

THE INFINITY SHIFT



By Dennis Detwiler

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As we agree with the growing consensus that “they” can and should be used as a gender-neutral, singular English language pronoun when one is needed, we have adopted that as the style in our products. If you see this grammatical construction, it is intentional.



THE INFINITY SHIFT

ABOUT THE ADVENTURE

Welcome to the High Frequency Active Auroral Research Program! They call it HAARP. You call it the rear end of a two-year stint at the United States Air Force base in Gakona, Alaska. Nothing ever happens at HAARP—or at least nothing used to happen until they really turned on the machine for the first time. Now, everything happens there, all at once. Can you and your buddies survive one eternal shift at the center of all space-time?

GAKONA

Welcome to Gakona, Alaska, armpit of the Air Force.

Gakona is *precisely* the kind of place you don't want to be assigned to as career Air Force. Assigned is not even the proper word for Gakona; you *end up there*. The dregs, the near-washouts, the people the Air Force just can't come up with a real reason to shake—Gakona is their playpen, an isolated place where they can stay and “work” while the rest of the girls and boys protect the United States from airborne attack.

Except for the bizarre mile-after-mile of high-frequency radar arrays that cover the ground like a grid of electric trees and a jet-capable airstrip, most of Gakona AFB is underground. There is a whole dorm, rec rooms, cafeterias, resonance chambers, sewage treatment rooms, and more—too many rooms for the skeleton crew that now occupies the base, really—all below the snow. It was supposed to be a big deal, HAARP, though no one on-site has any idea what that deal was supposed to be, precisely. It had something to do with the magnetosphere, something to do with radar. It's complicated.

They never could get it to work just right, anyway.

There are only six full-time residents of Gakona now—the dregs, overseen by an officer or two who fly in every six months

or so to see how bad things have gotten. All the HAARP experiments on the bizarre equipment that runs there are operated remotely via satellite by military personnel at Crystal Palace, Wyoming, or at the Sandia National Laboratories. The tests are all the same: “Crew, flip breakers 78 through 1,913, plus breaker 2,133, and then we'll turn it on. Nothing, huh? Okay. Why don't you try breakers 73 through...”

The PCs are the full-time residents of Gakona. All they do is eat, sleep, play cards, watch videotapes of *Three's Company*, and occasionally track down a junction box in the miles of tunnels to flip a breaker. It's a boring, isolated, stupid, waste-of-time life. Oh, and there is no Internet or cable television.

Aim high, Air Force.

THE WINTER OF 2016

It is the winter of 2016. Four and a half feet of snowfall cover the ground above Gakona AFB. The hundreds of weird radio transmitters that make up HAARP are clear of snow, thanks to heating elements that cause the snow to melt off, but the airfield is closed and will be until at least April—months from now. Still, the team at Gakona is in touch with the various remote scientific crews that put HAARP through its strange turns (which, as far as the crew can tell, do little or nothing except cause a low thrumming sound throughout the base).

The good news is: the end is in sight! HAARP is set to be permanently shuttered as of May 1, 2017. You and your “compatriots” are in the homestretch. There are only ten more tests between here and there. Ten more tests and then a plane back to the world. Yay.

THE PREAMBLE AND THE CREW

The preamble is this: *You and your five compatriots all work and live at Gakona AFB. You are a skeleton crew looking after a high-tech experiment in electronics and radar*



This adventure includes page references to various subjects accompanied by this symbol. These references are to the *Cypher System Rulebook*, where you can find additional details about that item, place, creature, or concept. It isn't necessary to look up the referenced items in the book; doing so is an optional way to provide additional information to your players.

called HAARP—High frequency something, something, something, whatever. You live like moles underground, because aboveground, it's ice and snow and nothing for hundreds of miles in all directions. You do what's asked of you via radio, the Air Force does its experiments, and then you kill time until the next test. On May 1, they will permanently shutter the base and you'll rotate back to the world, but May is a long, long way away.

Today, you will carry out Test #24114, Operation BROWNCOW. Whoopdeedoo.

Hand out the six pregenerated characters and let the players have a few minutes to look over them. The six bullet points beneath each character description contain the keys to portraying the character—a secret, a skill, and some info about relationships.

The skeleton crew of Gakona AFB is composed of the following:

- **E-2 Airman Angela Ruiz is a Guarded Explorer who Doesn't Do Much;** this Boston native has a dislike of E-3s and a habit of sneaking off to a hideout in the facility.
- **E-2 Airman Albert "Fish" Bogosta is a Kind Speaker who Works the System;** this Floridian electronics whiz loves Gakona AFB, where he runs to breakers and troubleshoots to keep the base in good shape.
- **E-2 Airman Kolani Watts is a Brash Explorer who Looks for Trouble;** this communications and radio expert from Chicago despises Gakona and his compatriots, though he'd never let them down.
- **E-2 Airman John Johnson is a Perceptive Warrior who Entertains;** this Minnesotan used to living in isolation cleans the facility and knows all its areas inside and out.
- **E-3 Airman First Class Elizabeth Blumgartner is a Driven Speaker who Fights Dirty;** this stickler for rules from Sacramento plays nice to Senior Airman Berkman but can be mean to her inferiors.
- **E-4 Senior Airman Michael Berkman is a Naive Warrior who Would Rather Be Reading;** this big, strapping Ohio native—the ranking airman on-site—really wants to help people but looks to higher authority when in doubt.

A DESCRIPTION OF THE FACILITY

Gakona AFB consists of twelve miles of tunnels that run directly under the hundreds of odd "electric tree" high-energy arrays which stand on the ground above. From the air, the base looks like a bizarre solar farm without the panels installed. This forest of radio arrays covers eight square miles. While the rest of the area for miles is covered in thick snowfall, all the arrays are devoid of snow, as heating elements keep the snow from accumulating on them.

Buried under the snow, there are a jet airfield, a low-slung, heavily sloped hangar, a security door that leads to the big elevator to the base—and below it all, about 30 feet (10 m) beneath the earth, a complex of rooms and tunnels where the Air Force personnel live and work.

There is no cable or satellite TV, no Internet, and nothing in the way of truly modern amenities. There is a bitching ping-pong table, a 1986 Nintendo Entertainment System with four games, and two jealously hoarded TV/VCR combos, as well as a videotape collection with the entire run of *Three's Company*, a single semiruined copy of *Megaforce*, and a feature on the making of *Logan's Run*. It's not exactly Club Med.

TEST #24114

Test #24114, designated BROWNCOW, is being run by Dr. Evan Ionescu from the applied physics and high-energy research lab at the Sandia National Laboratories in Albuquerque, New Mexico. Ionescu is a naturalized American born in Greece who has dealt with the test crew before; they call him "Doctor Nonsense." He has caused them no end of trouble, radioing in incredibly complex instructions and lapsing into Greek when something is done incorrectly. During these tests, Ionescu often asks the crew to run down the many miles of service tunnels to manually flip dozens of breakers in an attempt to get a precise electromagnetic reading on the satellite. Test #24114 seems like more of the same.

The setup for BROWNCOW involved a week of flipping various breakers in the



access tunnels connected to the electronic radio arrays above, and then checking and rechecking that the proper switches were thrown or turned off. In previous tests, large numbers of breakers were on, but in BROWNCOW almost all are off. Only five switches scattered throughout the tunnels at weird intervals are in the “on” position.

GAME START: THE BROWNCOW INCIDENT

Welcome to BROWNCOW, January 29, 2017, 08:09.

Now, with the crew gathered in the control center on the radio with Dr. Ionescu, the HAARP equipment is turned on. The crew is usually kept here during tests to avoid their catching static charges from the array, though sometimes people have to

go out into the tunnels. When they do so during a test, they use something called a degaussing station to remove any residual static charge. Most of the time, a test lasts an hour or two of the crew sitting in the control room watching cameras and lights.

Not with BROWNCOW. Immediately, everything goes south.

- First, the entire facility shakes as if it were being struck by a minor earthquake.
- The power cuts out.
- This, of course, cuts the radio, stopping all communication, cutting off Ionescu midquestion.
- The emergency power fails to come on.

INSIDE THE CONTROL ROOM

The control room is a small chamber crammed with radio equipment, a wall of screens that show the long expanses

of most extension tunnels, and a control board that indicates which arrays are on or off. Before the test was triggered, the configuration of lights on the board matched Ionescu's designation perfectly. Now, after the power failure, it is dark—as in, pitch dark.

- **The Radio:** The radio is in A-OK shape, except it (like everything else) has no power.
- **The Screen Bank:** Like the radio, this would work, except there's no power.
- **The Control Board:** Again, no power.
- **Other Stuff:** There is a medical kit in the room, as well as a full toolkit, an unopened bag of ranch-flavored chips, and a golf bag and putter set with a rolled-up mat of fake grass.
- **The Walkie-Talkies:** Each crew member has a walkie-talkie. Usually the devices suck, and very rarely have they worked properly. However, the advent of the dimensional rift has somehow made them amazing radio transmitters and receivers. They will work flawlessly anywhere in the facility or above.

OFF, BUT STILL ON

Despite the power being cut, anyone with a brain can tell the array is somehow still functioning. There is an otherworldly hum in the air. Touching the walls throws slight sparks, and all the PCs' saliva tastes of metal.

It doesn't take a rocket scientist to figure out that turning off the breakers that were turned on should do the trick and restore things to normal. The problem is, between the PCs and the breakers, in the shimmering, weirdly lit darkness of the tunnels, *things* have come from other dimensions to hunt, feed, and interrogate—and they don't want those switches thrown.

THE HOWL FROM THE HALLWAY

While the PCs figure out what to do, there is a long, low, weird *howl* heard from beyond the locked control room door. Somewhere out in the winding passages, something big and most definitely not human lets loose a chilling cry—it sounds like a wolf or dog. The howl fades, and just when the PCs

have convinced themselves they didn't hear anything, it happens again.

Investigating the Howl: Those poking their heads out into the darkened corridor listening for a repeat of the howl are rewarded with one a few moments later. This one comes from somewhat closer and, disturbingly, it is *joined* by a second howl from another direction that ends in a very strange staccato hooting, which sounds entirely unlike a wolf or dog, and more like a wind instrument. Then, there is silence. Those who wander off alone are not seen alive again (see Extradimensional Replacements on page 11 for more details).

WHAT DO THE PCs DO?

- **Find some weapons:** There's not much in the way of weaponry in the control room. There are four flashlights, three golf clubs, and a packet of flavored tortilla chips, though. Moving to the weapon closet that Johnson knows of requires the PCs to survive an encounter (as picked by the GM). Once the PCs make it to the closet, they can equip each crew member with the following: a submachine gun (6 points of damage) or pistol (4 points of damage), two grenades (5 points of damage in a 10-foot [2 m] radius) and a single-shot LAW rocket launcher (10 points of damage, ignores 4 points of Armor).
- **Turn on the auxiliary power:** The reset panel for the auxiliary power is quite a distance from the control room (about a mile). To get there, the PCs will have to deal with two encounters; the Raptormen! and the Plant in the Walls! encounters (see below) are recommended. Turning on the auxiliary power restores lighting in most of the crew area as well as the emergency lighting in the tunnels.
- **Go to the main power plant:** The main power is equally far away in the opposite direction (just under a mile). To get there, the PCs will have to deal with two encounters; the Raptormen! and the Fifth Reich! encounters are recommended. Once at the main power plant, the PCs can restore all power to the facility.

- **Turn off the breakers for BROWNCOW:** Those who can move about in the dark, find the breakers they switched on for BROWNCOW, and switch them off can shut down the individual dimensional effect that a breaker is causing. If the PCs shut down switch 36, for example, the plant-thing vanishes back to its reality. The PCs must face an encounter to access each switch.
- **Go to the crew quarters or some other crew room:** These are closer than either of the power stations or the breakers, but the PCs encounter a pair of *Gigantopithecus blacki*. See the How You Say Big...uh...feets? encounter on page 9.
- **Attempt to reach the surface via the elevator:** See On the Surface on page 12 for more details.
- **Howl Back or Go as a Group toward the Howl:** Those who make significant noise in the hallway, or who move as a group toward the noise, end up in the Raptormen! encounter on page 8.

INTO THE UTILITY HALLWAYS

The tunnels are a confusing mess. Each is labeled, but the letter and number designations often don't seem to make sense. The passages wind in strange patterns and sometimes cross over or under each other. Occasionally, there is a ladder to a small tunnel leading all the way to a door that opens to the surface, but a Might task (level 4) is required to open such a door (see On the Surface on page 12 for more details).

There is a large breaker and control box in the tunnels corresponding to each array on the surface. Each box has two switches, one red, one black. The red switches are marked "Surface Snow Suppression," and almost all of them are on. The black ones are marked "EM Control," and almost all are off (except for the ones activated for BROWNCOW).

EVERY DIMENSION TELLS A STORY, DON'T IT?

HAARP has worked, finally! But it has done terrible things to the space-time continuum in the process, playing with it like a toddler

moving a hand up and down a keyboard. The facility and everything in it are being thrown through hyperspatial rifts every picosecond, and outside of the degaussing chambers and the sealed Faraday cage that is the control room, the air seems to swirl with vague colors as it stutters through twenty-two dimensions as well as up and down the timeline of causality. Sometimes things boil into existence in the base—not all of them are friendly.

Long story short is, there is only one way to stop this, and that is to turn off all the switches. Even without power, the effect is still operating. (The power is on in *some* of those dimensions, right?)

PLANT IN THE WALLS!

The PCs come upon an area filled with a hanging ground mist. Soon, the air becomes rich with the smell of rotting vegetation. There are even some small pools of standing water. Those entering the area find that they can see occasional movement at the periphery of their vision. Sometimes, a noise will draw their attention away and they'll catch sight of something slithering down into the water, only to vanish a moment later.

This **plant-thing** is from Earth at a vibrational frequency of 11,011 MHz, and it is controlled by switch 36. It is the classic giant "Venus fly-trap," but big enough to gobble an economy car. Its sliding, ropy tentacles will creep forth and then grab and toss unsuspecting victims into its maw, where they'll be devoured.

Goals:

- **Grab!** The plant has a dozen fully motile tentacles the size of fire hoses that slink and move through the low pools of water and attempt to snake around a limb of a target. The target must succeed at a difficulty 3 Speed-based task or a difficulty 5 Might-based task to struggle free. If the plant grabs a victim, it pulls the target toward its maw (this takes three rounds). On each round, the target may attempt a difficulty 3 Speed-based task or a difficulty 5 Might-based task to struggle free (each person

Plant-Thing: level 9, perception as level 6; health 55; Armor 3; fire attacks ignore armor; tentacle smash inflicts 7 points of damage

At the end of the plant encounter, every character should get a subtle cypher.



Subtle Cypher, page 343



One of the raptormen carries a cypher (a chemical vial that is a curative, combat effort enhancer, meditation aid, or strength boost).

helping them reduces the difficulty by one step). On a success, they suffer 1 point of damage but are free of the plant's grasp.

- **Eat!** If a target is dragged toward the maw for three rounds without successfully breaking free, they are thrown into the maw on the fourth round. They are permitted a single difficulty 6 Speed-based task to dodge the gnashing teeth of the plant-thing and fall free. Still, they suffer 2 points of

damage doing so. If they fail, they suffer 9 points of damage as the plant chomps on them.

- **Reproduce!** If the plant-thing kills and eats *any* human-sized target, it fires a spore to a nearby location on the next round. Each round, that spore gains a level and 6 health (from level 1 up to level 9). At level 3 it can attack and eat targets like its parent.

Cross-Interactions:

- **Against the Raptormen!** The plant-thing will eat the raptormen! Equipment might be left over (chemical vials).
- **Against How You Say Big...uh...feet?:** The plant-thing will eat the big...feet!
- **Against the Fifth Reich!** The plant-thing will eat the Fifth Reich agents! Equipment might be left over (machine guns and grenades, etc.).
- **Against Double Duty!** The plant-thing will eat the doubles! Interesting bits may be left over (i.e., uniforms with name tags identical to the PCs', etc.).

RAPTORMEN!

The howling hoots in the hallways of the facility come from four raptormen from Earth at a vibrational frequency of 12,919 MHz, and they are controlled by switch 2,123. They are intelligent, evolved descendants of a world of dinosaurs where the extinction event never occurred and mammals never gained the upper hand. While on patrol in their enclave, they discovered themselves transported to the interior of a web of bizarre metal tubes. They have the intellectual capacity of humans (and are maybe even a bit smarter), but their technology is mostly chemical-based, and they limit their use of machines to simple hand-operated devices.

Each raptormen stands 7 feet (2 m) tall and is built like a humanoid, though it stands tipped slightly forward, with a somewhat pointed ovoid face, faceted spiky teeth, blue-green globe-like eyes, and a spray of odd, stringy, colorful feathers all over its body. It can jump, climb, and move *much* faster than a normal human. Each raptormen carries four colored vials of

liquid on a bandolier shaped out of some sort of leather.

Goals:

- **Stun! (or Kill!):** The raptormen will attempt to hit the target with their red chemical vial to stun the target. If the target is stunned, they attempt to kidnap the target. If a target injures any raptormen, they shift their attacks to kill, and will lead with a chemical assault followed by a claw and bite attack.
- **Kidnap!:** The raptormen lash any stunned target with a weird, weblike netting made of some sort of animal skin and pull the target off at high speed. They settle in somewhere in the tunnels and set a guard—and then two of the raptormen move on to Study!
- **Study!:** A kidnapped target is subjected to weird howls and hoots from the raptormen, who have never seen a mammal larger than a field mouse. They have no knowledge of technology, and devices such as radios will be baffling and very interesting to them.

Cross-Interactions:

- **Against the Plant in the Walls!:** The raptormen attack with the red chemical. When the plant is poisoned, the raptormen will wait for it to die and then take samples.
- **Against How You Say Big...uh...feets?:** The raptormen attack with the yellow chemical (bigfoot slip-and-slide)! If they can't kill one *Gigantopithecus blacki* in three or four rounds once it is hit, the raptormen will flee.
- **Against the Fifth Reich!:** The raptormen capture and study the Fifth Reich agents as they would normal PCs! They will strip all of them of their vacuum suits and drag them around in their net, hooting and poking and prodding them.
- **Against Double Duty!:** The raptormen capture and study the doubles as they would normal PCs! They will drag them around in their net, hooting and poking and prodding them.

HOW YOU SAY BIG...UH...FEETS?

A duo of *Gigantopithecus blacki*, colloquially known as “bigfeet,” have been snatched from Earth at a vibrational frequency of 4,652 MHz, and the creatures are controlled by switch 131. They are intelligent, and represent the highest form of ape life on their peaceful, silent world. The tubes and tunnels of Gakona AFB are small, constricting, and terrifying to the 10-foot-tall (3 m) beasts. They are certain the tiny pink apes are responsible for their sudden displacement.

Goals:

- **Hide and Stalk!:** Despite their scale, the *Gigantopithecus blacki* are shy, withdrawn creatures. They will hide, fleeing away from any sound, and only when they feel they are unobserved will they double back to track the PCs (or any other living thing). After a time, they begin to Imitate! them.
- **Imitate!:** If exposed long enough to any creature or threat, the *Gigantopithecus blacki* learn to imitate its vocalizations perfectly. Anytime they overhear a human shouting something (like “stop!” or “no!” or any command in any language), they can replicate the sound exactly. They are smart enough to associate names with particular Gakona AFB crew members if they stalk their target long enough.
- **Disable!:** If confronted, the *Gigantopithecus blacki* will attempt to smash the target into unconsciousness, but they’ll try their best not to kill it.

Cross-Interactions:

- **Against the Plant in the Walls!:** The *Gigantopithecus blacki* smash and eat it!
- **Against the Raptormen!:** The *Gigantopithecus blacki* run away and stalk the raptormen!
- **Against the Fifth Reich!:** The *Gigantopithecus blacki* smash the Fifth Reich agents and run (but then stalk them)!
- **Against Double Duty!:** The *Gigantopithecus blacki* run away (but then stalk the doubles)!

Gigantopithecus blacki: level 8, stealth, lifting, smashing, and running as level 9; health 50; Armor 1; flailing arm smash inflicts 8 points of damage

Raptorman: level 6, perception, jumping, running, and climbing as level 7; health 22; Armor 1; red chemical attack stuns (Might); claw and bite attack inflicts 6 points of damage; blue chemical attack causes disorientation (Intellect); yellow chemical attack causes target to slip and fall (Speed); each calls for a single difficulty 5 Might-, Intellect-, or Speed-based task to avoid a negative effect; if the victim is affected, all actions for that stat are treated as two steps more difficult for an hour

At the end of the bigfoot encounter, every character should get a subtle cypher.



Subtle Cypher, page 343

FIFTH REICH!

A team of seven extradimensional explorers from the *Kaiser-Wilhelm-Institut für Physik*, Munich, on Earth at a vibrational frequency of 17 MHz, has come through a portal to investigate the strange world on the other side. They are controlled by switch 541. They come from an Earth where the Allies conceded the war in 1957, England and Russia are now German colonies, and the United States barely hangs on in the midst of a second Civil War. The [agents of the Fifth Reich](#) are well armed and wearing vacuum suits. They are under orders to kill and bring back any odd specimens they might find on the other side of the portal (including the PCs). If any of the explorers is injured, they very much subscribe to the “shoot first and ask questions later” school of thought.

If they capture any normal human PCs, one member of their team who spent the early 1950s occupying England and speaks English will interrogate a PC—possibly the highest-ranking PC—and then compare notes with his compatriots.

Agent of the Fifth Reich:
level 5, attacks as level 6, science and technology as level 7; health 18; Armor 1 (vacuum suit provides 24 hours of atmosphere and +10 to Armor against extreme temperatures); thermite grenade inflicts 5 points of damage in immediate radius; machine gun inflicts 4 points of damage

The leader of the Reich team carries two cyphers.

Goals:

- **Locate and Contain!:** The Fifth Reich is here for one purpose: to document this reality. They will investigate everything they come across, paying special attention to books or printed materials, and they will collect small cultural tokens from Gakona AFB. Once they locate people, they will hunt them down.
- **Subdue and Transmit!:** They have visited hundreds of other worlds, but none of them was an Earth where Germany was defeated. Once they have subdued targets, they will use their bizarre transdimensional radio equipment to radio Munich on Earth at a vibrational frequency of 17 MHz—and tell them to *send more troops!*
- **Exterminate!:** Once their reinforcements arrive, they will line up their prisoners and dispatch them with ruthless efficiency.

Cross-Interactions:

- **Against the Plant in the Walls!:** The agents of the Fifth Reich use their



thermite grenades to attack the plant-thing and take samples!

- **Against the Raptormen!:** The agents of the Fifth Reich use their *Maschinengewehr!* (“Machine gun!”)
- **Against How You Say Big...uh...feets?:** The agents of the Fifth Reich use their *Maschinengewehr!* (“Machine gun!”)
- **Against Double Duty!:** The agents of the Fifth Reich capture and question the doubles as if they were normal PCs!

DOUBLE DUTY!

Doubles of PCs that died have wandered over from Earth at a vibrational frequency of 8,919 MHz—from their alternate Gakona where they never died. They are controlled by switch 777. For some reason, only dead PCs do this (perhaps only one may exist on a vibrational plane at any time). Each duplicate is extremely similar to their “home world” counterpart, with some obvious and some not-so-obvious differences.

A NOTE (OR THREE) ABOUT PACING

This scenario is meant to be free-form and flowing. It contains several independent elements that can appear, move about independently, and interact with one another. Here are some tips about making it flow smoothly.

THERE ISN'T ONLY ONE!?

The five distinct encounters are not the only beasties wandering the halls. Feel free to improvise—anything can be wandering the tunnels at Gakona AFB. Even better, just because you triumph in one encounter doesn't mean there aren't more mutated plants, raptormen, bigfeet, Fifth Reich agents, or dimensional duplicates out there.

THEY FIGHT EACH OTHER, TOO!

The doors truly get blown off a scenario like this when the weird extradimensional groups cross each other's path and mix it up. Have the Fifth Reich get into a machine-gun fight with the plant-thing, or have the *Gigantopithecus blacki* capture a raptorman—nothing is static.

AN ENCOUNTER DOES NOT (NECESSARILY) MEAN COMBAT!

Change it up. If the PCs have been in too much combat, reel it back and let them observe one of the new threats from a place of concealment, to discover its motivations and actions at a distance, or even have such a threat approach them in a nonthreatening manner. Or, if you want to amp the players up, have them find evidence or hear a noise from a threat they have not yet seen.

WHEN IN DOUBT, HINT!

Giant footprints, spent Nazi machine-gun shells, weird glass vials, webbing, or clothing from near-identical dimensional duplicates—any of these items can be thrown in to make an otherwise standard hallway become suddenly interesting. Take these moments to tell a story. (If a lone Fifth Reich survivor whose team was eaten by the plant-thing fled up the hallway away from a bigfoot while emptying his machine gun, what evidence would that leave?) Doing so will cause the players to slow down, take a moment, and try to figure out what is going on.

EXTRADIMENSIONAL REPLACEMENTS

Players whose characters are killed in their attempt to save Gakona can be handed a duplicate of their dead PC who is alive and well, but from another dimension. In other words, they get to play their character again, but with slight changes.

E-2 AIRMAN ANGELA RUIZ FROM EARTH (8,919 MHZ)

PICK ONE DIMENSIONAL CHANGE:

- You are incredibly cooperative.
- You love small spaces.
- You come from Tranquility Base, Tycho—the fifty-first state.
- You are a firebug; fire is your *friend*.
- You once dated Fish.
- You are an electronics expert.

E-2 AIRMAN ALBERT “FISH” BOGOSTA FROM EARTH (8,919 MHZ)

PICK ONE DIMENSIONAL CHANGE:

- You look the same, but you're a foot taller and built.
- You tend to mouth off to everyone.



A newly-arrived duplicate of a dead PC has a full allotment of subtle cyphers.



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- You always carry an automatic pistol (4 points of damage) on you.
- You can speak and read Japanese, German, and Italian.
- Your parents had three of you, and your brothers (called “bottle babies”) live in New York City.
- You are very overweight and out of shape.

E-2 AIRMAN KOLANI WATTS FROM EARTH (8,919 MHZ)

PICK ONE DIMENSIONAL CHANGE:

- You are a cook, and you have no idea about anything to do with electronics.
- You are a coward and will do anything you can to cover your own ass.
- You killed Fish Bogosta, but most likely he’s here when you arrive. That’s kind of scary.
- You are a team player and think everyone has something to add to the process.
- You grew up in Tala, Alaska, in a city built in the crater left by a nuke detonated underground.
- You don’t feel secure unless you’re carrying (or using) a machine gun.

E-2 AIRMAN JOHN JOHNSON FROM EARTH (8,919 MHZ)

PICK ONE DIMENSIONAL CHANGE:

- You were once the commander of the base, but you lost your rank due to drug use.
- Your family is filthy rich, and you have tons of valuable knickknacks such as electronics and video game systems.
- You have a terrible memory and sense of direction—you have no idea where you are going in the facility.
- Your keys *look* like the right keys, but none of them work.
- You have two hand grenades you keep on your person, just in case (6 points damage in a 10-foot [3 m] radius).
- You are a secret operative of the Fifth Reich from Earth (17 MHz), waiting for your chance.

E-3 AIRMAN FIRST CLASS ELIZABETH BLUMGARTNER

PICK ONE DIMENSIONAL CHANGE:

- You were born in Austin, but your parents left right before it was leveled in the first dimensional war.

- You’re just waiting for your chance to expose and kill Berkman, who is obviously a spy from another dimension.
- You are extremely lax and just want to do as little as possible.
- You are eidetic; you remember anything you’ve ever looked at or read.
- You wear a standard-issue Air Force stunner, which causes 2 points of damage and stuns a target for one round.
- You have one shot of “cure-all,” which can immediately restore all Pools to full (or an NPC to full health).

E-4 SENIOR AIRMAN MICHAEL BERKMAN

PICK ONE DIMENSIONAL CHANGE:

- You are decisive and wise, and people look up to you.
- You formulate multiple plans, and fall back on contingencies when things go south.
- You are totally bald.
- You can levitate and fly (covering up to a short distance in one round), and you think everyone else can as well.
- You have a cybernetic Web uplink in your eye that lets you surf the Internet.
- You’re pretty sure all the others are shapeshifting aliens who need to be destroyed.

ON THE SURFACE

PCs who somehow manage to make it to the surface when breakers are still turned on and HAARP is still engaged are met by one of the following sights (this sight will change as switches are turned off below).

- As normal, but the moon is a huge, unblemished sphere—super close to Earth—with not a single crater or mark on it.
- As normal, but a ring surrounding the Earth (like the ring around Saturn) traces a vast ellipse in a purple sky.
- As normal, but the snow is light green, and clear, harmless tentacles are wiggling in the snow everywhere, apparently growing from the ground.
- As normal, but some sort of huge, oblong metal structure hangs in the sky in orbit. It is about a quarter of the

moon in size, and it has some sort of geometric logo on it.

- As normal, but a small blue-white sun hangs in the air next to a low giant red sun. The sky is lit red-green, and the snow is double its previous depth.
- As normal, but the snow is covered in weird, thin casings that resemble leaves. It takes a moment to realize they are all just the desiccated, hollowed-out exoskeletons of dead bugs. Occasional swarms of these bugs fly in the distance, boiling across the sky.

No matter what, the surface is inhospitable arctic tundra, and there's no real way out of Gakona. It should be clear that if the PCs leave on foot, they will die of exposure long before they find another soul.

RESOLUTION

Turning off all the breakers is the only clear resolution to the problem of BROWNCOW. Once a breaker is switched off, turning it back on does nothing. The dimensional effect does not return.

If dead PCs have been replaced by duplicates from Earth (8,919 MHz), when that breaker is shut down, the doubles remain permanently integrated into this Earth (perhaps they "slot" in to their new Earth, filling the gap in reality left behind by their dead counterpart). Each threat that is dismissed in this manner causes the remaining frequencies to double up (more of the threat from that location begins to appear).

Bodies, equipment, and other items brought through (except for the human duplicates from Earth at 8,919 MHz) vanish when their breaker is thrown, but the damage they inflicted remains behind (though bullets from the Fifth Reich would vanish from inside injured PCs, for example).

The PCs will have a very hard time explaining to their superiors just what happened here unless they manage to turn on the auxiliary or main power. If they do so, a closed-circuit television system captures everything in every room and hallway, no matter how bizarre.



GM'S NOTES

E-2 Airman Angela Ruiz

NAME

Guarded

Explorer

WHO

DESCRIPTOR

TYPE

Doesn't Do Much

FOCUS

1

TIER

1

EFFORT

XP

MIGHT

SPEED

INTELLECT

10

POOL

1

EDGE

15

POOL

11

POOL

RECOVERY ROLLS

1d6+

1 ACTION

1 HOUR

10 MINS

10 HOURS

DAMAGE TRACK

IMPAIRED

DEBILITATED

+1 Effort per level
Ignore minor and major
effect results on rolls
Combat roll of 17-20
deals only +1 damage

Can move only an
immediate distance
Cannot move if Speed
Pool is 0

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Practiced With Light and Medium Weapons

Danger Sense (1 Speed point): The difficulty of your initiative roll is reduced by one step. Enabler.

Fleet of Foot: If you succeed at a difficulty 2 Speed roll to run, you can move a short distance and take an action in the same round. Enabler.

No Need for Weapons: When you make an unarmed attack (such as a punch or kick), you can choose whether it is considered a medium weapon or a light weapon. Enabler.

Surging Confidence (1 Might point): When you use an action to make your first recovery roll of the day, you immediately gain another action. Enabler.

ADVANCEMENT

INCREASE CAPABILITIES
+4 points into stat Pools

MOVE TOWARD PERFECTION
+1 to the Edge of your choice

EXTRA EFFORT
+1 into Effort

SKILL TRAINING
Train in a skill or specialize in a trained skill

OTHER
Refer to the *Cypher System Rulebook*

SKILLS • MIGHT

T = trained, S = specialized, I = inability

T	S	I

SKILLS • SPEED

Climbing

T	S	I
X		

SKILLS • INTELLECT

Intellect defense tasks

Discerning the truth, piercing disguises, and recognizing falsehoods

Computers

Deception or persuasion

T	S	I
X		
	X	
	X	
		X

ATTACKS

Utility knife

MOD	DAM
-1	2

CYPHERS

2

LIMIT

EQUIPMENT
Utility knife
Lighter

ARMOR

MONEY



CYPHER™
SYSTEM

BACKGROUND

You are from Boston, Massachusetts, and Gakona is as close to open wilderness as you ever hope to come. In the beginning, that wilderness was magical, but now, you are absolutely sick to death of everyone, and since the winter has come, you're trapped underground with them. You've been here for two years, and that's two years too long. You were dumped in this hole because you dated and then dumped an E-3 at Andrews AFB, and he had his revenge by getting you reassigned. Now you do what you can to ruin all E-3s' lives whenever you come across one. At Gakona, you know everyone so well—too well. So much so that you know what everyone is going to say before they say it. You do your best to avoid work by making yourself scarce. Often, you find solace in the nooks and crannies off the utility tunnels—you've been building yourself a nest in a small closet out there, having managed to smuggle in food, some water, and an old integrated TV/VCR. You've only got ten tests until this place is mothballed.

You are very good at arguing; in fact, it might be your calling.

You are claustrophobic in very small places such as pipes or access tunnels.

You have a hideout in the facility no one else knows about.

You want to ruin E-3 AFC Elizabeth Blumgartner's life without being caught.

You kind of hate everyone's guts (though Fish Bogosta is okay).

Your job is to make sure the test is a success, whatever that takes.

NOTES

PORTRAIT

BACKGROUND

You are from Tampa, Florida. Everyone calls you “Fish,” and it’s either because of your bug eyes, or the fact that you’re the only one who likes the frozen fish sticks—you’re afraid to ask. Gakona is a dump, but it’s your dump, and you do your best to keep it running. Maybe, sometime, someone will notice and get your ass out of here. Though everyone keeps talking about the station being “end-of-life,” you just can’t imagine it closing down. Everyone here is okay, and you do your best to please anyone you can, within reason. People sometimes call you a “kiss ass,” but you prefer the term “operationally motivated.” You know your way around a high-energy radar array and transceiver, and—miracle of miracles—you’re self-taught. What else are you going to do when you can’t go outside nine months out of the year, after all? You can only play so many games of Master of Orion.

You are good with electronics.

You must kiss ass straight up the chain of command.

You are neutral. Everyone tolerates you (within reason).

You love Gakona, and want to keep it in tip-top shape.

You can climb, crawl, and maneuver through all the nooks and crannies of the base.

Your job is to run to breakers, or troubleshoot problems as needed on the fly.

NOTES

Special Abilities (continued)

reasonable action must be agreed upon by the GM; it should not put the creature or its allies in obvious danger or be wildly out of character. Action.

Hack the Impossible (3 Intellect points): You can persuade automations, machines, and computers to do your bidding. You can discover an encrypted password, break through security on a website, briefly turn off a machine such as a surveillance camera, or disable a robot with a moment’s worth of fiddling. Action.

Interaction Skills: You are trained in two skills in which you are not already trained. Enabler.

Karma: Sometimes, strangers just help you out. To gain the aid of a stranger, you must pay 1 XP to the GM, and the GM determines the nature of the aid you gain. Usually, the act of kindness isn’t enough to turn a bad situation completely around, but it may moderate a bad situation and lead to new opportunities. For example, if you are captured, a guard loosens your bonds slightly, brings you water, or delivers a message.

Understanding (2 Intellect points): You observe or study a creature or object. The next time you interact with it, the difficulty of the related task is reduced by one step. Action.

PORTRAIT

BACKGROUND

You are from Chicago, Illinois. You play basketball in the gymnasium to make certain you don't kill anyone, because man, everyone here has their idiot dial turned up to 11.

It's not an irrational hate either. Each person here (except maybe Fish Bogosta, who just does his job and tries to stay out of the way) is just a unique piece of work. You trained in radios, communications, and ELF arrays, and you're here to make sure that when Sandra or Wyoming rings up Gakona, the connection comes through loud and clear. As far as you can tell, HAARP is just another multibillion-dollar waste of money that will amount to nothing; but some of the stuff here is weird. When they shutter this place, you'll dance on its grave. And that can't happen soon enough for your liking.

You are an expert on radios, radiation, and communication equipment.

You are forced to prove yourself whenever directly challenged.

You dislike everyone except Fish Bogosta.

You are brave, and despite not liking most of the crew, you'll try your best to help them.

You just want to do your job without having to answer to stupid people.

Your job is to keep the radio operating.

NOTES

Special Abilities (continued)

Fleet of Foot: If you succeed at a difficulty 2 Speed roll to run, you can move a short distance and take an action in the same round.

Enabler:

Muscles of Iron (2 Might points): For the next ten minutes, the difficulty of all Might-based actions other than attack rolls that you attempt is reduced by one step. Enabler.

Surging Confidence (1 Might point): When you use an action to make your first recovery roll of the day, you immediately gain another action. Enabler.

Wound Tender: You are trained in healing.

PORTRAIT

E-2 Airman John Johnson

NAME

Perceptive

ISA

DESCRIPTOR

Warrior

WHO

TYPE

Entertains

FOCUS

1

TIER

1

EFFORT

XP

MIGHT

10

EDGE POOL

SPEED

14

EDGE POOL

INTELLECT

1

EDGE POOL

12

EDGE POOL

RECOVERY ROLLS

1d6+

1 ACTION

1 HOUR

10 MINS

10 HOURS

DAMAGE TRACK

IMPAIRED

DEBILITATED

Can move only an immediate distance

Combat roll of 17-20

deals only +1 damage

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Practiced With All Weapons

Bash (1 Might point): This is a pummeling melee attack. Your attack inflicts 1 less point of damage than normal but dazes your target for one round, during which time the difficulty of all tasks it performs is modified by one step to its detriment. Action.

Control the Field (1 Might point): This melee attack inflicts 1 less point of damage than normal, but regardless of whether you hit the target, you maneuver it into a position you desire within immediate range. Action.

Levity: Through wit, charm, humor, and grace, you are trained in all social interactions other than those involving coercion or intimidation. During rests, you put friends and comrades at ease so much that they gain +1 to their recovery rolls. Enabler.

continued on back

ADVANCEMENT

INCREASE CAPABILITIES +4 points into stat Pools

MOVE TOWARD PERFECTION +1 to the Edge of your choice

EXTRA EFFORT +1 into Effort

SKILL TRAINING Train in a skill or specialize in a trained skill

OTHER Refer to the Cypher System Rulebook

SKILLS • MIGHT

T = trained, S = specialized, I = inability

Intimidation

T	S	I
X		

SKILLS • SPEED

T	S	I

SKILLS • INTELLECT

T	S	I
X		
X		

Perception

Trivia

CYPHERS

2

LIMIT

EQUIPMENT

Utility knife

Giant tangled keyring

Scary clown mask

ARMOR

MONEY



BACKGROUND

Your name is John Johnson, and you're not from Wisconsin (something you've been asked countless times). You're from Riley, Minnesota. Gakona is not too much different: snow, some trees, animals, nothing... You know, a life of isolation. Living at Gakona is like living on a very big submarine. You wander the halls with your mop and bucket, polishing your way back and forth around the miles of corridors while listening to the Grateful Dead on your iPod. When you reach one end of the facility, you start again and go back the other way. You figure you'll cover the whole facility another forty to fifty times before it's closed for good.

You have an encyclopedic knowledge of all the areas of the facility.

You have keys to all rooms, doors, and corridors.

You tend to say precisely what's on your mind all the time (this is usually not good).

You hate talking to groups of people; one on one you're usually OK, but in groups you sometimes freeze up.

A month ago, you found an armory closet no one seems to know is there. It's filled with Cold War ordnance: grenades, machine guns, ammo—heck, there are a dozen LAW rockets in there! You cleaned the floor and left without mentioning it to anyone.

Your job is to clean stuff up and, sometimes, to point people to the proper location.

NOTES

Special Abilities (continued)

No Need for Weapons: When you make an unarmed attack (such as a punch or kick), it counts as a medium weapon instead of a light weapon. Enabler.

Swipe (1 Speed point): This is a quick, agile melee attack. Your attack inflicts 1 less point of damage than normal but dazes your target for one round, during which time the difficulty of all tasks it performs is modified by one step to its detriment. Action.

PORTRAIT

E-3 Airman First Class Elizabeth Blumgartner

NAME

ISA Driven

DESCRIPTOR

Speaker

TYPE

WHO

Fights Dirty

FOCUS

1

TIER

1

EFFORT

XP

MIGHT

SPEED

INTELLECT

10

POOL

EDGE

15

POOL

EDGE

11

POOL

1

EDGE

RECOVERY ROLLS 1d6+

1 ACTION

1 HOUR

10 MINS

10 HOURS

DAMAGE TRACK

IMPAIRED

DEBILITATED

+1 Effort per level
Ignore minor and major
effect results on rolls
Combat roll of 17-20
deals only +1 damage

Can move only an
immediate distance
Cannot move if Speed
Pool is 0

ADVANCEMENT

INCREASE CAPABILITIES +4 points into stat Pools

MOVE TOWARD PERFECTION +1 to the Edge of your choice

EXTRA EFFORT +1 into Effort

SKILL TRAINING Train in a skill or specialize in a trained skill

OTHER Refer to the Cypher System Rulebook

SKILLS • MIGHT

T = trained, S = specialized, I = inability

T S I

SKILLS • SPEED

T S I

SKILLS • INTELLECT

T S I

Intellect defense actions

Daily skill

Perception

X

X

X

ATTACKS

Utility knife

MOD

DAM

-1

2

CYPHERS

2

LIMIT

EQUIPMENT

Utility knife

Tin full of powerful breath mints

Standard toolkit (screwdriver, hammer, etc.)

ARMOR

MONEY

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Practiced With Light Weapons

Aggression (2 Intellect points): Your words twist the mind of

a character within short range who is able to understand you,

unlocking her more primitive instincts. As a result, she gains an

asset on her Might-based attack rolls for one minute. Action to

initiate.

Enthrall (1 Intellect point): While talking, you grab and keep another

creature's attention, even if the creature can't understand you. For

as long as you do nothing but speak (you can't even move), the

other creature takes no actions other than to defend itself, even

over multiple rounds. If the creature is attacked, the effect ends.

Action.

Fast Talk (1 Intellect point): When speaking with an intelligent

continued on back

BACKGROUND

You were raised in Sacramento, California. Gakona is the result of your pushing your luck just one step too far. You were this close to promotion to staff sergeant at Whidbey Island when you were caught off base after hours—line dancing of all things. **NO ONE MUST KNOW.** At Gakona, you thought you'd have the highest rank, but then "Jerkman" (Senior Airman Berkman) showed up. Now you need to play second fiddle to a person who thinks Euripides is a side dish at a Greek restaurant. So it goes. You can get through anything. If you play your cards right and make it through these last few tests, you can get reassigned back to the world and catch that elusive promotion.

You pretend to be super nice in front of Senior Airman Berkman.

You are mean and petty to the other personnel when Berkman is not present.

You are a stickler; everything must be completed perfectly, or it is not completed at all.

You try (and often fail) to quote deep and meaningful philosophy.

You go by the book. You're no-nonsense and kind of annoying—you like the limited power you have over the others.

Your job is to keep all the E-2 knuckleheads in line and follow orders from E-4 Berkman.

NOTES

Special Abilities (continued)

creature who can understand you and isn't hostile, you convince that creature to take one reasonable action in the next round. A reasonable action must be agreed upon by the GM; it should not put the creature or its allies in obvious danger or be wildly out of character. Action.

Liar: You are trained in all forms of deception. Enabler.

Spin Identity (2+ Intellect points): You convince all intelligent creatures who can see, hear, and understand you that you are someone or something other than who you actually are. You don't impersonate a specific individual known to the victim.

Instead, you convince the victim that you are someone they do not know belonging to a certain category of people. "We're from the government." "I'm just a simple farmer from the next town over."

"Your commander sent me." A disguise isn't necessary, but a good disguise will almost certainly be an asset to the roll involved. If you attempt to convince more than one creature, the Intellect cost increases by 1 point per additional victim. Fooled creatures remain so for up to an hour, unless your actions or other circumstances reveal your true identity earlier. Action.

Taking Advantage: When your foe is weakened, dazed, stunned, moved down the damage track, or disadvantaged in some other way, the difficulty of your attacks against that foe is decreased by one step beyond any other modifications due to the disadvantage. Enabler.

PORTRAIT

E-4 Senior Airman Michael Berkman

NAME

ISA Naive

DESCRIPTOR

Warrior

TYPE

WHO

Would Rather Be Reading

FOCUS

1

TIER

1

EFFORT

XP

MIGHT

SPEED

INTELLECT

14 POOL

1 EDGE

10 POOL

10 EDGE

10 POOL

10 EDGE

RECOVERY ROLLS 1d6+

1 ACTION

1 HOUR

10 MINS

10 HOURS

DAMAGE TRACK

IMPAIRED

DEBILITATED

Can move only an immediate distance

Ignore minor and major effect results on rolls

Combat roll of 17-20

deals only +1 damage

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Practiced With All Weapons

Bash (1 Might point): This is a pummeling melee attack. Your attack inflicts 1 less point of damage than normal, but dazes your target for one round, during which time the difficulty of all tasks it performs is modified by one step to its detriment. Action.

Fresh: You add +1 to your recovery rolls.

Incorruptible: You are trained in Intellect defense tasks and all tasks that involve resisting temptation.

No Need for Weapons: When you make an unarmed attack (such as a punch or kick), it counts as a medium weapon instead of a light weapon. Enabler.

Swipe (1 Speed point): This is a quick, agile melee attack. Your attack inflicts 1 less point of damage than normal but dazes your

continued on back

ADVANCEMENT

INCREASE CAPABILITIES +4 points into stat Pools

MOVE TOWARD PERFECTION +1 to the Edge of your choice

EXTRA EFFORT +1 into Effort

SKILL TRAINING Train in a skill or specialize in a trained skill

OTHER Refer to the Cypher System Rulebook

SKILLS • MIGHT

T = trained, S = specialized, I = inability

T	S	I

SKILLS • SPEED

T S I

T	S	I

SKILLS • INTELLECT

T S I

T	S	I

ATTACKS

MOD DAM

MOD	DAM



CYPHERS

2

LIMIT

EQUIPMENT

Utility knife

Football

Battered paperback fantasy novel

ARMOR

MONEY

BACKGROUND

You were raised in Dayton, Ohio. Listen, you have no idea how you got here, okay, man? Dude. You're big and good-looking, and you can follow basic instructions. You're well-read (I mean, you LOVE books), but heck, you don't really like school. Still, after you read the E-4 manual you walked through your E-4 test without even really thinking about it, and then you were on a plane to Alaska. It's not really your command (they have an E-6 technical sergeant who flies in every half year or so), but you're in charge while he's not here. You don't like it any better than the people under you like it. Why does this stuff always happen to you?

You often ask people what they think you should do, despite the fact that this seems to upset them.

No matter how hard you try (or how long you're with the same people), you can't keep all their names straight.

You really (like, really, really, man) want to help people, but you always feel like you're messing up.

You are strong and fit—probably the strongest person on base—and you often run and lift weights.

Whenever you feel like you don't know what to do next, you try to call command on the radio.

Your job is to keep Dr. Ionescu happy and make sure BROWN/COW goes off without a hitch.

NOTES

Special Abilities (continued)

target for one round, during which time the difficulty of all tasks it performs is modified by one step to its detriment. Action.

Thrust (1 Might point): This is a powerful melee stab. You make an attack and inflict 1 additional point of damage if your weapon has a sharp edge or point. Action.

PORTRAIT