use of the Locksmith ability lets Viv open the heavy metal doors.

### Viewing the Body

Whether or not Lenz shows her the body, the scene follows a similar course. Viv must first walk through a room of sheet-covered wooden dissection tables and instruments to get to the mortuary's cold chamber. The mortuary handles the hospital's many dead, including victims of accidents and murder. During the day, medical students bend over a few corpses on the tables, bone saws, scalpels, and forceps in hand. At night, Viv moves through chilly silence and shadow.

Beyond the main dissection room, Viv comes to the vault where the bodies are stored. The building's subterranean stone construction provides a certain natural coolness which is augmented by a loud industrial refrigeration system, but they only do so much to hide the odor of death. Anyone who doesn't spend regular time down here initially chokes on the thick, sweet smell as they open the door. If present, Lenz offers Viv a scented handkerchief.

The shelves of the cold chamber make it resemble a grotesque bunk-house. Without Lenz's help, Viv takes a few minutes to locate the corpse. Using **Evidence Collection** to check ankles and toes for identification, she soon notes the bodies lie in a rough chronological order. Fink — what remains of him — rests in a top bunk. To get a good view of the body at night, Viv may pull up a small-but-sturdy stepladder which provides attendants adequate balance to move hundreds of pounds. During the day, Lenz calls in a single medical student to wrest Fink down.

By now, Fink's body has taken on the greenish-blue color of early decomposition. The coroner closed Fink's staring eyes, but his mouth continues to gape in horror. Round, purpling bruises score his torso and one arm. In the center of each bruise, Viv sees a puncture wound over a small, hard lump. Several lumps have been excised for analysis, leaving gouges. Below his torso? A bag holds in what intestines remain and below that — nothing. The ends of his flesh appear ragged, as if torn off with an act of extreme force.

## GETTING INTO THE MORGUE

### *Stealth*

**Advance 5+:** With practiced ease, you slip into the mortuary wing of the building. It appears deserted: just you and the shadows.

**Earn an Edge:** Edge 4, "Cat Burglar"

**Hold 3–4:** The police must have anticipated something like this. Two uniforms stand outside the door to the morgue. If you want access, you might have to go through channels. There's still a chance to slip away quietly.

**Setback 2 or less:** As above, but you turn a corner and walk headfirst into one of the uniforms. See "Chewed Out" below and gain Problem 10, "O'Connor Isn't Happy."

**Extra Problem:** Problem 11, "Easier In than Out"



## SEEING FINK'S REMAINS

### Stability

**Advance 9+:** The overall condition of the body reminds you of the time you covered a train wreck. Not the sucker marks, of course, but there's a first time for everything.

**Earn and Edge:** Earn Edge 5, "The World Must Know"

**Hold 5-8:** Your horror makes you go weak in the knees. If you don't get out of here soon, you'll lose the contents of your stomach — perhaps for the second time.

**Setback 4 or less:** See Hold, but also gain Problem 12, "No One Is Safe"

**Extra Problem:** Gain Problem 13, "Jaded"

**Evidence Collection:** Either through talking to Lenz or by reading the autopsy notes, Viv learns that Fink died of a "massive coronary event." In lay terms, his heart gave out. The bruising and mutilation to his body occurred immediately after death, leaving venom directly under the skin instead of filtering into his bloodstream. Give the player time to connect this venom to the puncture-marks Viv saw in the center of the bruises. The venom's composition doesn't match any known species, but it most closely resembles that of jellyfish. The autopsy notes include several photographs of the bruising. If visiting the morgue during the day, Viv may grab one on a Difficulty 4 Quick **Filch** Test.

**Photography:** If Viv shows photographs of Fink's corpse to her nurse Source, Louisa pulls down a book on animal attacks with a photograph of a leg with a similar coil of bruises around it. But how could a squid attack someone on dry land?

### Chewed Out

If the guards catch Viv attempting to break into the morgue, they'll hold her for Lt. MacAdams. The player certainly could try using a **Fighting** Quick Test to break free while one policeman phones the station, but this would result in a city-wide hunt for her. MacAdams picks her up in an unmarked

car and drives her home. On the way, he lectures Viv about interfering with police investigations, emphasizes that a twisted killer remains on the loose, and warns her to keep her nose — and her notepad — out of the whole business. Possible responses to points she may raise:

- Of course the girl thinks her fiancé didn't do it, but plenty of vicious killers seem perfectly ordinary to their family and friends.
- August Williams clearly hit the sauce that night before bed. He just saw something a little darker than pink elephants.
- Murders don't always have a motive like they do in the pictures. Maybe Preston snapped because he didn't like the way Fink looked at him. Maybe Fink played his radio too loud while Preston was trying to sleep.
- Yes, he knows Lt. O'Connor, and he'll have a word with O'Connor's captain about the kind of company his man keeps (if Viv tries dropping O'Connor's name to get out of trouble.)

When dropping her off at her apartment (or place of work, in the daytime), he notes that he won't escort her inside for the sake of her reputation, but vaguely threatens that he'll look her up if he hears about her interfering again in this case. See "Antagonist Reactions."

## MIRACLE MACHINE

**Scene Type:** Core

**Lead-Ins:** George's Apartment, Questioning Pearl, Temple of Nephthys

**Lead-Out:** Going on the Grid

Viv may take the schematics for George's machine to either her scientific Source, Nettie Rice, or to Charlie for her electrical expertise. If the player holds the card "Soft Spot" and doesn't consider the possibility of calling up Charlie on her own, the GM should prompt her. In keeping with Problem cards, the desire to see Charlie again sets up Viv for more trouble — this time with Fuller.

Nettie moves stacks of papers to the floor in order to create enough desk space to look at the schematics. If Viv takes them to Charlie, see "Catching Fuller's Eye" below. Either way, Viv

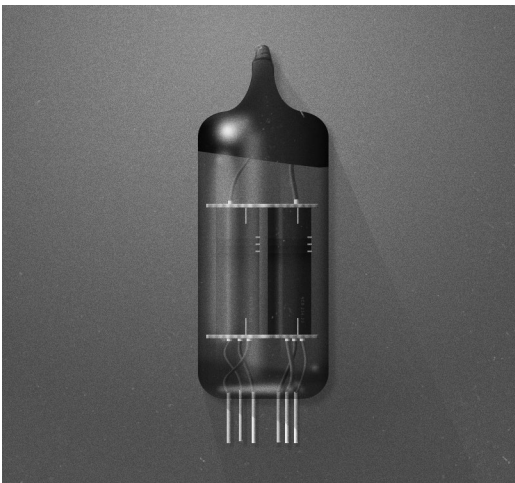
learns the following facts about the schematics from her contact:

- These schematics are missing several pages. One couldn't build a complete machine from them.
- From what she can tell, this would be the center of the device. It resembles a radio receiver, receiving signals and passing them along to the missing part — logically an amplifier. But it doesn't look like any radio schematic she's seen. It's much more complex.
- (Core, "Going on the Grid") For something probably the size of a small suitcase, this device draws a disproportionate amount of power. It would probably cause outages on the city's pieced-together system. If Viv mentions the problems with electricity at the apartment building, the contact affirms the connection. The contact knows Marie Lewis, a dispatcher at Consolidated Gas: either as a former student at the college (Nettie) or as a [deliberate look] friend (Charlie). If someone's using the device, Marie might help her figure out where it is.

If Madame Isis had the schematics briefly, their incompleteness explains why she gave them back without any reticence.

### Catching Fuller's Eye

If Viv brings the schematics to Charlie at work, she attracts the attention of Mr. Fuller, who attempts to buy them from her: "No good to you, might as well see what my boys... and Charlie... can make of 'em." Turning him down may lead to an Antagonist Reaction later on.



## CASH IN HAND

### Cool

**Penalty:** -2 if Viv holds Problem 2, "Hand to Mouth."

**Advance 4+:** You barely even consider it. Even though you need the money, you know how it would complicate things. Perhaps when this is over, your client can sell the plans herself.

**Earn an Edge:** Edge 6, "Professional Ethics"

**Hold 2-3:** You don't take the money, but it hurts.

**Setback 1 or less:** You take it, and keep all or give some to Sadie to ease your conscience. Invite the player to narrate what financial difficulty this solves for Viv: paying her rent, getting her typewriter out of hock, etc. But at what cost to her sense of professionalism, and to the case?

**Extra Problem:** Problem 14, "No Good Deed"

## THE LEG-BREAKER

**Scene Type:** Alternate

**Lead-Ins:** Temple of Nephthys,  
Men Gone Missing

**Lead-Outs:** Charlie Comes Clean,  
Breaking into Fuller's

Like an Antagonist Reaction, this scene may occur at several points in the adventure. Logically, it takes place sometime after Viv visits the "Temple of Nephthys" or investigates "Men Gone Missing" and learns that a mob loan enforcer might have it out for Preston. However, if the player visits the temple early in the adventure, the GM may choose to hold this scene until Viv has also visited "George's Apartment" or after she's seen "The Thing in the Morgue."

When leaving the temple, apartment building, or morgue (as described above), Viv must make the following test to realize that someone's shadowing her.

## SPOTTING MARTY THE MOUTH

### *Sense Trouble*

**Advance 5+:** You realize you've picked up a tail...

**Immediate Advantage:** ... and may choose to confront him straight away or step into an alley and attempt to get him at a disadvantage; see the "Pinning Marty" Challenge below. Viv's advantage gets folded into the Challenge's Difficulty.

**Setback 4 or less:** You don't notice anything until you hear the sound of hurrying footsteps and a strong pair of hands steer you into an alley. Move to Challenge "Jumped by Marty."

**Extra Problem:** Problem 15, "Jumpy"

## PINNING MARTY

### *Fighting*

**Advance 3+:** You surprise your shadow and get him off his feet or pinned against a wall. Secures his cooperation. Invite the player to describe how she does it.

**Earn an Edge:** Edge 7, "Marty's Respect"

**Hold 2 or less:** Marty didn't see it coming, but he's been in the game long enough that he steps deftly aside and the two of you find yourselves facing off. Spend a Bargain Push to get him talking or give the Keeper a compelling description of how you win his cooperation, such as offering to share what you know.

**Extra Problem:** Problem 16, "Sprained Wrist"

## JUMPED BY MARTY

### *Fighting*

**Advance 4+:** You extricate yourself from your attacker and put him at a disadvantage. Secures his cooperation. Invite the player to describe how she does it.

**Earn an Edge:** Edge 8, "Sharp Reflexes"

**Hold 2-3:** You manage to get free but he sidesteps your attempts to get him in a hold. Same results as Hold in "Pinning Marty" Challenge above.

**Setback 1 or less:** Once he's got what he wants, Marty lets you go. The bad news is what he wants. Problem 17, "Marty's Got Your Notebook."

**Extra Problem:** Problem 16, "Sprained Wrist"

### Marty Runs His Mouth

The man identifies himself as "Marty."

**Streetwise:** Combining the name and profession, Viv can make an educated guess that this is "Marty the Mouth," a low-level enforcer for the Luciano crime family. Once Viv and Marty have squared off and she secures his cooperation, he reveals the following in response to questions:

- Marty is also trying to hunt down George. If Viv got an Advance on "Spotting Marty the Mouth," he's not surprised she made him and references a previous scene (e.g., "George's Apartment," "Temple of Nephthys," "The Thing in the Morgue") in which he just barely made it around a corner. Otherwise he's watched her for some time. Either way, he realized she's on the same errand as he is.
- Preston had borrowed money from a generous local businessman (Marty doesn't say a mob-backed loan shark, but **Streetwise** Viv reads into that). It came due last week, but that generous personality got squat. Now Marty needs to find him and explain the difference between a loan and fil-an-thro-pee, see?
- Yeah, he waited outside that crackpot Egyptian

place to talk to Preston. Sometimes puts a bit more pressure on a guy when you have a nice little talk in front of his friends, see?

- He's heard the kid's trying to dodge a murder rap. Didn't figure him for the type.
- How much does he owe? About \$200.
- He'd hoped to compare notes, with a meaningful glance at her reporter's notebook (or flipping through it, if Viv holds Problem 17).
- Marty doesn't know how Preston managed to give him the slip. The guy didn't seem like a slick operator. But he vamoosed, and if Marty can't find hide or hair of the guy, it'll be his own hide, if she knows what he means.
- (Alternate lead-in, "Breaking into Fuller's") The night Preston disappeared, Marty was watching the door at Fuller's from 4 p.m. onward — planning to have "a friendly chat, see?" — But Preston never came out. Marty figures he must've gotten a warning from one of the other fellows and scrambled out the back. There was a moment the streetlights went on the fritz, but he kept his eye on the door the whole time: thought it might be some kind of funny business.
- (Alternate, "Charlie Comes Clean") He only saw one person go in, a dame. That happened maybe ten minutes after the streetlights went on the fritz. Two people come out. The short, funny dame that works there (attempts to determine which dame lead him to provide clarifying descriptions of Charlie, not Petunia). And the Joe that owns the place. They came out together.

After talking to Marty, Viv may attempt to resolve Problem 17. Possible solutions:

- **Bargain:** Viv trades the notebook for some nonspecific favor in the future. Take on Problem 18, "I Owe You One."
- Describe how Viv uses a Push to convince Marty that he won't learn more from the notebook.
- **Reassurance:** Viv promises to let Marty know when she finds George, or at least finds out what happened to him. Problem 19, "Two Masters."

## GOING ON THE GRID

*Scene Type:* Core

*Lead-Ins:* Miracle Machine,  
Interviewing the Neighbors

*Lead-Out:* Breaking into Fuller's

Just east of Union Square, the 26-story Consolidated Gas building stands out less for its giant clock than for the miniature temple and enormous bronze lantern at its pinnacle. Even if Viv has never gone inside the building before, she's used its nighttime illumination as a landmark.

Viv's contact, Marie Lewis, works in an open, overcrowded office on one of the middle floors. She and her fellow dispatchers take phone calls, map the locations and types of complaint, and relay the messages to teams of repairmen. The process involves a great deal of bustle, internal phone calls, and notes.

**Bureaucracy:** A quick observation of the dispatchers at work leads Viv to notice the importance of "The Ledger," a central book in which they record all incoming calls and resolutions. If Viv gets time to go through The Ledger, she may be able to find out if any similar disturbances have been reported. When she mentions it to Marie or the other women, they'll complain that their manager, Mr. Goddell, often takes the women to task over the number of open calls, entirely unjustly, as they can't control the speed or number of repair crews.

Viv may make any kind of **Bargain** with Marie for a chance to take notes on The Ledger. An obvious solution would be to offer to keep it updated for the rest of the dispatchers as she copies out relevant entries.

From The Ledger, Viv may piece together the following:

- The entry for the disturbance on the night of Fink's death shows multiple complaints from neighboring apartment buildings and one drugstore in a two-block radius around his apartment building.
- By the time maintenance workers arrived, the power had returned to normal and they could find no problems in the system itself.



- The Ledger shows several similar entries from the night shift for calls in a five-block region north of Fulton. Same ambiguous resolution.
- The calls north of Fulton have come in each night, starting on Thursday, May 2, around 10:30 p.m., with repair crews arriving as early as 11 p.m. to find no problems. If Viv visits at night, she may mention this to a night dispatcher who exasperatedly mutters “we need to send out a pre-emptive team or just stop responding to those calls.”
- (Core, “Breaking Into Fuller’s”) Evidence Collection: At the center of those disturbances? Fuller’s Electrical Repair.

### MEN GONE MISSING

*Scene Type:* Alternate

*Lead-In:* Addie Needs Answers

*Lead-Outs:* The Leg-Breaker,  
Breaking Into Fuller’s

The crowd outside Fuller’s has thinned since Viv first visited the shop. Perhaps with George’s disappearance now a thing of the past, fewer men think they have a chance at his job. Perhaps the odd goings-on with the other men Fuller’s brought in have made them change their minds. She still encounters five or six men having a smoke and shooting the breeze.

It takes a while to get the men to warm up to her. A judicious use of **Bargain** might offer them some of her cigarettes or to buy anyone who’ll talk to her a cup of coffee. Viv may even want to pull out **Inspiration**: two good (well, close enough) men have disappeared in a single week: wouldn’t they want their families to have answers if it was them? One of the men, Herbert Roach, appears willing to talk, but he’d rather do it somewhere other than here. Viv can get answers out of him at a nearby diner or in an alley out of sight of the main door. Once sufficiently warmed by coffee, a cigarette, or the fire of Inspiration, Roach nervously reveals the following:

- He’s only here because his missus will get right sore if she doesn’t think he’s pounding the pavement every day. He has no desire to work

for Fuller, “anyways, not anymore.”

- (Alternate, “The Leg-Breaker”) Far as he knows, George was an OK guy, but he was making bad decisions. Like borrowing money from a guy everyone knows works for, well, all he can say is... *people*. And you don’t want to be in debt to people. If he could guess, that’d be what happened to George... except for the strange matter of his replacements.
  - Why doesn’t he want to work for Fuller? The man’s been hiring day-rate replacements and it strikes Herbert as funny that he never asks them to work a second day. Could be like he says every morning, he’s looking for men who meets his standards. But after Addie Sims came ’round asking about her husband, he realized he hasn’t heard from any of the other fellows Fuller hired.
  - No, he hasn’t looked them up. That’s not really his business.
  - (Alternate lead-in, “Breaking into Fuller’s”) The really strange thing is those fellows Fuller hired never came out at the end of the day. Neither did Fuller. He asked about it yesterday because Jim O’Hara is a buddy of his. One of the guys said the boss promised Jim more if he stayed late to work on a “special project.” With five little ones, Jim can’t exactly say no, can he? If Viv visits Fuller, he gives her the same brush-off he would in “Fuller Himself” (p. 175), that the men’s work didn’t pass muster. Pressing the issue of the men, or otherwise going inside on this errand, means Viv faces the Challenge “Getting Past the Guards” in “Breaking Into Fuller’s.”
- Viv may decide to make especially sure about the missing men, in which case Roach gives her names and buildings of three he can think of, and she gets the attached responses from wives:
- Jim O’Hara: wife Rose hasn’t seen him since yesterday, assumes he’s hiding at his brother’s after drinking his earnings.
  - Mike Deaton: no, his wife Ida doesn’t know where he’s gone. She’s almost frantic enough to telephone the police, but “they never help people like us.” Viv knows through her source Lt. O’Connor that the Missing Persons department rarely follows up on men who leave their families.



- Danny Mallory: no wife. If Viv checks with his landlord, she'll find he hasn't seen Danny in several days. Possible he got a job that took him out of town; that happens sometimes.

### CHARLIE COMES CLEAN

*Scene Type:* Alternate

*Lead-In:* The Leg-Breaker

*Lead-Out:* Breaking into Fuller's

Armed with the knowledge that Charlie's been holding out on her, Viv may wish to question her again. At first, Charlie vehemently insists that she told Viv everything she knows, taking great offense that Viv doubts her word. Once Viv reveals her new information, Charlie's resistance breaks down and she confesses her full knowledge of that night.

As far as Charlie knows, George *could* have split. She came back late to drop off some

equipment she'd... borrowed. Normally it was just George there, working on his machine. She wryly admits that she probably didn't have to return the equipment as long as she brought it into work the next day, but she liked to make sure George went home and got at least a little shut-eye.

Viv may recognize Charlie's fear of having her name attached to this information. It takes **Reassurance** to convince Charlie that Viv won't name her as a source in print or go straight to Fuller with anything Charlie tells her. All she knows is she found Mr. Fuller at George's desk, looking over some of his schematics. The machine was there too, but no George. Fuller convinced her to help "put it away" for safekeeping and said George must have forgotten when he left. That wasn't like George, but Charlie thought no harm would be done if they put it away at the shop. George had been worked up, after all — maybe he was frustrated. She figured George would come in the next day, same as always.

But then George didn't come in, and eventually the police did. She tried talking to Mr. Fuller about it, only, the night before, Fuller saw the tools Charlie had borrowed. Now Fuller's threatening her into silence with the threat not just of losing her job ("I've got a mother at home and a kid sister. It took George pushing to get me this job. I'd have to go back to a waitress' salary and men pinching me") but of reporting her to the police for theft. If the police booked her for that, they'd probably find out she's been wiring houses too — off the books and without a license ("I want to put my sister through college so she can get out of this place"). Things could get real bad for her. She can't prove Fuller knows anything — what kind of evidence is finding him in his own shop at night? She's been keeping quiet, but it eats her up inside.

If Viv makes the request while Pushing with **Inspiration** or **Flattery**, she may persuade Charlie to investigate Fuller's with her. Alternately, not bringing Charlie (or losing her if Viv gets knocked out) may provide a more satisfying horror ending in "Breaking into Fuller's." If the player wants more muscle, she may also consider bringing a Source, Esteban Manuel Aragon Gonzalez or even Lt. O'Connor, or Marty if he owes her a favor.

As in "Men Gone Missing," if she bursts into Fuller's to question Charlie the second time, Viv faces the Challenge "Getting Past the Guards" in "Breaking into Fuller's."

**BREAKING INTO FULLER'S**

**Scene Type:** Conclusion

**Lead-Ins:** Going on the Grid, Men Gone Missing, Charlie Comes Clean

**Lead-Out:** Sadie and the Scoop

If Viv has re-questioned Fuller, come into the building to question Charlie a second time, or spent too much time talking to men outside his shop, Fuller gets wise to her line of thinking and hires some extra protection. The Keeper may also deploy them if Viv lets a night elapse between her conversation with Charlie and breaking in: Charlie's begun to think about going to the police, and Fuller can see it in her eyes. Otherwise skip "Getting Past the Guards."

**GETTING PAST THE GUARDS**

**Stealth**

**Advance 6+:** You move like a cat in the shadows and gain entrance to the warehouse without the men outside even spotting you.

**Earn an Edge:** On an 8+, gain Edge 9, "On Edge"

**Setback 5 or less:** Fuller's guards hit you over the head and haul you inside to face the big man; move to "Tied to the Chair."

**Extra Problem:** Problem 20, "Cocky"

Outside the building, the streetlights begin to fritz. Assuming Viv gets safely past any guards, a use of Locksmith gets her through the back door, into a darkened storage room in the rear of the shop. Through the door she can see a crack of flickering light. She hears a non-mechanical hum: an eerie sound that makes her think of sailors' descriptions of the song of whales.

Viv can glance through the door long enough to see a figure tied to a chair and strange beings floating in the harsh spotlight around him. The strange beings appear blobby and luminescent, but alien and disturbing. If Viv neither brought Charlie with her and the scene "Charlie Comes Clean" didn't occur immediately previous to this, she recognizes the figure in the chair as Charlie. In this case, players holding "Soft Spot" take a -2 to either of the following Challenges. Otherwise, it's one of the job-seekers she has seen massed outside Fuller's. Just then, a swirling mass of translucent tentacles moves in from the edge of the spotlight. She may choose to look away and examine the "Body in the Chair" afterward; to watch and face the test "Watching the Devourer;" or to burst in and interrupt, in which case the action skips to "They Came from Beyond." Examining the corpse after "Watching the Devourer" does not trigger the "Body in the Chair" test.

The action is over in a matter of horrifying moments. A wise player would have Viv look away, in which case she hears squishing, snapping, and a muffled scream. If Viv keeps watching, she sees



a writhing, iridescent mass of tentacles and claws swarm over the body, which lets out a muffled scream before being devoured. The tentacles wrap it tight, and pincers begin snipping off pieces of flesh and passing them into a dark maw, eventually devouring the flesh and organs, leaving parts of a skeleton with ragged ends of muscle and tissue hanging off. The body's clothes, neatly snipped by the pincers, lie on the floor at its feet. Once the beast ceases feeding, Viv can sense it looking for its next prey — at which point it suddenly vanishes.

If Viv brought company, they pass out as Viv undergoes either of the next two tests. If Viv fails her run-ins with Fuller, she comes to with her companion tied up beside her. Otherwise, she can shake them back to a dazed consciousness and have them help her handle Fuller.

## WATCHING THE DEVOURER

### *Stability*

**Advance 9+:** You've discovered what killed Myron Fink, and that's a start, right? You can't let yourself get sidetracked by horrors.

**Earn an Edge:** On an 11+, gain Edge 10, "Unflappable"

**Hold 5-8:** You struggle to keep down the remains of your last meal. Either lose Edge 9, "On Edge," or lose a die in "Dodge the Chloroform."

**Setback 4 or less:** Same as Hold but also gain Problem 21, "All Shook Up."

**Spending Edges:** Edge 5, "The World Must Know," for an extra die if Viv hasn't spent it on a Push, or any Edges that affect Stability or General/Mental.

**Extra Problem:** Gain Continuity Problem 13, "Jaded"

Once the device powers off and the shapes disappear, Viv may safely (for values thereof) emerge from the storeroom to examine the body and inspect the device. If she did not see the body consumed, it triggers the following Stability test.

Use the description of what happened to it to formulate an approximation of what she finds.

## BODY IN THE CHAIR

### *Stability*

**Advance 6+:** You're closing on the answers; you just need to focus. Take a lot of deep breaths and keep going.

**Hold 3-5:** You've rarely seen a body in such a mangled state. The smell of blood and bowels causes you to retch. Either lose Edge 9, "On Edge," or take a -4 penalty to "Dodge the Chloroform."

**Setback 2 or less:** Same as Hold but also gain Problem 21, "All Shook Up."

**Spending Edges:** Edge 5, "The World Must Know," for an extra die if Viv hasn't spent it on a Push, or any Edges that affect Stability or General/Mental.

**Extra Problem:** Gain Continuity Problem 13, "Jaded"





Either way, if she examines the body and scrutinizes the seemingly empty warehouse, she must make the following test to “Dodge the Chloroform.

## DODGE THE CHLOROFORM

### *Sense Trouble*

**Advance 12+:** You sense movement in the darkness and duck out of the way just as Fuller, chloroform in hand, looms up behind you.

**Hold 6–11:** Fuller gets the chloroform over your mouth, but after the first inhalation, you have the sense to stop breathing. Head swimming, you can move to the test “Fighting off Fuller.” Take 12 minus your result as a penalty to that test.

**Setback 5 or less:** You take a deep breath of something sweet, and then everything blurs. You stay at the edge of consciousness as someone maneuvers your body into a chair and binds your hands. Move to “Tied to the Chair.”

**Spending Edges:** Edge 9, “On Edge,” or any Edges that affect Sense Trouble or General/Mental.

## FIGHTING OFF FULLER

### *Fighting*

**Penalty:** See “Dodge the Chloroform” above.

**Advance 4+:** Whether it’s righteous anger or self-preservation, you unleash everything you’ve got and either knock Fuller out or secure his cooperation. Move to “Fuller Fesses Up.”

**Setback 3 or less:** Fuller’s right hook finishes the work the chloroform started. Move to “Tied to a Chair.”

## Fuller Fesses Up

Whether he shouts it down from his darkened office with his hand on the switch that powers Preston’s machine or mutters it while tied to the chair himself, Fuller can fill Viv in on the details of the situation. By now, she might be surprised to learn that he didn’t kill George Preston, but he pushes the point, ignoring the collateral damage he has caused since.

George Preston caused the first two deaths, Fink’s and his own. The first was an accident. The light from Fink’s room must have drawn the attention of the creature while it ignored Preston’s lightless room. That night after work, with Charlie having slipped out, Preston broke down and confessed the whole thing to Fuller, begging the older man to destroy his device — but only after he let beasts from beyond kill him in the same way they had eaten Fink. To him, this seemed like the only way he could atone for Fink’s death. Fuller didn’t believe a word of it, instead thinking the kid had finally snapped from too many nights working late. Maybe he’d killed his neighbor, but nothing else made sense.

Only after Fuller watched from his darkened office did he believe Preston’s story. He threw the emergency switch to cut power to the kid’s bench, but it was too late. Viv senses excitement, rather than horror in his voice. In Fuller’s opinion Preston was a coward, afraid of his own success. If the world at the edge of our vision isn’t made up of ghosts but of something much more horrible, that just makes his invention more valuable.

All Fuller needs now are those damn schematics so he can reproduce the machine — as a weapon. With the news from Europe, he knows it’ll be a seller’s market soon enough and this could change things the way gas did in the Great War. And Charlie (if he killed or captured her)? He could tell it was only a matter of time before she went to the police — doesn’t have the sense to keep her head down.

The thing Viv saw? That isn’t the only kind of beast out there, that’s just his “pet” — the one who’s learned to come when Fuller switches on the device. He’s seen far more than that: big, stupid, whale-like blobs and swarms of tiny creatures

which pick over and devour the remains. You'd never know anyone had died. (Fuller isn't naïve about his "pet." He switches off the machine once it loses interest in a body, only switching it on a few minutes later to attract the scavengers who remove the corpse. If the "pet" can see beyond the light, Fuller doesn't want to find out firsthand.)

### Tied to the Chair

Her head splitting, Viv comes back to full consciousness to find herself tied to a chair (with any companions beside her) on the main floor of the repair shop. Lights from the workbenches, meant to illuminate detail work, encircle her in a painful glare. She has difficulty making out any details behind the brightness. Once Fuller sees she's woken up, he monologues details from "Fuller Fesses Up" above as he switches on the machine, triggering the test "They Came from Beyond."

Though Viv gets a chance to escape, the machine begins to take effect, revealing sights and sounds from a plane of reality bordering on our own. It takes some time for the creature to realize Fuller has set out a second meal. In the meantime, other strange beasts walk or float by Viv as she takes fights for Stability and takes stock of her situation.

## THEY CAME FROM BEYOND

### Stability

**Advance 10+:** Sure, nobody else has escaped this situation, but they didn't have all the facts. Hold it together, girl, and you can pull through.

**Setback 9 or less:** Take on Problem 22, "Haunted."

### Confronting the "Pet"

After either rushing in to save the captive in the chair, or being captured by Fuller and making the Stability Challenge "They Came from Beyond" (whether Advance or Setback), Viv may attempt to escape without being eaten. She may use Quick Tests (Advance 4+, but any failed test increases the

Difficulty of the next Quick Test of any kind by 1) as proposed by the player. If tied up by Fuller, she can use Athletics to untie her hands or Preparedness to have a pocketknife Fuller didn't think to check for. A successful Quick Test of Athletics or Fleeing, if Fuller has spotted her, gets her into the darkness where she can pull the plug to the machine, flip the wall switch to the desk, smash the machine, shoot it (the canonical method of destruction), or even propose a way to switch on the light in Fuller's office, turning the creature's attention to him. If she fails the tests and the Difficulty gets too high? Move on to the coda and Viv's last thoughts.

How Viv resolves the situation if she escapes the creatures depends entirely on the player and her goals. She may wish to hold Fuller at gunpoint, if she has a gun, and force him to confess to his crimes. She may knock him cold or shoot him in the legs, and leave him for the police. She may prefer to rely on her two dice in Fleeing and try to grab any schematics (appropriate on whatever the GM considers a high success) as she escapes, calling in a tip for MacAdams to check out the repair shop.


### SADIE AND THE SCOOP

*Scene Type:* Denouement

*Lead-In:* Breaking into Fuller's

After wrapping things up at Fuller's, Viv can report back to Preston's fiancée. How much she chooses to reveal is up to the player. Perhaps Sadie only needs to know that her fiancé's device backfired, killing him, and his boss covered it up. Sadie mourns, but accepts that sometimes brilliant inventors pay a price for their genius. Viv gets the sense that even if she moves on, Sadie will always canonize George in her mind. Viv may use Edges such as "Good Citizen" or "Marty's Respect" to talk someone into finding Sadie another job.

Did Viv leave Fuller alive and not call the police? If so, Petunia Adams finds him the next morning, swinging from the iron walkway to his office. Viv hears about this when a fellow journalist covering the story remembers her interest in the place.



If Viv retrieves the schematics but does not destroy them, she comes home several days later to find out from her landlady that the police raided her apartment and confiscated some drawings they said were stolen from their investigation. She can only imagine where they might end up.

As for Charlie, if she somehow survived the ordeal, Viv may make overtures — but learns that she plans to take her mother and sister and leave the city. She wants to put as much distance between her and these horrors as she can — though she'll never be able to shake off her newfound knowledge.

Use the procedure outlined on p. 61 along with these possible endings to help the player craft a suitable coda for the story.

## ANTAGONIST REACTIONS

Trigger	Reaction	Setback	Hold	Advance	Extra Problem
Holds Problem 11, "Easier in Than Out"	MacAdams' cops toss Viv's place, causing conflict with her landlady and roommate. <i>Cool</i>	1 or less: Problem 23, "Evicted"	2-5: They accept her argument, but give her the cold shoulder for a few days	6+: Edge 11, "Good Citizen"	Problem 14, "No Good Deed"
Fuller tried and failed to buy the schematics from Viv	A man (one of Fuller's out-of-work electricians) breaks into Viv's apartment to steal the schematics. <i>Fighting</i>	4 or less: Viv loses the schematics	5-9: He gets away without the schematics	10+: He gets away, but Viv did some damage. Edge 12, "Still a Castle"	Problem 8, "Wrenched Ankle"
Viv got a Hold in her tussle with Marty the Mouth, leaving him feeling sore	A couple men in suits and fedoras come by Viv's place to make vague threats about what happens to Nosey Nellies				
Lt. MacAdams escorted Viv home from the morgue building	When Viv next shows up at work, her editor calls her in for a chat about the detective who just dropped by <i>Cool</i>	2 or less: Problem 24, "On Probation"	3-5: Viv wants a stiff drink after that conversation, but no harm done	6+: Edge 13, "Hardship Pay"	Problem 20, "Cocky"
Viv has Problem "Hand-to-Mouth" or Problem 14, "No Good Deed"	A young man tries to snatch Viv's purse, which has everything she's got left for the month in it <i>Fighting</i>	2 or less: Viv loses her purse and takes on Problem 8, "Wrenched Ankle"	3-6: Viv manages to hold onto her purse but still takes on Problem 8, "Wrenched Ankle"	7+: Viv keeps her purse and her pride	N/A
Viv has Problem "Sucker for a Pretty Face"	An old flame who's bad news drops by <i>Cool</i>	2 or less: Viv yields to temptation, and it ends messily, as always. -2 on the next General/Mental test	3-5: Viv manages to extract herself, but it's not smooth or polite	6+: Viv suavely maneuvers the flame out the door	N/A
Viv has Problem "Anything for the Story"	Sees a business owner whose corrupt employment practices she exposed lurking outside her building. <i>Stealth</i>	1 or less: It takes Viv 30 minutes to convince him to go away. -2 on the next General/Mental test	2-4: Viv loses him in the alleys, but now knows he's located her address	5+: He doesn't see Viv at all and appears unsure she even lives there	N/A
Viv has problem "Hot-Tempered"	Takes an offhand comment from a fellow journalist very personally. <i>Cool</i>	2 or less: Problem 24, "On Probation"	3-8: The argument puts Viv's nerves on edge; -2 to the next Cool or Stability test	9+: Viv bites back the urge to argue; +2 to the next Cool or Stability test	N/A



# Fatal Frequencies Problem Cards

PROBLEM 1

## Sucker for a Pretty Face *Continuity*

You change lovers as frequently as clothes. Of course you try not to sleep with your story's subjects, but sometimes it's the best way to get new information, right?



PROBLEM 2

## Hand-to-Mouth *Continuity*

You got into this line of work to make a difference, not make dough. But even with the odd work you pick up around the office, you never know if you'll have next month's rent.



PROBLEM 3

## Anything for the Story *Continuity*

Every good reporter remembers the time their nose for a story put them in danger. You, on the other hand? You remember the time or two it *didn't*.



PROBLEM 4

## Hot-Tempered *Continuity*

You go from zero to boiling over in the blink of an eye. Whether it's for justice or personal dignity, it puts a strain on relationships and even employment.



PROBLEM 5

## Fuller Becomes Suspicious

Once Fuller notices the missing envelope, he puts two and two together (or, if he saw you take it, he starts to have second thoughts). He suspects you plan to target him in your next exposé. He requires Pushes when questioning him further.



PROBLEM 6

## Sourpuss

Whatever you're feeling for Charlie, it's not entirely professional.



PROBLEM 7

## Big Talker

You protested a little too strongly that you just want information about George, and got a bigger response than you bargained on. The GM brings forward men with random and conflicting theories until you either make a Stealth Quick Test to leave them arguing with each other or lose an hour or two listening to them all.



PROBLEM 8

## Wrenched Ankle

You pulled something in your foot. Take a -2 on your next Athletics, Fighting, or other General/Physical test or Take Time, and then discard this problem.



PROBLEM 9

## Torn Dress

Pearl fights dirty. During the scuffle, she pulled one arm half off your dress. Until you Take Time to regroup and change your outfit, lose the ability to make Pushes and take a -2 to Cool tests.



PROBLEM 10

**O'Connor Isn't Happy**  
*Continuity*

You've done it this time, Sinclair. O'Connor knows you don't always use the most orthodox means, but he's still angry you got caught. The strings he's had to pull for you...



PROBLEM 11


**Easier in Than Out**

Getting in's the easy part. You make it home safely, but reports of a snappily dressed woman filter back to MacAdams, who may put two and two together.



PROBLEM 12

**No One Is Safe**

**Mythos Shock** : Nothing from *this* world could do that to a person. If this could happen in an ordinary apartment building, no one is safe.



PROBLEM 13

**Jaded**  
*Continuity*

Only someone with ice in her veins could hold her cool like that. Your next Push for **Reassurance** or **Inspiration** costs double as the words taste like ash in your mouth. Then discard this card. If you don't have two Pushes, you can't Push.



PROBLEM 14

**No Good Deed**

Difficulties with money come to a head in Antagonist Reactions or the episode's coda. If you somehow manage to fail even with the extra die, a creditor immediately calls for the money Fuller paid you. You may Counter this card with Edge 7, "Marty's Respect."



PROBLEM 15

**Jumpy**

How long did he follow you before you noticed? Was he the man you saw walking away last night? You can't help looking over your shoulder for more. -2 on your next Cool or Stability test, then discard this card.



PROBLEM 16

**Sprained Wrist**

Trying to get free from Marty's hold really messed up your wrist. -2 on any Athletics test until you either Take Time to get it in a brace or wake up the next day.



PROBLEM 17

**Marty's Got Your Notebook**

If you thought Marty wanted you, you've got another think coming, sister. Marty wants to know what you know... and not just about this case. Marty might be willing to give it back for money or information.



PROBLEM 18

**I Owe You One**

Other reporters get in bed with the mob, but you always swore that'd never be you. You just hope when Marty calls in his favor he'll be gentleman enough to let up after that.



PROBLEM 19

### Two Masters

Now you've got a bona fide mob enforcer waiting for your call. Better not forget to clue him in when all this is over.



PROBLEM 20

### Cocky

You feel really good about how well you did. Too good. Take a -2 to your next Sense Trouble test.



PROBLEM 21


### All Shook Up

You are not coping well *at all*. Until you Take Time to counter this card, take a -2 to Cool and Stability tests.



PROBLEM 22

### Haunted

**Mythos Shock** : Neither alcohol nor drugs can erase the knowledge that such horrors exist or that their paths can cross ours.



PROBLEM 23

### Evicted

Viv's landlady gives her and her roommate until the end of the month to get out.



PROBLEM 24

### On Probation

Your editor is keeping an extra close eye on your comings and goings. Better not put a foot out of line.



## Fatal Frequencies Edge Cards

EDGE 1

### Ice Queen

You're getting better about prioritizing the things that matter. Spend to refocus and get an extra die on Cool or Stability or a +2 on General/Mental tests, then discard.



EDGE 2

### Sure-Footed

You know exactly where to put your feet, even if that's in someone else's path. Spend for an extra die in an Athletics test.



EDGE 3

### Pulled it Together

It didn't start pretty, but you finished with a flair. Spend for +2 on any Athletics or Fighting test.



EDGE 4

### Cat Burglar

You're becoming an old hand at this. Spend for an extra die on Stealth or Shadowing.



EDGE 5

### The World Must Know

You've stumbled into the middle of a massive cover-up. No ordinary man could have done this, and police must know it. You have a cause. Discard to gain a Push.



EDGE 6

### Professional Ethics

You may end up sleeping on a friend's couch, but nobody can smear your sterling reputation. Spend for an extra die on Cool or Stability or a +2 on a General/Mental test and discard.



EDGE 7

### Marty's Respect

*Continuity*

You've proven yourself one tough broad. Spend this card to get a favor from Marty — just be sure it's the kind of favor you can live with.



EDGE 8

### Sharp Reflexes

Spend for an extra die on any Athletics or Fighting test.



EDGE 9

### On Edge


You've pulled together the focus and control under pressure that make you an excellent investigative reporter. Spend to gain an extra die to Mental tests.



EDGE 10

### Unflappable

You've seen hell's gates open and still held it together. Spend to Counter a Mythos Shock Problem.



EDGE 11

### Good Citizen

*Continuity*


Doing what you can to make this world a better place. Spend this card for a Push.



EDGE 12

### Still a Castle


It may not be much, but it's yours and you can protect it. Spend for an extra die on any Athletics or Fighting test or a +2 on General/Physical tests.



EDGE 13

### Hardship Pay

You convince your editor that the paper's lucky to have such a dedicated a reporter as you on its staff. You not only turn the situation around but manage to talk him into a raise. Counters Problem 2, "Hand-to-Mouth," if held.





**WARTIME**

**DOC**

featuring

**LANGSTON MONTGOMERY WRIGHT**

in

**CAPITOL COLOUR**



# LANGSTON MONTGOMERY WRIGHT

*I, too, sing America.*

*I am the darker brother.*

*They send me to eat in the kitchen*

*When company comes,*

*But I laugh,*

*And eat well,*

*And grow strong.*

*Tomorrow,*

*I'll be at the table*

*When company comes.*

*Nobody'll dare*

*Say to me,*

*"Eat in the kitchen,"*

*Then.*

*Besides,*

*They'll see how beautiful I am*

*And be ashamed—*

*I, too, am America.*

— Langston Hughes, *I, Too*

Welcome to the home front in Washington, DC: a time and place of hope under the crushing weight of the war, corruption, and rampant racism. You are stepping into the shoes of a down-on-his-luck, wounded war-hero-turned-two-bit-shamus, fighting for those who have no one else.

The war bolsters the once-crippled economy and the sleepy capital of the United States is transforming into the Goliath that it will become in the modern day; industrialization and backroom dealings are the norm. The streets are safe, with hundreds of soldiers and heavy artillery strategically placed around the city to knock out any enemy Jerrys or fifth columnists.

But there is something more sinister in the dark corners of the city: those smoky back rooms with politicians selling the souls of their constituents for a little more power and a lot more wealth, sacrificing anything to keep their elected office. They are the players destroying people's lives and hopes, shattering their sanity.

Langston Wright's story boils down to one good black man doing the best he can against the rising tide, and making the hard choices no matter the cost.

It's up to you to give the people a moment's hope in the dying of the light, for just one more day. One more day of rationing, working, and enduring the oppressive Jim Crow laws. One more day without getting killed.

Langston is driven by his sense of scholarship to expand human knowledge and understand those things he does not know. His life changed during that secret Axis attack at the Casablanca Conference. Langston saved a dozen people, but he still has the shrapnel in his body. The wound forced him to return home with an honorable discharge, while the war raged on without him.





# LANGSTON MONTGOMERY WRIGHT

*Private Eye*

## INVESTIGATIVE ABILITIES

- Assess Honesty (👤👤)
- Bargain (👤)
- Chemistry (⚙️)
- Cop Talk (👤👤)
- Cryptography (📄)
- Evidence Collection (⚙️)
- Flattery (👤👤)
- Inspiration (👤)
- Intimidation (👤👤)
- Languages (📄)
- Oral History (👤👤)
- Physics (📄)
- Psychology (👤)
- Reassurance (👤👤)
- Research (📄)
- Streetwise (👤)

## GENERAL ABILITIES

- Athletics (●)
- Cool (●)
- Disguise (●)
- Driving (●)
- Fighting (●●)
- Filch (●)
- First Aid (●)
- Fleeing (●●)
- Preparedness (●)
- Sense Trouble (●●)
- Shadowing (●)
- Stability (●●)
- Stealth (●)

## STORY

Langston Montgomery Wright is an African American WWII vet who battled Nazis across Europe until he took shrapnel saving some GIs. He was honorably discharged, and sent home to Washington, DC, a city that's near busting. He's a second class citizen trying to make a place for himself in a world that challenges him at every turn. He uses his smarts, morals and willingness to do whatever it takes to make rent, solving cases and battling enemies, one mythos threat at a time.

### *Personalizing Langston*

To make Langston more personal, have the player answer the following questions:

1. Langston had five siblings, but they didn't all survive to adulthood. How many died, and how?
2. What is Langston's favorite drink? (Bourbon is always a classic if in doubt.)
3. Is Langston religious? If so, which religion? If not, why not?
4. What does he enjoy the most about his one day a week at the Naval Observatory?
5. Langston is a week behind on the rent. How did he handle his landlord when he met him yesterday?

A month after recovering, he found a part-time job, working one day a week at the Naval Observatory at 3450 Massachusetts Avenue NW. Originally hired to process astronomical data, he's more often tasked with keeping the telescope in running order. It's not enough to pay his rent, but it's better than cleaning toilets. He has access to a car: it's on loan from his friend and former boss, OSS chief "Wild Bill" Donovan, to help with his recovery. Any day now, though, Donovan might ask for it back. Still, favors from friends is the best Langston can hope for. Like many black veterans learn after returning home from the war, Langston knows that the Government will not provide for him and has no plans to do so, regardless of his service. But at least in his own neighborhood, Langston is considered a hero, a vet, and a stand-up guy.

## Friends, Acquaintances, and Rivals

### William “Wild Bill” Donovan, Friend:

Soldier, lawyer, and diplomat turned intelligence operative, after being hand-picked in 1942 by President Franklin D. Roosevelt to found the Office of Strategic Services (OSS), America’s first national intelligence agency.

Langston was assigned as Donovan’s driver in 1941 while he served as Roosevelt’s unofficial emissary to Britain. Donovan discovered Langston’s gift for languages and drafted him into the army under the OSS as a codebreaker, but under the guise of being his driver/steward. Both of them knew that, as a black man, Langston was practically invisible, which enabled him to acquire intelligence few others could. Still active on the war front, Donovan values Langston’s skills. He has even supplied him with his current car, which he has nicknamed Adelaide.

### Detective Calvin Watts, Fair-Weather

**Rival:** Watts is one of just a few black police officers, following nearly a century later in the footsteps of Charles Tillman— one of the first African Americans to join the force and eventually advance to detective in the District— Watts does whatever it takes to close his cases. He and Langston have crossed paths a few times, and he knows the egghead gets the job done, no matter what. He will offer some help — but always at a price, since Langston once cost Watts a promotion by solving a case before he did.

**Miguel Balcazar, Acquaintance:** Miguel is a Hispanic dock-worker who came to DC with the mass population boom of the war. Occasionally he helps make a crate or two disappear for the right price, but mostly he keeps to himself and under the radar of his supervisors. Langston and Miguel have a passing business relationship: Langston has paid him for tips about activity on the docks.

**Laura Wayne, Acquaintance:** Laura owns Langston’s favorite jazz club: the Club Caverns, a black-owned-and-operated joint that has hosted such artists as Cab Calloway and Duke Ellington. It is where he goes to relax, to forget a tough case, or to escape the memories of the war. The music is always hopping, the booze flowing, and the company divine. Laura and Langston were lovers in the past, but neither considers it anything of note.

**James Jackson, Friend:** James is a janitor at the Pentagon and an aspiring actor who spends all of his free time watching movies and listening to radio serials, hoping that one day he will get his big break. James knows that radio is the only opportunity for a black person to get a good part, other than playing a waiter or a mammy. Langston and James frequently bump into each other at the few black nightclubs, and James has helped Langston come up with some mannerisms to help conceal his identity when he needs to.

## Sources

### ROSAMUND CARTER

#### Professor of Sociology & Anthropology

Brilliant and sharp-eyed, Professor Carter is a legacy of Howard University (see p. 224), with each generation of her African American family having taught at the institution since its inception. Hidden beneath looks that rival those of movie star Nina Mae McKinney is one of the shrewdest minds in all of DC.

Few would believe that Langston and she are friends, due to her firm belief in the supernatural





and his adherence to science. The two met a decade ago while Wright was taking an advanced class in Latin, after Langston graduated from Harvard with a degree in physics and sought his Masters in linguistics at Howard. She asked him why he was pursuing this new degree, but he just smiled and said, “Why not? Life is learning, and it is our duty to make our lives better than those of our parents. Plus, there is power in knowledge.” The two became fast friends.

Rosamund views Langston’s studies and adventures with a wary eye, but knows he would go mad if he did not have a little action. Besides, it’s a chance for him to see the real truth of the world: the world that can’t be measured or quantified with an equation; a world where the Great Old Ones sleep and await their chance. She dispenses “truth” to him in a slightly cryptic manner to ease him into it, in the hopes of not shattering his sanity with knowledge of the Cthulhu Mythos, but still providing him enough information to allow him to reach his own conclusions. When not in her office or working with undergrads, she is nearly always found in the library, studying and working on her plan to become Dean, hoping to follow in the footsteps of Lucy Diggs Slowe, the first female Dean of Women. She frequently spends nights surrounded by books while smoking her favorite brand of cigarettes, Lucky Strikes.

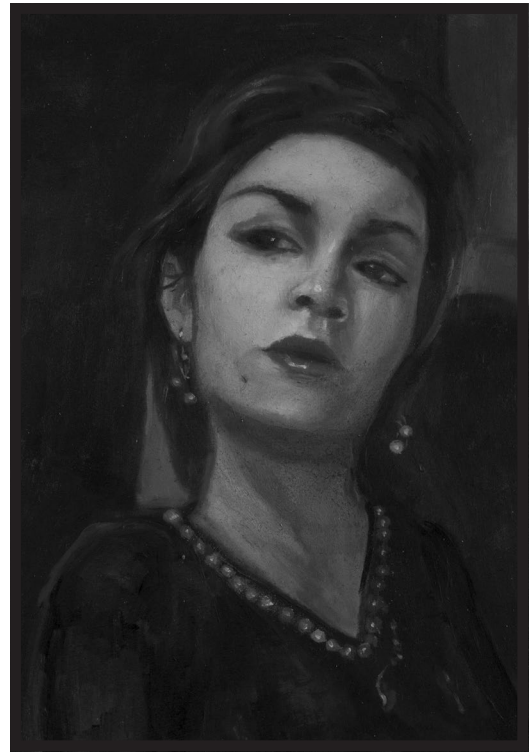
**Investigative Abilities:** Anthropology, Archaeology, Art, Cthulhu Mythos, History, Occult, Research.

**MYRNA BETTY COHEN**

**Insider at Department of Agriculture** 

Myrna has the personal power to command the attention of everyone around her. This magnetism, coupled with her perfectionist tendencies and sharp wit, makes her a force to be reckoned with. Even her superiors recognize her insight, and frequently come to her about their next decision. She is a white Jewish woman who has risen to the best position available to her, which is still below her capabilities.

Myrna is the better half and fiancée of Hal Rappaport, one of Langston’s OSS squad mates. Langston saved Hal’s life during the Casablanca attack, and when that forever changed Langston



and sent him back to the U.S., Myrna took it upon herself to look out for the wounded vet and help him settle into life on the home front. Langston protested, but Myrna would have none of it, and the two have established an almost familial relationship: the kind of relationship that only people in the military, either through service or marriage, can fully understand. She almost sees keeping Langston safe as protecting Hal overseas. Myrna can be found every night praying for Hal’s safe return at the Adas Israel Synagogue at 600 I Street NW.

Myrna’s position as the social secretary at the Department of Agriculture gives her a surprising amount of administrative power. She is always in the know about various aspects of the war, based on the comings and goings of foreign diplomats. And after years of helping her lawyer father, she has an incredible grasp of the legal system. As a side-project, she has also taken it upon herself to find Langston a wife and frequently inquires about his dating life, much to his chagrin.

**Investigative Abilities:** Accounting, Architecture, Art History, Bureaucracy, Flattery, Law.

**REVEREND ERNEST THOMPSON****Pastor of Nineteenth Street Baptist Church** 

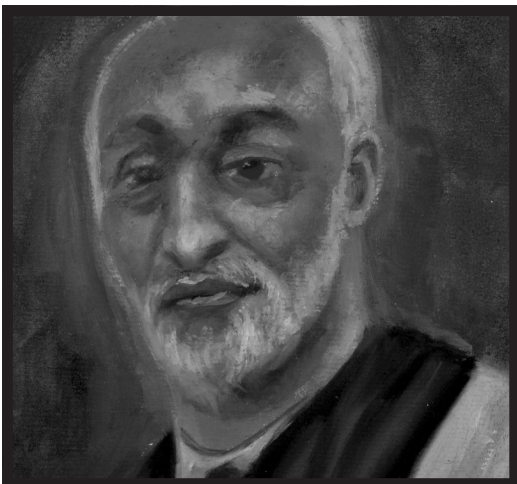
The reverend is a wall of a man: once all muscle, he has turned slightly soft with the passing of decades. Always dressed for services, he has a warm smile to share with anyone and everyone. Ernest has the vitality of a person three decades younger than his sixty-six years: Only his full grey beard and the thinning white hair peeking out from under his hat reveal his true age.

Ernest served as chaplain and combat medic for the all African American 1<sup>st</sup> Separate Battalion of the 372<sup>nd</sup> Infantry Regiment in World War I. Ernest watched the war destroy people, and then witnessed the horror that awaited veterans of color upon their return home, denied their rights and being killed by white people who feared they had become too self-important. Only activity kept the veterans grounded and focused.

A few weeks after Langston started working at the Naval Observatory, Ernest asked for help to solve the murder of one of his church's members. The police refused to investigate, and several congregants who gathered at the police station were arrested. Since then, Ernest has advised his congregants that Langston has an open door for those in need when the police refuse to help.

Ernest always has a flask of whiskey on him, and the two have spent many evenings drinking and playing cards and talking about their time at war — therapy for both of them.

**Investigative Abilities:** Biology, Medicine, Oral History, Pharmacy, Theology.

**CORNELIUS "SCOUT" MOORE****Journalist** 

The flash of a camera always announces Cornelius. He is on a crusade for that groundbreaking story that will jump-start his career, whether it's about Axis spies, corrupt police, questionable politicians, or gangsters shooting up soldiers. Cornelius' crimson, horn-rimmed glasses, camera, notepad with pen, and tattered suit are his weapons and armor on the streets.



Cornelius' parents were killed by the Ku Klux Klan, and he was taken in by his aunt and uncle in Auburn, Alabama. Though cousins, Langston and Cornelius have become like brothers, growing up in the harsh realities of the Jim-Crow South to a farmer father and a nightclub singer and teacher mother, alongside five other siblings. The family fled Alabama during the Great Migration to find a better life for the family.

When Cornelius tried to enlist in the army in 1941, he was turned away like many other African Americans, who were considered lesser. He has taken part in every march in DC for civil rights, and got his nickname for scouting out areas before marches. He believes that a change is going to come.

Scout loves listening to Langston’s stories about beating the bad guys and what he did in the war. He knows his cousin would be more effective if he got a P.I. license, and has wasted countless hours trying to convince him.

**Investigative Abilities:** Assess Honesty, Cop Talk, Craft, Locksmith, Photography.

**LT. COL MELVIN HARTMAN**  
**Office of Strategic Services Officer** 

Everyone tells Hartman he has movie-star looks. Unfortunately, the movie star in question is Peter Lorre, but he has made those looks work for him. Standing barely five feet tall, weighing one hundred pounds, and cursed with a near-constant sweating problem no matter the weather, life has taught Hartman to handle the disrespect he often endures, and not break under pressure. People rarely notice him, and if they do, they underestimate how smart he is — a fact he has used to his advantage to move up the ranks. He is always dressed in his uniform, with his .45 pistol on his left side.

As a gay man serving in the military, Melvin keeps his secrets close, and has few people that he trusts. Revealing his orientation would instantly see him kicked out of the army, and likely thrown in prison — possibly even executed overseas. He worked closely with Langston when both were in the OSS; they respect each other and know each other’s secrets. It brings Hartman endless pleasure to see Langston solving crimes, and he is keen to help in any way he can, frequently trying to play



Mycroft to Langston’s Sherlock. While his OSS duties limit his free time, Hartman does what he can when asked. To the extent that his stateside available resources are minimal, he has been known to use army resources to help his friend, or arrange for him to receive extra gas rations.

**Investigative Abilities:** Astronomy, Forensics, Geology, Languages, Outdoorsman.



**THE  
HOME FRONT**

*“Yesterday, December 7, 1941 — a date which will live in infamy — the United States of America was suddenly and deliberately attacked by naval and air forces of the Empire of Japan.”*

— Franklin Roosevelt, *infamy speech*



# THE HOME FRONT

World War II involved every major power on the planet, leaving death and carnage in its wake and bringing vast changes socially, economically, and morally. The war washed over America and became its primary focus from 1942 through 1945, requiring intense military, diplomatic, and production effort, fundamentally changing the entire country.

America in the early forties was very much an isolationist country, focused on itself as it slowly recovered from the Great Depression that spanned most of the 1930s. The Great Depression wrought widespread poverty and unemployment. Most of the American public opposed entering the war until December 7<sup>th</sup>, 1941, and the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor. In the 1970 movie *Tora! Tora! Tora!*, Japanese Admiral Isoroku Yamamoto states, “I fear all we have done is to awaken a sleeping giant and fill him with a terrible resolve.”

A sleeping giant indeed. That attack galvanized the United States into action, with President Roosevelt declaring war the following day. The president had been providing assistance to the Allies with Lend-Leases, which meant he authorized the provision of arms to governments of any country vital to the defense of the United States. He also provided intelligence and aid before Pearl Harbor, but now America turned into a war machine, with all of its people dedicated to the cause.

## Wartime Economy

When the United States entered World War II, it did so with a focus on industrial might, and became the largest producer during the war. This virtually eradicated unemployment; while millions

of (white) men were in the military, industry was forced to begin accepting women, blacks, the elderly, and other workers whom they would not have considered before the war.

This swift change to war production affected every business in the United States. Soft-drink manufacturers loaded shell casings, toy companies made compasses, piano factories made airplane parts. One of the first things Donald M. Nelson, head of the War Production Board (WPB), did was order Ford Motor Company to produce only B-24 Liberator bombers. A number of automobile companies did not produce cars for the years 1942–1944, as they were contributing to the war effort during that time.

President Roosevelt called on the American people to work harder, and they did. By the end of the war, the United States had produced more than twice as many goods as all the Axis countries combined.

## Daily Life

Before the war, America was recovering from the Great Depression with families working, going to school, and coming home to listen to the radio: a little *Amos 'n' Andy*, *The Avenger*, or *The Adventures of Sam Spade*. When America entered the war, daily life greatly changed; rationing, scarcity, and patriotism become common conversational subjects, and the government’s propaganda push to prepare the nation meant everyone had an answer to the question “What are you doing to help out the boys over there?”

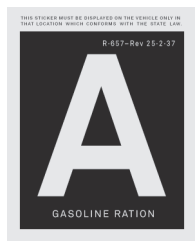
The Office of Price Administration (OPA) was created by the president and tasked with developing a consumer rationing plan for the

war effort, as some of the country's supplies had been cut off by the war: the supply of rubber, for example, was blocked by Japan's expansion into Asia's rubber-producing areas.

The OPA created a system of certified rationing, and staffed thousands of rationing stations across the US. Starting on May 4, 1942, every family received a coupon book with various colored stamps and stickers. The stamps were part of a per-person, point-based system. "Red Stamp" rationing covered all meats, butter, fat, oils, and cheese, with expiration dates. "Blue Stamp" rationing covered canned, bottled, and processed foods (soups, baby food, ketchup, etc.) as well as frozen fruits/vegetables and juices. Ration stamps were an unofficial currency.

### Gas Ration Stickers

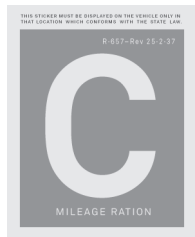
Speed limit was changed to maximum of 35 mph to limit wear on tires and to conserve gas



[A] 4 (later 3) gallons of gas.  
*Black.*



[B] Extra driving (war plant worker or carpool.) *Green.*



[C] Essential duties.  
*Red.*



[X] Unlimited gas.  
*Black.*

People were encouraged to grow victory gardens, donate scrap metal and rubber, drive less, and tighten their belts. The need for metal was so great that wooden fences became the norm as metal gates were donated. Temporary housing, with spaces for hundreds of people per building, sprang up overnight to cater for the more than 13 million people relocating to business centers for work.

## Propaganda

The propaganda machine was almost as important as the production of aircraft and ammunition. Propaganda fed the people's spirits, distracted them from the rationing, and helped them feel they were a vital part of the war effort, and their every little action helped their husbands, cousins, or pals who were away fighting.

The radio became the greatest tool in the propaganda war, with President Roosevelt talking directly to the people during his "fireside chats." This was the first time a president had ever regularly communicated with the citizens. During the talks, he quelled rumors and explained policies in a way people could understand; his self-assured way gave the people confidence.

Radio shows changed, with Sam Spade, the Shadow, and others battling fifth columnists and Axis spies on the home front. Comic books became a weapon to raise morale, with the legendary first issue of Captain America showing the star-spangled hero punching Hitler right in the kisser. Hollywood created movies about the war for the boys over there and the people at home, demonstrating American courage and bravery: This Is the Army actually cast 300 soldiers.

## Minorities and the War

World War II's impact on minority groups was enormous, as the exigencies of war made it a time of massive social change. Women began working in roles that were traditionally considered male, but they remained responsible for the home.

Racial tensions rose: the hypocrisy of America's fight for equality abroad, while not all its own citizens were treated equally, angered minority communities. Philip Randolph, the



## *A Day in the Life: Langston Wright*

Most days, Langston starts his day drinking coffee at a local black diner, set up in a corner booth and flipping through the paper. Often, his breakfast is interrupted by a member of the community, seeking his help. One day each week, he dresses in his colorful suspenders, black homburg, and suit, and takes the bus to work at the Naval Observatory. He pays the same fare as everyone else, and then moves to the back of the bus, which is designated for blacks. People pile onto the bus as it goes through different neighborhoods, making its way to Northwest DC. If all of the white seats are filled, making up two-thirds of the bus, the white bus driver demands Langston give up his seat for any whites getting on board. If he doesn't, he will be kicked off of the bus at the very least, but he also could face arrest, physical violence, and even losing his job if his white supervisor finds out. The thought that his money doesn't buy him the same level of respect as the white riders lingers in his mind.

Arriving at work after a lengthy bus ride, a thirsty Langston must pass by fifteen well-maintained water fountains before he finds a dirty and barely functioning fountain with a sign hanging from it, reading Colored. Then he rushes back to the office, entering through a side door while his white counterparts enter through the front door.

While he is more intelligent and better educated than a number of his co-workers, Langston is only given the simplest of tasks, and questioned constantly if he dares to offer feedback. His colleagues watch every move he makes, eager to tell the "boy" what he is doing wrong. They make his work life a constant challenge, with the only reward being the occasional few seconds of self-respect.

After work, he makes his way to a blacks-only or blacks-friendly bar, watching a military jeep full of white soldiers speed past him. While it would be shorter to cut through the Cleveland Park neighborhood, he takes the longer route, adding an hour to his travel time to avoid the police who would be only too happy to arrest him for being in the "wrong" area.

Even at the bar having a few drinks, Langston knows he can't drink too much. He always has to stay in control. He can't shout — can't lose his cool — or he may not live another day.

president of the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters (a black union) and a civil rights movement leader, saw that after World War I, black soldiers received a pretty parade but no jobs, benefits, or anything else in thanks for their service. A firm believer in the power of peaceful direct action as a force for change, in 1941 he organized over 50,000 blacks to march on Washington, DC, to demonstrate that while America claimed to fight for freedom and equality, the country actively practiced racism at home.

In response to Randolph's proposed march, President Roosevelt issued Executive Order 8802, which banned racial discrimination in hiring for the national defense industry, but he still refused to address segregation and discrimination in the military. The march was cancelled, and people of color were given equal opportunities — on paper. In reality, people of color who were hired were frequently given the worst jobs, and they were hired in smaller numbers, with no ability to change positions like their white counterparts had. Langston's position at the Naval Observatory is directly related to this order. Without it, even with his knowledge and service, he would certainly have been turned away.

Despite suffering under these unbearable circumstances, those people of color who could do so joined the armed forces, and served in some of the most recognized units. The contribution of these brave soldiers to groups such as the 761<sup>st</sup> Tank Battalion, and the Nisei 442<sup>nd</sup> Regimental Combat Group, would not be fully recognized for many years.



Cornelius turns to Langston for help. Another protest-planning session was raided and everyone present was arrested. The police claim to be targeting drug rings. This is the third time this has happened, and people are getting scared. Langston discovers that one of the members of the movement is a police informant, and has been planting drugs at the planning sessions where key leaders are, in an attempt to discredit them.



**WARTIME DC**



*“Man A is walking along when he sees Man B calling for help in the Potomac. Man A rushes to the riverside and inquires as to where Man B lives. Upon getting the answer, Man A rushes off to this address. He asks the landlord about a room to rent, confident he’ll receive the drowned man’s room. The landlord replies that it’s already been rented. “How can that be,” Man A asks, agape. The landlord replies, “It’s been rented to the man who pushed him.”*

– Source unknown, *popular joke about the DC housing crisis*

# WARTIME DC

Washington, DC, in 1943 is a city of hope draped in the lingering shroud of a delayed death, which can best be described in three words: metamorphosis, secrecy, and power. The nation's capital is known as the seat of democracy and freedom, but beneath that shiny veneer lies a darker truth of corruption, overcrowding, bad housing, crime, and a place where all you can hope to do is to delay the inevitable for one more day.

## War Effort in Washington

The military quickly mounted anti-aircraft guns around Washington, protecting both residents and its monuments and institutions. The guns became such a part of daily life that tourists would pose for pictures with them outside Federal buildings. Hundreds of army troops from nearby Fort Myer, across the Potomac River in Arlington, Virginia, began occupying the city.

To further protect the city from attack, Congress has ordered an emergency measure to turn off the spotlights around the city. Blackout curtains were installed on most government buildings and in private homes, and the Sunday drone of an air-raid signal is a constant reminder of war.

Numerous new government agencies cropped up overnight to handle the constantly changing demands of the war, ranging from the War Production Board (WPB) that helps businesses switch from peacetime endeavors to war production, to the Office of Strategic Services (OSS) which was the first United States espionage effort.

Stage Door Canteens, offering servicemen nights of dancing, entertainment, food, and

nonalcoholic drinks along with the chance to rub elbows with celebrities, were held at the Belasco Theater to raise money for the war effort and boost morale.

## Life in Wartime Washington

The switch to a defense footing has ignited urban growth. The population of Washington boomed during the war, with hundreds of people coming to town every day to fill new administrative and factory jobs, or just to seek a better life. They arrived by bus, by train into Union Station, or by air to the National Airport. Government rationing on gas and tires made it difficult to travel long distance by automobile, so the new transplants make good use of Washington's streetcar system.

The average salary for workers in Washington ranged from \$2,000–3,000 a year, with 50-hour work weeks expected before overtime. Food and a bed to sleep in cost at least half the average salary of a white worker. The flood of new people overran the finite housing available, and as Washington became a 24/7 city with activities going on around the clock, some apartments allowed sleeping in shifts to accommodate the insatiable demand. Alley cities began springing up overnight for the poor, and the government made efforts to build temporary housing as Washington's population more than doubled.

Despite these hardships, the people of Washington felt a common bond. Every family either had someone serving, or knew someone fighting, on the front. This bond encouraged people to work harder toward the war effort, resulting in victory gardens, scrap drives, and adhering to the new rules of less driving and less consumption

in general. Those in Washington may have been smiling, but they never forgot that any second the bomb could drop.

This realization aided Washingtonians in dealing with the military occupation of their city. It was common to see soldiers manning a machine gun atop the WPB building or walking down U Street. This enhanced military presence bolstered public morale by giving a good show of keeping the city safe from Axis plots. It also reduces criminal activity, as would-be crooks were dissuaded by the thought that a police car and a squad of soldiers could descend on them at any time.

## The City

The origins of the city are steeped in mysticism. The occultist and Freemason Pierre Charles L'Enfant, who was hand-picked for the job in 1790 by President George Washington (also a Freemason), designed the city based on the Seal of Solomon. This would give the wisdom and power of Solomon to the king (or president) to command spirits and demons, to speak with animals, to control primordial forces, and to practice alchemy. When L'Enfant was fired, his replacement Andrew Ellicott (another Mason) revised the plans to include more symbols and patterns, and to enhance the Baroque architecture style of the city.

The Senate Park Commission of 1901 instituted the McMillan Plan, an early urban renewal scheme that aimed to tear down slums and build public monuments and government offices in the city center. World War I changed the plan: the city's population nearly doubled, from 280,000 to 525,000 by 1918. This forced a move to temporary buildings and cheap office spaces, abandoning the idea of constructing regal European-style buildings that would establish Washington, DC as a seat of power on a global scale.

African Americans have made up a significant population of Washington since its inception, with their back-breaking slave labor making it a viable capital. After the Emancipation Proclamation in 1863, thousands of freed slaves flocked to Washington, and in 1868 Congress allowed African Americans the right to vote in municipal elections. This opened the door to African Americans

acquiring jobs in the government.

In 1913, President Woodrow Wilson introduced segregation into Federal departments for the first time since 1863, destroying with a wave of his hand much of the progress African Americans had made in the city. However, the increased population would later lead to Washington becoming a hub of black business, culture, the Civil Rights Movement, and higher learning.

Washington stands on low ground near the coast, leading to hot, humid summers and pleasant springs and falls. Most winters are mild, but an occasional snowstorm can close the city down for days. The District of Columbia is bordered by Maryland on three sides, and sits across the Potomac River from Virginia on its fourth. Washington itself is bisected by the Anacostia River, and composed of four quadrants (Northwest, Northeast, Southwest, and Southeast) centered the Capitol.

### NORTHWEST (NW)

The largest and most prosperous of the District's four quadrants is located north of the National Mall, and west of North Capitol Street. NW contains the central business district, Federal Triangle, and the well-to-do neighborhoods of Cleveland Park, Dupont, Embassy Row, and Glover Park. It also has most of the college campuses such as George Washington University, Howard University, and Georgetown University.

**The White House** (1600 Pennsylvania Avenue NW) has been the home of every president since 1800, and is one of the most haunted places in the United States. Ghosts have been spotted throughout the house, from the attic to the Rose Garden. The most frequently encountered specter is that of former president Abraham Lincoln, whose restless soul roams the building in a constant search for something forever out of his grasp.

**Howard University** (known as Mecca or simply Howard) (2400 6<sup>th</sup> Street NW) is a Federally chartered, private, coeducational, nonsectarian, historically black university. A hub of African American scholastic achievement, Howard University has played an important role in American history and the Civil Rights Movement. In 1942, Howard University students pioneered the

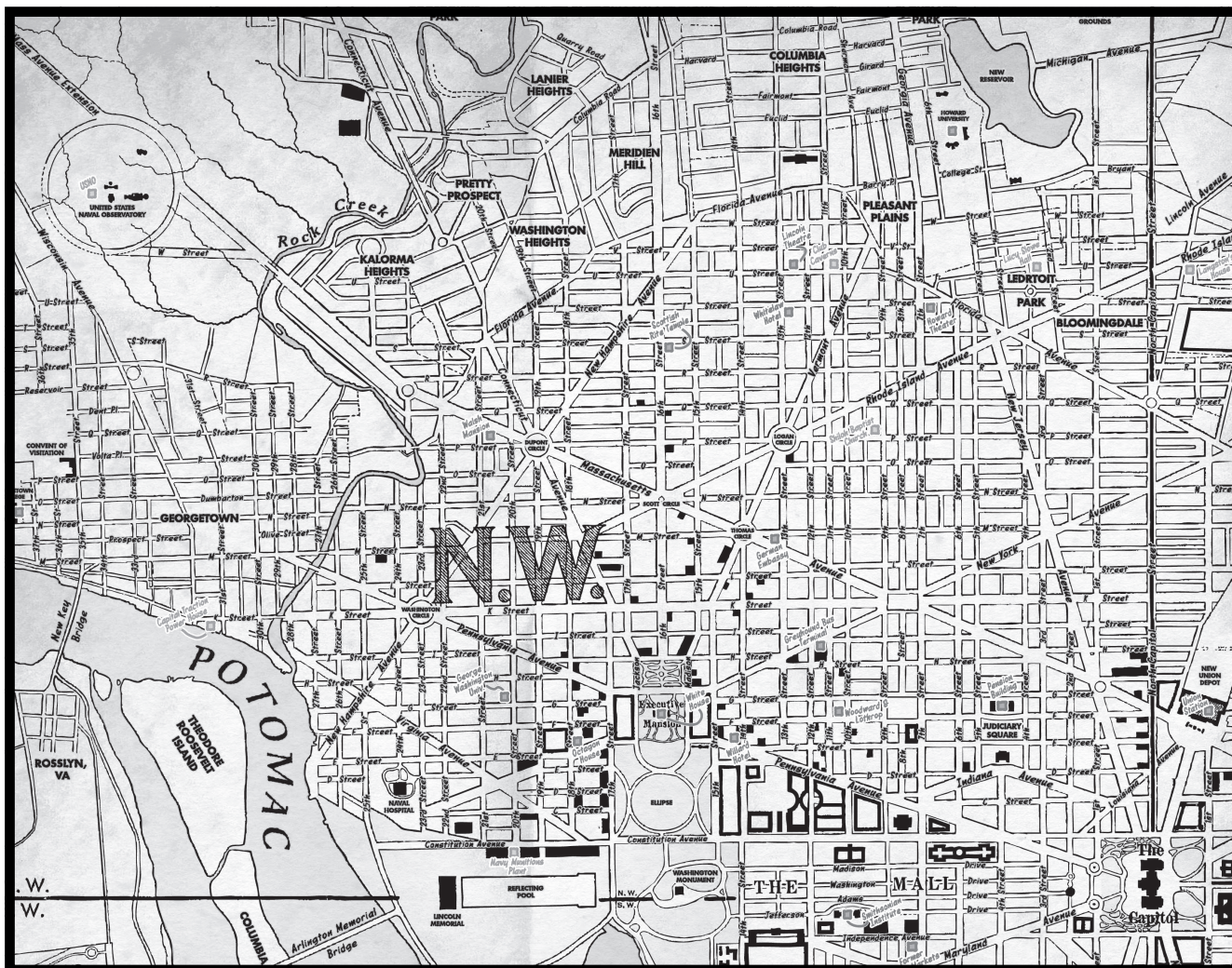


# WASHINGTON, D.C., 'CRIME CAPITOL'



# 'CTHULHU CONFIDENTIAL'





“stool sitting” technique, a peaceful tactic to force change by having protestors fill available space in a business. By January of 1943, students have begun to organize regular sit-ins and pickets at cafeterias around Washington, DC, that refuse to serve them because of their race.

**Howard Theater** (620 T Street NW) opened in 1910. The theater is known to its African American patrons as the “Theater of the People,” hosting great black musical artists such as Pearl Bailey, Sammy Davis, Jr., and Lena Horne. It also supports two local theatrical organizations: the Lafayette Players and the Howard University Players. The theater features an orchestra, balcony seats, and eight proscenium boxes. In ’41 it underwent reconstruction, changing to a more Streamline Moderne style. President Roosevelt

and the First Lady can frequently be found here attending balls, watching performers like Danny Kaye and Cesar Romero.

The **Octagon House** (1799 New York Avenue NW) is purported to be one of the most haunted homes in DC. Despite the name, the house is hexagonal, and was built to maximize space on its plot of land. It was designed in 1798 by William Thornton, the first architect of the United States Capitol, for Colonel John Tayloe III. Tayloe was reputed to be the richest Virginian planter of the time, owning Mount Airy Plantation in Richmond County, Virginia, which employed hundreds of slaves. Twelve to eighteen slaves worked at the Octagon House in that time.

The home quickly became associated with horror due to the restless spirits haunting it. The



oldest known effect is the ringing of the servant's call bells by the spirits of murdered slaves, who can often be heard howling in pain. It is also haunted by Tayloe's two daughters, who each fell to their deaths from the third floor after separate heated arguments with their father. It is unknown whether they fell, were pushed, or jumped. The first daughter's crumpled form can be found at the foot of the large winding staircase at the center of the house, while the other sister haunts the third floor. The Colonel himself also haunts the house.



The Colonel knew of the L'Enfant plan and its symbols of power, but did not comprehend the Ellicott disruption of the symbols. He believed that by sacrificing those he loved, it would grant him eternal life and prosperity. In a sense, he was right: while their spirits haunt the house, their bodies are ghosts, which deliver a similar fate to anyone owning the house. Each death adds to their number.

**Walsh Mansion** is a Second Empire style mansion located at 2020 Massachusetts Avenue NW. A penniless Thomas J. Walsh emigrated from Ireland to the United States in 1869 and built a fortune as a carpenter, miner, and hotel manager. The Walsh family moved permanently to DC and constructed the home in 1903. This exquisite manor has 60 rooms, a theater, a ballroom, a French salon, a grand staircase, and millions of dollars in furnishings. After his death, his daughter Evalyn lived in the manor with her husband Edward McLean, heir to the publishing family that owned the *Washington Post*. In 1910, Ned bought Evalyn the "cursed" Hope Diamond. Over the next thirty years, her nine-year-old son died in a car accident, her daughter died of a drug overdose, Ned left her for another woman and died in a sanitarium, and the *Washington Post* went bankrupt.

Doing her part for the war effort, Evalyn is loaning the house rent-free to the Red Cross. The nurses use the home for training and for making surgical dressings.



Evalyn does not believe all of that mumbo-jumbo about a curse, but has heard rattling in the house and unusual static from her radio. Fearful of another Gaston Means (a

corrupt treasury agent who fleeced her for over \$100K during the missing Lindbergh baby ordeal), and with eyes on her last few million, she hires Langston to investigate the radio static. The Hope Diamond is a piece of the Black Pharaoh's treasury; a Child of the Sphinx has been seeking to return it and has arranged the death of everyone that has touched it. With a jackal head atop a muscular human frame, the Child of the Sphinx stands slightly under six-feet in its long flowing back robes. The creature's armored flesh, magic use, and ability to transform make it a deadly force.

A lavish Washington, DC, institution, the **Willard Hotel** (1401 Pennsylvania Avenue NW) has been host to elegant dinners, meetings, and gala social events for nearly a hundred years. A bustling place, the lobby is full of servicemen, businessmen, and government girls. It's not uncommon to run into government officials and dignitaries, and maybe even some spies from the Office of Strategic Services practicing their intelligence skills there. In fact, Ulysses S. Grant coined the term "lobbyist" from all the people pushing their agendas in that same lobby. Visitors and workers in the hotel claim to have seen President Grant's ghost sitting in his favorite spot in the lobby, puffing on a cigar with wisps of smoke circling around him.

**Woodward & Lothrop** (1025 F Street NW) is more like a city within the city than a mere department store. Woodies, as it is often called, is housed in a mammoth 400,000-square-foot retail space, its exterior decorated in cast iron with leaded glass accents. It is the place to shop for a large swath of Washingtonians, but like most of the District's white-owned department stores, Woodies caters to whites only – not allowing African Americans to shop or dine there, maintaining separate restrooms, and hiring few minorities.

**Uptown Theater** (3424 Connecticut Avenue NW) is located in Cleveland Park and was constructed in 1936. The theater is considered to be one the best screens in the metro area and draws the Hollywood elite. The theater seats over 1,120.

**J** The Army Emergency Relief is showing This Is the Army as their annual fundraiser, with Marlene Dietrich as host, but they have had a number of power fluctuations and cannot narrow down what the power issue is. Langston is assigned to investigate the cause. Larry Jenkins is an electrician, and the only surviving member of a fifth-columnist cell plotting to overthrow the US Government. The FBI raided its safe house, and he escaped with pieces of an Elder Thing device and the journal of Max Well, the cell leader. He doesn't know what else to do, so he intends to carry out its mission by assembling the machine. He doesn't know what it will do, but Well told him it would bring chaos down on DC. The device is actually a summoning circle for nightgaunts, and will call a horde of them to descend on Washington when it is assembled.

The **Greyhound Bus Terminal** is located in downtown DC along the stretch of New York Avenue between 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> Streets NW. Completed in 1940, the terminal is a classic art deco (or modern) landmark. The terminal has become a hub for servicemen and other government workers who are coming to the city to fuel the war effort. It is common to see long lines of soldiers and their sweethearts, as well as patrolling military police assigned to stop any servicemen tempted to go AWOL.

Nearly one mile from the White House, the formidable **House of the Temple of the Scottish Rite** is located at 1733 16<sup>th</sup> Street NW. This monumental building has served as the national headquarters of the Supreme Council of the Freemasons since 1915. Its architecture is an adaptation of the famous Mausoleum at Halicarnassus, one of the Seven Wonders of the Ancient World. The library — the first to open to the public in Washington, DC — contains books on Freemasonry including history, philosophy, symbolism, poetry, lodge proceedings, and periodicals. Outside, mammoth sphinxes guard the House of the Temple of the Scottish Rite.

President (and Mason) Roosevelt donated

funds in 1935 for a stained-glass window with the Egyptian all-seeing eye. Egyptian hieroglyphics appear around a large atrium. Congress will pass special Acts in 1944 and 1953, allowing the remains of Albert Pike and John Henry Cowles to be interred in the nine-foot-thick walls of the building. Both men will serve as sovereign grand commander of the Supreme Council.

A large wooden throne, covered in purple velvet and adorned with bronze snakes, can be found in a second-floor inner sanctum called the Temple Room, where Masons from around the world gather behind closed doors every two years.

The **Lincoln Theatre**, built in 1922, is a cultural center of DC, predating and influencing Harlem's renaissance in New York. The theater, located on "Washington's Black Broadway" at 1215 U Street NW, serves the city's African American community, as segregation keeps them out of other venues. The Lincoln Theatre includes a movie house and ballroom, and hosts jazz and big band performers on a regular basis. Great artists show up all the time to perform there, including Washington natives Duke Ellington and Pearl Bailey, while visitors such as Ella Fitzgerald, Billie Holliday, Cab Calloway, Louis Armstrong, and Sarah Vaughan perform regularly on the storied stage.

The **Whitelaw Hotel** (1839 13<sup>th</sup> Street NW) is an upscale apartment hotel located in the Shaw neighborhood, which was completely financed and built by African American entrepreneurs, investors, designers, and craftsmen to serve prominent African Americans. Entertainers who perform on U Street stay at the Whitelaw, as do African Americans who come to Washington for meetings and cannot stay in the city's other hotels. With its large public spaces, the Whitelaw is an important social center, hosting parties, and annual balls.

**Billy Simpson's House of Seafood and Steaks** is a restaurant on Georgia Avenue NW. The restaurant offers fine dining to the city's black middle and upper classes, with many entertainment and political celebrities as customers, making it a special place where the social and political elements of Washington's African American community come together. Billy Simpson is an active supporter of the Civil Rights and anti-war movements.

**Embassy Row** covers the section of Massachusetts Avenue NW between Scott Circle and the north side of the United States Naval Observatory, so called because of the concentration of diplomatic buildings in this area and the streets nearby.

**The German Embassy** (Massachusetts Avenue NW, east of Thomas Circle) currently stands empty. On December 19, 1941, all of its occupants left the United States, and it was placed under the control of the neutral country of Switzerland for the duration of the war. Foreign embassies along 16<sup>th</sup> Street and Massachusetts Avenue NW that represented countries under German control were also placed under neutral Swiss government control.

### NORTHEAST (NE)

This quadrant is home to the largest number of African Americans, and is located north of East Capitol Street and east of North Capitol Street.

**The Capitol** (East Capitol and First Streets SE) houses the United States Congress and is the originating point for DC's street numbering and four quadrants. The neoclassical style of the building is highlighted by the rotunda and central dome that were added a century after it was built. Underground tunnels connect the Capitol to the Congressional offices and surrounding buildings.

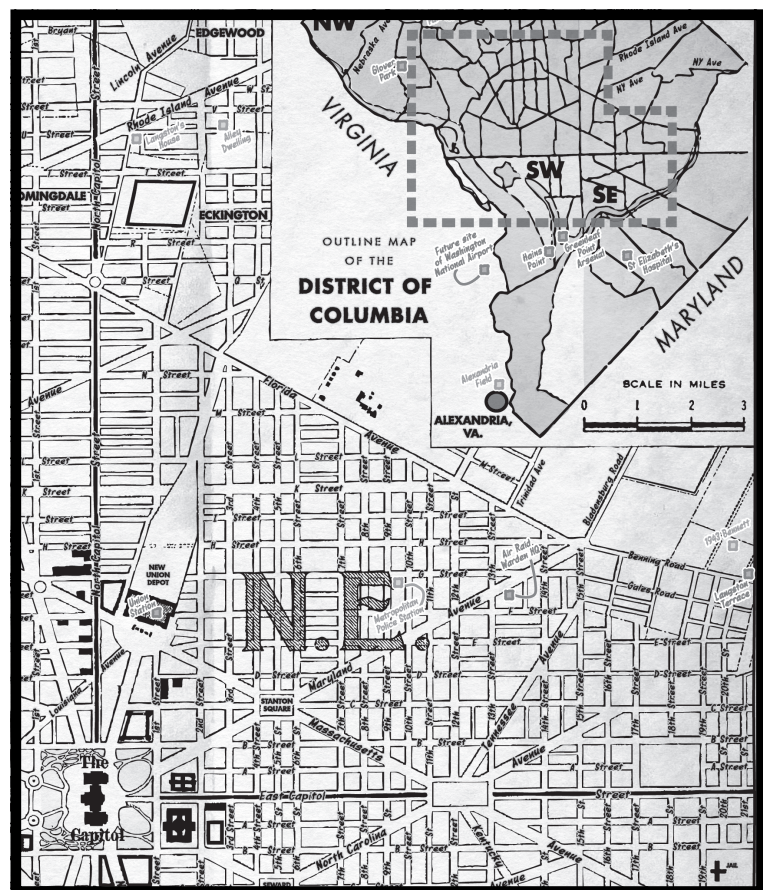
The Crypt is located on the ground floor and was originally designated for George Washington, but he was later buried at Mount Vernon. The inlaid design on the floor of the crypt is a compass star representing the four quadrants of DC. A massive marble head of Abraham Lincoln looks over the crypt. The monument is missing its left ear, to represent Lincoln's unfinished life.

To quell an early rodent problem, a number of cats was released into the Crypt. After removing the infestation, all of the cats left save one — the Demon Cat (D.C.). The Demon Cat's eyes glow an unholy crimson, and it is only seen before national tragedies: Lincoln's death; the 1918 New York Transit accident with over 90 killed; and the Knickerbocker Theatre collapse of 1922, when nearly 100 people died in Northwest DC after a large snowfall. The D.C. stalks the crypt, and has reportedly leapt at guards, growing to the size of a lion but vanishing an instant before striking its prey.




The witch Elizabeth Richardson survived her unjust hanging in 1652 in Quaker, Maryland, and made her way to Washington a century later. While fleeing the Masons during the construction of the Capitol, she transformed into a cat. The Mason's seal on Washington has imprisoned her in the building and trapped her in feline form as the Demon Cat. To entertain herself she uses her visions to warn of imminent disasters.

Like every other security guard, Joshua Sharp shot at the D.C. — but he actually injured her. She leapt at the man, slashing him, and almost escaped her prison. No one believes Sharp, and he turns to Langston for his own peace of mind. The recent additions to the Capitol have destroyed part of the Mason's wards, and Richardson will be free soon to carry out her vengeance against the descendants of those who imprisoned her.



The **Langston Terrace Dwellings** (21<sup>st</sup> Street and Benning Road NE) are located in the Kingman Park neighborhood. Recently completed by famous California architect Paul Revere Williams, who found himself working for the navy after taking on the project, the 274-unit complex is the first Federally-funded housing project in Washington, and only the second in the United States. Constructed primarily by African American laborers, it is part of President Franklin Delano Roosevelt's Public Works Administration. Rooms are available for \$6 per month, or \$4.50 per month without utilities.

 The residents of Langston Terrace are complaining about the horrible smells and scratching sounds that have recently been plaguing the building at night. No inspection of the housing project has yet turned up the source — a pack of ghouls which is using the basement as a means of entering the building to hunt for flesh.

**Union Station** (50 Massachusetts Avenue NE) opened in 1907. Among the station's unique features is the "presidential suite" that was accessible only to the President of the United States and high-ranking State Department and Congressional leaders, to receive distinguished visitors arriving in Washington. In 1941, the suite was converted to a USO canteen that served over 6.5 million service members, offering them refreshments and other sundries for free. At the pinnacle of traffic during World War II, over 200,000 people used it in a single day. The station was the lifeline of the city during the war.

The **Air Raid Warden Headquarters** (1341 Maryland Avenue NE) is a two-story Georgian Revival style brick building, which was a library before being converted to the air raid headquarters.

 In April, a chief of the Air Raid Wardens was found in the stacks, inexplicably covered in sheets of ice. Shortly afterwards a librarian was found in the same state. Hartman asked Langston to take a look into the situation, as the air raid warden was his drill sergeant a decade ago. The cause is ten-year-old Charlie Jackson, who asked his imaginary friend to stop the bad


man (Mr. Air Raid Warden) from hurting his mommy, Barbara. He also asked it to stop the man with whom she was cheating on his absent father (Mr. Librarian). Charlie's new friend is a mi-go, studying the development of children's minds. The men were frozen with its mist projector, and it is only a matter of time before Charlie's friend kills again. Can Langston get to the bottom of this, or will he meet Captain America's fate and be frozen?

**SOUTHWEST (SW)**

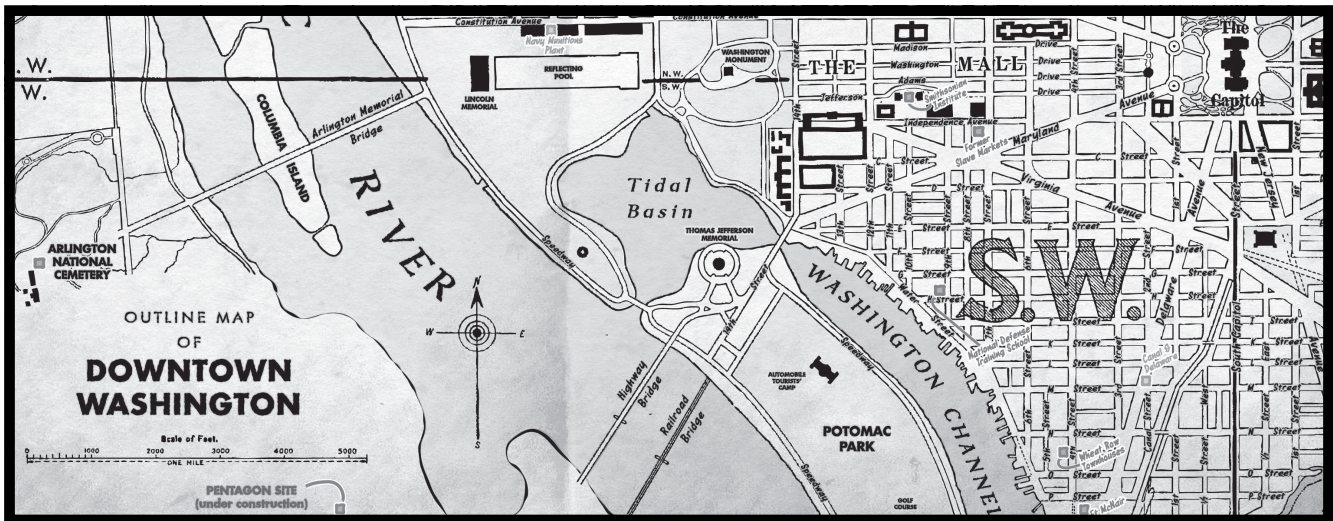
The smallest of the four quadrants, Southwest, includes some of the oldest buildings: the 1793 Wheat Row townhouses, the 1791 Fort McNair, and the 1673 US Arsenal at Greenleaf Point.

The **Smithsonian Institution Building**, built in 1855 and popularly known as the "Castle," has become the anchor for the National Mall at Jefferson Drive at 10<sup>th</sup> Street SW, as additional museums and government buildings have been constructed around it. Located inside the north entrance is a small, chapel-like room containing the crypt of James Smithson (1765–1829), benefactor of the institution.

**Hains Point** is located at the southern tip of East Potomac Park between the main branch of the Potomac River and the Washington Channel. The island is artificial: it was built up from material dredged from the Potomac from 1880 to 1892. It is a popular place for a picnic or a bicycle ride on a fine day. At the tip of the island there is a small but stately, white-columned teahouse facing toward the open water of the Potomac. Originally built in 1923, it was one of the best places to escape the hot city, but has been shut down during the war, to discourage people from driving their cars while gasoline and rubber are in demand.

 Of late, people have complained that Hains Point has actually shifted about ten feet from where it should be. A local fisherman asks Langston to look into it, as all of his tests show that it has moved. A group of cultists has been attempting to raise a sleeping dhole.





The spirits of slaves are rumored to haunt a portion of **Independence Avenue SW**, the site of two of the city’s largest slave markets. The Yellow House, or Williams Slave Pen (at about 800 Independence Avenue SW) was the most notorious slave pen in the capital. A nondescript, two-story, yellow house conceals a basement, in which slaves were chained to walls in windowless rooms, while a large yard surrounded by a 12-foot-high brick wall provided space for the training and selling of slaves. Another large slave market, the Robey Slave Pen, was just a block away at the corner of 7<sup>th</sup> Street SW and Independence Avenue SW. Walking along the street at night, witnesses say they have heard screams and the clinking of chains.

Built in 1887 in order to process pensions for Civil War veterans, widows, and orphans, the **Pension Building** (401 F Street NW) contains 15 Corinthian columns, made of brick and plaster and painted to imitate black onyx. Security guards and other witnesses have seen the swirling colors of the columns change to form the outlines of people with ties to the building who have recently died. Night watchmen continue to report seeing a man on horseback on the upper floors, where animals used to be quartered during the Civil War. They also reported seeing the ghost of James Tanner, a stenographer who took down the testimony of eyewitnesses after the assassination of President Lincoln at Ford’s Theatre.

In 1940, Colonel Hobby of the Women’s Army Auxiliary Corps (WAAC) broke racial lines by

encouraging African American women to join the **National Defense Training School** (in the Old Harbor Garage at Ninth and H Streets SW). There, they learn an array of skills including welding, typing, stenography, switchboard operations, riveting, airplane maintenance, and censoring mail.

### SOUTHEAST (SE)

Southeast is the richest of the four quadrants in cultural history. It contains the remains of several Civil War–era forts, the historic St. Elizabeth’s Hospital, and the Congressional Cemetery.

Its architecture is unlike anywhere else in the Washington, with 19<sup>th</sup>- and early-20<sup>th</sup> century small, brick, working-class housing. The area was first inhabited by the Nacotchtank Native Americans who lived by the Anacostia River which bisects SE.

The **Washington Navy Yard** is the oldest navy shore establishment, founded in 1799. The booming growth of the Yard created a need for housing to handle the influx of new employees. The Yard is the largest naval ordnance plant in the world, with 188 buildings and employing close to 25,000 people. In 1945, it will be named the US Naval Gun Factory.

### SURROUNDING AREA

**The Pentagon** is the headquarters of the United States Department of Defense. This bastion of the American military began construction in 1941, and was completed in 1943.



The building is currently the largest office building in the world, with double the square footage of the Empire State Building. At the center is a five-acre football field that allows the 40,000 workers to socialize when not working. The self-sufficient building contains shopping arcades, bookstores, medical facilities, and banks. The Pentagon features 7,748 windows, 685 drinking fountains, a bus lane that shuttles 10,000 workers by Capital Transit, and 54 acres of parking.

Across the Potomac from Washington, **Arlington National Cemetery's** 624 acres have been used as since 1864 to honorably bury the nation's servicemen and servicewomen who died in combat since the American Civil War. In 1921, the U.S. Congress approved the burial of unidentified American servicemen from World War I, and the construction of a monument known as the Tomb of the Unknowns.

**Washington National Airport**, three miles from downtown Washington, began operations in mid-1941. The airport was built atop land reclaimed from the Potomac River.

**J** **Sister Mary Aquinas Kinsky** (1894–1985), nicknamed the “Flying Nun,” from Ironwood, Michigan, is a licensed pilot and instructor. She spends her time training other nuns in aircraft maintenance and how to operate out of Washington National Airport. She crashed two days ago: the air controller is moving to have her license revoked, as no one believes her explanation. Reverend Ernest Thompson, grateful for her help with his church's food drives, asks Langston to look into her case. Sister Kinsky clipped a flying polyp that only became visible for a moment. The creature was recently released from its subterranean prison because of the construction of the airport, and has set out to pursue its age-old thirst for vengeance against the long-gone Great Race of Yith.

DC's extensive **streetcar system** is one of the most convenient and least expensive methods of traversing the city. Fares are 10¢, or 50¢ for six trips, or \$1.25 for a monthly pass. The transit map

urges housewives to help Washington's war effort by traveling only between 10 a.m. and 3 p.m. only, to help the system handle the 300,000+ wartime workers traveling to and from work. To improve service, Capital Transit has invested in new equipment, including a fleet of modern cars — but the cars' metal conductors, called plows (designed to access the power source buried between the tracks), are less than optimal. In the wintertime the slots become jammed with snow and ice, and in the summer the metal in the slots sometimes expands and swells shut. Almost every day, at least one streetcar gets stuck and an entire line stops for 15 to 45 minutes while an emergency crew comes to fix the problem. Even so, Capital Transit doesn't have a problem attracting riders — particularly since gasoline rationing means limited automobile use.

**J** Wilson Fogg, artist and dreamer, helped design the new streetcars in the hope of inspiring the locals. He added some beautiful sea-green stone that he brought back from the Dreamlands into the design of Car 105. Wilson is found dead three days after riding on 105; then another person is found dead a few days later, and then another. Unbeknownst to Fogg, the green stone was from the idol of Bokrug in the city of Ib. Every few days, the train collects enough power to send the riders on a tour of the drowned city. Hardly anyone remembers the experience: those who do will enter the Dreamlands alone when they sleep, only to be returned on the morrow, drowned. Can Langston figure out what is going on before another hapless victim turns up, or he joins their number?

## Politicians, Civil Rights Activists, Hucksters, and Soldiers


Instead of a mayor, Washington is administered by a three-member committee called the **Board of Commissioners**. This arrangement was put in place in 1874 and will last until 1967. The Board is composed of one Democrat, one Republican, and a civil engineer with both legislative and executive authority, all appointed by the President of the

United States. The three members then elect a President of the Board. The current members of the Board are John Russell Young (Republican) as President, Guy Mason (Democrat), and Col. Charles Willauer Kutz (civil engineer).

**Mary Church Terrell**, 80, (1863–1954) is a fierce civil rights and women’s suffrage activist. At the age of 80, she never misses a beat, and can still be found on the picket lines fighting against segregation alongside those six decades younger than her. Born a slave in Memphis, Tennessee, she became one of the first African American women to earn a degree, mastering four languages and founding the Colored Women’s League of Washington in the 1890s. She is also one of the charter members of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP).

She is known as the *grande dame* of Washington’s black society, and like most of those fighting against racial segregation, she has been arrested multiple times for violating Jim Crow laws. She will continue to fight, but Washington will remain segregated until the late 1940s.


In the 1950s, she will head the Coordinating Committee for the Enforcement of D.C. Anti-Discrimination Laws, while picketing the White House and testifying before the Supreme Court to end segregation in city restaurants. Most downtown restaurants will not serve black patrons until the mid-1950s.

 Mary Terrell has noticed the unusual behavior of a few fellow activists, and is concerned they are being influenced to disengage by outside forces. She asks Langston to look into it discreetly. One activist, named Carl, recently opened a powdered government Meal Ready to Eat (MRE) ration pack, only to have it erupt all over him. He breathed in the powder, including an Insect from Shaggai that rehydrated once absorbed into his body. The infected Carl has also infected Sara, a fellow activist, and the insect is looking for its next host. Can Langston stop it before the entire movement is infected — and how did the insect get into the food in the first place?

**Eleanor Josephine Medill “Cissy” Patterson**, 60, (1881–1948) despises President Roosevelt and his administration, believing the U.S. should have remained isolationist, and should never have entered the war. One of the first white women to head a newspaper, The Washington Times-Herald, which she bought from famed paper man William Randolph Hearst, she uses it to reinforce her beliefs. The intensity of her beliefs has led to her being accused of being a Nazi sympathizer on the floor of Congress.

**Pauli Murray**, 33, (1910–1985) is a black graduate student and a few months away from leading a coed sit-in at the whites-only Little Palace Cafeteria near 14<sup>th</sup> and U Streets NW. This will lead to another arrest, akin to her experience in ’41 when she and her girlfriend sat in the whites-only section of a bus in Virginia and were arrested. She is an ardent women’s and civil-rights force-in-the-making. In 1944 she will graduate top of her class at Howard, but unlike her male counterparts she will be denied access to the graduate program. This is despite a letter from President Roosevelt; Pauli and the first lady have had an ongoing correspondence since they met in ’33 at Camp Terra (the female version of the male Civilian Conservation Corps).

**Brigadier-General Leslie Groves**, 47, (1896–1970) is the white officer leading the Manhattan Project from his office on the fifth floor of the new War Department Building at 2201 C Street NW. Though disappointed with the mission, he was hand-picked by the Secretary of War, who told him this mission, if successful, could win the war. Groves went to work in 1942, finding the best location and scientists. Eventually he decided on Julius Robert Oppenheimer, who many believe to be a security risk from his Communist associations, which include his brother Frank Oppenheimer.

 Groves is sure of his choice but hesitant to risk the nation on his gut without some proof. He turns to the OSS and Wild Bill, who in turn asks Langston to look into it: just like overseas, he expects no one to notice Langston poking around. Oppenheimer is in Washington for meetings, and should be easy to follow.

A day into the job, Langston notices the physicist is being tailed — or guarded. It turns out an Axis mystic has seen Oppenheimer’s future, and wants him dead before he can affect the war — but Oppenheimer is also under the protection of Azathoth cultists, who believe his bomb will bring about the “seething nuclear chaos” described in the *Necronomicon*.

In 1941, **Joseph Rauh**, 32, (1911–1992) aided A. Philip Randolph in drafting Executive Order 8802, the first presidential directive on civil rights since Reconstruction. Shortly afterward, the black lawyer was commissioned into the army with the rank of lieutenant. After the war, he will work shoulder-to-shoulder with Eleanor Roosevelt, former first lady, to found Americans for Democratic Action, an American political organization advocating progressive policies.

**Andrew J. May**, 48, (1875–1959) is serving in his sixth successive year in Congress. May is the chairman of the powerful Committee on Military Affairs and has heavy involvement with Murray and Henry Garsson, two New York businessmen who have won multiple lucrative munitions contracts being issued by committee — despite having no experience in weapons manufacturing.

The businessmen’s influence on May is so great that the Congressman frequently calls the army ordinance office and other government officials on behalf of the Garssons. In June 1943, during the so-called May Incident, the congressman spills the beans about secret military information during a press conference: American submarines had a high survival rate against Japanese depth charges, which were fused to explode at a shallow depth. After this, the Japanese adjust their depth charges to explode at deeper depths, costing the U.S. at least ten submarines and nearly a thousand killed in action.

In 1946 the Senate will begin investigating reports of irregularities within the Military Affairs Committee, and will eventually find that May received substantial cash payments and other inducements from the Garssons. All three will receive prison terms, but May will be pardoned by President Truman after nine months and will

continue to influence the Democratic Party.

**Perle Mesta**, 54, (1889–1975) is a socialite, political hostess, and the heiress to a 78-million-dollar fortune. She is known for her lavish parties, which bring artists, senators, congressmen, cabinet secretaries, and other leaders together in bipartisan soirées of high-class glamor. An invitation to one of her parties is a sure sign that one has ascended to the inner circle of Washington’s political society.

She is an active member of the National Woman’s Party, and an early supporter of an Equal Rights Amendment. In 1940 she left the Republican Party to join the Democratic Party, and she will be rewarded for her support with the ambassadorship to Luxembourg in 1949.

**J** Perle believes that Walter Pierce, the son of Congressman Harold Pierce, may be abusing his delicate father and using his family name to get a job on the War Finance Committee. Unwilling to become involved directly, she asked her cook, Peggy, to speak with the Pierces’ servant. Peggy found out that all the servants had been fired months previously, and asks Langston to investigate. Walter’s father has completed his transformation into a spawn of Cthulhu, and under his orders Walter has been using his father’s connections to build a temple to the Great Old Ones under the guise of a secret radar testing facility.

**Theodore Bilbo**, 56, (1887–1947) is a master debater in the Senate, and a white supremacist first and foremost. He opposes Executive Order 8802, is in favor of segregation, and preaches that black and Jewish people are inferior and should be treated as such.

**Walter Francis White**, 50, (1893–1955) formerly blond-haired and blue-eyed but now greying, is descended from the ninth President of the United States, William Henry Harrison, and one of his slaves, Dilsia. He embraced his African American heritage, and led the NAACP for over two decades as the Washington bureau’s first director. The bureau focused on tracking and influencing Federal legislation, monitoring government agencies, and administering Federal regulations

and programs to end lynchings and segregation.

Defector and former Nazi spy **George John Dasch**, 40, (1903–1992) gave himself up to the FBI in 1942. This cost him some effort, as they did not believe his story at first. He provided information that led to the arrest of his compatriots, destroying a Nazi plan for a two-year sabotage mission to mount strategic attacks against American infrastructure. President Roosevelt quickly covered up the entire affair, and aside from Hoover taking credit for it in the back rooms of power, it was never mentioned. Dasch and one other are serving time, and the other six have been executed.



A transcript of Dasch's full story reaches Hartman. The report mentions an arcane symbol carved into the flesh of each spy, which means that if killed, they will rise from the dead under the command of an unknown agent. Hartman doesn't believe this mumbo-jumbo, but he can't help worrying about the implication that there is one Nazi spy still at large. He can't involve the OSS without alerting Hoover, who took credit for single-handedly foiling the entire spy ring, so he calls in his old friend Langston to investigate. The commanding agent is Nazi spy Elle West, who now has the necessary pages from the Book of Eibon, as well as the six dead Nazis, and is preparing to carry out the sabotage mission.

**Susanna Mildred Hill**, 60, (1888–1919) a spry Caucasian mother of ten, runs one of the best lonely-hearts rackets out of her Washington home. She contacts men with pictures of her eligible youngest daughter, and milks them for as much as she can get before informing the poor mark that her daughter has suddenly run off with some two-bit car salesman. Her scheme is so successful that she has started using a mimeograph to copy hundreds of letters to mail out.

Known for his bald white head and bulging eyes, **Maurice Paul Holsinger** is an unlikely lonely-hearts con artist who also operates out of Washington. He sends pictures of attractive men to wealthy women, and tells them he can put them in touch — for a fee. After sending him his “Cupid

## Jim Crow

The Jim Crow laws were a series of rigid anti-black laws that created a racial caste system focused heavily, but not exclusively, in the Southern states from 1877 to the mid-1960s. These laws enforced the second-class citizen status of African Americans, and were portrayed as a way of life, becoming second nature to many in the majority. The laws, while lessened by the war and the passing of Executive Order 8802 (see p. 220) will still impact Langston and are very familiar to him, as he grew up in the South.

The generally standardized Jim Crow etiquette norms:

- Black men were forbidden from extending their hands to white men (to shake hands), because it would imply a level of social equality. Black men risked being accused of rape if they were to extend a hand, or even offer to light a cigarette, for a white woman. Even the accusation of a white child toward a black man for such small crimes as petty theft or using a whites-only bathroom, could have a black man lynched, likely in front of crowd, to “send a message.”
- The two races were not supposed to eat together. If they did eat together, whites were served first, and a partition would be placed between them.
- Whites were not to introduce blacks, as that implied a level of equality. Blacks were supposed to introduce whites, proving their lesser social status.
- Whites never used courtesy titles of respect when referring to blacks, and always used their first names or a nickname. The opposite was true for blacks who had to use courtesy titles when referring to whites, and were not allowed to call them by their first names. If blacks addressed whites by their first names, that could lead to imprisonment. Even if the two were friends, blacks could not just use first names. For instance, in the 1942 movie *Casablanca*, the characters of Rick (Humphrey Bogart) and Sam (Dooley Wilson) were close friends, but Sam always had to refer to his friend as Mr. Rick, while Rick would just call him Sam.
- If a black person rode in a car driven by a white person, they sat in the back. White motorists always had the right-of-way.
- Displays of affection between black people were not allowed in public, as they were considered offensive to white people.



Fee,” the mark never hears from him again. This scheme nets him thousands of dollars per week. Holsinger has escaped police dragnets for years and is always on the move, leaving states for a while and returning once the heat is off.

**J** Marcia Brown, a wealthy white widow, has fallen victim to this fraudster and is determined to get her money back. Fear of hurting her social status has forced her to enlist an attorney to find a discreet private eye, and so Langston is called in. To complicate matters further, Maurice is a hybrid Deep One, close to undergoing his change, and he can hear the calling of the water. He is frequently seen around the Anacostia River.

The Bears are on their way to an unheard-of no-loss season, and the buzz about this feat is everywhere. Despite this, the white press rarely comments on their achievements.

## Racism on the Home Front and Beyond

*“It is damnation. It is the never-ending night. And the length of that night is most of our history. Never forget that we were enslaved in this country longer than we have been free. Never forget that for 250 years black people were born into chains — whole generations followed by more generations who knew nothing but chains.”*

— Ta-Nehisi Coates,  
*“Letter to My Son,” The Atlantic*

### *The Negro Travelers’ Green Book*

This travel guide was produced from 1936 to 1964, with the intention of providing African American motorists the information they needed to find safe boarding, dining, and sightseeing opportunities in the age of segregation. It allowed parents to shield their children as much as possible from the realities around them, and plan travel accordingly. The book was named for its creator, Victor H. Green from Harlem, a well-known postman-turned-publisher-turned-travel-writer.

*When, long ago, the gods created Earth  
In Jove’s fair image Man was shaped at birth.  
The beasts for lesser parts were next designed;  
Yet were they too remote from humankind.  
To fill the gap, and join the rest to Man,  
Th’Olympian host conceiv’d a clever plan.  
A beast they wrought, in semi-human figure,  
Filled it with vice, and called the thing a N\*gger.*

— H. P. Lovecraft,  
*On the Creation of N\*ggers (1912)*

The **Washington Bears** began with journalist Harold “Hal” Jackson in 1941 when he organized a new all-black basketball team in Washington, financed by Abe Lichtman, owner of the Howard and Lincoln theaters. There is no black professional basketball league like baseball’s Negro Leagues, but independent teams play against each other on a nationwide circuit. The Bears immediately became a force to be reckoned with, and frequently sell out their 2,000-capacity home court at Turner’s Arena, on the northeast corner of 14<sup>th</sup> and W Streets NW. Nearly all of the Bears’ fans are black.

Wartime DC is written in a fashion that takes history into account, but plays it through a noir lens, which allows the GM and player to decide the level of realism they wish to employ. This section highlights the facts of racism, and includes some details about what life was like during the time of this setting, as well as a few detailed examples of its impact on Langston Wright, your protagonist.


One of the reasons for setting this scenario in World War II-era Washington, DC, is that the U.S. capital served as the home of the Civil Rights Movement, a monumental tidal shift in American ideology. As the center of the fight for equal rights, 1940s DC reflected both the segregation of the day, and the brewing change that was to come within the next two decades.

Racism is interwoven into every aspect of United States history — from centuries of slavery,

to decades of Jim Crow laws, to internment camps during World War II, to years of “separate but equal,” to the systemic racism affecting every aspect of the life and work of people of color. Micro-aggressions, which go unnoticed by those who have not lived under the weight of racism, forever change the experience of a person of color, who must always look over their shoulder and be aware of the people around them. Racism’s deep-seated legacy within every facet of American life makes it difficult for people to understand its true impact.

Current-day racism, while insidious, is somewhat different from the racism of the Greatest Generation. Today’s racism is the death of a thousand tiny cuts. The cabbie who won’t stop for a person of color, the lower salaries for workers of color, and the two-tiered justice system that refers to a brown man with a gun as a terrorist or a thug, but a white man with a gun as a gunman or mentally ill. Today’s racism often goes unnoticed, and many times is accepted by society as a normal part of everyday life.

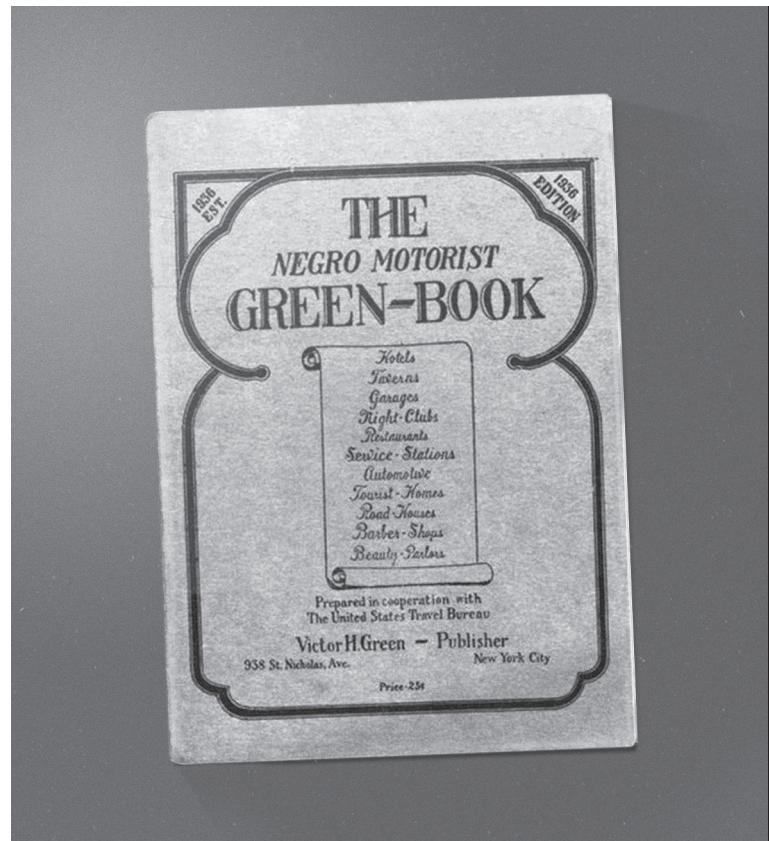
Old-school racism, like that found during World War II, was often blunter and more violent. Laws were established to enforce “separate but equal,” a false equivalency that never actually existed. Racism for the Greatest Generation was a way of life that seemed immutable, and as natural as breathing: the white male was unquestionably king. Entire political campaigns were based on keeping blacks in their place, and lynchings were published in the paper, like gladiatorial events. It was a brutal and horrific existence for those living under the effects of racism.

When playing any adventure where Langston is the protagonist, find a level of realism that you are both comfortable with by discussing it before you play the game. To convey the racism of the time, you don’t have to be offensive or use derogatory language. The scenario is written with the best possible outcomes for ease of play. But to help GMs, some sections have a **HANDLE WITH CARE** icon  to flag the intensity that comes from the realistic racism in that scene. To represent systemic racism in as a game mechanic, Langston must spend extra Pushes to accomplish tasks: the GM escalates the depiction of racism in the scene. Each section of the scenario includes some brief

examples of how you can do this. This allows you to decide if a little extra realism is what you and your player want.

The two Great Migrations involved over 6 million blacks moving from the Jim Crow South between 1916 and 1970, to seek better lives with a semblance of safety. The first Great Migration ranged from 1910 to the mid-1930s, and involved rural workers. The Second Great Migration began just before the outbreak of World War II. The majority of migrants took up residence in cities and traveled following the advice provided in their Green Books. This movement caused a population explosion, and blacks were met with increasingly poor working conditions and limited housing.

Race influences every aspect of a person’s life in this time, whether they are experiencing the plight of people of color or enjoying the privilege associated with being white (especially the privileges of a straight white male). To empower the GM to play the GMCs and how they interact with Langston, race is listed in each character’s description.



## Select Bibliography

*“I know how bad a thing it is to be a slave and I know how terrible it was but I don’t believe that there’s a free person in the whole world that knows how good a cup full of water can taste. Because you have to be a deprived slave, to be kept waiting for your water like we were, to really appreciate how good just one swallow can be. When we finally got a drop on our tongues it was like something straight from the hands of the Almighty.”*

— Walter Mosley, *This Year You Write Your Novel*

### FICTION

Walter Mosley, *A Red Death, White Butterfly, The Long Fall*

Chester Himes, *A Rage in Harlem, The Real Cool Killers, The Crazy Kill, All Shot Up*

Victor LaValle, *The Ballad of Black Tom*

Rudolph Fisher, *The Conjure-Man Dies: A Mystery Tale of Dark Harlem*

### NONFICTION

David Brinkley, *Washington Goes to War*

Scott Hart, *Washington at War: 1941–1945*

Alexander D. Mitchell, *Washington, D.C., Then and Now*

Paul Kelsey Williams, *Lost Washington, D.C.*

### FILMS

Carl Franklin, *Devil in a Blue Dress*

Joseph Stanley, *Rosie the Riveter*

Rian Johnson, *Brick*

Leo C. Popkin, *The Well*

### MUSIC

Pearl Bailey

Cab Calloway

Billie Holiday

Thelonious Monk



**CAPITOL  
COLOUR**



*“It is so easy to be hopeful in the daytime when you can see the things you wish on. But it was night, it stayed night. Night was striding across nothingness with the whole round world in his hands... They sat in company with the others in other shanties, their eyes straining against cruel walls and their souls asking if He meant to measure their puny might against His. They seemed to be staring at the dark, but their eyes were watching God.”*

— Zora Neale Hurston, *Their Eyes Were Watching God*

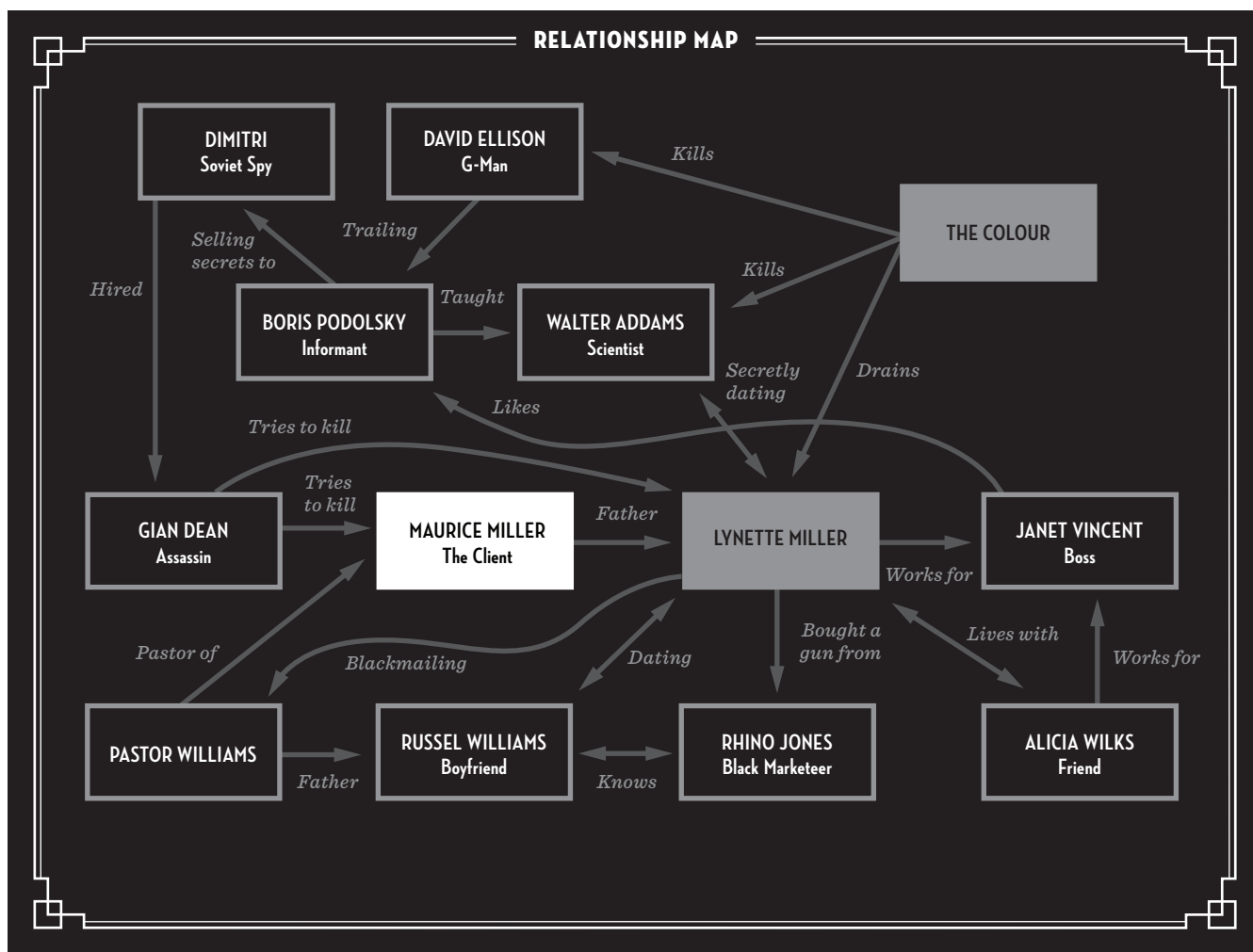
# CAPITOL COLOUR

Where is Lynette Miller, and can you find her before it is too late? Her worried father comes to you — Langston Montgomery Wright, part-time shamus — to locate her. Time is running out before you even start the case. A scheming villain, questionable politicians, a deadly trap, and the horrors of the Beyond all await you.

## Cast

**Maurice Miller:** 55, concerned father and crippled veteran of World War I. He calls on Langston to find his missing daughter.

**Lynette Miller:** 23, dazzling and determined. She has seen the Colour and knows Boris is stealing from the lab.



**Russell Williams:** 33, beefy and flat-footed secret boyfriend. Russell knows Lynette wanted money and a gun.

**Boris Podolsky:** 46, (1896–1966), bitter and brilliant professor turned traitor. Boris is selling the mutated Colour specimens to the Soviets.

**Special Agent David Ellison:** 29, brash and hot-headed. Jack loves his job finding and killing bad guys. He has tracked Podolsky, whom he believes is a fifth columnist, and is determined to catch or kill him once he has more proof.

**Walter Addams:** 37, smart yet gullible. Former student of Boris who called him to help with his work at Navy Munitions Plant Echo.

**Dmitri “Richard Davis” Yusoff:** 43, unassuming and perceptive. A Soviet spy masquerading as a congressional aide and Boris’ contact. They are to meet in four days.

**Janet Vincent:** 28, conformist and stern. Lynette’s boss at Navy Munitions Plant Echo who knows about the secret base under the plant.

**Alicia Wilks:** 23, friendly and honest. Roommate of Lynette; knows about her boyfriends.

**Gian Dean:** 26, cold and methodical. Hired killer with no moral compass.

**Rhino Jones:** 37, bruiser in an expensive suit. Black-market dealer who sold Lynette a gun.

### *The Colour*

The Colour Out of Space is a nonhumanoid extraterrestrial of unknown origin and incomprehensible thoughts. Colours primarily arrive during meteor storms, and suck the life out of creatures and plants in the area around their landing-spot until they are fully grown. They then return to space, leaving countless desiccated husks and horrifically mutated species behind them.

The Colour feeds on its prey multiple times; each feeding leaves the victim more and more drained of life. The victim’s skin greys, their body begins to die, hair falls out, and their will slowly erodes away. Once the Colour has fed on a victim, it can track this individual to continue its feeding. If an adult Colour attacks someone directly, it can drain all of the life out of them instantly; the victim crumbles to dust. This is not the preferred method, as the creature does not gain as much life-force as it would by feeding slowly over multiple attacks.



---

## THE STORY SO FAR

---

The following events happen before Maurice erupts into Langston's life.

A little over five months ago, a meteor shower containing a Colour Out of Space rained down on a corn field in Fairfax County, Virginia. The Office of Civilian Defense (OCD) and the Army mobilized within minutes to investigate the objects falling from the sky, worried that they might be from some Axis secret weapon. The OCD blocked the road, and the Army moved into the area. They recovered most of the meteors and transported them to Navy Munitions Plant Echo for the egg-heads and pencil-pushers to examine.

Walter Addams, a physicist, was assigned the task of investigating the stones when it was discovered that they were highly radioactive. Addams dedicated the next few months to running myriad experiments, including tests for explosive isotopes. He removed several chunks of material from the main meteorite, keeping the largest sample locked in a box of leaded, polarized glass while he experimented on the smaller samples. When the rocks reacted in a fissile manner he knew he was out of his depth, but he also knew this kind of discovery could make his career after the war. He contacted one of his former professors, Dr. Boris Podolsky from the University of Cincinnati, and arranged for him to serve as a scientific specialist; however, he listed Dr. Podolsky as a visitor so no one would know he needed help.

Unfortunately for Walter, Boris is a Soviet informant looking to sell American research, fissionable materials, and whatever else he can. Boris has a vast understanding of quantum mechanics and a radical approach to the theoretical science. In 1935, after breaking with Albert Einstein and Nathan Rosen due to differences of opinion over their work, Boris took a tenured professorship of mathematical physics at the University of Cincinnati, with the assistance of his letter of recommendation from Einstein: "I am happy to be able to tell you that I estimate Podolsky's abilities very highly... He is an independent investigator of unquestionable talent."

Addams knew his former professor could crack this strange rock, and likely help secure his position. The two worked well together; they turned the infant Colours into a more gelatinous state, while still keeping the creatures restrained. Unknown to

Addams, the radiation and wave theory experiments have split the Colour, and each of the pieces holds an infant Colour waiting to be freed.

Podolsky believed the rock, and creatures that inhabited it, could be more useful than the uranium that he was going to sell to the Soviets, and it was not as well guarded. These infant Colours each have the power of a small nuclear explosion when ignited. A single adult Colour remains trapped within the "glass" cage, as it was not exposed to the same treatment, but it cannot escape its prison.

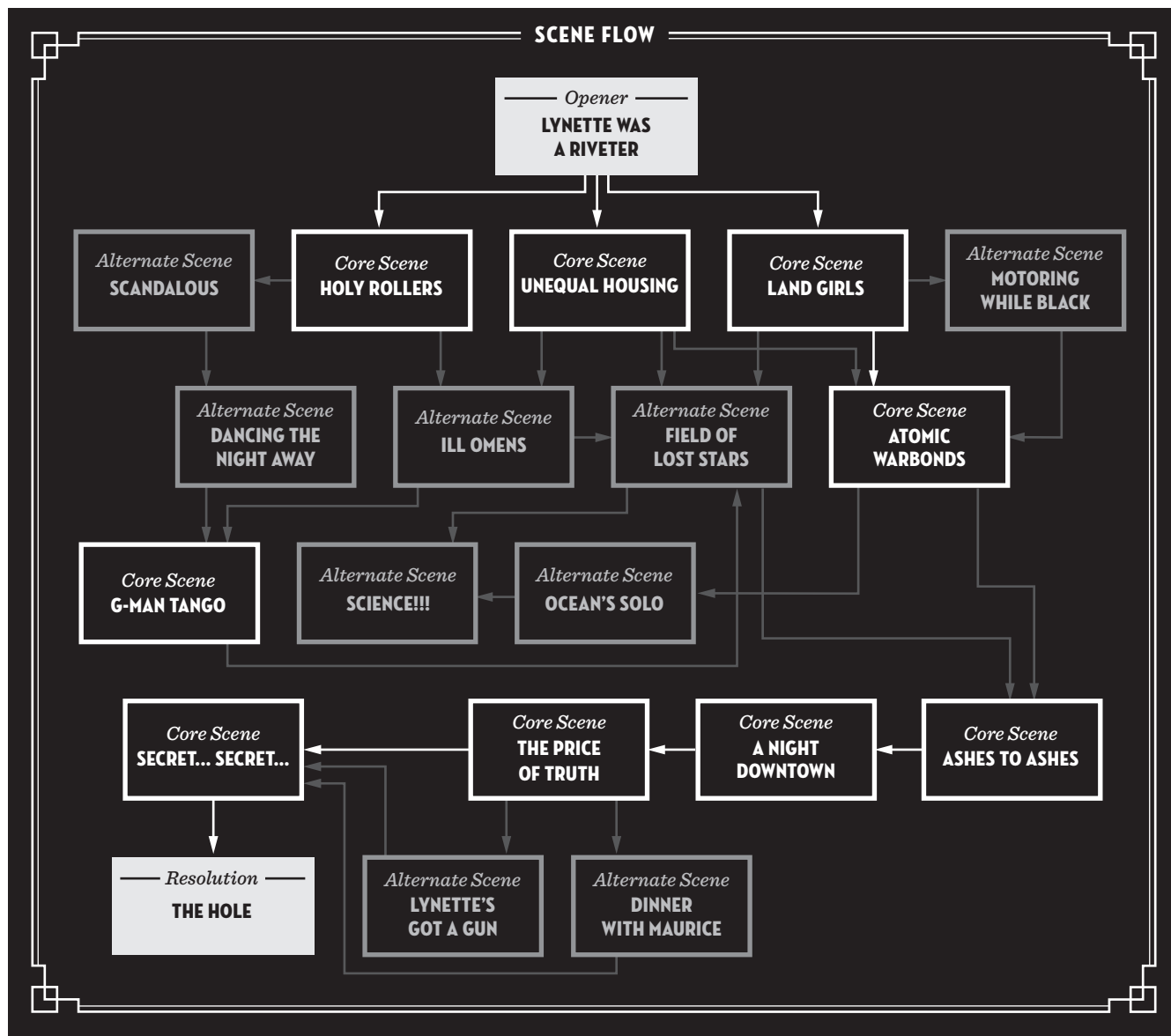
Just over a month ago, Lynette sneaked down to the lab to see her secret boyfriend Walter. She hid behind the leaded polarized glass when she discovered he was not there, and she heard footsteps approaching. As she watched Boris stealing documents from the lab, she inadvertently touched one of the rocks, and an infant Colour fed on her.

Special Agent Ellison was onto Boris. He had followed him to Washington and informed Director Hoover of his suspicions. Needing more proof, he continued to watch from a distance. Ellison sneaked into the lab one night: startled by the Colour, he shot it. The shot cracked the sealed cage, and the Colour fed briefly on Ellison before he fled.

A few days ago, Walter was investigating the case, having not yet seen the Colour. The voracious being gorged itself on him until he turned to ashes. Boris watched in amazement and dread. He had already told his contact he had something better than nuclear secrets, so he needed to go through with the deal. That just left Lynette as a loose end.

Having seen Boris unflinchingly watch Walter be killed and then not report it, Lynette fled. She believed that her word would only implicate her in Walter's disappearance, and that Boris could easily lay the blame at her door. Knowing her father would worry, but not wanting to put him in danger, she forged a note, and bought a gun from Rhino Jones with money she blackmailed from Pastor Williams. She is living in Walter Addams' house temporarily; she knows it has already been searched, and will not be disturbed again soon. She just needs time to come up with a plan. Meanwhile, Boris will deliver the three remaining shards of meteorite to his contact Dmitri at the Capital Traction Power House in four days.





**A NOTE ON TIMING**

There are two time-dependent scenes – the reception in “Atomic War Bonds,” and Boris’ meeting with Dmitri in “Secret... Secret...” The reception takes place two days after the start of the investigation in “Lynette Was a Riveter”; Boris is due to meet Dmitri after four days.

## Scenes

### LYNETTE WAS A RIVETER

**Scene Type:** Introduction

**Lead-Outs:** Holy Rollers, Unequal Housing, Land Girls

The scenario opens at the end of the day, at Langston's two-room house.

Let the player choose from Langston's starting Problems. These are the first four Problem cards and can be found on p. 274; "Love in All the Wrong Places," "Short on Rent," "Eternal Outsider," and "Uppity So-and-So." Give the player a chance to read and absorb the cards. Then ask her to give you a few sentences about their current situation, based on the chosen Problem card.

Ask the player to describe something about Langston that vital to her interpretation of the character. It could be the service revolver that he never returned; the experiment he is conducting with borrowed supplies from the office; the constant ringing of his phone from his family calling him, which he never answers; or something else of the player's own devising. This process will help the player slip into the character and make it her own.

Langston's door rattles as someone frantically hammers on it. The knocking gets louder and louder until he answers. The moment the door opens, a rail-thin black man with one leg — Maurice Miller — pushes past him into the house. The older man is trembling with fear and rage about something; he doesn't wait for Langston to ask him any questions. His story spills out of him in a frantic rush.

Maurice quickly explains to Langston that his daughter has been missing for days. The police won't help him. Then he breaks down and can't speak, tears rolling down his dark brown cheeks. His body convulses in sobs as both crutches crash to the floor, and a weariness overtakes the old soldier.

## OLD SOLDIER'S GRIEF

**Cool**

**Penalty:** -2 with Problem 3, "Eternal Outsider"

**Advance 5+:** You remember what the battlefield was like: the cries of men around you, the surges of adrenaline, and battling for a cause greater than you. Veterans stand together no matter what.

**Earn an Edge:** Edge 1, "Battle Buddies"

**Hold 2-4:** You recall the fighting in the war, and know that it can break a man without anything to fight for.

**Setback 1 or less:** Your mind flashes back to the attack that sent you home and stole your future. Gain Problem 5, "Phantom Pains."

**Extra Problem:** Problem 6, "Worn Out"

Once comforted, or given a strong drink, Maurice continues his tale. He needs Langston to find his daughter and bring her home. No matter what. She is his life. If asked for details, Maurice explains the following:

- Lynette got a job as a riveter six months ago. Before that, she was a maid.
- She was so excited about the change, leaving housework behind and tripling her salary. She jested that it was like winning the lottery.
- Her attitude changed about two months ago, and Maurice saw less and less of her.
- It has been two weeks since he saw her, and no one in her boarding house has seen her in a week.
- "I got a letter in the mail saying she had been transferred to Minnesota, but I know she would never leave without talking to me. She loves this city."

Langston can tell the following:

**Assess Honesty:** Maurice is panicked, concerned, and not holding anything back. He'll answer anything Langston can think to ask if it will help find Lynette.

**Streetwise:** Anybody working for the government could be selling supplies to the black

market, to make a quick buck or just to get along. If the authorities caught anyone black selling illicit goods, they would just toss them in jail and lose the key, and they would never be heard from again.

Langston is a bright and observant man with a number of other abilities. The player may need a few minutes to figure out questions based on those abilities. Feel free to prompt them with some examples:

- Do you have anything from your daughter? A picture?
- Where does she work or go out to at night?
- When was the last time you saw her?
- If asked the right questions, Maurice can provide the following information:
- If asked why he chose Langston, Maurice explains he has heard that he helps others in the community, when no one else will.
- Lynette has been working for over a decade and supporting both of them.
- Maurice’s wife, Lisa, left after he came back from World War I. If pushed or asked any more questions about her, he shifts from concerned father to jilted husband.
- (Core, “Land Girls”) Maurice admits that he was not happy that his daughter was doing a man’s work at Navy Munitions Plant Echo, but they needed the money.
- (Core, “Unequal Housing”) Maurice can provide the address of the boarding house.
- Maurice is convinced that Lynette was not dating anyone.
- Maurice can provide a picture of Lynette in her work get up.
- (Core, Holy Rollers,”) Lynette was an avid church-goer, part of the choir at Shiloh Baptist Church, and always carried her mother’s Bible with her.
- She would call him most nights after work, and they would talk for a few minutes.
- He can also provide her letter if asked; he is hesitant to part with it, as it is his last link to her.

Even as Maurice hands Langston the letter, Langston knows it is wrong. Langston’s talent for **Languages** senses the lack of rhythm and terminology that would be in a military-issued letter. **Evidence Collection** notes the lack of proper government letterhead; even the paper feels like it has been treated with something. By

holding it up to the light, **Chemistry** can tell the fading of the paper is not natural, and it should not be as brittle as it is. A word of **Reassurance** and promise to return the letter is enough for Maurice to leave it with him.

If Langston spends a few hours with his small home lab and performs a little **Chemistry**, he can deduce the following:

- The paper was typed up less than a month ago, but appears to be over a year old.
- The paper was exposed to some unidentifiable chemical that “aged” the paper.
  - Langston has a rough idea of the basic components and could identify the substance, if he encountered it again.

If Langston calls the Metro Police Department and asks to speak with Detective Calvin Watts, Watts says he can help him in exchange for a favor. If Langston agrees, he gains Problem card 7, “Favor for Watts.” Watts tells him that, yes, a report was filed, but no one is really going out of their way to locate a missing black girl. Plus, her father seemed to experience a seizure of some kind and had to be restrained. If pushed, Watts tells him that it will be at least a few weeks before they send a unit out to her apartment.

Langston knows that he will need to investigate this further, and this may require driving. Rationing is in full effect, but Langston’s buddy Hartman can get him a little extra juice for Adelaide, in exchange for a good story or an interesting case. If the player plans this in advance, Langston gains Edge 17, “X-Card”.

### HOLY ROLLERS

**Scene Type:** Alternate

**Lead-Ins:** Lynette Was a Riveter,  
Unequal Housing

**Lead-Outs:** Ill Omens, Scandalous

Langston makes his way to Shiloh Baptist Church, located at 1500 9<sup>th</sup> Street NW, in the Shaw neighborhood. The red brick building stands four stories tall, and the massive wooden double doors are carved with symbols of the Lord. Built in 1924,

it towers over the neighboring buildings. The church is open from 10 am to 8 pm daily.

As Langston enters the church, the choir sings a rousing rendition of “Oh, Freedom,” quickly transitioning into “Roll, Jordan, Roll” and “Wade in the Water” before Langston can attract anyone’s attention.

## THE HOLY SPIRIT

*The church reverberates with sounds of people rejoicing and singing praise. Their infectious joy swirls around you.*

### Cool

**Bonus:** + 1 if Langston has Edge 1, “Battle Buddies”

**Penalty:** -2 if Langston has Problem 3, “Eternal Outsider”

**Advance 11+:** The unity of the room overtakes you; you forget for a moment what brought you here, and the endless possibilities of hope put a little extra spring in your step.

**Earn an Edge:** Edge 2, “Bible, Baby, Bible”

**Hold 4–10:** The music is nice; their voices are loud, but you aren’t fazed and need to get moving.

**Setback 3 or less:** The music rings in your ears, but all you can hear are the screams of your uncle three decades ago being whipped outside of a church for not stepping off the sidewalk quickly enough for a white couple’s liking. Gain Problem 8, “Salty.”

A heavy-set man in his late 50s with a number of gold rings on his chubby fingers locks eyes with Langston and walks towards him. In moments, the two black men are face to face, and Pastor Richard Williams extends a meaty paw as he introduces himself with a smile. Many pastors are known for dipping into the coffers, and Williams is no exception. He cares for his congregants, but also enjoys the earthly pleasures.

His first question is always, “Have you found

God, brother?” He then attempts to have Langston join his church for a small tithe. After all, the war is on and we all need to help those less fortunate than ourselves. If asked about Lynette, the pastor excuses himself, as other duties require his attention— but not before directing Langston to talk to the choir director. Though Pastor Williams is silver-tongued, spending a Push on Assess Honesty reveals that he is nervous at the mention of Lynette. It’s obvious that he knows her, and quite possible that he might know where she is. He is hiding something. Does Langston try to call him out in front of his congregants?

An elfin black man in a grey suit, James Turk, choir director of Shiloh Baptist, tells the choir to take a five-minute break and turns his attention toward Langston once he’s made sure the pastor is gone. Turk is 5’6”, in his late 30s, and clean-shaven. A little Flattery goes a long way, and he opens up instantly if his choir is complimented. James knows a lot about Lynette and is willing to share.

- Lynette has been a member of the choir since she was seven.
- She has the voice of an angel.
- She does have a boyfriend, the pastor’s son Russell. “Although it is very hush-hush, so please be discreet.”
- The two have been dating for close to a year.
- (Alternate, “Ill Omens”) If asked, Russell lives in Southwest in an alley town, street housing for African Americans.

Once he is done speaking, Langston notices that Turk lingers for a moment longer. A word of

**Reassurance** with a question about the pastor and Lynette gets him to reveal a little more.

- A few weeks ago, Turk walked in on a heated argument between the pastor and Lynette. He doesn’t know what it was about, but the two almost came to blows. He assumed it was about her dating his son.
- It was also unusual, but a little over a month ago, her voice cracked and her skin was ashy, almost like she was wasting away.


If Langston presses his luck and follows Pastor Williams, or comes back looking for him after talking to Russell (“Ill Omens,” p. 252), he finds him in his office. A small metal sign which reads *Offices* hangs on a large wooden door on the



northeast wall of the church. The wooden door swings open silently, revealing a flight of stairs leading up to the second floor. If the pastor is in, his office door is open; otherwise, it's locked.

In his office, the pastor is even less responsive, and asks Langston to leave. Langston's keen eye notes a high quality safe, possibly with a list of questionable deeds tucked inside.

If Langston waits for the pastor to leave the church, a Push convinces Turk to unlock the Pastor's office door for Langston before going back to direct the choir. Alternatively, Langston can try opening the office door himself with Devices, but he's not a practiced burglar. Someone reports him to a passing patrol car, and he picks up Problem 13, "Pinched."

 If asked, Scout offers to make quick work of the pastor's door after hours with **Locksmith**, so the two can take a look around (see the alternate scene, "Scandalous").

### SCANDALOUS


**Scene Type:** Alternate

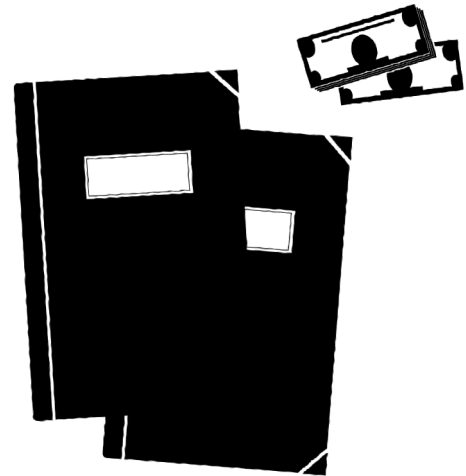
**Lead-In:** Holy Rollers

**Lead-Out:** Dancing the Night Away

The office is quiet and richly-furnished with a solid oak desk, various paintings, an overflowing bookshelf, and a sofa that appears to be well-used.

**Evidence Collection** turns up a second set of coded account books, a number of photographs, steamy letters from a few wives in the pastor's congregation, and a wad of cash, all hidden in a secret cabinet in the back of the bookshelf. Langston's **Cryptography** easily breaks the simple number code in a matter of moments, but he still needs a pencil-pusher with some **Accounting** to tell him what it all means.

 Myrna can confirm that Langston has found a cooked account-book, proving that Pastor Williams is skimming about 30% off the top. It shows that he gave two hundred dollars to Lynette Miller seven days ago. If asked, Myrna can state with confidence that it looks like Williams has a personal bank account with over one thousand dollars of church money.



If Langston confronts Pastor Williams with this find, the man lies outright that he did no such thing: he did not sleep with those women; he did not give anyone any money; and he will call the police if Langston doesn't leave. A little **Intimidation** breaks the pastor, who starts pleading, "Please don't turn me in, I will tell you everything... just promise me."

Pastor Williams spills what he knows:

- Lynette came to him and asked him for two hundred dollars.
- After he refused, she threatened to tell the church about his affairs and his skimming of the books. She worked on the accounts months ago, and had noticed the discrepancies.
- (Alternate, "Dancing the Night Away") She said "it" was after her and she "needed a piece" because she had to "kill him." Williams has no idea what any of this means.
- He paid her, and she left.
- He could have sworn her skin had an unholy glow about it.

The choice is up to Langston: does he turn the pastor over to the police? To his congregants? Or does he demand a piece of the action? If Langston takes a cut, Gain Problem 9, "Goon," and Edge 3, "Big Spender." If he is turned over to the police, Pastor Williams' fate is forever unknown. If he is turned over to his congregants, he is eventually forgiven after returning the money. Russell, Pastor Williams' son and one of Lynette's boyfriends, later tells Langston that the pastor moved to Los Angeles.

**UNEQUAL HOUSING***Scene Type:* Core**Lead-Ins:** Lynette was a Riveter, Land Girls, Ill Omens**Lead-Outs:** Holy Rollers, Land Girls, Ill Omens, Field of Lost Stars, Dancing the Night Away, Atomic War Bonds

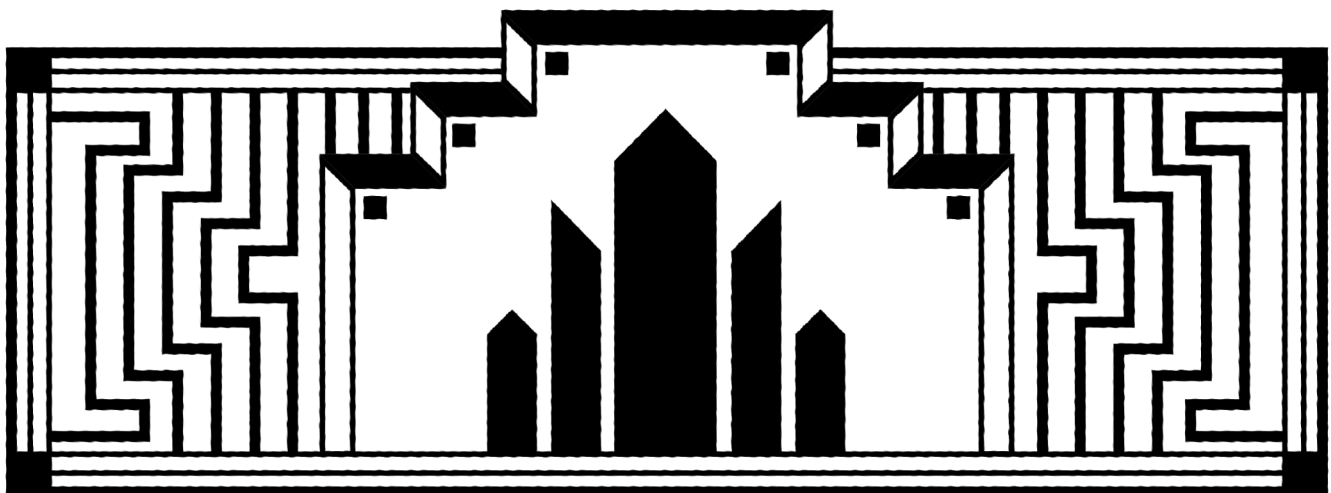
Maurice's directions send Langston to the Lucy D. Slowe Hall in LeDroit Park in NW Washington, run by the Defense Homes Corporation for African American women. The building offers 227 single rooms at seven dollars a week, and 22 double rooms costing six dollars per person per week: no single occupancy.

The main lobby of the brick building is warm and inviting, unlike the weathered white woman in her twilight years who sits at the front desk listening to the radio and reading the paper. Her wrinkled hands lay the paper on the desk after Langston enters, and her gaze attempts to burn holes in him.

No amount of niceties will break the ice with Ethel Dearth. The guardian of the boarding house stares hatefully at Langston. After a few frustrating moments, a black Latina walks in on the scene, and perks up at the mention of Lynette's name. This is Alicia Wilks; her smile is warm enough to melt icebergs, and will likely make Langston swoon for the 23-year-old woman.

**JUST THE FACTS... MA'AM****Cool****Bonus:** + 1 if Langston has Problem 3, "Eternal Outsider"**Penalty:** -2 if Langston has Problem 1, "Love in All the Wrong Places"**Advance 5+:** That smile could launch a thousand battleships and have a million GIs propose to her. But you're made of sterner stuff.**Earn an Edge:** Edge 4, "Unbreakable"**Hold 2-4:** While you can't stop looking at that smile, you've got work to do. So... just the facts.**Setback 1 or less:** Damn it! You're smiling and wrapped around her little finger. Gain Problem 11, "Head Over Heels."**Spending Edges:** Anything that gives a benefit to Cool or General/Mental, or spend Edge "Battle Buddies" to resist her charms.**Extra Problem:** Problem 10, "Sucker for Love"

Alicia takes Langston up to the room she shares with Lynette. It is a spacious, if cold, room with twin beds and running water. The few pictures on the wall, torn out of popular magazines, feature



actor Victor Jory (the movie face of *The Shadow*), singer Lena Horne, and dancers Fayard and Harold Nicholas. Alicia closes the door, puts on a record, and offers Langston a splash of gin with his water.

Stepping into the room, Langston also notices pictures of Lynette with a large black man in his late 20s, usually dressed in an ill-fitting grey suit (Russell Williams), some others of her with an older white man in his mid-30s, dressed in a tweed jacket and black glasses (Walter Addams), and four of her with Maurice at a small one-bedroom house. **Psychology** notes that each of the pictures seems to be that of a happy couple at various locations around Washington.

Alicia shares what she knows freely, and seems deeply concerned for her missing roommate. She leans against Langston, as she tells him her story:

- Lynette was dating two men on the home front and, like a lot of young ladies back home, she had three fiancées overseas fighting for America. They all know their engagements are not real, but even false hope is better than no hope, just as a perfumed letter from back home is better than nothing. If Langston appears shocked, Alicia points out we are at war and “the boys need something to fight for. Just think about all the girls at those USO parties.”
- The two have been roommates since they started working for the government.
- Alicia is a secretary at the National Archives.
- (Core, “Land Girls”) Lynette began acting strangely about a month ago. She sometimes did not come home at night, and when she did she was always looking out the window like she was being followed. She never liked to be alone. She also asked if Alicia had seen “an old Russian Jew — one of the professors from work” around the building.
- Lynette seemed to have lost about 10 pounds in under a month.
- Some of her hair fell out, and it was very brittle. Alicia abruptly stops talking about Lynette after that. A little **Inspiration** or **Reassurance** has her supply the following in very hushed tones and near tears.
  - She has not seen Lynette in a week.
  - The last time she saw her, she looked like she had been beaten.
  - She also seemed to have burns over her body.

**Assess Honesty** can tell that Alicia is holding something back. If asked, she breaks into tears and describes the following:

- The truly scary thing... eight nights ago... Alicia swears she saw a swirling rainbow of sickly lights outside of their window, and when she rushed over to the window with her military flashlight they appeared to flow up toward the sky and the roof before she could open the window. “I don’t know why, but I felt that death had just passed me by.”
- After she told Lynette about it, she did not come back.

If Langston asks Alicia to assist him in finding Lynette, or returns to her later on, offer Edge 18, “Alicia’s Assistance.”

Before leaving the room, Langston’s keen eye with **Evidence Collection** allows him to pocket Lynette’s diary and a few brittle hairs. Just touching the hairs sparks Langston’s **Chemistry**, telling him that these hairs feel like they have been left in bleach for a week, even though they have none of the discoloration associated with that type of treatment. (A somewhat similar effect to that on the hair in Maurice’s letter, if Langston has researched it.) Reading the diary uncovers a number of clues.

- Lynette got an offer to go to Howard, but needed to work so she could take care of her father.
- (Alternate, “Ill Omens”) Russell is great, but boring; he’s not what she expected from the son of a preacher-man, since they are well-known to be trouble.
- Walter is fun, but so worried about what other people think.
- There is an address in the inside cover: 111 Adams Street, with a heart beside it. (This is Walter’s address, where she will hide out in “Lynette’s Got a Gun”, p. 267).
- She never wants to get married.
- She loves being a riveter, and wants to see the world once the war is over.
- (Core, “Land Girls”) Walter has called in an expert that gives her the creeps.
- “I saw it again. It was so beautiful and repellent all at once.” Lynette describes the Colour in side notes throughout the next few pages, and

draws a picture of an amoeba-like fog cloud.

- She loves listening to the *The Shadow* on the radio, as he defends the US and battles Jerrys. She swells with pride knowing she is doing her bit, fighting Nazis by working at Navy Munitions Plant Echo. Just like her hero.
- She went to the doctor and was told nothing was wrong, which didn't explain why her hair was falling out.
- (Core, "Atomic War Bonds") She is excited about the war bonds party, and hopes that Walter will sneak her in. She even bought a new dress for it.
- The writing gets more frantic and takes extra effort to read. She believes someone is after her. She expresses concern for her father, and worries she needs a gun.
- (Alternate, "Dancing the Night Away") A later entry suggests she bought one.
- The journal expresses her concern over her voice cracking the other week during choir. She tries to link it to overwork, but notes she works fewer hours now than when she did housework.
- (Alternate "Holy Rollers") A smaller note mentions getting Pastor Williams' help.
- (Alternate, "Field of Lost Stars") Coordinates for a field in Fairfax County, Virginia. It is written in a military fashion, instantly relaying that she idolized her war veteran father, who must have taught her everything he knows.

### LAND GIRLS

**Scene Type:** Core

**Lead-Ins:** Lynette Was a Riveter,  
Unequal Housing, Ill Omens

**Lead-Outs:** Unequal Housing, Field of  
Lost Stars, Atomic War Bonds

As the car rolls up to the chain-link fence, which reaches toward the sky around the smoking Navy munitions plant where Lynette worked, a dozen soldiers turn to look at Langston from their three strategically-placed booths outside of the gate. A few aim machine guns in his general direction, but after a verbal ID check, or a mention of Lynette's name, they let him pass through the open gate.



However, he's watched closely as long as he's inside.

The warehouse is nearly a football field in length. Langston knows that most munitions factories are built away from towns to minimize any danger from an accidental explosion, and the eight buses outside are the only way back to town for most of the workers. Navy Munitions Plant Echo, the massive aluminum walled complex, awaits.


Evidence Collection spots dozens of size 7–9 dress-shoe footprints in the dirt. However, all of the soldiers are wearing combat boots.


Stepping through the main twelve-foot double doors, he is greeted by the sight of hundreds of women hard at work; some welding, some assembling tank shells, and others riveting. The sound of work is nearly deafening. A woman in her early thirties, Janet Vincent, makes her way over to him. The Caucasian forewoman is all business.

**Oral History** or **Flattery** gets the same response from the busy woman. "Sorry, son, but the janitors only come on the weekend." Once corrected, she still looks a bit dubious but will answer some of Langston's questions with what she knows.

- Janet has been the plant supervisor for close to a year.
- The plant operates from 06:00 to 18:00— 6 am to 6 pm, in civilian language.
- Lynette Miller did work here, and was a great employee.
- No, the plant did not send a letter to her father.
- She stopped showing up for work about nine days ago.

- (Core, “Atomic War Bonds”) She had ideas about going to the fundraiser at the Belasco Theater.
- The plant is all women (**Assess Honesty** notes this is a blatant lie).
  - If questioned, Janet giggles and says that is, except for the soldiers outside the fence (still a lie) that guard the facility.
  - Spending a Push on **Flattery** gets her to admit that they have some scientists working underground.
  - Spending a Push on **Intimidation** gets her to admit they have ten scientists on site doing something with rocks and radiation. Janet’s scared look attracts two burly passing security guards, who quickly toss Langston off the factory grounds, warning him that next time they see him, he will be shot.

 If Langston follows up with Myrna once back in Washington, she knows someone in the Planning Department and with her Bureaucracy skill she can have the public plans for the plant delivered to her office. While the plans do not give many details about the building, they show all the fortified positions where the army has men posted, and they also show the fence that goes all the way around the compound. Her love of Architecture means she spots extra support beams and slope of the buildings. She explains it likely has a sub-basement level — based on its closeness to the Potomac, there will only be one.

 (Alternate, “Field of Lost Stars”) If Langston goes to Melvin Hartman, he can’t pull up schematics for Navy Munitions Plant Echo, but remembers with his Astronomy that nearly three months ago (from the start of the scenario), a meteor shower occurred, and they sent out some of the boys because they thought it might be an off-target bombing raid. The rocks were taken to Navy Munitions Plant Echo. Last he heard, they were being researched by a Professor Walter Addams.

(Core, “Atomic War Bonds”) After a few moments, he mentions an upcoming fundraiser that Addams should be attending.

## ILL OMENS

**Scene Type:** Alternate

**Lead-Ins:** Unequal Housing, Holy Rollers

**Lead-Outs:** Unequal Housing, Land Girls, Dancing the Night Away

**Streetwise** instantly recognizes the cross streets of U Street and 3<sup>rd</sup> Street NE as an alley town. The population boom in DC may have hurt everyone, but it really crippled African Americans, forcing tens of thousands of them into makeshift dwellings of every imaginable shape, with no running water or heating.

Langston pulls up to see that among seven tightly-packed houses are nine shed-like buildings of varying sizes and shapes. A number of wooden toilet boxes sit outside of them, with no hydrants in sight. The smell assaults his senses as he approaches. Two black children of around six run out of one of the sheds and down the street to play.

Langston’s keen eye notices a dirty picture of Lynette in a battered picture frame in a nearby shed. A tattered black cloth flaps in the entrance in place of a door.

If Langston waits for Russell to return home before entering, or attempts to knock on the wall and announce himself, Russell will answer; a massive wall of man, he is friendly, but wary, and will attack anyone mentioning Lynette (see “Tussle with Russell”).

If Langston walks into the 6’ x 3’ shed, he sees it contains only a bed, with a greenish shirt as a curtain. **Evidence Collection** spots a key with chain wedged into the asphalt floor. The keyring states this is the property of Boarding House for Colored Young Ladies at Lucy D. Slowe Hall (“Unequal Housing,” p. 249). Before Langston can reach for it, the scene “Tussle with Russell” begins.



## TUSSLE WITH RUSSELL

*Russell Williams has little patience for thieves, or for people asking about his girl. A huge beefy paw tries to grab Langston by the neck and slam him to the ground.*

### Sense Trouble

**Advance 4+:** You dodge Russell's first swing, and knock him on his ass with a little fisticuffs (have the player describe the exact move). The beaten boyfriend acquiesces, and lends any assistance he can.

**Earn an Edge:** Edge 5, "This Is What I Do!"

**Hold 2-3:** Russell punches you in the kisser. You uppercut him, and send him spiraling onto his butt. Russell is willing to answer questions, but may bolt if given the chance.

**Setback 1 or less:** As above, but you have a ringing in your ears and you look like a sucker. Gain Problem 15, "Buzzing." You must use Reassurance, or make the use of another affable Interpersonal ability, to seem credible, or offer a good bourbon to earn Russell's cooperation. He knows he can take you, and it might cost you a little green to get him talking.

**Spending Edges:** Any benefit to Sense Trouble, Fighting, or General/Mental tests.

**Extra Problem:** Problem 16, "Steel Jawed"

Russell will reveal what he knows when asked a specific question, but will not volunteer any information.

- He has been dating Lynette for a year.
- He asked Lynette to marry him six months ago.
- She refused, saying her father would not approve of her marrying someone who did not fight in the war.
- He admits to being happy about not being sent overseas to shovel shit, but he did volunteer, and was told they had enough blacks.
- He thinks Lynette might be sick. They stopped

having sex three weeks ago, and he noticed that some of her hair had fallen out.

- She also had some "burns, I guess you would call them, but she said they were from work."
- He has not seen her for a week, and she was acting strangely the last time he saw her.
  - (Alternate, "Dancing the Night Away") She was ranting about needing money, and demanding to know where she could buy a gun.
  - Russell did not know where, and she did not have that kind of money.

## FIELD OF LOST STARS

**Scene Type:** Alternate

**Lead-Ins:** Unequal Housing, Land Girls

**Lead-Outs:** SCIENCE!!!, Ocean's Solo, Ashes to Ashes

Following the coordinates from Lynette's journal leads Langston out to a field, over the bridge and about twelve miles outside of Washington in Fairfax County, Virginia. Even as the car pulls up, it is apparent that something is not right in the area.

Asking locals with Oral History reveals that "government men" took something away — there's a rumor that it was an unexploded experimental bomb of some sort, because one of the guards was recognized as a fellow who works at Navy Munitions Plant Echo (Alternate lead-in, "Ocean's Solo").

*If the scene takes place during the day:*

Stepping out of the car and looking at the field of corn starts a feeling of dread boiling in the pit of Langston's stomach. The corn hangs from massive stalks, and each piece is nearly a foot and a half long. The entire field, as far as the eye can see, has mutated, with 36-inch corn cobs hanging from thick tree-like limbs. A rustle of fur can be seen moving between the stalks, getting closer and closer.

Out of the underbrush erupts a growling, cancerous, German shepherd, its paws bent backwards. Its fur is mangled, and half of its face is little more than a pile of mush. Yellowed teeth edged with green-tinted froth protrude from its mouth.

## NO BONES ABOUT IT

*The dog charges Langston.*

**Cool**

**Advance 5+:** Your reflexes never fail you. In one fluid move you dispatch the monstrosity. Have the player describe how Langston deals with the creature.

**Earn an Edge:** Edge 11, “Hardened Vet”

**Hold 2–4:** This is not the first time a dog has attacked you. Have the player describe how Langston deals with the creature.

**Setback 1 or less:** Your mind flashes back to that attack. The one that sent you home and stole your future. Gain Problem 40, “Damn! This Is a New Suit.”

**Extra Problem:** Problem 41, “Tetanus shot”

*If the scene takes place at night:*

As the car crests the hilltop, the entire field glows a sickly fluorescent color. Did a farmer leave his lights on for the war effort? Once out of the car and closer, it is apparent to Langston that the light is not from farm equipment. The corn itself is shining, the stalks writhing, reaching skyward in the windless night. Looking down, Langston finds a piece of rock, which is hot to the touch and flakes under his fingers.

Then it happens!

## MOMENT OF TRUTH

*Out of the corn fields, a five-foot swirling cloud of lights rises up from the mutated, twisted form of a goat and starts towards you. The grass under it browns as it moves in your direction.*

**Stability**

**Advance 8+:** You’re sure it’s best to bolt, hoping to outrun it. It gets closer and closer; fortunately for you, you run past a cow and the cascade of sickly lights

pauses on it. Just then, a helicopter flies by, shining a massive spotlight onto the area, and the Colour sinks into the ground.


**Earn an Edge:** Edge 6, “Logic, Not Fear”

**Hold 3–7:** You’re sure it’s best to bolt, hoping to outrun it. It gets closer and closer; fortunately for you, you run past a cow and the cascade of sickly lights pauses on it. Just then, a helicopter flies by, shining a massive spotlight onto the area, and the Colour sinks into the ground.

**Setback 2 or less:** The sight of the swirling, amorphous, cascading, pale lights overwhelms you with an overwhelming sense of doom. The world goes black, and you wake two hours later. Your skin has a faint glow, but everything around you is dead. The plants. The animals. All dried husks of nothing, leaving only a blasted heath. Gain Problem 17, “Fed Upon,” and discard “Geiger Counter Expert” if held.

**Spending Edges:** “Geiger Counter Expert” — the counter served its purpose, giving you a few extra seconds to act. Any Edge that benefits Stability or General/Mental tests.

**Extra Problem:** Problem 18, “Colour Shock”

 If Langston tells Rosamund about the encounter (if necessary, remind Langston that she has a love of these kinds of things and may know something), then she nods in understanding throughout the entire tale, never questioning Langston, but trying to comfort any shock he may have. She invites him to wait with a coffee, or little vodka, while she does some research in Howard’s rare book collection. After a few hours, she returns with a few hefty tomes, and briefly recounts a similar instance that she located:

In June of 1882, a meteorite fell to earth in Boston, and a strange amalgamation of lights caused the crops to rot. The sight of it drove people mad, and it destroyed an entire village before the lights reportedly launched skyward. People seemed to glow after coming into contact with it, and vegetation that it influenced grew to near-supernatural sizes and became inedible. **Cthulhu Mythos** allows her to understand what the creature is, but fearing to break her friend's mind, she chooses to provide him a few hints and hope for the best.

"From reading these, if it is the same thing, it is best not to let it touch you. If it does, it is not instant death, but..."

- It appears to affect the environment around it.
- The rock seems never to cool.
- The rock has a strange relationship with electricity. One night, it was struck by lightning several times during a thunderstorm, and the next morning the meteorite was gone — *as if the electricity had driven the force within the rock to take shelter underground.*
- It has an aversion to bright light.
- The creature itself is intangible.

## MOTORING WHILE BLACK

*Scene Type:* Alternate

This scene runs well after "Field of Lost Stars", but it can take place any time after Boris knows Langston is asking after him.

On the dirt road back to Washington, about at the halfway point, a patrol car pulls out from around a Punch Hitler in the Face sign. The patrol car follows behind Langston for a few long moments, no matter how fast he is going. If Langston slows, the patrol car slows. Cop Talk reveals that most patrols don't come out this way, as it is under Army security. This leads to sticky issues about jurisdiction.

The lights and siren blare, and the police attempt to pull Langston over. Langston has two likely options here. He can pull over to talk to the white police officers, or he can attempt to outrun them.

### Handle with care

- If Langston takes the "Yes... Officer" Challenge, he automatically gets a Setback. The officers shoot his tires and yank wires out of the engine. Gain Problem 14, "Hitchhiking," in addition to Problem 12, "Beat Down."
- If Langston takes the "Speed Demon" Challenge, he automatically gets a Setback. One of the officers fires, and Langston suffers -2 to Driving. Gain Problem 28, "Shot... Again" in addition to Problem 13, "Pinched."

## YES... OFFICER...

*You know this routine. You haven't done anything wrong, but you gotta play it cool. Just nod and agree.*

### Cool

**Penalty:** -2 if Langston has Problem 4, "Uppity So-and-So"

**Advance 5+:** You played it smart. The cops harassed you and wasted your time, but you got out with your dignity and all your teeth.

**Immediate Advantage:** Gain a Push.

**Hold 3-4:** You did not break, but they did break your headlight. They also gave you a couple of quick punches and a twenty-dollar ticket.

**Setback 2 or less:** They destroyed your headlights, dragged you out of the car, and treated you to the Sunday Special. Gain Problem 12, "Beat Down."

**Extra Problem:** Your blood is still pumping after that little jaunt. Gain Problem 8, "Salty."



## SPEED DEMON

*You know what's gonna happen if you stop. If you're lucky you will see a jail cell. You slam your foot on the accelerator, and Adelaide roars down the dirt road.*

### Driving

**Bonus:** + 1 if Langston has Edge 17, “X-Card”

**Advance 5+:** You mastered driving ages ago, and Adelaide leaves the cops in the dust before they can see your license plate.

**Immediate Advantage:** Gain a Push.

**Hold 2–4:** You take a quick corner, and it puts you ahead of the cops. After a few more moments you manage to lose them but are sure they saw your license plate.

**Setback 1 or less:** Your baby did all she could, but never had a chance to outrun a fully-gassed patrol car. Your tank hits E, and you roll to a stop. You manage to hide in the underbrush. Gain Problem 14, “Hitchhiking.”

**Extra Problem:** Your blood is still pumping after that little jaunt. Gain Problem 8, “Salty.”

## DANCING THE NIGHT AWAY

**Scene Type:** Alternate

**Lead-Ins:** Ill Omens, Scandalous, Unequal Housing

Langston knows that getting a gun in Washington these days is nearly impossible; it would be easier to just make one in the factories. **Streetwise** remembers that Rhino Jones (a local small-time crook, who earned his nickname when he head-butted a cop into a coma) claims to have come into some serious merchandise. He loves Cab Calloway, who is in town playing at Club Caverns. But you can't hit the Caverns unless you look sharp.

Once dressed to the nines, Langston finds himself outside Club Caverns, at 2001 11<sup>th</sup> Street NW. The stone three-story building's colors are warm and inviting; the sign hanging on the door says *Open All Night*. This breaks the midnight curfew, but they never seem to get raided. The line is long, and the music is jumping — even outside, as it blares out of the door every time it swings shut or open. Two burly black men in suits, with obvious bulges barely concealing their heaters, let people in slowly. A little **Cop Talk** spots the two undercover detectives waiting to get inside.

Langston can either wait in line for a few hours, or push his way up to the bouncers who know him and let him in. As he walks in, he sees the man himself, Cab Calloway, warbling away onstage and dancing in his lithe, rhythmic style, which few can mimic, much less match. His voice fills the entire club, bombing out “F.D.R. Jones.” Dolly, the hostess, winks at Langston and gives him a seat close to the stage. A waiter brings him his favorite drink — the player should have established what this is during character generation. The first drink is on the house.

Langston needs to decide if he wants to check in with Laura, the club's owner and an old flame, who is likely backstage in her office. The two are very casual about their past, and she has not seen him since he was wounded. It's up to the player to decide how Langston reacts to Laura; she is very fond of him, but will question him to find out what effect the war has had on him. If he looks a bit haggard, she may have one of the staff bring him something to eat, or if needed, she could pull some strings and have his ticket resolved by her friends downtown.

The music is jumping, people are dancing, and he sees Rhino Jones, a former heavyweight boxer, nursing a beer. Langston remembers with **Streetwise** that, for all of the man's might, he is a well-known lightweight when it comes to booze.

Once approached with **Flattery** and **Reassurance**, the powerhouse smiles ever so slightly, becoming receptive to the consultant's question.

- He did hear about the army losing fifteen pistols, seven rifles, and two grenades. How sad. Hopefully they will find them soon. He smiles a little wider.

- He did hear about some pretty bird (Lynette) trying to buy a heater.
- To the best of his knowledge (he strokes his chin thoughtfully), she found what she was looking for. *At a reasonable price.*
- If asked, he will confirm she looked worried. But who isn't? There is a war on.
- Rhino will sell Langston any of the items above for twenty-five bucks, his soldier's discount.
  - Rhino comments about “gotta keep the troops equipped.”
  - Langston remembers that Rhino tried to sign up but was turned away by the army like some other African Americans.
  - If buying a gun, the player gains Edge 8, “Packing Heat.”
- Rhino also has the inserts for a bulletproof vest, which he could part with for one hundred bucks.
  - If bought, the player gains Edge 7, “Life Preserver.”



### G-MAN TANGO

**Scene Type:** Alternate

**Lead-In:** Any time after Land Girls

**Lead-Outs:** Any

Any time after going to Navy Munitions Plant Echo, Langston has drawn some unwanted attention, and needs to figure out how to handle it. While walking to his car, or out of a nightclub, or home after a long day of work, Langston hears the shuffle of feet close, but not too close — definitely someone tailing him. Only a couple of choices for him: fight, flight, or wait and see.

## BETTER PART OF VALOR

*You hear some mook making a move on you. It's too early in the case for this. Better to split than rumble, so you beat feet.*

### **Stealth**

**Penalty:** -1 if Langston has been drinking, or -2 if the “War Wound” is acting up.

**Advance 5+:** You break into a dead sprint and duck into one of the alley cities, losing your tail instantly in a sea of the nearly homeless.

**Setback 4 or less:** You think you lost your tail, and slip behind the wheel of your car. You glance into the rear view mirror and see a man in the backseat smiling at you. You're nabbed.

## THE OLD ONE-TWO

*You hear some mook making a move on you. It's too early in the case for this. But if they want to rumble, you're not about to get capped.*

### **Fighting**

**Penalty:** -1 if Langston has been drinking or -2 if the “War Wound” is acting up.

**Advance 5+:** You duck behind a car, and then catch your tail by surprise. One solid punch knocks him out for a couple of seconds. He looks up at you, beaten.

**Setback 4 or less:** You never saw it coming. The weasel was fast and furious. He socked you in the jaw and handcuffed you to a lamp post.

If encountered, either due to Langston waiting, standing over him, or being caught by him, the young white man with sandy-brown hair smiles at the consultant. If beaten, he comments about Langston's great right hook, or if caught in a foot chase, he talks about running track in high school.

The man introduces himself. “Special Agent



David Ellison of the FBI. I have some questions for you.” In one fluid motion, he yanks out a small yellowish notebook to jot down the answers. If possible, he moves the conversation somewhere private, like Langston’s car or apartment, giving him an added opportunity to snoop.

Ellison takes the offensive, and drills Langston about what he is doing. What is his name? Where does he live? What did he do at Navy Munitions Plant Echo? Why is he out at this time of night? He is only interested in the factory, but hopes to set Langston off-balance with a barrage of questions. Later, Ellison turns the notebook over to Associate Director Clyde Tolson, who features in the final scene, “Man of the Hour” (p. 272). Take a note of the player’s answers for Tolson to reference in that scene.

**Cop Talk** reveals that the G-man is fishing, but he can arrest Langston, no question. After a few minutes’ conversation it becomes clear that he seems to have a deep desire for justice, and with the right **Inspiration**, he could be talked into spilling the beans.

With some **Inspiration**, Ellison shares the basics:

- He has a closing record of 9 out of 12 cases.
- He is on a case for the big man.
- The case deals with Navy Munitions Plant Echo.
- “If you know anything, call this number.” He hands Langston a black card with a number written on the back.
- “Otherwise... stay out of it.”

The G-man leaves Langston alone, possibly with more questions than answers.

### ATOMIC WAR BONDS

*Scene Type:* Core

*Lead-Ins:* Unequal Housing, Land Girls

*Lead-Outs:* Ocean’s Solo, Ashes to Ashes

#### Handle with care

- If Langston takes a poke at anyone, he also gains Problem 12, “Beat Down,” as he is beaten and thrown out.
- If caught, Langston must Take Time and is released the following day.

A couple of leads have pointed to the planned war bond party at the Belasco Theater. Langston knows that the scientist from Navy Munitions Plant Echo

should be in attendance trying to get money for his project, but no coloreds are allowed. Time to think outside the box and find a way inside.

If the player is stumped, give them a gentle reminder that during Langston’s time in the war, he would use the racism of others to his advantage by basically being invisible at gatherings. Allow the player to gain access with any reasonable plan, such as talking his way in, or masquerading as part of the wait staff.

Once inside the party, unless Langston does something to draw attention to himself such as speak, eat, drink, or present himself as an equal in some way, he is practically ignored. The occasional guest will hand him an empty cocktail glass or ask when the hors d’oeuvres will be served.

If Langston has the Problem card “Uppity So-and-So,” he must overcome the below Challenge before doing anything else.

## DAMMIT! I AM A SCIENTIST!

*That’s it. You have held your tongue; you have stepped off the sidewalk, and been disrespected again. A fella can only eat so much crow.*

### Cool

**Advance 6+:** A wave of anger washes over you. But you’re too cool of a customer to make yourself into a chump. You spot Janet from Navy Munitions Plant Echo with a drink in each hand and overhear her giggle at a joke told by someone she calls Boris.

**Setback 5 or less:** You hear a politician’s son, bragging about dodging the draft, starting to call you a N... and your fist moves before he can finish, and he goes flying over the dessert table. A flurry of movement occurs, and you find yourself tossed out of the fundraiser — luckily not arrested, because a couple of the GIs recognize you from your out processing earlier this year.

**Spending Edges:** “Battle Buddies” or “Bible, Bible, Baby,” or another Edge that benefits Cool or General/Mental tests.

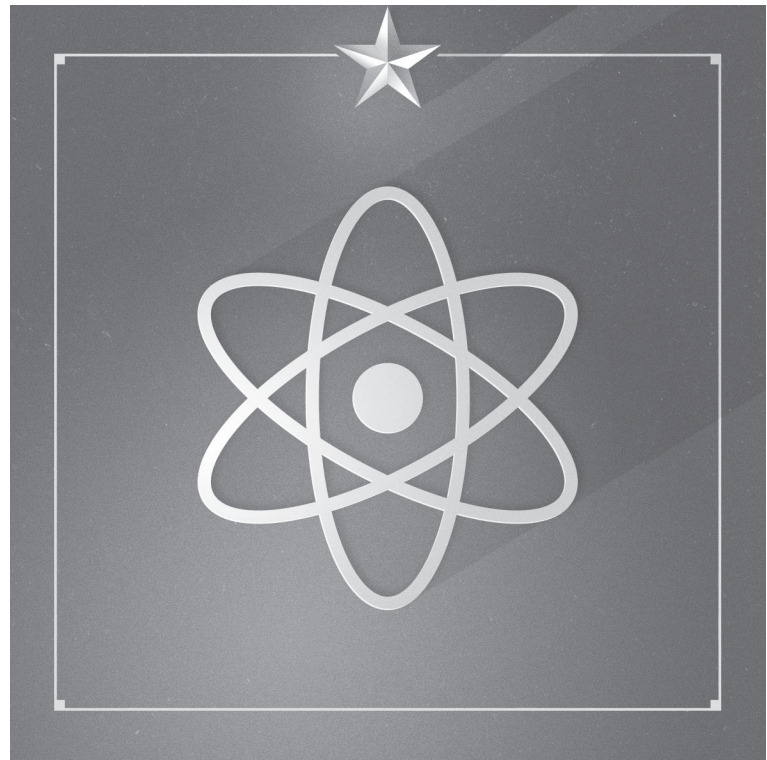
If Langston doesn't have to overcome the Challenge, he wanders around the party for a bit and hears a few interesting snippets.

- Colonel Grant plans to cut the budget to the Naval Observatory and shift the funds to the War Production Board (WPB). All that science doesn't help: we need more planes, boats, and guns! A Push lets Langston understand what that means. Earn Edge 9, "Inside Track."
- All of the GIs on guard are buzzing that Dorothy Lamour, the pin-up girl, will be here tonight. Maybe she will wear that sarong.
- Some scientists are laughing about using inflatable tanks to trick the Axis.
- Two military police officers are talking about a crate of missing weapons.

Eventually Langston sees Janet Vincent; she is drinking, and surrounded by some men in tweed sports coats. This is the only chance for Langston to see Boris, as he is at the fundraiser. Unless Langston passed the "Dammit! I Am a Scientist!" Challenge, he does not overhear Boris' name.

Standing nearby allows Langston to overhear most of the conversation. After a few moments it becomes obvious the old man has useful information. Langston is able to pick up the following snippets before the group moves upstairs, where no staff are allowed.

- (Core, "Ocean's Solo," p. 260) The old man is working with Addams, and doing work with "rock samples" in a lab at the munitions plant.
- The pieces of rock came from a field in Fairfax County, Virginia.
- After months of study, the mineral is astounding. It seems to absorb radiation, has an accelerated half-life that is substantially less than it should be, and never seems to cool down. Langston's mind races through his years of physics, and is sure that the mineral is the common link, and likely very fissionable.
- Walter Addams is not feeling well, and has been at home for the last few days. The old man suggested to him that he take a sabbatical to recover, as he has been working too hard. **Assess Honesty** notes that most of that is a lie of some kind.
- Janet says she may go check on him at his house. **Psychology** catches the man's voice



crack slightly, and a bead of sweat appear on his brow, before he slyly suggests she give him a couple of days, as she would not want to catch what Walter has. Then he laughs softly.

- The old man thinks it's time that he returned to his real job, which he'll do in a few days.
- Sticking out of the man's pocket is a set of papers — a pass, a travel docket, and other documents — that allow access to the munitions plant.
- After hearing the man speak for so long, Langston's ear for **Languages** is sure he is not American. The way his Vs are emphasized, he has to be Russian. Maybe he has lived here for a couple of decades, but that is harder to pin down.

Listening to the conversation, **Psychology** identifies that the man has a severe and deep-rooted need to prove his intellectual superiority in all situations.

Walter is not at the fundraiser, having already met his untimely fate and become ashes in the bottom of the Colour's "cage."

While serving drinks, Langston has a chance to nab Addams' papers for access to Navy Munitions Plant Echo.

## ALLONS-Y

*A subservient smile, an offer of a cocktail, and a feather-light touch are all it takes. You've heard stories from other OSS agents about how to pull this off.*

### Filch

**Bonus:** +2; everyone is drinking

**Penalty:** -2 if Langston has Problem 38, "War Wound."


**Advance 5+:** They take the drinks and laugh. As they walk past, you slip the papers out of his pocket.

**Hold 2-4:** Well, that could have gone better. You nabbed the papers, but they slipped out of your hand when one of the drinks spilled. They got ruined, but you did get a good look at them, and bet Scout can forge you a set.

**Setback 1 or less:** Shit! You got caught red-handed. No choice but to run, or spend the next decade in jail. You make it out, but that suit is ruined; if it is a loan, you owe someone some serious dough. You have no idea about the papers, lost a whole night, and may have been marked. Gain Problem 19, "GI Blacklist."

**Spending Edges:** "Battle Buddies" or another Edge that benefits Filch or General/Manual tests.

**Extra Problem:** Problem 40, "Damn! This Is a New Suit!"

 If Langston needs forgeries of papers, he knows that Scout can arrange them for him, and it should only take a couple of hours, assuming he knows what they look like. These papers don't grant Langston automatic access. If used, they will allow him to make a Push to be granted access to Navy Munitions Plant Echo.

## OCEAN'S SOLO

**Scene Type:** Core

**Lead-Ins:** Atomic War Bonds, Field of Lost Stars


**Lead-Outs:** Ashes to Ashes, SCIENCE!!!

### Handle with care

- If Langston is caught entering the munitions plant without a set of papers — forged or otherwise — he is detained in a cell for two days before Hartman can arrange to have him released. If this happens, Hartman is inaccessible for the remainder of the scenario, as he is dealing with the repercussions of freeing his friend. Gain Problem 19, "GI Blacklist."
- If Langston protests, the soldiers pummel him into submission. Gain Problem 12, "Beat Down."
- Even with the stolen papers, the soldier does not believe Langston and checks up on him within an hour, possibly leading to him being arrested.

Langston likely comes to Navy Munitions Plant Echo at night, when security is looser and his forged or stolen papers will receive less scrutiny. He drives up to the security gate, and is stopped by a ginger-haired, freckle-faced Private Elliot. Flashing the actual papers grants the consultant access.

Using false papers means that Langston has to jump through a few more hoops with the armed private, but **Reassurance** and a Push gets him through the gate; otherwise, he is turned away.

 Without papers, as a last resort, Langston can still get in with **Architecture**; Myrna can dig up plans of the plant and identify an intake pipe near the river that leads — after a muddy, dangerous crawl, through foul water — to the sub-basement. He gains Problem 40, "Damn, This Is a New Suit."

Once inside, Langston goes down a flight of stairs and through long metallic hallways under the factory above, and follows the signs to Addams' lab. Langston is only stopped once more, but is allowed to go about his way unless he says something off.

Once inside the large lab, Langston sees a massive glass cage with four small rooms inside. Each room is a mini-lab full of equipment. Touching the glass, he knows it is somehow

wrong. The structure was once a lead-lined glass container, of a sort used to contain radioactive materials under investigation, but it's been altered somehow. It's got three layers of glass, but the middle pane is in constant movement, constantly altering the polarization of the glass. **Physics** screams at his mind that this is something to do with quantum mechanics; spending a Push on Physics, and a little experimenting, tells him the cage has been modified by someone who had to be a genius.

Langston notes what looks like a bullet-hole in the glass, which has rendered this genius' precautions pointless. Stepping inside with a sweep of **Evidence Collection**, Langston discovers:

- a small, malleable, colorful globule of rock that is hot to the touch. There are more leaded-glass beakers nearby if he wants to take it with him safely.
- a handful of mathematical equations, with notes written in Russian. Reading them takes **Languages** to discover the notes compare the explosive properties of the rock to that of uranium-235, a bomb-grade, and highly valuable, commodity. Wracking his brain with **Streetwise**, Langston is sure none of the black market people he knows would traffic in anything this dangerous and treasonous.
- (Core) a pile of greasy ash on the floor. Running tests on this later ("SCIENCE!!!", see below) confirms that it is human remains. Weirdly, it shows no signs of being carbonized by fire; the cells just fell apart.

When Langston leaves the glass cage, he hears a click as he lifts one foot and sees he is standing on a trapped pressure plate floor.



## UNWANTED GUEST

*Looks like your elephant-in-a-china-shop routine just bit you in the ass. Time to think your way out of this.*

### **Mechanical Repair**

**Bonus:** +1 if Langston has Edge 4, "Unbreakable"

**Penalty:** -2 if Langston has Problem 15, "Buzzing"

**Advance 9+:** You quickly see that the pressure plate for the trap was hastily installed, and you remove the trigger, like that time you defused a car bomb for Wild Bill Donovan.

**Earn an Edge:** Edge 10, "Good Old Days"

**Hold 4–8:** You manage to delay the trap long enough to beat feet.

**Setback 3 or less:** Whoever did this was smarter than you. A cloud of sparkling dust explodes out of the ceiling, covering you in radioactive material. You quickly get it off, but too late. Gain Problem 21, "You Got DOSED!"

**Extra Problem:** Problem 42, "Chemical Spill."

Whether dosed or not, Langston has collected everything of interest, and possibly more.

## SCIENCE!!!

**Scene Type:** Alternate

**Lead-Ins:** Field of Lost Stars, Ocean's Solo

Langston works in the basement of the United States Naval Observatory (USNO), one of the oldest scientific agencies in the United States. While being black has limited how much anyone wants to interact with him, it has also made him invisible, with most of his comings and goings unnoticed unless he draws attention to himself.

Langston can run tests on the letter from Maurice, the crops from the field, or the hair he

discovered in Lynette’s boarding-house room. It takes him a chunk of time, and the tests are better run at night, when fewer people are at the USNO. If run during the day, a white junior scientist pops into his lab without warning and condescends: “Boy, what are you working on?”

Without waiting for an answer, the white scientist walks over and picks up whatever the item is. If it is the hair or letter, he simply turns it over and over then drops it on the floor. If it is crops from the field, he stops almost as if he saw something move and runs out of the room in fear. If followed, he mumbles about the phosphorescent colors and he swears the vegetation moved under the lights. **Assess Honesty** detects he believes every word he says. After a few minutes, a secretary comes and takes him to the lounge for tea to relax.

After examining the paper or hair using a microscope, X-rays, and a Geiger counter, **Physics** confirms that all of the items have been exposed to a radioactive source, but the half-life of the objects appears to be weeks, instead of the years it should be. Spending a Push on **Physics**, Langston is sure he could modify a Geiger counter to detect this type of radiation at close range. If done, Langston gains Edge 15, “Geiger Counter Expert.”

If Langston has Problem 17, “Fed Upon,” the Geiger counter spins uncontrollably and becomes useless. Discard the Edge.

### Test Run on Mammals and Vegetation

- The radiation accelerates the metabolic rate of living creatures.
- It passes on mutagenic properties.
- The cellular growth is unchecked, and while increasing size, it damages the cell walls of the life form.
- It hampers the organism’s ability to process sunlight and could be detrimental in later stages.
- Prolonged exposure results in death — the sample just rots away, consumed from within and unable to withstand any change in conditions, even simple exposure to sunlight.

### Test Run on Piece of Meteorite

- It generates a significant amount of heat and seems to sublimate at an accelerated rate when exposed to air.

- The rock is extremely malleable and can be shaped with the hand, if protection is worn.
- No gas is released if heated.
- It is luminous and glows in the dark with a pale light.
- It demonstrates unusual sensitivity to electrical pulses, and it’s possible a strong sustained pulse could accelerate its internal reactions to the point of exploding.
- Bright light appears to cause the atoms of the rock to move away from it.
- If added to any fissile material, it would magnify the explosion by a power of three.
- The rock is radioactive, but it’s generating more heat than conventional radioactive decay can explain.
- Spectroscopic analysis results can’t identify the components of the rock.
- It has magnetic material qualities.

### ASHES TO ASHES

**Scene Type:** Core

**Lead-Ins:** Field of Lost Stars, Atomic War Bonds, Ocean’s Solo

**Lead-Out:** A Night Downtown

Run this scene when Langston comes back after one of the listed lead-in scenes, but after “G-Man Tango.” Returning home after a trying night, he notices his door is ajar. When he opens the door he is greeted by the sight of a ragged-looking Special Agent Ellison. The man’s sandy-brown hair is grey and frayed at the edges. His usually white skin seems to have a sickly glow about it. He’s sitting on the battered second-hand couch, and on his lap is an electric desk lamp that he’s taken from Langston’s desk. He’s unscrewed the lamp stand — judging by his bloody hands, he unscrewed it with his bare hands and lost half-a-dozen soft, peeling fingernails in the process — and sits there with exposed live electrical wires hissing and snapping inches away from his bare skin. As Langston enters, he half-rises and reaches out, mumbling inaudibly, his face contorted in a visage of eternal pain.

The man coughs out a few coherent words. “I saw it. You have to help...” Then his entire



body starts to crumble, dropping the lamp. First his hands dissolve, reaching out ashen toward Langston; then his arms, and swiftly the corruption dissolves his body, which glows a sickly color that has never existed on earth.

## COLOUR BLIND

### *Electrical Repair*

**Bonus:** + 2 if Rosamund shared the Colour's secret, or if Langston ran tests on the rock

**Penalty:** -2 if Langston has Problem 15, "Buzzing"

**Advance 9+:** You watch the Colour drain the life out of Ellison. As it moves to leave, it dramatically adjusts its course to avoid the sparking electricity from the lamp. The Colour's repelled by the electricity! Ellison must have known the thing's weakness on some instinctive level.

**Earn an Edge:** Edge 6, "Logic, Not Fear"

**Hold 4-8:** You watch the Colour drain the life out of Ellison. As it moves to leave, it dramatically adjusts its course to avoid the sparking electricity from the lamp.

**Setback 3 or less:** You stand dumbfounded, watching Ellison's ashes swirl around you.

**Spending Edges:** "Geiger Counter Expert" — the counter served its purpose, giving you a few extra seconds to act. Any Edge that benefits Stability or General/Mental tests.

(Core, "Lynette's Got a Gun") If Langston has seen the ashes in the cage in "Ocean's Solo" (p. 260), and noticed that Walter was missing from the War Bonds party in "Atomic War Bonds" (p. 258), he can put two and two together and realize that Walter is dead.

## A NIGHT DOWNTOWN

**Scene Type:** Alternate

**Lead-In:** Ashes to Ashes

**Lead-Out:** The Price of Truth

Whether Langston calls the police or not, they arrive at his house roughly thirty minutes after Special Agent Ellison crumbles to ashes. They knock violently on the door, and eventually break it down if they get no answer. If Langston has any illegal items, he has time to dispose of them before the cops make their way in. They don't play the usual game, either. They come in, pistols drawn, arrest him, and let him rot in a cell for close to six hours before dragging him into the interrogation room.

The two white detectives handcuff Langston's right wrist to a heavy metal chair that's stained a dark brown from the blood of former occupants. The younger of the two stands just out of view behind Langston, while the older sits across the table from him, and offers him a glass of water.

**Psychology** and a life lived without the benefit of the doubt at the harassing end of police attention sees the Good Cop, Bad Cop routine coming miles away. He knows he needs to play it smart and tough, or he won't make it out of this room.

Detective Charles, the Good Cop, hands him a drink and says, "We know you're working with her. She probably played you for a sap, son. Just tell us where she is, and you won't serve much time." His face is hard but inviting, after a night in the slammer.

Langston will likely ask who, or be confused by his current situation. Whatever he says, Detective Silver slams a phone book into his ribs with the force of a charging bull. Langston has a choice — take the beating ("Be a Hep Cat Man... Hep Cat") or fight back ("Seven Minutes in Hell").

If Langston has Edge 7, "Life Preserver," the two cops make a couple of jokes about the war hero being scared of the DC streets and take the vest.

## Handle with Care

If Langston's tangled with the cops already (by picking up the Problems "Pinched," "Beat Down," or "Hitchhiking"), or if using the **Handle with Care** rules, then his treatment is even worse:

- The detectives slam Langston into doors while walking him into the interrogation room; gain Problem 15, "Buzzing." Spending a Push on Cop Talk gets the detectives to realize they need information first, avoiding this added injury.
- He is locked in the cell with his hands cuffed behind his back for hours, giving him a -1 to all Physical tests for 24 hours.
- If Langston chooses the "Seven Minutes in Hell" Challenge, he suffers a -2 due to his wrists being cuffed far too tightly causing limited blood flow.
- "Seven Minutes in Hell" adds Extra Problem 38, "War Wound."
- "Be a Hep Cat Man... Hep Cat" requires a Push to achieve any success greater than a Hold.

### SEVEN MINUTES IN HELL

*Detective Silver starts to pummel you; you can see the sick joy in his racist eyes. Getting to take down another black man, just like the last guy to sit in this chair.*

#### Athletics

**Penalty:** -2 if Langston has Problem 21, "You got DOSED!" as his body is fighting the effects of radiation.

**Advance 6+:** You slip under Silver's next swing, using your cuffed hand and your momentum to slam the metallic chair into him. The man crumples to the floor, and you slip into the corner of the room with the chair in front of you, knowing that Detective Charles has probably drawn his piece. Your eyes meet and he lowers the gun slightly as you stay in the corner.

**Earn an Edge:** Gain Edge 11, "Hardened Vet."

**Hold 2-5:** You slip under Silver's next

swing, using your cuffed hand and your momentum to slam the metallic chair into him. The man crumples to the floor, and you slip into the corner of the room with the chair in front of you, knowing that Detective Charles has probably drawn his piece. Your eyes meet and the gun is pointed directly at your head.

**Setback 1 or less:** You try to move but zig directly into Silver's next punch, and he knocks you to the ground, and the chair slams on top of you. You got beat, like every other guy in that chair. Gain Problem 22, "Demoralized."

### BE A HEP CAT MAN... HEP CAT

*That snatcher Silver rains down punches on you; you see sick joy in his racist eyes, getting to take down another black man, just like the last guy to sit in this chair.*

#### Cool

**Penalty:** -2 if Langston has Problem "Uppity So-and-So," and another -2 if Langston's a repeat offender.

**Advance 9+:** You quip at the racist detective beating you. Ask the player what they say. His eyes bulge, and he ripples with rage. He gets ready to hit you again, when partner Detective Charles pulls him off of you and kicks him out of the room.

**Earn an Edge:** Gain Edge 12, "Gallows Humor."

**Hold 5-8:** The racist detective keeps beating you, and you suffer through it until the fat man wears himself out and sits down. Then Detective Charles starts questioning you.

**Setback 4 or less:** You try to tough it out, hoping the fat detective has a heart attack. No luck, though, and he knocks you out. When you wake, they are both across from you laughing, and then the questioning starts. Gain Problem 22, "Demoralized."

**Extra Problem:** Problem 15, "Buzzing."

Win or lose, Detective Charles calls off Silver. Langston knows many a black man has never left a police station after having a “tumble” down the stairs. **Psychology** can tell they want something from him, and need him in a state to do something. But it has to be something more, as that would not stop them from rendering him incapacitated. **Cop Talk** believes that Watts may be looking out for him, as he has helped Watts close some cases.

Then the interrogation begins. Over the next few hours, **Cop Talk** starts to piece together some of the missing pieces for Langston. Someone tipped them off about Lynette stealing some aluminum cases to sell for a quick buck from Navy Munitions Plant Echo. They picked Langston up because they know he was at the factory a couple of days ago, asking questions about Lynette. Being harassed by cops so much, **Cop Talk** knows this level of attention means something else going on.

The two detectives are more than happy to give Langston three days of freedom, but they will be watching him. They let him know that next time he may not make it into the station, if he doesn't come through; and he better get to walking. Gain Problem 39, “Marked Man.”


### THE PRICE OF TRUTH

**Scene Type:** Core

**Lead-In:** A Night Downtown

**Lead-Outs:** Dinner with Maurice, Lynette's Got a Gun, Secret... Secret...

After Langston has either been in the sub-level of Navy Munitions Plant Echo and seen the experiment, or witnessed Special Agent Ellison's horrific demise, Dmitri will wrap up all of the loose ends before he meets with Boris tomorrow at the Capital Traction Power House. Dmitri has hired a goon, Gian Dean, to help with this. The likely best time for this is after Langston has been released from the Metropolitan Police station.

**Handle with care**  Langston has made it a few blocks from the police station in NE, having just passed 1943 Bennett Place NE, (a two-story brick townhouse converted to apartments) on his way to catch the trolley. The police have left his car

at his home when he was arrested last night. The sun slowly works its way skyward.

## DEAD BY NOON

### **Sense Trouble**

**Penalty:** -2 as Langston has been up all night getting worked over.

**Advance 5+:** You are walking along when a silenced bullet whizzes by your skull, missing you by less than an inch. You drop behind the closest junker, and see a glint of steel from the upstairs window of that townhouse. Too bad the fuzz kept your piece.

**Earn an Edge:** Edge 13, “Born Lucky.”

**Hold 3-4:** You are walking along, thinking about your next move, when a silenced bullet grazes your shoulder. You drop behind the closest junker. Too bad you didn't see exactly where it came from, but it's likely that townhouse. Gain Problem 23, “Snipered.”

**Setback 2 or less:** You feel a bite in your shoulder, a feeling you know all too well. You drop to your knees as you hear a scream from the townhouse across the street, before the world goes dark for ten minutes. Gain Problem 24, “Bleeding Out.”

**Spending Edges:** “Life Preserver” negates the attack completely, or another Edge that benefits Sense Trouble or General/Mental tests.

**Extra Problem:** Problem 27, “Ringin in Your Ears.”

Once Langston makes it to the townhouse, there is mass panic. A little Reassurance settles down the landlord, Jesus Garza, a slightly overweight Hispanic man in his early fifties. Once calmed and asked specific questions, he knows the following:

- A tenant on the second floor heard a soft “pinging” sound from next door.
- (Core) The man that rented the apartment last night paid up front for a week but just left with a duffle bag.

- The man was muscular, young, and tough-looking.
  - If asked, he will allow Langston to go upstairs.
- If Langston Advanced, he can make it into the room before the sniper is able to fully clean up the site, and he recovers a shell casing from some sort of rifle.

**🔍** If taken to Hartman, he can easily identify the shooter as a 7.62mm Mosin sniper rifle, of Soviet design from about a decade ago. A new model came out about five years ago. Likely, whoever used this has been stateside for probably a decade to have this as their weapon of choice. But if the person had been a trained sniper, Langston would be dead.

(Core, “Secret... Secret...”) On any result, once in the room, **Evidence Collection** spots an ID card for a Capital Traction Power House (see Secret...Secret..., page 269) in NE close to Anacostia. Scribbled on the back in ballpoint pen is tomorrow’s date and the time 2130 written on it.

(Core, “Lynette’s Got a Gun”; alternate, “Dinner with Maurice”) He also spots a notepad on the bedside dresser. Falling back on old-school tricks, Langston can scribble over the pad and see four names: Special Agent Ellison with a line through it, Maurice Miller and Lynette Miller, each with addresses, and Langston’s own name. Lynette’s name has two addresses next to it — the room she shared with Alicia in Lucy D. Slowe Hall, and another address (Addams’ house). Langston has to decide which of the two people, Maurice or Lynette, he will try to save first.

**DINNER WITH MAURICE**

**Scene Type:** Alternate

**Lead-Ins:** The Price of Truth,  
Lynette’s Got a Gun

**Lead-Outs:** Lynette’s Got a Gun,  
Secret... Secret...

Langston likely makes his way here after surviving the sniper attack and discovering the notepad. If Langston comes here first, he has a chance to save Maurice. If not, Maurice is dead by the time he arrives.

Langston rushes to the tenement house at Delaware and Canal Avenues SW. The run-

down building houses almost a hundred African American former soldiers, and he can smell the mildew as he rushes up to the fourth floor.

Any former soldier points him upstairs toward Maurice’s apartment and mentions, “He sure is popular today. Some Capital Traction Power man was asking about him 20 minutes ago.”

**🔒** The door is locked, and no one answers, no matter how much Langston knocks. **Locksmithing** would easily allow him access, but unless he brought Scout with him, Langston will have to shoulder the door to break it down: it crumples quickly, and alerts all of the residents on that floor.

Maurice is spasming on the floor, and at this distance **Streetwise** notes he’s been slipped a deadly Mickey laced with cyanide. Langston only has seconds to help his fellow soldier and knows that a large dose of hydroxocobalamin, a form of vitamin B12, can save him.

**THE UNICORN AND THE WASP**

*You glance around the small apartment for components and pull out a few spirits you have on you.*

**Preparedness**

**Advance 6+:** You mix together a quick antidote for Maurice and grant him a second chance at life. You pour the foul-smelling brew down his gullet, and he springs up cursing. You saved the old man.

**Immediate Advantage:** Gain a Push.

**Hold 3-5:** You mix together a number of chemicals and hope for the best as you pour it down the old man’s gullet. He stops frothing and lies unmoving with shallow breaths. It looks like he will live, but you better call an ambulance.

**Setback 2 or less:** You mix together a number of chemicals and hope for the best as you pour it down the old man’s gullet. He stops frothing and breathing. Gain Problem 25, “Eyewitnesses.”

**Spending Edges:** Spend “Battle Buddies” to get an automatic Advance, or spend another Edge that benefits Preparedness or General/Mental tests.

If Langston saves or stabilizes Maurice, he is greeted with cheers, and finds out that the local power man from Capital Traction Power came by to connect power in Maurice's apartment. No one is sure why, as Maurice could not afford it. If awake, Maurice confirms that he did not call the power people, but this guy insisted, so who was he to turn away free power? The description given — muscular, white, thug-like — matches the description from the townhouse sniper attack (*The Price of Truth*, p. 265).

If Langston failed to save Maurice, or killed him, everyone becomes violently upset and instantly enters the “Any Which Way” Challenge below.

## ANY WHICH WAY

*You screwed up and screwed up big in front of a crowd of people. You gotta bolt, or else...*

### **Athletics**

**Penalty:** -2 if you have any Problem that affects Physical tests.

**Advance 6+:** You manage to sprint down the hall and down the backstairs before the crowd can fully mobilize.

**Earn an Edge:** Edge 14, “Jesse Owens.”

**Hold 3-5:** You manage to get down the stairs, but only a few feet ahead of the crowd. They run you off, and you better not come back.

**Setback 2 or less:** You are too slow. Guess that war wound got you again. They beat you into unconsciousness, and you wake up in a dumpster a few hours later. Problem 38, “War Wound.”

**Extra Problem:** Problem 26, “You killed Maurice!”

If Langston went to Lynette first, the two arrive as a pair of gloomy-looking workers wheel Maurice's body to the back of an ambulance. They will give the two a moment to look at the man. It appears that his death was accompanied by violent and painful convulsions. Chemistry notes these convulsions were produced and not natural.

## LYNETTE'S GOT A GUN

**Scene Type:** Core

**Lead-Ins:** *The Price of Truth*,  
Dinner with Maurice

**Lead-Outs:** Dinner with Maurice,  
Secret... Secret...

The small, one-story house in Cleveland Park is located at Connecticut and Ordway NW, surrounded by one of the few unoccupied areas of green trees and dotted with signs advertising future construction.

A couple of different clues can lead Langston to Lynette's hiding place: the most likely route is the address from the hired killer (*The Price of Truth*, p. 265), but reading it in Lynette's diary (“Unequal Housing”), or learning Walter's name and looking up his address through **Research** could also work. Lynette decided to hide out at Walter's house until she comes up with a better plan — as Boris knows that Walter is dead, she guessed that no one would go to his home after it was searched days ago.

She saw the name of the field where the meteorite landed on a chart in the lab. She thought there might be something interesting there, so she jotted the coordinates down, as her dad taught her — she needed to make sure her roommate didn't understand. She never made it out there, but planned to investigate.

(Core) She witnessed Walter being killed by something in the “cage,” while Boris stood there and watched. He did nothing, and she could have sworn he even smiled. He mumbled something about this find making him rich. He saw her, and she ran.

She mailed the letter to her father saying she had been transferred. She hoped this would stop him worrying. She planned to send him money every month, somehow.

Based on Langston's questions, Lynette provides all the information above. But first Langston needs to reach her.

If Langston discovers her location by overhearing Walter Addams' name during “Atomic War Bonds” and getting the address through a little **Research**, or by going there first after “The Price



of Truth,” he has two likely courses of action: either the direct approach of a knock on the door, or trying to sneak up to the house to investigate.

Sneaking up on the house begins the below Challenge:

### THE SILENT TREATMENT

*You move slowly towards the house, moving low to the ground like so many times you snuck up on the Krauts.*

**Stealth**

**Bonus:** + 2 if at night, +4 with “Alicia’s Assistance”

**Penalty:** -1 if during the day

**Advance 5+:** You make your way up to the house and even slip inside through the unlocked back door. You get the drop on Lynette. She turns and sees you, but she can tell that you don’t mean her any harm: you could have done anything to her before she saw you. She lowers her gun.

**Earn an Edge:** Gain Edge 16, “The Invisible Man”

**Hold 2–4:** You make your way up to the house and even slip inside through the unlocked back door. You get the drop on Lynette. She turns and sees you, and makes a move for her gun.

**Setback 1 or less:** You make your way up to the house and even slip inside through the unlocked back door. You get the drop on Lynette. She turns and sees you, with a gun in her hand, and she fires. Gain Problem 27, “Ringing in Your Ears.”

**Extra Problem:** Problem 38, “War Wound”

Walking up to the front door, or a result other than an Advance in “The Silent Treatment,” gets a quizzical look from Lynette. A Push, or showing her the letter or picture from Maurice, gets her to lower her gun, loosen up and share her story with Langston. Otherwise, she tries taking a shot, giving Problem 27, “Ringing in Your Ears.”

If Langston arrives after “Dinner with Maurice,” his reception is very different. He hears

the sound of a heated gun battle. The small house is under assault by a muscular man in Capital Traction Power overalls, using his sedan as cover. Lynette is firing back from the shattered window by the front door.

### CLEVELAND PARK CORRAL

*The only option is to take out the goon dressed as an electrician for the Capital Traction Power House, or Lynette may get iced. But better watch out — she is clearly a good shot, and she doesn’t know you. Maurice must have taught her how to shoot; she is better than half the guys you served with.*

**Fighting**

**Bonus:** + 1 if “Packing Heat”

**Penalty:** -2 due to the flying hot lead

**Advance 6+:** You and Lynette make a dynamic duo, and plug the goon multiple times. His bloody corpse drops to the ground. Lynette gives you a nod of thanks.

**Immediate Advantage:** Gain a Push.

**Hold 3–5:** You and Lynette make a dynamic duo, and plug the goon multiple times. His bloody corpse drops to the ground.

**Setback 2 or less:** You make your move, but get caught in the crossfire and drop to the ground. Looks like the goon is gonna ice you. Then you hear a bullet strike home. His eyes glaze over and he falls to the ground beside you. You slowly push yourself up to see Lynette’s pistol pointed at you. Better start talking fast. Gain Problem 29, “At the Mercy of Lynette.”

**Extra Problem:** Problem 38, “War Wound”

**Streetwise** instantly identifies the goon as a contract killer, and **Evidence Collection** uncovers a piece of paper with Langston’s, Maurice’s, and Lynette’s addresses along with Capital Traction

Power House, tomorrow's date, and a time: 21:30 (9:30 pm). Lynette is determined to go and check on her father, if Langston has not already saved him.

If Maurice is dead, then she's even more terrified. She's convinced that Boris and his associates will hunt her down no matter where she goes. There's no chance of escape as long as they are chasing her. They have to confront Boris somehow. Everything points toward the Capital Traction Power House. Langston has a location and a time: now he needs a plan.

### SECRET... SECRET...

**Scene Type:** Conclusion

**Lead-Ins:** Lynette's Got a Gun, Dinner with Maurice, The Price of Truth

**Lead-Out:** Man of the Hour

The deserted waterside power plant is kept dark for fear of air raids. The massive Capital Traction Power House's wires and machinery provide enough cover to shield the transaction from the outside world.

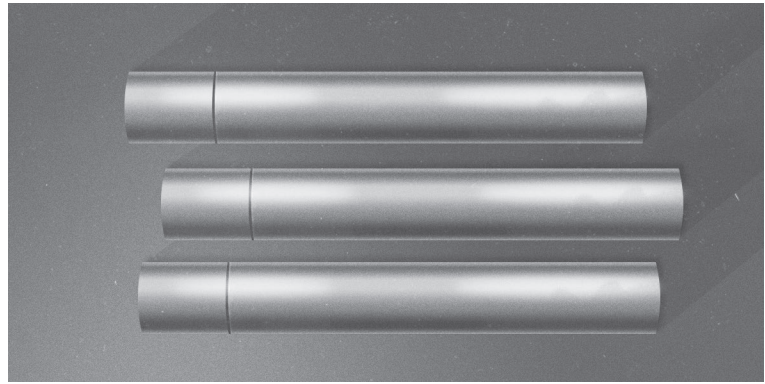
Dmitri is here alone. He arrives an hour early to scout out the location, but doesn't go inside until five minutes after Boris does. He is a trained spy, and is watching for anyone tailing him.

If Langston stakes out the power station any time before 8 pm, he will spot Dmitri entering the building. Otherwise, Dmitri spots him.

If Dmitri spots Langston, he hides, to let Langston go inside to confront Boris and listen to the exchange. Dmitri is keen to confirm that Boris is not informing on him. So far, the two have only done dead drops, and Boris has no idea of what Dmitri looks like.

Boris arrives ten minutes early, parks under a tree, and glances around for any sign of anyone. He takes out a metallic case with three cylinders, each containing gelatinous stunted Colours and shards of the meteorite. He is nervous, and wants to get the exchange over; he understands how unstable these cylinders are, and isn't sure what part of the wave theory radiation treatment altered the creatures to their current states.

If Langston doesn't spot Dmitri, and follows



Boris inside, Boris crumbles nearly instantly under any interrogation from shame, forcing Dmitri's hand to attack.

## AT THE MERCY OF DMITRI

### Sense Trouble

**Bonus:** +2 for "Born Lucky"

**Penalty:** -1 if "Buzzed"

**Advance 6+:** You heard the cocking of the gun and dove on top of Boris, saving both of you.

**Hold 5-2:** You're about to sling Boris when a bullet whizzes past you, striking him in the arm. It sends the spy spinning into one of the dark corners of the factory.

**Setback 1 or Less:** A bullet clips you in the back; you dive, as the assassin is probably ready for his next shot. Take a -2 to your next physical challenge.

**Spending Edges:** Any that add to General or Physical

If Dmitri doesn't spot Langston, he walks in after Boris and silently creeps up on the physicist. The exchange only takes a few minutes if not interrupted. Dmitri thanks Boris for his service to the Soviet Union, and hopes this is the start of a profitable association. With that, he gives him an envelope with five hundred dollars. Boris hands him the case, gently, and then scurries away.

Assuming Langston attempts to sneak in after Dmitri, the following Challenge starts.

## SHADOW PLAY

### Stealth

**Bonus:** + 1; it is dark in the Capital Traction Power House

**Penalty:** -2 if Langston holds any Problems

**Advance 5+:** You sneak through the shadow monument of power and find the perfect vantage point to overhear the conversation and strike when ready.

**Immediate Advantage:** Gain a +2 on any Fighting roll during this scene.

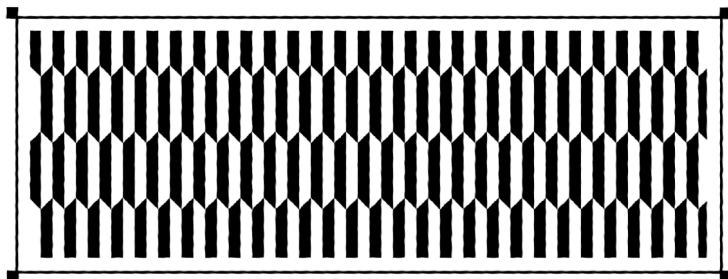
**Hold 2-4:** You get close to the two without being noticed and can pick up most of the conversation.

**Setback 1 or less:** It is too dark, and you bump into a workbench. An open tool case loudly spills its contents all over the floor, and Dmitri dives behind a generator. Gain Problem 30, “Out in the Open.”

**Spending Edges:** “The Invisible Man”

**Extra Problem:** Problem 31, “Dropped Your Piece”

After the exchange is done, Boris starts to walk out, but screams and points at an amorphous, glistening cloud of pale colors that passes through the exterior wall towards Dmitri. If Langston has the Problem “Fed Upon,” it moves toward him instead of Dmitri. The horror emerges fully into the room, bringing an overwhelming feeling of dread to everyone watching the billowing movements of the sentient hunter.



## THE COLOUR'S COMING HOME

*This insubstantial cloud of dread moves purposefully, and you can sense the intelligence in it. Hopelessness begins trying to work its way into your brain.*

### Stability

**Bonus:** + 1 if Langston has Edge 6, “Logic, not Fear”

**Penalty:** -2 if Langston has Problem 17, “Fed Upon”

**Advance 10+:** You stay hardboiled, adjust your homburg, and then move into action. That jolt of confidence shakes loose the cobwebs.

**Immediate Advantage:** Discard a Mythos Shock Problem.

**Hold 4-9:** You stay hard-boiled and ready.

**Setback 3 or less:** The magnitude of the multiverse opens itself up to you. Gain Problem 32, “Starry Night.”

**Spending Edges:** “Logic, Not Fear,” or another Edge that provides a benefit to Stability or General/Mental tests. “Geiger Counter Expert” — the counter served its purpose, giving you a few extra seconds to act. Any Edge that benefits Stability or General/Mental tests.

**Extra Problem:** Problem 38, “War Wound”

Dmitri starts firing at the monster and Langston. Boris decides it is time to take up sailing, and runs to his backup plan, a small motor boat on the Potomac.

Langston needs a plan, and quick, or he is not long for this world. Hot lead is flying toward him, and the cascade of colors is hunting them both. He is a scientist in a power plant full of equipment.

If he has discovered the Colour’s aversion to bright lights and electricity, he may want to use that as a shield for himself, granting him a momentary reprieve. A few steps put him at a control console.

## BEACON IN THE DARKNESS

*You quickly flip some switches and turn the crank.*

### **Mechanical Repair**

**Bonus:** +1 if Langston has Edge 6, “Logic, Not Fear,” or Edge 2, “Bible, Baby, Bible”

**Penalty:** -3 if Langston has Problem 15, “Buzzing”

**Advance 6+:** You power up the station in a matter of moments and turn the overhead spotlight onto yourself, bathing you in a shaft of nearly blinding white light. While protecting you from the Colour, it makes you a pigeon waiting to get shot. If Rosamund has shared the cosmic truth about the Colour, move directly to the “Reverse the Polarity,” as Langston understands how deadly the mythos horror is. If not, move directly into “Two Guns Blazing.”

**Setback 5 or less:** You power up the station in a matter of moments and turn the overhead spotlight onto Dmitri, bathing him in a shaft of near blinding white light. While protecting him from the Colour, it makes him a pigeon waiting to get shot. Go to the Challenge “That Draining Feeling.”

**Hold 3–5:** You manage to avoid most of the feeding but better do something fast.

**Setback 2 or less:** The Colour has sapped more than your strength. You can’t spend any Edges on the next Challenge.

**Extra Problem:** Problem 38, “War Wound”

## TWO GUNS BLAZING

*Even with the cascading creature lurking toward you, the spy is the bigger threat, and you two exchange hot lead.*

### **Fighting**

**Bonus:** +1 for “Packing Heat”

**Penalty:** -2 if you’re under the spotlight

**Advance 10+:** You drilled the Soviet spy full of lead.

**Immediate Advantage:** Counter one Physical impediment.

**Hold 4–9:** You’re slightly faster and drop the spy.

**Setback 3 or less:** Your shot goes wide, and you take a bullet in the gut, as the Soviet spy drops the case and runs. Gain Problem 33, “Stomach Wound.”

**Extra Problem:** Problem 34, “I’ll Be Back”, as Dmitri crawls away, clutching his bullet wound

## THAT DRAINING FEELING

*The Colour encompasses you, and your skin begins to glow.*

### **Athletics**

**Bonus:** +2 if Langston has Edge 11, “Hardened Vet”

**Penalty:** -2 if Langston has Problem 17, “Fed Upon”

**Advance 6+:** Your skin glows, but you fight off the feeding creature and roll to momentary safety.

**Immediate Advantage:** Gain a +1 on Stability test for 24 hours.

## REVERSE THE POLARITY

### *Electrical Repair*

**Bonus:** +2 if Rosamund shared the Colour’s secret, or if you ran tests on the rock; +2 if you use the embryonic Colours that Boris brought with him

**Penalty:** -2 If you’re under fire from the Soviet spy

**Advance 10+:** You rapidly rearrange multiple wires at the generators, hoping this works. Electricity sparks around the entire station, and galvanizes the Colour prematurely, launching it into space. No one will ever know how close they came to dying, but you didn’t do it for a pat on the back. You did it because no one else could, and because it was the right thing to do.

**Immediate Advantage:** Counter any Mythos Shock Problem.

**Hold 4–9:** You yank wires out of multiple generators, knowing this will knock out the power in Washington for hours until a repair team can come here. People may panic, but it is the only chance to stop this thing. Electricity sparks around the entire station and galvanizes the Colour prematurely, launching it into space.

**Setback 3 or less:** You yank wires out of multiple generators, knowing this will knock out the power in Washington for hours until repaired. You miscalculated the charge, and send a jolt of power through both yourself and the Colour. The Colour, nearly fully grown, leaves the Capital Traction Power House, and you, in peace. Gain Problem 35, “Third Degree Burn.”

**Extra Problem:** Problem 36, “The Crumbling Man”

Once alone in the power plant, Langston picks up the aluminum case and steps out of the door.

## MAN OF THE HOUR

*Scene Type:* Denouement

*Lead-In:* Secret... Secret...

The door to the power plant slams shut behind him, and two sets of highlights wash over Langston’s battered and weary body. A shady form slowly walks forward and speaks slowly.

“You did good, son. Ellison was right about you.” The G-man flips open Ellison’s notebook and reads back one of the player’s responses to the now-dead FBI agent in “G-Man Tango” (p. 257). Once the man is fully visible, Langston recognizes the G-man as Clyde Tolson, associate director of the FBI, and a man drenched in the corruption of Washington politics.

“You don’t need to tell me anything. I bet it was those goddam fifth columnists. Just hand over the case, boy. We both know how Ellison really died. I can lift the heat from you, but the director knows your name, and he’ll expect a favor.”

This is Langston’s chance to stand tall, and give a rousing speech about the corruption of the world, and one man’s plight against insurmountable odds. Remind the player that Langston knows he can’t leave here with the case, and even if he got away, what about the cops who want Lynette? What about poor Maurice? What about the missing physicist?

Langston can play hardball with Tolson and point out that a gunfight would end with him dead and whatever is in the case blowing to bits. This would draw the attention of the press, and his friend Scout would be sure what he knows gets out. Langston could push Tolson to make the cops leave him alone, or arrange for Lynette to have some protection, or whatever else the player thinks of.

After the deal is done, Tolson looks back at Langston and says. “The director never forgets anyone, son.” Gain Problem 37, “Hoover Knows You.”

As Langston stands alone on the dock, give the player a moment to wax poetic. Determine which cards the player has. If any of the cards would have Langston die at the end of the case, let the player describe his death.

If not, mark down which cards the player has, and congratulations are in order for completing Langston’s first case.



**ANTAGONIST REACTIONS**

<b>Trigger</b>	<b>Reaction</b>	<b>Setback</b>	<b>Hold</b>	<b>Advance</b>	<b>Extra Problem</b>
Langston has the Problem Card “Colour Shock”	While driving at night the Colour attacks	2 or less: Problem 17, “Fed Upon.”	3-5: Langston gets away.	6+: Langston out paces the Colour Gain Edge 4, “Unbreakable.”	20, “Adelaide Takes a Hit.”
Boris feels that Langston is investigating him.	Gian cuts the gas line at Langston’s house.	2 or less: Problem 15, “Buzzing.”	3-4: Langston smells the gas and fixes the leak, but it’s gonna raise the rent.	5+: Langston smells the gas and quickly fixes the leak.	N/A
“Science!!!”	If Langston has brought any attention to himself.	Director Blake calls Langston into his office, threatening to lay him off for being too aggressive. Any reasonable response will calm the Director. Otherwise gain Problem 8, “Salty.”			
“Ill Omens” scene happened and Langston talked down to Russell.	Russell is looking to settle the score, and sends some guys to Langston’s house.	2 or less: Gains Problem 12 “Beat Down.”	3-4: Langston notices the group lurking outside of his house and escapes.	5+: Somehow Langston beats the four guys. Gain Edge 5 “This is what I do.”	40, “Damn this is a new Suit!”
Langston has the Problem Card “Eternal Outsider.”	Feeling the weight of the world, Langston decides to have a drink or three.	1 or less: Langston passes out drunk. -1 to all tests for three scenes	2-5: Langston has a couple of drinks and a slight buzz. -1 to any Cool test for the next scene	6+: Langston enjoys a slow glass of bourbon	N/A
Langston has the Problem Card “Goon.”	Rhino wants Langston to rough someone up.	1 or less: Langston says no and Rhino has his boys violently show him the curb.	2-5: Rhino threatens to have Langston beaten.	6+: Rhino buckles, knowing Langston can be bought but not owned.	N/A
Langston has the Problem Card “Short on Rent.”	The landlord changes the locks to Langston’s house.	1 or less: Langston must spend Interpersonal Push	2-5: Langston won himself an extra day to come up with the rent.	6+: Langston talks his way into a week’s reprieve.	N/A

# Capitol Colour Problem Cards

PROBLEM 1

## Love in All the Wrong Places

**Continuity**

*You fell for the wrong dame again and got burned. You promised yourself never again but know better. Chances are pretty good that the next pretty face will make you a sap... again.*



PROBLEM 2

## Short on Rent

**Continuity**

*You never had money growing up, serving your country paid bupkes, and Lord knows the job doesn't make ends meet. You need a payday yesterday, or the landlord will toss you out on the street. You've already avoided him twice. Can you do it again?*



PROBLEM 3

## Eternal Outsider

**Continuity**

*You are forever the odd man out. Well-educated and wounded from the war, you never thought you'd see the home front so soon. You are a veteran in a country that didn't want you or your African American brothers to fight. People don't know what to make of you — you enigma, you.*



PROBLEM 4

## Uppity So-and-So

**Continuity**

*Sometimes you just can't keep your mouth shut. Living under the heel of the Man for too long, you've got to follow the rules: don't make eye contact, step off the sidewalk for the white folk, don't go in that restaurant... But when the kettle boils too hot, it's gonna explode at some point.*



PROBLEM 5

## Phantom Pains

*Seeing Maurice like this makes you realize that you did not give your all. You could have been back over and fighting, instead of clocking in once a week and hunting day jobs. You can feel the shrapnel shift, but still...*

Spend a Push to discard.



PROBLEM 6

## Worn Out

*It's been a long week, and it finally caught up with you. Every bone in your body aches, and your knee is telling you it is going to rain tomorrow.*

Take -2 to any Athletics test to discard.



PROBLEM 7

## Favor for Watts

**Continuity**

*Watts did you a favor, and no doubt he will come calling soon. Either you help him or burn that bridge.*



PROBLEM 8

## Salty

Your next Push requires an extra spend. Then discard this Problem.



PROBLEM 9

## Goon

*You broke your own moral code and every Army value you hold dear. For what? Some cash and a few more days of living in your house. You sold out and now have to live with the shame.*



PROBLEM 10

**Sucker for Love**

*Continuity*

*You like her, you like her a lot, and you hope she stays around. But you know people around you always get hurt or dead. But maybe... just maybe... it will be different this time.*



PROBLEM 11

**Head Over Heels**

*You can't stop thinking about her. What are you doing again? Oh. The case. That smile. Those eyes.*

Your next General/Mental Challenge result is one step lower. Advance considered Hold. Hold considered a Setback. Then discard this Problem.



PROBLEM 12

**Beat Down**

*It's not the first fight you lost and probably won't be the last, but you'll never forget it. You look like you survived being on the wrong end of a charging bull.*

Until you Take Time to lick your wounds, all General/Physical tests result in automatic Setbacks.



PROBLEM 13

**Pinched**

*You got played, and the Man does what he does. You spent the night in jail next to a group of drunks. You lost some time and reek of vomit, sweat, and urine.*

Until you Take Time for a shave and shower all spends require an extra Push.



PROBLEM 14

**Hitchhiking**

*You should have been using public transport. Anyone driving alone is helping Hitler, or so the propaganda says. Time to buy some more bus tokens and hope you don't need to leave Washington. Otherwise you need to bum a ride.*



PROBLEM 15

**Buzzing**

*Damn, you got rattled good. That buzzing in your brain has to stop sooner or later. Right?*

Lose a Push, then discard this card.



PROBLEM 16

**Steel Jawed**

*You landed a solid hit, but that mook's jaw nearly broke your fist. It's swollen, but not broken.*

-1 to General/Manual Challenges. Discard after two such Challenges.



PROBLEM 17

**Fed Upon**

*Mythos Shock*

*Whatever that was, it has tasted you and it won't likely forget. It has your taste and will always come for you if it sees you again.*



PROBLEM 18

**Colour Shock**

*Mythos Shock*

*You saw it, you breathed it in and survived, but you are forever changed. If you keep doing this, it will drive you mad or claim your very soul.*

Take -1 to Stability when you encounter the creature again. Discard at the end of the case.



PROBLEM 19

**GI Blacklist**

*Continuity*

*Being black and in the Army is nearly impossible, but you did it and managed to get a little respect by doing twice the work for a third of the credit. You just blew it with that move and embodied every stereotype. Your rep just went to crap with your fellow soldiers.*



PROBLEM 20

**Adelaide Takes a Hit**

*Adelaide is your baby, and she just took a massive hit. It will take a few weeks to get her repaired.*

-2 to all Driving Challenges until you Take Time to get her repaired.



PROBLEM 21

**You got DOSED!!**

*Looks like you fell for the trap and took an unhealthy burst of radiation. You've got to cure this quickly, or your days above ground will have run out. You can only be cured by Taking Time in your lab or at a doctor's office.*

If you have this Problem at the end of the case, you die of radiation poisoning.



PROBLEM 22

**Demoralized**

*They took you down a peg, and you're not sure how to rally after that beating. The cops want you dead, they want the dame, and you're caught in the middle. There is no promise that you will walk away from this case.*

Take a -1 to all tests until you achieve an Advance on a Challenge.



PROBLEM 23

**Snipered**

*Damn. He got you good in the shoulder, and your arm is burning.*

-2 Penalty on all General/Physical tests until you Take Time. -1 thereafter until the end of the scenario.



PROBLEM 24

**Bleeding Out**

*The bullet went clean through, but looks like it clipped something vital. A slow, steady stream of crimson is working its way out of you. You need to Take Time at the doc's or hospital.*

If you have this Problem at the end of the game, you bleed out and die.



PROBLEM 25

**Eyewitnesses**

*You got made. If the Man comes looking for a killer, it is you, and there is no way out of this one.*

The coroner will do an autopsy on the body in a few days and will clear your name. A Cop Talk Push gets it done in a few hours.



PROBLEM 26

**You Killed Maurice!**

*You tried to save him, but couldn't. They all watched you fail, and likely reported you to the police. The only reason you're still walking the streets is that the cops may not care.*

If you have this card at the end of the case, you're tossed in jail.



PROBLEM 27

**Ringin' in Your Ears**

*The bullet went wide, but the deafening sound reverberated in this small confined space. The ringing will pass... hopefully...*

Take a -2 to the next General/Mental test and a -1 to the following General/Mental test. Discard after those two tests.



PROBLEM 28

### Shot... Again...

*You got what you got — a slug in your favorite arm.*

You take -2 to all Physical tests until you Take Time at the doc. After that, you still suffer -1 to your next Athletics and Fighting tests, and then discard this Problem.



PROBLEM 29

### At the Mercy of Lynette

*Those hazel orbs are looking down at you. She has it all, brains, strength, moxie, and... you owe her your life. You better make this square and treat her right.*



PROBLEM 30

### Out in the Open

*The blinding spotlight washes over you. It is hard to see, but the sounds of being shot at help pinpoint your target.*

-2 to all Fighting Challenges while under the spotlight.



PROBLEM 31

### Dropped Your Piece

*Well, that could have gone better. You dropped your heater, and now you're getting shot at. Time to duck and roll.*

-2 to next Fighting Challenge.



PROBLEM 32

### Starry Night

**Mythos Shock**

*The sky is full of horrors, and humanity's actions are insignificant. All of our wars, our struggles for equality and freedom... none of it matters. We are a doomed race on a spinning piece of rock dancing for the Other Gods.*



PROBLEM 33

### Stomach Wound

*The good thing about a stomach wound is that it doesn't kill you right away. But still, it is a hell of a distraction.*

You can't spend any Pushes for this scene or the next.



PROBLEM 34

### I'll Be Back

**Continuity**

*Damn it! You don't know his name, and you don't really know what he looks like, but you do know he'll be back and that means trouble for you.*



PROBLEM 35

### Third Degree Burn

You have suffered massive burns and can barely move; your hands are smoking. Take -2 to all General/Physical Challenges until you Take Time at the doc's or the hospital; then take -1 to General/Physical until the end of the case.



PROBLEM 36

### The Crumbling Man

*You're a dead man walking; you know as you watch bits of yourself crumbling to dust, just like Special Agent Ellison. Maybe you can make one last play before the end.*

If this card is in your hand at the end of the case, you crumble to dust and die.





PROBLEM 37

**Hoover Knows You**  
*Continuity*

*You just caused trouble for J. Edgar Hoover, and he knows your name now, for better, but more than likely, for worse. You just pissed off the head of the FBI.*



PROBLEM 38

**War Wound**

*Shrapnel has a way of sticking to your ribs, you know? Your war wound may not be visible, but damn, if that doesn't smart when you get moving. Fist fighting may not be in the cards for you, but you know your way around a pistol, that's for sure.*

Take a -1 penalty to all General/Physical tests, and you can only achieve a maximum of a Hold on Challenges until you Take Time at the doc's or the hospital. It'll burn valuable time, but at least you'll be able to move again. Then discard this Problem.



PROBLEM 39

**Marked Man**  
*Continuity*

*You've got three days to solve this case, or else it's curtains. You'll just be another unidentified black man killed by the cops. The press will say they are doing their job.*

If you have this card in your hand in three days, you are gunned down by detectives.



PROBLEM 40

**Damn! This Is a New Suit!**

*You've ruined your new suit — and your mood.*

You can't make any Pushes until you Take Time to change.



PROBLEM 41

**Tetanus Shot**  
*Continuity*

*That mutt really bit into you, and the white bone can be seen through the jagged teeth marks.*

Take Time at the doctor's to heal or suffer a -1 to Physical/Mental tests. If Langston has this card at the end of the scenario, his condition worsens, and he suffers -2 to General/Physical tests for the next case.



PROBLEM 42

**Chemical Spill**

*Damn! Looks like someone spilled a ton of chemicals before you came in. They are all over the floor...and you. You scrap off a layer of skin quickly but still can feel it burning.*

Take -2 to any General/Physical Challenge for the next 24 hours.




# Capitol Colour Edge Cards

EDGE 1

## Battle Buddies

*You are gonna help Maurice one way or another. You never leave a man (or his kin) behind.*

Spend for an extra die on any General/Mental Challenge and discard after one use.




EDGE 2

## Bible, Baby, Bible

*Your thoughts on God are your own, but damn, that choir can sing, and your foot was tapping. You are humming with positivity.*

Spend to treat a Setback as an Advance. Discard after 48 hours.



EDGE 3

## Big Spender


*The money is all illegal and made of the hopes of others. But you're flush and you won't have to worry for a long time.*



EDGE 4

## Unbreakable

*You are too focused to be distracted by anything. Spend for an extra die on any test other than Stability.*




EDGE 5

## This Is What I Do!

*Adrenaline is your copilot and rarely fails you.*

Gain a +1 on General/Physical tests for 24 hours. Then relax with a drink.




EDGE 6

## Logic, Not Fear

*Everything can be explained with science; you just need the right tools and time. Supernatural is just undiscovered natural. It looks horrendous, but it's just unexplained and waiting to be identified. Time to grab your lab coat, test tubes, and Bunsen burner.*

Spend to Counter a Mythos Shock or as an extra die on an Electrical Repair Challenge.




EDGE 7

## Life Preserver

*You got the inserts for a bulletproof vest. They are kinda bulky and awkward, but you've been around the block enough to know a good thing when you see it.*

Ignore a Setback on a Fighting or Sense Trouble Challenge. Discard after one use.



EDGE 8

## Packing Heat

*Rhino is a two-bit crook, but damn, he has some nice hardware. The backup piece will be useful if things go sideways.*

Spend this card for an extra die on any Fighting Challenge, then discard.



EDGE 9

## Inside Track

### Continuity

*You got the inside scoop, and this could be useful later.*

You can use this knowledge to save your job once, and then discard.



EDGE 10

### Good Old Days

*It's tough for civvies to understand, and you're not saying the war was good, but it was just simpler. You could focus on the mission, be it translating Nazi intel, taking a bunker, or disabling a bomb.*

Spend for an extra die on any Electrical or Mechanical Repair Challenge and discard after one use.



EDGE 11

### Hardened Vet

*You've seen the horrors of war, things that would shatter most civvies, and you never stopped fighting. Just keep pulling the trigger until it stops moving.*

Spend to Counter a Problem that targets General/Mental abilities, Mythos Shocks excluded.



EDGE 12

### Gallows Humor

*You quip in the face of danger.*  
Make a witty one-liner and spend for an extra die on a Stability or Cool test.



EDGE 13

### Born Lucky

*Sometimes things just go your way. It's not skill, outtalking someone, or fighting the best. It's just being the right person, at the right time, in the right place.*

Spend this card for an extra die on any Challenge, then discard.



EDGE 14

### Jesse Owens

*You're fast, disciplined, and tireless.*

Gain an extra die on an Athletics Challenge and discard after use.



EDGE 15

### Geiger Counter Expert

*You can admit it — you're a genius. While this will only last a couple of days, it may be useful and it might even save your life.*

After being used to detect unknown radiation once, it breaks: discard this card.



EDGE 16

### The Invisible Man

*You pull a move like the Shadow from all of those radio serials, and blend into the darkness, waiting for the right moment to strike.*

Gain an extra die on a Stealth Challenge; discard after use.



EDGE 17

### "X Card"

*Hartman's a battle buddy who always has your back. He loaned you a temporary X card, and it's just you, the open road, and "Adelaide."*

Spend to Counter running out of gas or add an extra die for a Driving Challenge. Then discard.



EDGE 18

### Alicia's Assistance

*She's willing to do what it takes to help you find her roommate — but are you willing to put her in danger?*

Spend for a Push or to Counter any shooting attack on you. Then discard and gain Problem 10, "Sucker for Love."



# Hepster's Dictionary

## JIVE TERMINOLOGY

- A hummer (n.) — exceptionally good. Ex., “Man, that boy is a hummer.”
- Ain't coming on that tab (v.) — won't accept the proposition. Usually abbr. to “I ain't coming.”
- Apple (n.) — the big town, the main stem, Harlem.
- Armstrongs (n.) — musical notes in the upper register, high trumpet notes.
- Beat up the chops (or the gums) (v.) — to talk, converse, be loquacious.
- Bible (n.) — the gospel truth. Ex., “It's the bible!”
- Blow the top (v.) — to be overcome with emotion (delight).
- Bust your conk (v.) — apply yourself diligently, break your neck.
- Canary (n.) — girl vocalist.
- Capped (v.) — outdone, surpassed.
- Cogs (n.) — sun glasses.
- Collar (v.) — to get, to obtain, to comprehend.
- Creeps out like the shadow (v.) — “comes on,” but in smooth, suave, sophisticated manner.
- Cubby (n.) — room, flat, home.
- Dicty (adj.) — high-class, nifty, smart.
- Dime note (n.) — ten-dollar bill.
- Drape (n.) — suit of clothes, dress, costume.
- Dreamers (n.) — bed covers, blankets.
- Frolic pad (n.) — place of entertainment, theater, nightclub.
- Gabriels (n.) — trumpet players.
- Glims (n.) — the eyes.
- Got your boots on — you know what it is all about, you are a hep cat
- Got your glasses on — snooty, you fail to recognize your friends
- Guzzlin' foam (v.) — drinking beer.
- Hard spiel (n.) — interesting line of talk.
- Hep cat (n.) — a guy who knows all the answers, understands jive.
- Icky (n.) — one who is not hip, a stupid person, can't collar the jive.
- In the groove (adj.) — perfect, no deviation, down the alley.
- Jeff (n.) — a pest, a bore, an icky.
- Jelly (n.) — anything free, on the house.
- Joint is jumping — the place is lively; the club is leaping with fun.
- Jumped in port (v.) — arrived in town.
- Kill me (v.) — show me a good time, send me.
- Land o'darkness (n.) — Harlem.
- Latch on (v.) — grab, take hold, get wise to.
- Main queen (n.) — favorite girlfriend, sweetheart.
- Mellow (adj.) — all right, fine. Ex., “That's mellow, Jack.”
- Mouse (n.) — pocket. Ex., “I've got a meter in the mouse.”
- Muggin' (v.) — making 'em laugh, putting on the jive.
- Ofay (n.) — white person.
- Out of the world (adj.) — perfect rendition.
- Pounders (n.) — policemen.
- Ready (adj.) — 100 per cent in every way.
- Salty (adj.) — angry, ill-tempered.
- Sam got you — you've been drafted into the Army.
- Set of seven brights (n.) — one week.
- Take it slow (v.) — be careful.
- Take off (v.) — play a solo.
- The man (n.) — the law.
- Unhep (adj.) — not wise to the jive, said of an icky, a Jeff, a square.
- Zoot suit (n.) — the ultimate in clothes. The only totally and truly American civilian suit.







# **APPENDICES**

## Rules Quick Reference

*This summary quickly presents the game's essential rules concepts, which we'll go on to explain in greater depth.*

Your character attempts actions in the storyline by using abilities. Abilities come in two main types: **Investigative** and **General**

**Investigative Abilities** (p. 7) allow you to gather information. The animating principle behind *GUMSHOE* states that failing to get key information is never interesting. If you have the right ability and you look in the right place for clues you need to solve the mystery, you will always find the information you seek. If you lack the relevant ability, your character can talk to a friendly **Source** (p. 9), who will also provide guidance and assurance as needed.

A piece of information need not be critical to the case for you to gain it without chance of failure and at no cost. Much of mystery-solving lies in sorting the important from the tangential. If only the crucial clues came for free, it would give the game away.

In some situations, you can spend a resource called a **Push** (p. 9) to gain an additional benefit. This might be information you don't absolutely need to solve the case; more often it consists of advantages that clear the character's path through the story, such as favors from witnesses, knowledge that keeps the character safe, or prior relationships to central figures.

You start the game with 4 Pushes, and can gain others during play.

**General Abilities** (p. 17) determine whether you succeed or fail when trying to take actions other than gathering information, usually in an event called a test. The most important kind of test is the **Challenge** (p. 22).

You have either 1 or 2 dice in each General Ability your character possesses.

The game uses standard six-sided dice, which

roleplayers sometimes refer to as d6s.

Whenever it might be as interesting for you to fail as it would be to succeed — say, fighting a thug, running away from a creature, or trying to repair your car before you die in the desert — you roll your die or dice.

When rolling multiple dice, roll one at a time: you may succeed without having to roll all of them.

At the end of the Challenge, your die roll total may match or exceed that of an **Advance** (the best result), or a **Hold** (an okay or middling result). If not, your **Outcome** is a **Setback**, which means that something bad happens.

On an Advance you will probably gain an **Edge** (p. 25): an advantage you can use later in the scenario. As a reminder, you gain an Edge card. The card's text will tell you how it works. Often, you must discard the card to gain the advantage. If you reached the Advance threshold without rolling all of the dice you were entitled to, you also gain a Push.

On a Setback, you often gain a **Problem** (p. 25), representing a dilemma that might cause trouble for you later. Again, you receive a card to remember it by — a Problem card. Certain cards might lead to a terrible end for your detective should you fail to get rid of, or Counter, them (p. 26) before the scenario concludes.

Most Challenges allow you to voluntarily take on an Extra Problem, in exchange for rolling one more die.

Every so often you'll make a simple roll, called a **Quick Test** (p. 27), to see if you succeed or fail, without the possibility of Advances, Edges, Setbacks, or Problems.

The rest is detail. You don't have to learn any special rules for combat or mental distress, as you would in standard *GUMSHOE* and most other roleplaying games. The Challenge system, with its descriptions of outcomes, and its resulting Edges and Problems, handles it all.

## Starter Notes for Experienced GUMSHOE Hands

Already steeped in standard multi-player *GUMSHOE* and want to get the lay of this new land quickly? We made these bullet points just for you.

- Investigative Abilities do not have pools. In place of point spends, the player spends Pushes, which can be applied to any Investigative Ability. The character starts with four Pushes and can gain additional ones during play, as laid out on p. 23.
- General Abilities don't use pools, either. Instead each is associated with a number of dice — usually 1 or 2 — you roll in an attempt to hit a difficulty number, the number to Advance.

*Why no pools, you ask? In multiplayer GUMSHOE, pools divide spotlight time between players. A solo format dispenses with the entire issue of dividing up time and coolness between players, making pools an unnecessary complication.*

- In place of the basic pass/fail outcomes of General Ability tests, *One-2-One* uses a more detailed story-branching format called the Challenge. Here the player can achieve great,

okay, or disastrous results. In that order, we call these Advances, Holds, and Setbacks. Difficulty thresholds for these are customized for the Challenge at hand.

- The player receives cards acting as reminders of ongoing advantages (Edges) and impediments (Problems) that the character can use, or must face, over the course of an investigation. Sometimes you have to spend, or, discard, an Edge card to gain its benefit. In other cases the card text grants an ongoing benefit.
- The character can take action to get rid of (Counter) Problem cards. Sometimes you spend an appropriate Edge to do this; in other instances the detective must undertake particular actions in the storyline.
- Health hits the road in *One-2-One*.
- Stability remains an ability but works a little differently. The character doesn't die or permanently succumb to Lovecraftian insanity in the middle of the story. The player, however, may have Problem cards in hand that indicate this will happen at or after the climax, unless those cards aren't Countered beforehand.

## Handout For New Roleplayers

In a tabletop roleplaying game, a group of participants gathers to talk its way through a story they spontaneously create together, adjudicated by a set of game rules. Here, unusually, that group consists of two people only.

Many, but by no means all, popular roleplaying games present detailed rules where you manipulate numbers and make tactical choices, most often during elaborate fight sequences. Some assist with this by encouraging you to move figures around on a map.

*GUMSHOE One-2-One* is more like storytelling, with you in the role of a hard-boiled detective, fearless reporter, or similar character, solving a mystery prepared by the GM. Every now and then you'll roll a die, creating suspense and an unpredictable outcome. You'll accumulate, and attempt to get rid of, cards marking your position in the story. Your choices shape the way the story unfolds and ends.

You don't win or lose a roleplaying game. Often you play many times, building a story featuring the same character and setting. You may play many scenarios, coming to follow your chosen detective as you would the hero of your favorite mystery show on TV. The difference is, you control the character's fate.






































Your Game Moderator (abbreviated as GM) guides you through the events of the story. The GM:

- populates the setting of the game with interesting places, people, and things for the main characters to interact with




















- portrays those secondary figures, called GMCs (Game Master characters) or supporting players
- describes the setting's places and things to you when your characters encounter them
- provides you (when your character looks in the right place and uses the right ability) with the information needed to solve the mystery — and much more besides, requiring you to sort the important clues from background color
- shapes the Challenges that determine whether you succeed superlatively, merely hold your ground, or suffer a setback. Challenges require you to roll an **ordinary 6-sided die**, sometimes making further rolls and adding them to your total.
- hands out, and helps you interpret, the Edge and Problem cards your character gains as consequences from good and bad Challenge results
- decides how the rules apply, should confusion arise
- refocuses your attention, guiding you when you feel at a loss for a next choice

As player, all you have to do is imagine your character in the situations that the GM narrates to you. Then describe what your character does in response to those situations. The rest will take care of itself, with explanations of rules as they become necessary.

## Investigative Ability List





























































Ability	Type
Accounting	Academic 
Anthropology	Academic 
Archaeology	Academic 
Architecture	Academic 
Art History	Academic 
Assess Honesty	Interpersonal 
Astronomy	Technical 
Bargain	Interpersonal 
Biology	Academic 
Bureaucracy	Interpersonal 
Chemistry	Technical 
Cop Talk	Interpersonal 
Craft	Technical 
Cryptography	Academic 
Cthulhu Mythos	Academic 
Evidence Collection	Technical 
Flattery	Interpersonal 
Forensics	Technical 
Geology	Academic 
History	Academic 
Inspiration	Interpersonal 
Intimidation	Interpersonal 
Languages	Academic 
Law	Academic 
Library Use	Academic 
Locksmith	Technical 
Medicine	Academic 
Occult	Academic 
Oral History	Interpersonal 
Outdoorsman	Technical 
Pharmacy	Technical 
Photography	Technical 
Physics	Academic 
Psychology	Interpersonal 
Reassurance	Interpersonal 
Streetwise	Interpersonal 
Theology	Academic 

## General Ability List

Ability	Type
Athletics	Physical 
Conceal	Manual 
Cool	Mental 
Devices	Manual 
Disguise	Manual 
Driving	Manual 
Explosives	Manual 
Fighting	Physical 
Filch	Manual 
First Aid	Manual 
Fleeing	Physical 
Hypnosis	Mental 
Magic	Mental 
Preparedness	Mental 
Psychoanalysis	Mental 
Sense Trouble	Mental 
Shadowing	Physical 
Stability	Mental 
Stealth	Physical 






























































## List With Dex's Sources

Ability	Source	Occupation	Type
Accounting	N/A	N/A	Academic 
Anthropology	Alfred Kelham	Professor 	Academic 
Archaeology	Alfred Kelham	Professor 	Academic 
Architecture	Max Weyl	Production Designer 	Academic 
Art History	Max Weyl	Production Designer 	Academic 
Assess Honesty	N/A	N/A	Interpersonal 
Astronomy	Virginia Ashbury	Scientist 	Technical 
Bargain	N/A	N/A	Interpersonal 
Biology	Virginia Ashbury	Scientist 	Academic 
Bureaucracy	Max Weyl	Production Designer 	Interpersonal 
Chemistry	Virginia Ashbury	Scientist 	Technical 
Cop Talk	N/A	N/A	Interpersonal 
Craft	Max Weyl	Production Designer 	Technical 
Cryptography	N/A	N/A	Academic 
Cthulhu Mythos	Madame Eva	Fortune Teller 	Academic 
Evidence Collection	N/A	N/A	Technical 
Flattery	Max Weyl	Production Designer 	Interpersonal 
Forensics	Virginia Ashbury	Scientist 	Technical 
Geology	Virginia Ashbury	Scientist 	Academic 
History	Alfred Kelham	Professor 	Academic 
Inspiration	N/A	N/A	Interpersonal 
Intimidation	N/A	N/A	Interpersonal 
Languages	Alfred Kelham	Professor 	Academic 
Law	N/A	N/A	Academic 
Library Use	N/A	N/A	Academic 
Locksmith	N/A	N/A	Technical 
Medicine	Dr. Jeff "Mack" Mackintosh	Shrink 	Academic 
Occult	Madame Eva	Fortune Teller 	Academic 
Oral History	Alfred Kelham	Professor 	Interpersonal 
Outdoorsman	Dr. Jeff "Mack" Mackintosh	Shrink 	Technical 
Pharmacy	Dr. Jeff "Mack" Mackintosh	Shrink 	Technical 
Photography	N/A	N/A	Technical 
Physics	Virginia Ashbury	Scientist 	Academic 
Psychology	Dr. Jeff "Mack" Mackintosh	Shrink 	Interpersonal 
Reassurance	N/A	N/A	Interpersonal 
Streetwise	/A	N/A	Interpersonal 
Theology	Alfred Kelham	Professor 	Academic 

N/A entries denote Dex's abilities, which do not require him to seek out a Source.

## List With Viv's Sources

Ability	Source	Occupation	Type
Accounting	N/A	N/A	Academic 
Anthropology	<i>Esteban Gonzalez</i>	Explorer 	Academic 
Archaeology	<i>Esteban Gonzalez</i>	Explorer 	Academic 
Architecture	<i>Astelle Abrams</i>	Amateur Occultist 	Academic 
Art History	<i>Esteban Gonzalez</i>	Explorer 	Academic 
Assess Honesty	N/A	N/A	Interpersonal 
Astronomy	<i>Annette Rice</i>	Professor 	Technical 
Bargain	N/A	N/A	Interpersonal 
Biology	<i>Annette Rice</i>	Professor 	Academic 
Bureaucracy	N/A	N/A	Interpersonal 
Chemistry	<i>Annette Rice</i>	Professor 	Technical 
Cop Talk	<i>Lt. Joseph O'Connor</i>	Detective 	Interpersonal 
Craft	<i>Astelle Abrams</i>	Amateur Occultist 	Technical 
Cryptography	N/A	N/A	Academic 
Cthulhu Mythos	<i>Astelle Abrams</i>	Amateur Occultist 	Academic 
Evidence Collection	N/A	N/A	Technical 
Flattery	N/A	N/A	Interpersonal 
Forensics	<i>Lt. Joseph O'Connor</i>	Detective 	Technical 
Geology	<i>Esteban Gonzalez</i>	Explorer 	Academic 
History	N/A	N/A	Academic 
Inspiration	N/A	N/A	Interpersonal 
Intimidation	<i>Lt. Joseph O'Connor</i>	Detective 	Interpersonal 
Languages	<i>Annette Rice</i>	Professor 	Academic 
Law	<i>Lt. Joseph O'Connor</i>	Detective 	Academic 
Library Use	N/A	N/A	Academic 
Locksmith	N/A	N/A	Technical 
Medicine	<i>Louisa Reynolds</i>	Nurse 	Academic 
Occult	<i>Astelle Abrams</i>	Amateur Occultist 	Academic 
Oral History	N/A	N/A	Interpersonal 
Outdoorsman	<i>Esteban Gonzalez</i>	Explorer 	Technical 
Pharmacy	<i>Louisa Reynolds</i>	Nurse 	Technical 
Photography	N/A	N/A	Technical 
Physics	<i>Annette Rice</i>	Professor 	Academic 
Psychology	<i>Louisa Reynolds</i>	Nurse 	Interpersonal 
Reassurance	N/A	N/A	Interpersonal 
Streetwise	N/A	N/A	Interpersonal 
Theology	<i>Astelle Abrams</i>	Amateur Occultist 	Academic 

N/A entries denote Vivian's abilities, which do not require him to seek out a Source.

## List With Langston’s Sources

Ability	Source	Occupation	Type
Accounting	<i>Myrna Betty Cohen</i>	Bureaucrat	Academic
Anthropology	<i>Rosamund Carter</i>	Professor	Academic
Archaeology	<i>Rosamund Carter</i>	Professor	Academic
Architecture	<i>Myrna Betty Cohen</i>	Bureaucrat	Academic
Art History	<i>Rosamund Carter</i>	Professor	Academic
Assess Honesty	N/A	N/A	Interpersonal
Astronomy	<i>Lt. Col Melvin Hartman</i>	OSS	Technical
Bargain	N/A	N/A	Interpersonal
Biology	<i>Rev. Ernest Thompson</i>	Pastor	Academic
Bureaucracy	<i>Myrna Betty Cohen</i>	Bureaucrat	Interpersonal
Chemistry	N/A	N/A	Technical
Cop Talk	Cornelius “Scout” Moore	Journalist	Interpersonal
Craft	Cornelius “Scout” Moore	Journalist	Technical
Cryptography	N/A	N/A	Academic
Cthulhu Mythos	<i>Rosamund Carter</i>	Professor	Academic
Evidence Collection	N/A	N/A	Technical
Flattery	N/A	N/A	Interpersonal
Forensics	<i>Lt. Col Melvin Hartman</i>	OSS	Technical
Geology	<i>Lt. Col Melvin Hartman</i>	OSS	Academic
History	<i>Rosamund Carter</i>	Professor	Academic
Inspiration	N/A	N/A	Interpersonal
Intimidation	N/A	N/A	Interpersonal
Languages	N/A	N/A	Academic
Law	<i>Myrna Betty Cohen</i>	Bureaucrat	Academic
Library Use	N/A	N/A	Academic
Locksmith	Cornelius “Scout” Moore	Journalist	Technical
Medicine	<i>Rev. Ernest Thompson</i>	Pastor	Academic
Occult	<i>Rosamund Carter</i>	Professor	Academic
Oral History	N/A	N/A	Interpersonal
Outdoorsman	<i>Lt. Col Melvin Hartman</i>	OSS	Technical
Pharmacy	<i>Rev. Ernest Thompson</i>	Pastor	Technical
Photography	Cornelius “Scout” Moore	Journalist	Technical
Physics	N/A	N/A	Academic
Psychology	N/A	N/A	Interpersonal
Reassurance	N/A	N/A	Interpersonal
Streetwise	N/A	N/A	Interpersonal
Theology	<i>Rev. Ernest Thompson</i>	Pastor	Academic

N/A entries denote Langston’s abilities, which do not require him to seek out a Source.

# Tables

## CHALLENGE DIFFICULTY TABLE

<b>Story Significance</b>	<b>Baseline (1 Die ability)</b>	<b>Baseline (2 Die ability)</b>
Determines direction of main plotline	<b>Advance 5+</b> <b>Hold 3-4</b> <b>Setback 2 or less</b>	<b>Advance 9+</b> <b>Hold 4-8</b> <b>Setback 3 or less</b>
Evokes the doom of noir and/or cosmic horror	<b>Advance 5+</b> <b>Hold 4</b> <b>Setback 3 or less</b>	<b>Advance 9+</b> <b>Hold 5-8</b> <b>Setback 4 or less</b>
Success certain, costs and gains uncertain	<b>Advance 7+</b> <b>Hold 4-6</b> <b>Setback 3 or less</b>	<b>Advance 13+</b> <b>Hold 5-12</b> <b>Setback 4 or less</b>
Determines if subplot comes into play	<b>Advance 4+</b> <b>Hold 2-3</b> <b>Setback 1 or less</b>	<b>Advance 7+</b> <b>Hold 3-6</b> <b>Setback 2 or less</b>
Threatens player control of character actions	<b>Advance 4+</b> <b>Hold 2-3</b> <b>Setback 1 or less</b>	<b>Advance 8+</b> <b>Hold 3-7</b> <b>Setback 2 or less</b>
Distressing turn (see sidebar for definition)	<b>Advance 6+</b> <b>Hold 4-5</b> <b>Setback 3 or less</b>	<b>Advance 13+</b> <b>Hold 6-12</b> <b>Setback 5 or less</b>
Climactic or pivotal story event (Extra Problem available)	<b>Advance 6+</b> <b>Hold 4-5</b> <b>Setback 3 or less</b>	<b>Advance 10+</b> <b>Hold 6-9</b> <b>Setback 3 or less</b>
Climactic or pivotal story event (Extra Problem unavailable)	<b>Advance 4+</b> <b>Hold 2-3</b> <b>Setback 1 or less</b>	<b>Advance 8+</b> <b>Hold 3-7</b> <b>Setback 2 or less</b>
Easy victory, made all the sweeter by the (slight) chance of failure	<b>Advance 3+</b> <b>Hold 2</b> <b>Setback 1 or less</b>	<b>Advance 5+</b> <b>Hold 2-4</b> <b>Setback 1 or less</b>
Easy victory with bad consequences if you miss	<b>Advance 3+</b> <b>Setback 2 or less</b>	<b>Advance 5+</b> <b>Hold 4</b> <b>Setback 3 or less</b>
Victory will feel like a miracle	<b>Advance 6+</b> <b>Setback 5 or less</b>	<b>Advance 12+</b> <b>Setback 11 or less</b>

**STABILITY CHALLENGE TABLE**

<b>Incident</b>	<b>Mythos Shock</b>	<b>Continuity</b>
<i>You examine documentary evidence suggesting the existence of malign Mythos forces.</i>	<b>YES</b>	<b>NO</b>
<i>You witness acts of torture.</i>	<b>NO</b>	<b>YES</b>
<i>You see a particularly grisly murder or accident scene.</i>	<b>NO</b>	<b>YES</b>
<i>You see a supernatural creature from a distance.</i>	<b>YES</b>	<b>NO</b>
<i>You witness an obviously unnatural – but not necessarily threatening – omen or magical effect: a wall covered in horrible insects for example, or a talking cat, or a bleeding window.</i>	<b>NO</b>	<b>NO</b>
<i>You kill someone in self-defense.</i>	<b>NO</b>	<b>NO</b>
<i>You exhaustively study a major Mythos text, like the Necronomicon, gaining extensive insight into cosmic malignity.</i>	<b>YES</b>	<b>YES</b>
<i>You see dozens of corpses.</i>	<b>NO</b>	<b>YES</b>
<i>You see a supernatural creature up close.</i>	<b>YES</b>	<b>NO</b>
<i>You spend a week in solitary confinement.</i>	<b>NO</b>	<b>NO</b>
<i>You discover the corpse of a friend or loved one.</i>	<b>NO</b>	<b>YES</b>
<i>You are attacked by one or more supernatural creatures.</i>	<b>YES</b>	<b>YES</b>
<i>You witness a clearly supernatural or impossible killing.</i>	<b>YES</b>	<b>YES</b>
<i>You experience a threatening magical effect.</i>	<b>NO</b>	<b>NO</b>
<i>You commit murder or torture.</i>	<b>NO</b>	<b>YES</b>
<i>You see a friend or loved one killed.</i>	<b>NO</b>	<b>YES</b>
<i>You are tortured for an hour or longer.</i>	<b>NO</b>	<b>NO</b>
<i>You discover that you have committed cannibalism.</i>	<b>NO</b>	<b>YES</b>
<i>You are possessed by some outside force, remaining conscious while it operates your body unspeakably.</i>	<b>YES</b>	<b>YES</b>
<i>You speak with a loved one, friend, or close acquaintance whom you know to be dead.</i>	<b>NO</b>	<b>YES</b>
<i>You watch helplessly as a friend or loved one dies in a spectacularly gruesome manner.</i>	<b>NO</b>	<b>YES</b>
<i>You kill a friend or loved one.</i>	<b>NO</b>	<b>YES</b>



# How To Solve a Case

Give this tip sheet to your player prior to your first game. Avid mystery fans may consider these points obvious. On the other hand, passively reading a story about a trained, confident, risk-taking detective can be quite different from taking on the role of one.

## *How to Solve a Case*

You are about to take on the role of a trained Investigator. You're not playing just any run-of-the mill detective, but one whose decisions drive an exciting, suspenseful story. One who keeps diving deeper into dangerous territory when a lesser mortal would back off or give up.

Experience has taught your character to succeed by following these simple tips:

- 1. Talk to People.** In the hard-boiled genre you may now and then find an important physical clue — a telltale matchbook cover, a burned photograph, a sculpture with a camera hidden in it. But nine times out of ten, the real dope comes from facts you gather from the denizens of the noir world: crooks, cops, nightclub singers, and law-breaking businessmen. Approach them directly and find the angle that will get them talking.
- 2. Talk in Person.** Quick phone calls get you information from individuals uninvolved in the case — clerks, librarians, desk sergeants and the like. But when someone might be a suspect, you won't get the real dirt until you look them in the eye.
- 3. Talk to Scary People.** Finding out who did bad things means talking to bad people. In person. Yes, it's a risk. But you know how to handle yourself. If you get knocked around a little, well, that's what you might call an occupational hazard.
- 4. Choose Cover Stories Wisely.** When talking to possibly scary people, you may find it expedient to approach them under false pretenses. Make sure, though, that the ruse you adopt doesn't stop you from asking your real questions. Be prepared to come clean and set your story aside if that's the only way to get at the truth.
- 5. Never Assume Coincidence.** Some elements of a case turn out to mean nothing. But you can't tell which ones until you turn over every rock. When you uncover anything outlandish, unusual, or unexpected, chances are it connects somehow. Never assume that something is unrelated — prove it, by investigating it!

## Player Characters for Other Mystery Genres

To present *GUMSHOE One-2-One* rules in a clear context, this book concentrates on a specific genre combination, mixing Lovecraftian horror with hard-boiled, noir investigation. The setting’s openness to haunted protagonists and downbeat conclusions fits particularly well with the Problem card system.

We hope that this *GUMSHOE* variant will catch on, allowing us to later present scenarios in other mystery genres. Experienced rules hackers will be able to do this without additional help from us. To get you started on that path, here are some sample player characters from various genres and sub-genres represented by existing *GUMSHOE* game lines.

To create a character type not found here, pick 14 Investigative Abilities, give or take, and assign a total of 18 dice, more or less, in various General Abilities. Choose abilities that evoke the chosen setting. You can fudge these numbers a little, but if you give the character too many abilities they become overwhelming. Multiplayer *GUMSHOE* requires more finely differentiated abilities, which create contrast between characters. Without that need you can collapse two or more specialized abilities from a standard *GUMSHOE* core book into a broader, umbrella ability. Some settings will require Abilities that don’t exist in *Cthulhu Confidential*, as you’ll see below.

Always bend the guidelines to fit the genre, not the other way around. A Sherlock Holmes style genius ought to have nearly every Investigative Ability in the book and still be able to throw a mean *baritsu jab*. He might not have to rely on Sources at all, even if he occasionally seeks out his Mycroft equivalent as a sounding board.

Before getting started, check your opening scenario against the sample character. Swap out abilities as needed to match those the character will most need to draw on during the case.

## Miskatonic University Professor

*For Trail of Cthulhu in a classic Lovecraftian vein*

### INVESTIGATIVE ABILITIES

- Anthropology** (Academic)
- Archaeology** (Academic)
- Architecture** (Academic)
- Art History** (Academic)
- Astronomy** (Technical)
- Bureaucracy** (Interpersonal)
- Evidence Collection** (Technical)
- History** (Academic)
- Inspiration** (Interpersonal)
- Languages** (Academic)
- Occult** (Academic)
- Oral History** (Interpersonal)
- Psychology** (Interpersonal)
- Reassurance** (Interpersonal)
- Research** (Academic)
- Theology** (Academic)

### GENERAL ABILITIES

- Athletics** 1
- Cool** 2
- Conceal** 1
- Driving** 1
- Filch** 1
- Fleeing** 2
- Fighting** 1
- First Aid** 1
- Preparedness** 2
- Psychoanalysis** 1
- Riding** 1
- Sense Trouble** 1
- Stability** 1
- Stealth** 1


















## Ordo Veritatis Agent

*Trained operative pitted against a modern occult conspiracy, for The Esoterrorists*

### INVESTIGATIVE ABILITIES

- Bullshit Detector** (Interpersonal) 
- Bureaucracy** (Interpersonal) 
- Cop Talk** (Interpersonal) 
- Data Retrieval** (Technical) 
- Explosive Devices** (Technical) 
- Fingerprinting** (Technical) 
- Evidence Collection** (Technical) 
- Forensic Accounting** (Academic) 
- Forensic** (Technical) 
- Psychology** (Academic) 
- History** (Academic) 
- Interrogation** (Interpersonal) 
- Intimidation** (Interpersonal) 
- Occult Studies** (Academic) 
- Reassurance** (Interpersonal) 
- Research** (Academic) 
- Trivia** (Academic) 











### GENERAL ABILITIES

- Athletics 2**  
- Cool 1** 
- Driving 1** 
- Filch 1** 
- Fighting 2**  
- Infiltration 2**  
- Mechanics 1** 
- Medic 1** 
- Preparedness 2**  
- Sense Trouble 2**  
- Stability 2**  

## Unwitting New Resident of Haunted House

*Ordinary person in a horror situation, for Fear Itself*

### INVESTIGATIVE ABILITIES

- Bullshit Detector** (Interpersonal) 
- Computer Science** (Technical) 
- Flattery** (Interpersonal) 
- History** (Academic) 
- Humanities** (Academic) 
- Negotiation** (Interpersonal) 
- Photography** (Technical) 
- Reassurance** (Interpersonal) 
- Research** (Academic) 
- Trivia** (Academic) 






### GENERAL ABILITIES

- Athletics 1** 
- Cool 1** 
- Driving 2**  
- Filch 1** 
- Fleeing 3**   
- Fighting 1** 
- Infiltration 1** 
- Medic 1** 
- Preparedness 1** 
- Sense Trouble 2**  
- Stability 2**  

















## Psychic Teenager

Nearly ordinary person in a horror situation,  
for Fear Itself

### INVESTIGATIVE ABILITIES

- Bullshit Detector** (Interpersonal) 
- Computer Science** (Technical) 
- Flirting** (Interpersonal) 
- Negotiation** (Interpersonal) 
- Occult Studies** (Academic) 
- Photography** (Technical) 
- Research** (Academic) 
- Science** (Technical) 
- Streetwise** (Interpersonal) 
- Trivia** (Academic) 

### GENERAL ABILITIES

- Athletics** 2  
- Cool** 2  
- Driving** 1 
- Filch** 1 
- Fleeing** 3   
- Fighting** 1 
- Infiltration** 2  
- Medium** 1 
- Premonitions** 2  
- Stability** 1 


















## Burned Spy

Trained espionage operative fleeing vampire former  
superiors, for Night's Black Agents

### INVESTIGATIVE ABILITIES

- Bullshit Detector** (Interpersonal) 
- Criminology** (Academic) 
- Data Recovery** (Technical) 
- Electronic Surveillance** (Technical) 
- Flirting** (Interpersonal) 
- Forgery** (Technical) 
- High Society** (Interpersonal) 
- History** (Academic) 
- Human Terrain** (Academic) 
- Intimidation** (Interpersonal) 
- Military Science** (Academic) 
- Negotiation** (Interpersonal) 
- Research** (Academic) 
- Tradecraft** (Interpersonal) 
- Traffic Analysis** (Technical) 
- Urban Survival** (Technical) 
- Vampirology** (Academic) 

### GENERAL ABILITIES

- Athletics** 2  
- Conceal** 1 
- Cool** 1 
- Cover** 1 
- Digital Intrusion** 1 
- Driving** 1 
- Filch** 1 
- Fighting** 2  
- Infiltration** 2  
- Network** 1 
- Preparedness** 1 
- Sense Trouble** 1 
- Stability** 1 
- Surveillance** 1 

## Mutant Cop

Police detective in a version of our world where 1% of the population has super powers, for Mutant City Blues

### INVESTIGATIVE ABILITIES

- Anamorphology (Technical)
- Ballistics (Technical)
- Bullshit Detector (Interpersonal)
- Bureaucracy (Interpersonal)
- Cop Talk (Interpersonal)
- Data Retrieval (Technical)
- Evidence Collection (Technical)
- Fingerprinting (Technical)
- Forensic Accounting (Academic)
- Forensic Psychology (Academic)
- Interrogation (Interpersonal)
- Law (Academic)
- Reassurance (Interpersonal)
- Research (Academic)
- Trivia (Academic)
- Streetwise (Interpersonal)

### GENERAL ABILITIES

- Athletics 2
- Cool 1
- Driving 1
- Fighting 2
- Preparedness 1
- Sense Trouble 2
- Stability 1
- Surveillance 2

Mutant General Abilities: Choose 3 adjacent enhanced abilities from the Quade Diagram. Treat General Abilities separated by enhanced Investigative Abilities or defects as adjacent for this purpose. Divide 5 dice between these three abilities, with at least 1 die in each. If desired, player may swap, on a one-to-one basis, any standard Investigative Ability for one appearing on the diagram adjacent to a selected General Ability. Character's starting Problem is the defect closest on the diagram to any of the three chosen mutant General Abilities. If two or more are equally close, the player chooses between them.

## Licensed Autonomous Zone Effectuator (LAZER)

Freelance Space Operative, for Ashen Stars

### INVESTIGATIVE ABILITIES

- Anthropology (Academic)
- Astronomy (Technical)
- Bio Signatures (Technical)
- Bullshit Detector (Interpersonal)
- Bureaucracy (Interpersonal)
- Data Retrieval (Technical)
- Downside (Interpersonal)
- Energy Signatures (Technical)
- Flirting (Interpersonal)
- Forensic Accounting (Academic)
- Forensic Engineering (Technical)
- Forensic Psychology (Academic)
- History – character's species, as chosen by player (Academic)
- Combine History (Academic)
- Inspiration (Interpersonal)
- Reassurance (Interpersonal)
- Respect (Interpersonal)
- Virology (Technical)
- Xenoculture (Academic)
- Zoology (Academic)

### GENERAL ABILITIES

- Athletics 1
- Cool 1
- Fighting 2
- Ground Craft 1
- Medic 1
- Preparedness 1
- Public Relations 1
- Sense Trouble 2
- Shuttle Craft 1
- Spaceship Combat 1
- Surveillance 1
- Systems Repair 2
- Viro Manipulation 1

Ask the player to choose an Ashen Stars species. If other than human, player may elect to reduce up to 3 two-die General Abilities by 1 die apiece, and gain one or more species-specific General Ability, allotting the chosen number of dice between them.

















Note how the various spaceship combat specialties have been collapsed into one item.



## Galactic Vengeance-Seeker

From The Gaean Reach. *Death to Quandos Vorn!*

### INVESTIGATIVE ABILITIES

- Anthropology (Academic) 
- Arts (Academic) 
- Astronomy (Technical) 
- Bureaucracy (Interpersonal) 
- Engineering (Technical) 
- Finance (Academic) 
- Flair (Interpersonal) 
- Flattery (Interpersonal) 
- History (Academic) 
- Life Sciences (Academic) 
- Materiel (Technical) 
- Negotiation (Interpersonal) 
- Nose for Mendacity (Interpersonal) 
- One-Upmanship (Interpersonal) 
- Punctilio (Interpersonal) 
- Research (Technical) 
- Scuttlebutt (Interpersonal) 

### GENERAL ABILITIES

- Athletics 2  
- Fighting 2  
- Gambling 2  
- Infiltration 2  
- Medic 1 
- Preparedness 3   
- Vehicles 2  
- Wealth 1 
- Wherewithal 2  


















## TimeWatch Agent

From TimeWatch

### INVESTIGATIVE ABILITIES

- Anthropology (Academic) 
- Architecture (Academic) 
- Authority (Interpersonal) 
- Falsehood Detection (Interpersonal) 
- Forgery (Technical) 
- History – Ancient, Contemporary, Future (Academic) 
- Paradox Prevention (Technical) 
- Reassurance (Interpersonal) 
- Research (Academic) 
- Science! (Technical) 
- Spying (Technical) 
- Taunt (Interpersonal) 
- Timecraft (Academic) 
- Trivia (Academic) 

### GENERAL ABILITIES

- Athletics 2  
- Burglary 2  
- Cool 1 
- Fighting 2  
- Preparedness 2  
- Reality Anchor 2  
- Sense Trouble 1 
- Tinkering 2  
- Unobtrusiveness 2  
- Vehicles 1 

---


# Teen Sleuth

From Bubblegumshoe,

published by Evil Hat Productions

## INVESTIGATIVE ABILITIES


---

**Bullshit Detector** (Interpersonal) 

**Fashion** (Interpersonal) 


**Flattery** (Interpersonal) 

**Gossip** (Interpersonal) 


**Grownup Face** (Interpersonal) 


**Negotiation** (Interpersonal) 


**Notice** (Academic) 

**Photography** (Technical) 


**Pop Culture** (Academic) 

**Reassurance** (Interpersonal) 

**Research** (Academic) 

**Scholarship** (Academic) 

**Taunt** (Interpersonal) 

**Town Lore** (Academic) 

## GENERAL ABILITIES

---

**Athletics 2**  

**Computers 2**  

**Cool 1** 

**Driving 1** 

**Fighting 2**  

**Filch 1** 

**Intuition 1** 

**Preparedness 2**  

**Sneaking 2**  

**Throwdown 2**  

## Generic Edges


Use these Edges in your own scenarios or as Advance rewards in new Challenges you and your player add to a published mystery. For ease of reference, easily adaptable Edges from scenarios in this book also appear here.

EDGE

### Against Horror

*You're sick of the madness and violence bubbling up from beneath the city streets. If you don't put a stop to it, who will?*

Spend for an extra die on any test. If spent on a Stability test, roll a die. On a 1, regain this Edge.




EDGE

### Bedrock Skepticism

*The supernatural? Malign deities? What a load of hogwash! You'll never fall for that bunkum.*

Spend to Counter a Mythos Shock Problem.




EDGE

### Coming Up Shamrocks

*It must be your lucky day.*


Spend for a Lucky Break (when available). After getting the break, roll a die: on an even result, this card returns to your hand. If at the end of the scenario no opportunity for a Lucky Break arose, spend to Counter any non-Mythos Shock Problem you can justify resolving with a stroke of good fortune.



EDGE

### “Dr. Freud Gave Me This Watch”


+2 on Hypnosis tests. Or get an automatic Advance on any Hypnosis test, gaining a Push and discarding this card.



EDGE

### Eerie Feeling


+1 to Sense Trouble tests. Spend for an extra die on a Sense Trouble test.



EDGE

### A Few New Tools for the Old Workshop

Spend for an extra die on any General/Manual test.



EDGE

### A Flair for the Furtive

+2 on Filch tests. Or get an automatic Advance on any Filch test, gaining a Push and discarding this card.



EDGE

### Forensic Detachment

*You look at gruesome sights not as horrors, but as chances to experience the wonders of science.*

Spend to Counter any Problem gained during a Stability test.



EDGE

### The French call it "Sang Froid"

Gain 1 Push when you Advance on any Stability test, whether or not you still have unrolled dice.



EDGE

### Gallows Humor

*What shocks and repulses others prompts you to crack wise.*

Make a dark wisecrack appropriate to any scene, then discard this card to gain a free Push on any Interpersonal ability.



EDGE

### Hard-boiled

*You've injured yourself to shocking situations that would send civilians to the psychiatrist's couch.*

Spend to Counter a Problem that penalizes any General/Mental ability, Mythos Shocks excluded.



EDGE

### Het Up

+1 on all Fighting tests. Or discard this card for an extra die on any Fighting test.



EDGE

### High Alert

+1 to all Sense Trouble tests until you spend this Edge. If you made a Sense Trouble test in the current scene, spend this Edge for an extra die on an Athletics, Fighting or Fleeing test.



EDGE

### He had it Coming

*You feel good about that unofficial justice you just doled out.*

Counter any non-Mythos Shock Problem that penalizes General/Mental Abilities or Interpersonal Pushes.



EDGE

### Invigorated

Get an automatic Advance on your next Athletics test, gaining a Push and discarding this card.



EDGE

### Never Leave the Office Without One

Discard to succeed at any Preparedness Quick Test.



EDGE

### On Your Tail

Get an automatic Advance on your next Shadowing test, gaining a Push and discarding this card.



EDGE

### Popular Mechanics

+2 on Devices or Devices tests. Or get an automatic Advance on any Devices or Devices test, gaining a Push and discarding this card.





EDGE

### Quick Reactions

Spend for an extra die on any Athletics, Driving or Fighting test.



EDGE

### Roadworthy

Get an automatic Advance on any Driving test, gaining a Push and discarding this card.



EDGE

### See You Later, Detonator

When you use Explosives to significantly impede a Mythos threat, spend this Edge to Counter any Mythos Shock Problem, or any Problem penalizing a General/Mental ability.



EDGE

### Self-Possessed

Spend for an extra die on any General/Mental test.



EDGE

### Shifty

Get an automatic Advance on any Conceal test, gaining a Push and discarding this card.



EDGE

### Situational Advantage


Spend for an extra die on any Challenge occurring at your present location.



EDGE

### These Shoes don't Squeak


Get an automatic Advance on your next Stealth test, gaining a Push and discarding this card.



EDGE

### Tied Up with a Neat Little Bow


When you crack the case, spend this Edge to Counter one Problem you acquired during the present scenario.



EDGE

### The Tough Get Going

Spend for an extra die on your next Challenge.




EDGE

### Triumph over Weirdness

*Bizarre enemies don't seem so daunting after you've out-drawn them.*

+1 Fighting vs. Mythos adversaries.




EDGE

### Battle Buddies

*Once again you have demonstrated a knack for turning adversity into sudden advantage.*


Spend to treat a Setback as an Advance.



EDGE

### Well-Rested

Spend for an extra die on any General/Physical test.



## Generic Problems

Deploy these generically written Problems as needed, either in your own scenarios or when player choices trigger an unexpected event during a published mystery. They might show up as Extra Problems, or as the result of Setbacks.

EDGE

### Whew

*You caught a lucky break just now. Maybe you're riding a hot streak for once.*

Spend for a Push of any kind, or an extra die on any test.



PROBLEM

### Bad Feeling about This

*There ain't a part of you that wants to do what you're about to do.*

The next time you roll a 6, ignore the result and roll again for a new result, then discard this card.



PROBLEM

### Bruised Knuckles

*You should see the other guy.*

-1 on all General/Manual tests. Discard the first time you suffer a Setback on a General/Manual test.



PROBLEM

### Butterfingers

Lose a Push the next time you use a Technical ability to gain information, and discard this card. If you have no Push, you lose the next Push you gain, and discard this card.



PROBLEM

### Car Trouble

-2 on Driving tests. Gives unfriendly cops a pretext to pull you over and hassle you. Counter by Taking Time with a trip to the garage.



PROBLEM

### Close to the Edge

*You've been pushing yourself too hard for too long. Now the bill's come due.*

All Advances on Cool tests become Holds. Counter by Taking Time to seek out someone, perhaps a Source, to lend you a sympathetic ear.



PROBLEM

### Chip on your Shoulder

Lose a Push the next time you use an Interpersonal ability to gain information, and discard this card. If you have no Push, you lose the next Push you gain, and discard this card.



PROBLEM

### Denial

*Your mind builds a wall around the terrible truth. Hope it doesn't crumble!*

After the next scene in which you gain evidence of a supernatural force or entity, lose a Push. If you have no Pushes, you lose your next Push as soon as you get it.



PROBLEM

### Driven to the Brink

*You're pushing yourself to the point where your frayed nerves have frayed nerves.*

-1 on General/Mental tests until you Take Time to calm yourself down.



PROBLEM

### Empathy Hurts

*You show someone you understand their agony. But now that you've opened up, how are you going to close it all down again?*

-2 on all Cool tests. Counter by Taking Time for heavy drinking (or the indulgence of another self-destructive vice).



PROBLEM

### Fight, not Flight

*To escape that scrape, you called on the terrified animal deep inside you. Desperation that stark isn't easy to forget.*

-2 Penalty on Cool or Stability tests. Discard after your next Fighting test.



PROBLEM

### Guilty Conscience

*That interaction left you feeling like a Grade-A heel.*

You can't spend Pushes on Interpersonal Abilities. Counter by Taking Time to have someone remind you of your essential decency.



PROBLEM

### Heart Strain

*You made yourself do something every fiber of your being told you not to. You've flooded yourself with adrenaline and can't calm down.*

Counter by accepting a -4 Penalty on any Challenge. If still in your hand at end of case, suffer a fatal heart attack.



PROBLEM

### Heedless

*You never met a warning you couldn't ignore.*

-1 on Sense Trouble tests. Discard on your next Sense Trouble Setback.



PROBLEM

### Indelible Image

*You saw something you sure wish you hadn't. Now you can't get it out of your mind.*

Until countered, -1 on all General/Mental tests.



PROBLEM

### Imminent Catatonia

*Mythos Shock* 

*Rather than truly correlate the significance of what you just witnessed, your mind is about to shut itself down. Maybe for good.*



PROBLEM

### Injury (Bad Beating)

*You've been beaten within an inch of your life.*

Until you Take Time to recuperate, all General tests result in automatic Setbacks. Even after that, all General/Physical tests take a -1 Penalty. Discard at end of scenario.



PROBLEM

### Injury (Minor)

Take a -2 penalty to your next General/Physical test and -1 to the one after that. Then discard this Problem.





PROBLEM

### Injury (Off-Putting)

*Sometimes a bruise, cut, or slash isn't a badge of honor. It's a reason for others to slowly back away.*

Discard after two days pass in the fictional game world. Until then, you can't make Bargaining, Intimidation, or Reassurance Pushes.



PROBLEM

### Injury (Life-Threatening)

-3 to your next General/Physical test; -2 to all subsequent test until Countered. Counter by Taking Time at a hospital or doctor's office. If you're still holding this at the end of the story, you die of internal bleeding.



PROBLEM

### Injury (Weird)

*That inhuman creature did more than wound you – its venom, germs, or psychic effluvia left you suffering symptoms of sickness.*

You can't spend Edges that grant any advantage or bonus to any General/Physical test. All bonuses to General/Physical tests granted by Edges you keep in hand are reduced to 0.



PROBLEM

### Insolent

The next time someone tries to get under your skin, make a Cool test, Advance 5+. Except on an Advance, you get lippy with them, and they decide to make trouble for you



PROBLEM

### Mental Fatigue

Lose a Push the next time you use an Academic ability to gain information, and discard this card. If you have no Push, you lose the next Push you gain, and discard this card.



PROBLEM

### Not so Fast

*Bad memories have a way of coming back on you.*

When you counter a Problem that penalizes any General/Mental ability, roll a die. On an odd result, regain the Problem.



PROBLEM

### Numbed to It All

*To avoid cracking up, you're just going to start ignoring certain implications.*

-2 to your next Sense Trouble test; -1 to all subsequent such tests.



PROBLEM

### Only a Matter of Time

*Push all those fears deep down inside you. You can deal with them later, when there's time.*

If you haven't countered this Problem by the end of the case, you do something crazy and/or self-destructive during the denouement.



PROBLEM

### Psychic Vertigo

**Mythos Shock** 

*You can't help it. Something deep within you recoils at the sight of a being that neither history nor science can properly account for.*

In scenes where one or more Mythos creatures are present, treat any even-numbered die you roll in a test as a 1.



PROBLEM

### Rattled

*Your confidence just took a major hit.*

Until you counter by Taking Time, take a -2 penalty on all Cool and Stability tests.



PROBLEM

### Restless Continuity

*Your unconscious instinct to protect yourself goes into overdrive. You lose the ability to relax.*

Before Taking Time to Counter any other Problem, you must Take Time to counter this one.



PROBLEM

### Seething

*Even a baby could tell you're bubbling with barely suppressed anger. In this state you're not the sort of person people want to cooperate with.*

Until you haul off and clock someone, you can't spend Pushes on Interpersonal Abilities.



PROBLEM

### Shaken

*You just saw something you wish you hadn't, and you can't stop shaking.*

Treat your next Advance as a Hold, then discard.



PROBLEM

### Sleep Deprived

*You've been working this case too hard without a break.*

-1 on General/Mental tests. Counter by Taking Time to find a safe place to nap, and then getting a few hour's slumber.



PROBLEM

### Stiff Drink

*This calls for the throat-burning distraction of cheap bourbon. Fortunately, you carry a flask in your jacket pocket for precisely this sort of occasion.*

-1 to General/Mental tests. Counter by spending 24 hours without drinking.



PROBLEM

### Swirling Possibilities

*Maybe it's the weirdness. Maybe it's just all the missing puzzle pieces. Either way, you're letting this case get to you.*

If you have an Edge granting a benefit to any General/Mental ability, discard it and this card. If not, wait until you get such an Edge, then discard it and this card.



PROBLEM

### Tempted

*Resisting that old vice of yours took more out of you than you'd prefer to admit.*

2 penalty on all Cool and Stability tests until you Take Time to indulge this or another weakness.



PROBLEM

### Winded

*You went all out to prevail, but it will cost you.*

-1 on Fighting tests. Counter by Taking Time, or spending an Edge that benefits Fighting or General/Physical Abilities.



PROBLEM

## Vengeful

*You're not one to nurse a grudge. You're one to put it up in an expensive hospital with a round-the-clock team of doctors to give it constant care and attention.*

Determine which GMC in the current scene most deserves your wrath. Unless you do something to lash out at this character, any coda in which you survive must feature a scene where you self-destructively lash out at him.

PROBLEM

## Yellow-Bellied Rat

*Running out on that lug was smart, not cowardly. But you let a whole bar full of lowlifes see your ungraceful exit, and that stings.*

You can't spend Pushes on Interpersonal Abilities. Discard the first time you score an Advance on any Challenge.



# DEXTER “DEX” RAYMOND

*Hard-boiled Shamus*

## INVESTIGATIVE ABILITIES

- Accounting
- Assess Honesty
- Bargain
- Cop Talk
- Cryptography
- Evidence Collection
- Intimidation
- Inspiration
- Law
- Locksmith
- Photography
- Reassurance
- Research
- Streetwise

## GENERAL ABILITIES

- Athletics
- Cool
- Conceal
- Devices
- Driving
- Filch
- Fighting
- Preparedness
- Sense Trouble
- Shadowing
- Stability
- Stealth

## STORY

Archetypal hardboiled private investigator Dex Raymond prowls Los Angeles’ haunted streets as an outsider by choice. With his smarts and grit, he could have wormed his way into its corrupt power structure. Instead, he operates on its fringes, writing wrongs for a modest fee, plus expenses. In addition to his contacts, he counts one more key friend— LAPD Detective Sergeant Ted Gargan, a rare honest man in a town where cops can be bought by the barrel.

## SOURCES



**VIRGINIA ASHBURY, Scientist**  
Astronomy, Biology, Chemistry, Forensics, Geology.

*A slim, somewhat birdlike woman typically seen in her white lab coat, Dr. Virginia Ashbury dotes on Dex as she would on a younger brother.*



**MADAME EVA, Fortune Teller**  
Cthulhu Mythos, Occult.

*This harmless grifter can assist Dex with information on the world of cults, spiritualism, and hermetic magic.*



**DR. JEFF “MACK” MACKINTOSH, Shrink**  
Medicine, Outdoorsman, Pharmacy, Psychology.

*Dex bounce questions off him, provided he can sit in his chair and puff on his pipe while doing it.*



**ALFRED KELHAM, Professor**  
Anthropology, Archaeology, History, Languages, Oral History, Theology.

*Proudly pedantic and a touch paternalistic, Kelham sees in Dex an echo of his own son, a soldier killed in WWI.*



**MAX WEYL, Production Designer**  
Anthropology, Archaeology, History, Languages, Oral History, Theology.

*He’s always willing to entertain Dex’s questions on the art world or movie gossip, provided he doesn’t have to stop moving.*





# VIVIAN SINCLAIR

*Investigative Journalist*

## INVESTIGATIVE ABILITIES

- Accounting
- Assess Honesty
- Bargain
- Bureaucracy
- Cryptography
- Evidence Collection
- Flattery
- History
- Inspiration
- Locksmith
- Oral History
- Photography
- Reassurance
- Research
- Streetwise

## GENERAL ABILITIES

- Athletics
- Cool
- Disguise
- Driving
- Fighting
- Filch
- First Aid
- Fleeing
- Preparedness
- Sense Trouble
- Shadowing
- Stability
- Stealth

## STORY

Pad and pencil in hand, journalist Vivian Sinclair tracks down leads, grills witnesses, and turns in hair-raising stories of corruption, crime, and parts of the city's underbelly most would rather not see. Where a detective sees a case, Viv sees a story. She'll follow it relentlessly to its conclusion, even putting her life in danger to get at the truth.

## SOURCES

- ASTELLE "STELLA" ABRAMS, Amateur Occultist** *Despite her apparent religious frivolity, she never discards books the way she does beliefs and can be called upon for theological as well as occult questions.*  
 Architecture, Craft, Cthulhu Mythos, Occult, Theology

---

- LT. JOSEPH O'CONNOR, Detective** *He stood out to Viv as an honest man trying to do the right thing even if it jeopardized his future with the department, or even his life.*  
 Cop Talk, Forensics, Intimidation, Law, Streetwise

---

- ESTEBAN MANUEL ARAGON GONZALEZ, Explorer** *The son of Cuban immigrants, who discovered a passion for archaeology. He's happy to hazard the cultural history of a peculiar idol Viv's discovered, or identify a strange set of tracks.*  
 Anthropology, Archaeology, Art History, Geology, Outdoorsman

---

- LOUISA REYNOLDS, Nurse** *While neither a psychiatrist nor a doctor, she's absorbed a vast practical knowledge of medicine, pharmacy, and psychology through her work and self-education.*  
 Anthropology, Archaeology, History, Languages, Oral History, Theology.

---

- ANNETTE "NETTIE" RICE, Professor** *The kindly, tweed-clad woman who taught Viv Natural Science course managed to make the subjects interesting but didn't woo her into the sciences.*  
 Anthropology, Archaeology, History, Languages, Oral History, Theology.



# LANGSTON MONTGOMERY WRIGHT

*Private Eye*

## INVESTIGATIVE ABILITIES

- Assess Honesty
- Bargain
- Chemistry
- Cop Talk
- Cryptography
- Evidence Collection
- Flattery
- Inspiration
- Intimidation
- Languages
- Oral History
- Physics
- Psychology
- Reassurance
- Research
- Streetwise

## GENERAL ABILITIES

- Athletics
- Cool
- Disguise
- Driving
- Fighting
- Filch
- First Aid
- Fleeing
- Preparedness
- Sense Trouble
- Shadowing
- Stability
- Stealth

## STORY

Langston Montgomery Wright is an African American WWII vet who battled Nazis across Europe until he took shrapnel saving some GIs. He was honorably discharged, and sent home to Washington, DC, a city that's near busting. He's a second class citizen trying to make a place for himself in a world that challenges him at every turn. He uses his smarts, morals and willingness to do whatever it takes to make rent, solving cases and battling enemies, one mythos threat at a time.

## SOURCES



**ROSAMUND CARTER, Professor**  
 Anthropology, Archaeology, Art, Cthulhu Mythos, History, Occult, Research.

*Brilliant and sharp-eyed. When not in her office or working with undergrads, she is nearly always found in the library, studying and working on her plan to become Dean.*



**MYRNA BETTY COHEN, Bureaucrat**  
 Accounting, Architecture, Art History, Bureaucracy, Flattery, Law.

*She is always in the know about various aspects of the war, based on the comings and goings of foreign diplomats.*



**REVEREND ERNEST THOMPSON, Pastor**  
 Biology, Medicine, Oral History, Pharmacy, Theology.

*The reverend is a wall of a man: once all muscle, he has turned slightly soft with the passing of decades. The two have spent many evenings drinking, playing cards and talking about war.*



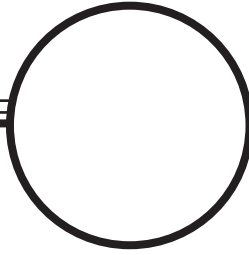
**CORNELIUS "SCOUT" MOORE, Journalist**  
 Assess Honesty, Cop Talk, Craft, Locksmith, Photography.

*He is on a crusade for that groundbreaking story that will jumpstart his career, whether it's about Axis spies, corrupt police, questionable politicians, or gangsters shooting up soldiers.*



**LT. COL MELVIN HARTMAN, Military**  
 Anthropology, Archaeology, History, Languages, Oral History, Theology.

*People rarely notice him, and if they do, they underestimate how smart he is — a fact he has used to his advantage to move up the ranks. He is always dressed in his uniform.*



Player's name: .....

Protagonist's name: .....

Protagonist's occupation: .....

**INVESTIGATIVE ABILITIES**

- Accounting** (Academic)
- Anthropology** (Academic)
- Archaeology** (Academic)
- Architecture** (Academic)
- Art History** (Academic)
- Assess Honesty** (Interpersonal)
- Astronomy** (Technical)
- Bargain** (Interpersonal)
- Biology** (Academic)
- Bureaucracy** (Interpersonal)
- Chemistry** (Technical)
- Cop Talk** (Interpersonal)
- Craft** (Technical)
- Cryptography** (Academic)
- Cthulhu Mythos** (Academic)
- Evidence Collection** (Technical)
- Flattery** (Interpersonal)
- Forensics** (Technical)
- Geology** (Academic)

- History** (Academic)
- Inspiration** (Interpersonal)
- Intimidation** (Interpersonal)
- Languages** (Academic)
- Law** (Academic)
- Locksmith** (Technical)
- Medicine** (Academic)
- Occult** (Academic)
- Oral History** (Interpersonal)
- Outdoorsman** (Technical)
- Pharmacy** (Technical)
- Photography** (Technical)
- Physics** (Academic)
- Psychology** (Interpersonal)
- Reassurance** (Interpersonal)
- Research** (Academic)
- Streetwise** (Interpersonal)
- Theology** (Academic)

**GENERAL ABILITIES**

- Athletics** (Physical)
- Conceal** (Manual)
- Cool** (Mental)
- Devices** (Manual)
- Disguise** (Manual)
- Driving** (Manual)
- Explosives** (Manual)
- Fighting** (Physical)
- Filch** (Manual)
- First Aid** (Manual)
- Fleeing** (Physical)
- Hypnosis** (Mental)
- Magic** (Mental)
- Preparedness** (Mental)
- Psychoanalysis** (Mental)
- Sense Trouble** (Mental)
- Shadowing** (Physical)
- Stability** (Mental)
- Stealth** (Physical)

**SOURCES & NOTES**

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

**STORY**

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

# INDEX

See also alphabetical lists of Investigative Abilities (p.8) and General Abilities (p. 17) in the main text as well as individual index entries for these categories. Abilities are listed with their subcategory in brackets, eg Accounting (Academic).

- Ability Dice 5
- Abrams, Astelle “Stella” (Vivian's Source) 149
- Accounting (Academic) 10
- Advancement, *See* Improvements (Experience)
- Advance (outcome) 5, 22
- Adventures, *See* Scenarios
- Advice for GMs 34–62
  - creating scenarios 40
  - escalating Mythos Shocks 56
  - guiding the player 34–36
  - HANDLE WITH CARE flag 237
  - managing intensity 34
  - sexual violence 146
  - violence and female characters 145–146
- Advice for players
  - experienced GUMSHOE players 285
  - new roleplayers 286
  - Rules Quick Reference 5
  - solving cases 293
- Alternate clues 43
- Alternate scenes 42
- Ames, Lawrence (Vivian's GMC) 148
- Antagonist Reaction scenes 42
  - Capitol Colour 273
  - designing 60
  - Fatal Frequencies 201
  - Fathomless Sleep, The 133
- Anthropology (Academic) 10
- Archaeology (Academic) 10
- Architecture (Academic) 10
- Art History (Academic) 10
- Ashbury, Virginia (Dex's Source) 68
- Ashen Stars (One-2-One character) 297
- Assess Honesty (Interpersonal) 10
- Astronomy (Technical) 11
- Athletics (Physical) 17
- Balazar, Miguel (Langston's GMC) 211
- Bargain (Interpersonal) 11
- Biology (Academic) 11
- Bisexuality, *See* Sexuality
- Bonuses (from Edges) 22
- Bubblegumshoe (One-2-One character) 299
- Build Points, *See* Advancement
- Bureaucracy (Interpersonal) 11
- Capitol Colour (Scenario) 239–281
  - Antagonist Reactions 273
  - cast 241–242
  - Edge Cards 279–280
  - Problem Cards 274–278
  - Relationship Map 241
  - Scene Flow Diagram 244
  - scenes 245–272
  - The Colour Out of Space 242
  - what happened 243–244
- Carter, Rosamund (Langston's Source) 211–212
- Challenge Difficulty Table 45
- Challenges 22, 44–46
  - bonuses and penalties 22
  - designing 44
  - die rolls 22
  - Difficulty Table 45
  - distressing turns 46
  - earning additional rolls 22
  - examples 25, 50–60
  - format 23
  - immediate consequences 24
  - outcomes 22
  - quick reference 23
  - running 39
  - versus Quick Tests 27
  - voluntary losses 24
- Character Cards 6
  - blank 315
  - Dexter “Dex” Raymond 312
  - Langston Montgomery Wright 314
  - Vivian Sinclair 313
- Character creation 40–41
- Characters
  - creating 40–41
  - customizing 69
  - for other GUMSHOE settings 294
  - pregenerated, *See* Pregenerated characters
  - protagonists, *See* Protagonist characters
- Chemistry (Technical) 11
- Clues
  - clue types 43–44
  - delivery 36, 43
  - Clue types 43–44
    - alternate clue 43
    - core clue 43
    - leveraged clue 44
    - pipe clue 43
- Coda scenes 61
  - referencing previous 62
- Cohen, Myrna Betty (Langston's Source) 212
- The Colour Out of Space 242
- Combat, *See* Fights
- Conceal (Manual) 18
- Conclusion scenes 42
- Contests, *See* Tests
- Continuity Cards 47
- Cool (Mental) 18
  - restricted by Stability 33
- Cop Talk (Interpersonal) 12
- Core clues 43
- Core scenes 42
- Craft (Technical) 12
- Cryptography (Academic) 12
- Cthulhu Mythos (Academic) 12
- Damage, *See* Problems
- Death 33
- Denouement scenes 42
- Devices (Manual) 18
- Difficulty, *See* Challenge Difficulty Table
- Disguise (Manual) 18
- Distressing turns 46
- Donovan, William “Wild Bill” (Langston's GMC) 211
- Driving (Manual) 18–19
- Edges 32
  - continuity 47
  - countering Mythos Shocks 32
  - designing 46
  - discarding 62

- duplicating 26
- formatting 25
- generic examples 300–304
- handling 25–33, 40
- The Esoterrorists (One-2-One character) 295
- Eva, Madame (Dex's Source) 68
- Evans, Catherine (Vivian's GMC) 149
- Evidence Collection (Technical) 12
- Experience (Gaining),  
    *See* Advancement
- Explosives (Manual) 19
- Extra Problems 47
- Fatal Frequencies (Scenario) 169–206
  - Antagonist Reactions 201
  - cast 171–173
  - Edge Cards 205–206
  - Problem Cards 202–204
  - Relationship Map 171
  - Scene Flow Diagram 172
  - scenes 173–200
  - timeline 171
  - what happened 170–173
- The Fathomless Sleep (Scenario) 95–140
  - Antagonist Reactions 133
  - cast 95–96
  - Edge Cards 139–140
  - Problem Cards 134–138
  - Relationship Map 96
  - Scene Flow Diagram 99
  - scenes 100–132
  - timeline 97
  - what happened 95–99
- Fear Itself (One-2-One character) 295–296
- Fighting (Physical) 19
- Fights 28–29
  - against female characters 145–146
  - death 33
  - outcomes 29
  - sexual violence 146
- Filch (Manual) 19
- First Aid (Manual) 19
- Flattery (Interpersonal) 12
- Fleeing (Physical) 19
- Forensics (Technical) 12
- The Gaeen Reach (One-2-One character) 298
- Game Moderator Characters (GMCs) 8, 35–36, 43, 145, 148, 237, 286
- Game Moderator (GM) 4
- Gargan, Ted (Dex's GMC) 65
- Gender 144–145
  - customizing 69
- General Abilities 16–20
  - ability dice 5, 22
  - adding new 33
  - alphabetical list 17
  - attempts without ability 21
  - capped at 33
  - definitions 17–21
  - improving 33
  - Outcomes 22–24
  - using investigatively 21
- Geology (Academic) 13
- GM advice, *See* Advice for GMs
- Gonzalez, Esteban Manuel Aragon (Vivian's Source) 150
- GUMSHOE
  - characters for other settings 294–299
  - One-2-One compared to GUMSHOE 285
  - settings using One-2-One 294
- HANDLE WITH CARE flag 237
- Hand-to-Hand, *See* Fighting (Physical)
- Hartman, Lt. Col Melvin (Langston's Source) 214
- History (Academic) 13
- Hold (Outcome) 5, 22
- The Home Front 215–220
  - daily life 217–218
  - minorities and the war 218–220
  - propaganda 218
  - wartime economy 217
- Homosexuality, *See* Sexuality
- Hypnosis (Mental) 19
- Immediate consequences 24
- Improvements (Experience) 33
- Inspiration (Interpersonal) 13–14
- Intensity management 4, 34
- Intimidation (Interpersonal) 14
- Introduction scenes 42
- Investigative Abilities 10–16
  - adding new 33
  - alphabetical list 8
  - definitions 10–16
  - improving 33
  - using 7–10
- Jackson, James (Langston's GMC) 211
- Jim Crow laws 235
- Keeper, *See* GM
- Kelham, Alfred (Dex's Source) 70
- Langston Montgomery Wright, *See* Wright, Langston Montgomery
- Languages (Academic) 14
- Law (Academic) 14
- Lead-Ins 42
- Lead-Outs 42
- Leveraged clues 44
- Lingo, *See* Slang
- Locksmith (Technical) 14
- Los Angeles 73–92
  - geography 84–92
  - Bel Air 86
  - Beverly Hills 86
  - Bunker Hill 89
  - Central Avenue Corridor 89
  - Chavez Ravine 88
  - Downey 92
  - Downtown 89–92
  - Echo Park 88
  - Glendale 89
  - Griffith Park 84
  - Hollywood 86–88
  - Malibu 88
  - Pasadena 84–86
  - Santa Monica 88
  - Silver Lake 89
- map 85
- people 76–83
- slang 71
- Lowell, Emma Sinclair (Vivian's GMC) 148
- Lucky Breaks 61
- Mackintosh, Dr. Jeff "Mack" (Dex's Source) 69–70
- Madness 29–33, 48, *See also* Stability
- Magic (Mental) 19–20
- Medicine (Academic) 14
- Moore, Cornelius "Scout" 213–214
- Mutant City Blues (One-2-One character) 297
- The Mythos 31
- Mythos Shocks 32–33
  - countering with Hypnosis 19
  - countering with Psychoanalysis 20
  - escalating 56
- New roleplayers guide 286
- New York City 153–168
  - geography 162–168
  - Downtown Manhattan 166–167
  - Kips Bay 165–166
  - Lower Manhattan 167–168
  - Midtown Manhattan 164–165



- Queens 168
- Union Square 165
- Uptown Manhattan 162–164
- map 161
- people 156–162
- Night's Black Agents (One-2-One character) 296
- Non-Player Characters (NPCs), *See* Game Moderator Characters (GMCs)
- Occult (Academic) 14
- O'Connor, Lt. Joseph (Vivian's Source) 149
- One-2-One compared to GUMSHOE 285
- Online play 62
- Oral History (Interpersonal) 15
- Outcomes 22
- Outdoorsman (Technical) 15
- Penalties (from Problems) 22
- Pharmacy (Technical) 15
- Photography (Technical) 15
- Physics (Academic) 15–16
- Pipe clues 43–44
- Player advice, *See* Advice for players
- Pollard, Sergeant Len (Dex's GMC) 66
- Pools, *See* Ability Dice
- Pregenerated characters, *See* *also* Protagonist characters
  - Burned Spy 296
  - Galactic Vengeance-Seeker 298
  - Licensed Autonomous Zone Effectuator (LAZER) 297
  - Miskatonic University Professor 294
  - Mutant Cop 297
  - Ordo Veritatis Agent 295
  - Psychic Teenager 296
  - Teen Sleuth 299
  - TimeWatch Agent 298
  - Unwitting New Resident of Haunted House 295
- Preparedness (Manual) 20
- Problems
  - continuity 47
  - countering 26
  - designing 47
  - discarding 62
  - duplicating 26
  - extra 47
  - formatting 25
  - generic examples 305–311
  - handling 25–33
- Taking Time 26–27
- Protagonist characters, *See* *also* Pregenerated characters
  - creating 40
  - customizing 69
  - Raymond, Dexter "Dex" 65–72
  - Sinclair, Vivian 143–152
  - Wright, Langston Montgomery 209–214
- Psychoanalysis (Mental) 20
- Psychology (Interpersonal) 15
- Pushes 9
  - gaining 23
  - with no General Ability 21
- Quick Tests 27
- Racism
  - GM Characters (GMCs) 237
  - HANDLE WITH CARE flag 237
  - the Jim Crow Laws 235
  - minorities and the war 218–220
  - The Negro Travelers' Green Book 236
  - on the Home Front 236–237
- Ratings, *See* Ability Dice
- Raymond, Dexter "Dex" 65–72
  - background 65
  - bibliography 72
  - Character Card 312
  - customizing 69
  - GMCs 65
  - Sources
    - Ashbury, Virginia 68
    - Eva, Madame 68
    - Kelham, Alfred 70
    - Mackintosh, Dr. Jeff "Mack" 69–70
    - Weyl, Max 70
- Reassurance (Interpersonal) 16
- Relationship map
  - Capitol Colour 241
  - Fatal Frequencies 171
  - Fathomless Sleep, The 96
- Research (Academic) 16
- Reynolds, Louisa (Vivian's Source) 151
- Rice, Annette "Nettie" (Vivian's Source) 151
- Rules Quick Reference 5, 284
- Scenarios
  - Capitol Colour 239–281
  - creating 40
  - Fatal Frequencies 169–206, *See also* Fatal Frequencies (Scenario)
- The Fathomless Sleep 95–140, *See also* The Fathomless Sleep (Scenario)
  - premise 40
- Scene Flow Diagram
  - Capitol Colour 244
  - Fatal Frequencies 172
  - Fathomless Sleep, The 99
- Scenes
  - anatomy 42
  - Lead-Ins 42
  - Lead-Outs 42
  - types 43
    - Alternate 42
    - Antagonist Reaction 42
    - Coda 61
    - Conclusion 42
    - Core 42
    - Denouement 42
    - Introduction 42
- Scuffling, *See* Fighting (Physical)
- Sense Trouble (Mental) 20
- Setback (Outcome) 5, 22
- Sexism 144–146
- Sexuality 69, 145
  - customizing 69
- Sexual violence 146
- Shadowing (Physical) 20
- Shooting, *See* Fighting (Physical)
- Sinclair, Vivian 143–152
  - background 143–144
  - bibliography 152
  - Character Card 313
  - GMCs 148
  - and sexism 144–146
  - and sexuality 145
  - Sources
    - Abrams, Astelle "Stella" 149
    - Gonzalez, Esteban Manuel Aragon 150
    - O'Connor, Lt. Joseph 149–150
    - Reynolds, Louisa 151
    - Rice, Annette "Nettie" 151–152
- Slang
  - Hepster's dictionary 281
  - Los Angeles 71
- Sources 9, 37–38
  - as clients 37
  - replacing 38
  - running 37–38
  - threatening 38
- Spends, *See* Pushes

- Stability Challenges 30, 48
  - Challenge Table 49
- Stability Challenge Table 49
- Stability (Mental) 20–21
  - restricted by Cool 33
- Starting Problems
  - choosing 7
  - creating 41
- Stealth (Physical) 21
- Streetwise (Interpersonal) 16
- Taking Time 26–27
- Tests 22
  - Challenges, *See* Challenges
  - quick tests 27
  - Stability Challenges 30
- Theology (Academic) 16
- Thompson, Reverend Ernest
  - (Langston's Source) 213
- Tick (Experience) 33
- TimeWatch (One-2-One character) 298
- Trail of Cthulhu (One-2-One character) 294
- Violence, *See* Fights; *See* Sexual violence
- Vivian Sinclair, *See* Sinclair, Vivian
- Voluntary Losses 24
- Washington, DC 221–238
  - geography 224–232
    - Northeast (NE) 229–230
    - Northwest (NW) 224–228
    - Southeast (SE) 231
    - Southwest (SW) 230–231
  - surrounding area 231–232
  - life during wartime 223–224
  - map 225
  - people 232–236
  - slang 281
  - the war effort 223
- Watts, Detective Calvin (Langston's GMC) 211
- Wayne, Laura (Langston's GMC) 211
- Weapons, *See* Fighting (Physical)
- Weyl, Max (Dex's Source) 70–71
- Wright, Langston Montgomery 209–214
  - background 209–210
  - bibliography 238
  - Character Card 314
  - customizing 210
  - a day in the life 220
  - GMCs 211
- Sources 211–214
  - Carter, Rosamund 211–212
  - Cohen, Myrna Betty 212
  - Hartman, Lt. Col Melvin 214
  - Moore, Cornelius “Scout” 213–214
  - Thompson, Reverend Ernest 213
- XP, *See* Improvements (Experience)

