



DEAD LANDS NOIR



THE CASE OF THE JUMBO SHRIMP

PINNACLE
ENTERTAINMENT GROUP



TALES OF THE BLACK HAND

An Adventure for *Deadlands Noir*

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THE CASE OF THE JUMBO SHRIMP

The Case of the Jumbo Shrimp begins for the investigators with a relatively run-of-the-mill job to gather dirt on a local union boss. The investigation takes an unexpected dark turn, drawing the shamuses into a power struggle between the Black Hand and a secret cabal of cannibals. It's not long before the heroes find themselves with few friends and a city full of joes looking to put their heads on a platter—all over a warehouse full of seafood.

CORNERING THE MARKET

Emilio Brassi, a Black Hand capo, got his hands on some juicy info. Simon Beauregard, a long-time Mob stooge and the current president of teamsters Local 270, told him the Hillberg Jumbo Shrimp Company was shipping out “special” deliveries containing more than just the basic ingredients for étouffée. It seems a few of New Orleans’ oldest and most-influential families are taking deliveries that include human flesh—and not the live kind that’s peddled down in Storyville. Among the list were some names that had been stubborn in cooperating with the Black Hand in the past.

As if just possessing bits of human flesh wouldn’t be bad enough, a little more snooping around revealed the members of the Brotherhood of the Flesh, as the cannibals refer to themselves, were using it for some dark ritual. Brassi knew this was a chance to put pressure on the high-society holdouts and score himself some points with his own bosses. He figured to put the muscle on the shrimp company and use it to blackmail the Brotherhood fancy-pants into working with his organization, giving the Black Hand even more control over the city.

Of course, there are always complications, even for the bad guys.

UNHEALTHY COMPETITION

One hand washes the other, as they say, and Beauregard’s hands were very, very dirty. Worse, he has a union election coming up, and some upstart activist has the gumption to challenge him for the local’s top seat. His opponent, Travis Evans, is gathering evidence to implicate him in racketeering. Granted he *is* heavily involved in racketeering, but Beauregard doesn’t see how that’s any of Evans’ business, so he called in some markers from Brassi to help clamp down on his opponent.

Unknown to Beauregard or Evans, the father of Evans’ personal assistant, Chelsea Gedde was doing some poking around of his own at the Hillberg Jumbo Shrimp Company, following up on a tip about some off-the-book deliveries Beauregard had scheduled there. Bob Gedde, a disgraced ex-policeman, had gotten hired on there as a night watchman, hoping to help his daughter’s career by exposing Beauregard’s corruption.

Bob uncovered the black-market flesh trade and realized things were worse than he suspected. But before he got around to spilling the fava beans, the warehouse management caught wind of his little investigation. Eager to cover the cabal’s tracks, Michael Handley, the leader of the Brotherhood, whipped up a bit of nasty mojo to drop Gedde dead in his tracks. The cannibals hid his body in a secret storeroom in the Hillberg warehouse for an ironic meal at their next meeting.

Through his own sources, Brassi learned of this and saw his chance to get a foot—or more appropriately a Black Hand—in the door. He contacted the shrimp company and told them he knew about their little problem. He explained that a missing informant, particularly one with a history in the police force, might draw more attention down on their operation than they wanted. Brassi offered to stage the body in one of the Black Hand's brothels and even provide witnesses. Instead of a mysterious disappearance, it becomes an embarrassing incident that even the family won't be tempted to look too deeply into.

A HELLISH TRADE

The Brotherhood realized Brassi had them over a barrel. If they agreed to his offer, he'd have a lever to use against them. On the other hand, if they didn't go along with the Mob, there was always the risk the Black Hand lieutenant would go out of its way to make sure Gedde's disappearance was *thoroughly* investigated.

Handley changed the game on Brassi, making him an offer he was hard pressed to refuse. They had been practicing an old Red Sect ritual that provided virtual immortality and youthful vitality for decades. If he helped them cover up Gedde's death, they'd let him in on the secret, too. Once they brought the capo into their cannibalistic cult, the Brotherhood was guessing he'd pick eternal youth over loyalty to his gangster buddies.

Brassi, no stranger to the double-cross game, is planning to pull one of his own. Once he learns the secret the cabal is dangling as bait, he plans to sell them out to the Black Hand. With them out of the picture, the

capo plans to use the nasty, arcane secret to cement his own influence within the Mob—and with a few choice politicians as well.

But before any of that can happen, the heroes stumble onto the stage and throw a wrench in everyone's plans...

A BRIEF SUMMARY

While every group has its own play style, and maybe even its own solution to *The Case of the Jumbo Shrimp*, here are the major points of each chapter.

Short-Haul Shenanigans: The heroes are hired by Travis Evans, an activist in the Teamsters Union, who's planning on running for the leadership of the local chapter in the upcoming election. He sets the characters to proving the incumbent, Simon Beauregard, is actually running a money-laundering operation for the Black Hand. Their investigation takes them to a few local businesses and hopefully provides the links in the chain Evans needs to out Beauregard.

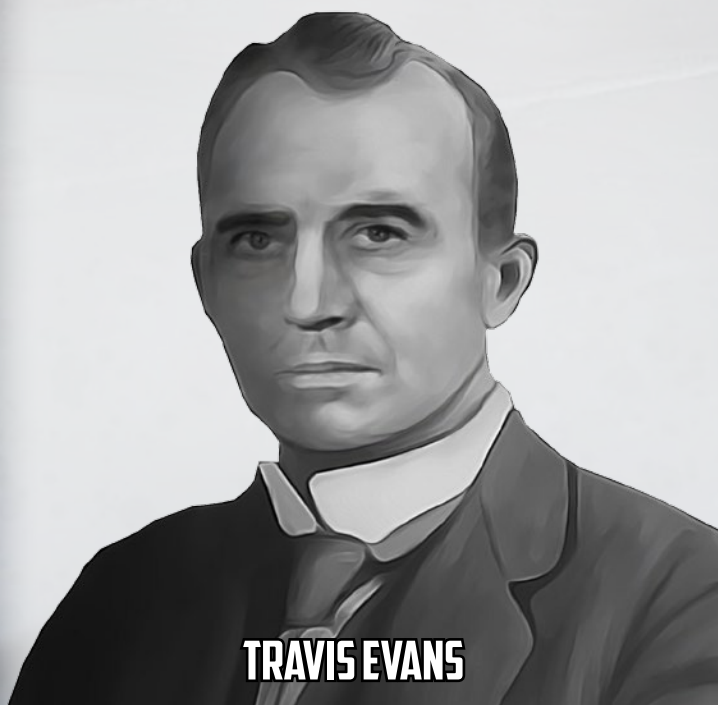
The Special Ingredient: Evans' secretary, Chelsea Gedde, asks the detectives to look into her father's death. The clues lead them to the Hillberg Jumbo Shrimp Company where they find evidence of a cannibal cult operating in New Orleans. It also forces Beauregard and his Black Hand contact, Emilio Brassi, to turn their sights on the shamuses.

Wanted!: To get the heroes out of his hair, Brassi frames the flatfoots for the murder of their one-time employer and Simon Beauregard's rival, Travis Evans. The characters have to find the evidence to clear their name while dodging the NOPD, Black Hand hit squads, and the Brotherhood of the Flesh. Finally, they find an unlikely ally in a recent foe, Simon Beauregard himself.

The Hidden Temple: The investigators track down the location of the Brotherhood's secret ritual in the trackless swamps south of the city. Hoping to catch the cannibals red-handed, they find themselves in a three-way battle involving not only the Brotherhood, but also Brassi's goons and perhaps a stranger and near-invincible guardian as well!

THE SETUP

This adventure assumes at least one of the heroes is a private detective. If that's not the case, simply change it so that Chelsea Geddes' is a friend in need. The chum can then call on a few of his or her pals to help out and you're off to the races.



TRAVIS EVANS

SHORT HAUL SHENANIGANS

Not all of a P.I.'s work is saving the dame or shooting it out with Mob goons. In fact, while they don't make headlines, the less glamorous jobs pay exactly the same rate without nearly the risk of lead inoculations. The real trick is being able to tell a simple snoop job from one that's going to end up with you at the dangerous end of some thug's heater.

A NEW CLIENT

The adventure begins when the heroes are contacted by Chelsea Gedde. She's an attractive young woman in her mid-20s, and at first glance, fits the profile for the typical damsel-in-distress that seems to be drawn to private detectives' offices like moths to candle flames. However, this young lady is all business, and none of it is personal.

She identifies herself as the secretary for a Mr. Travis Evans. Mr. Evans, she explains, would like to set up a meeting with the investigators to discuss their potential employment. For reasons he'll discuss when they meet, he would like to conduct their initial business at Marie's, a small coffee shop in the French Quarter the next day around 1 p.m.

It doesn't take much effort for the investigators to dig up background on Evans before they meet with him, if they're the cautious sort. A Streetwise or a Knowledge (Area Knowledge: New Orleans) roll quickly identifies him as a young firebrand in the Teamsters. A character with a background in the Teamsters can roll Common Knowledge instead. He has worked hard to build a reputation for fighting corruption and increasing member benefits.

He's put his name on the ballot for the upcoming election for president of IBT Local 270, but most think he's a bit of a dark-horse candidate. The current president, Simon Beauregard, has held the position for years and is pretty well entrenched in union and city politics. It doesn't take a genius to guess Evans' job probably has something to do with his union bid.

MEETING EVANS

Evans arrives at Marie's at 1 p.m. sharp and invites the group to a small private room in the rear of the shop. Even a moment of conversation reveals him to be a consummate politician. He's instantly likeable with an infectious smile, which coupled with the fact he's a perfect Southern gentleman, puts most folks almost instinctively at ease.

Take some time to build him as a genial character who seems genuinely concerned about the welfare of the union members and wants to protect them from mistreatment and abuse at the hands of well-protected industrialists and organized criminals. He also understands all too well that the union leadership is often complicit in these activities, and it's something he's hell-bent on changing.

Evans spends a little time on small talk before getting to the meat of his offer. Perhaps he's heard of one or more of the investigators' more famous—or notorious—cases, or maybe he's friends with a former client or current contact. Regardless, it's a part of his nature to try to find some common ground with anyone with whom he's speaking and that carries over into the negotiations with the heroes as well. Once the ice is thoroughly broken, he explains what he wants the shamuses to look into for him.

He's mildly disorganized and apologizes repeatedly as he digs through a stack of paperwork. Chelsea, his secretary, usually takes care of any filing and papers, he says, but she received some unfortunate news earlier today, and he gave her some time off to deal with family matters. If asked, he says her father passed away, but doesn't go into any further details, deftly turning the conversation back to the job at hand.

In preparation for his own election bid, the activist conducted an audit of Local 270's activities and uncovered information that made him suspicious of his opponent's use of union resources. It seems money was passing through the teamsters to businesses all around the city for less-than-obvious reasons. Evans suspects these enterprises are money-laundering operations for the Black Hand. On top of that, he's fairly convinced that the current president, Beauregard, has his fingers deep in the pot of dirty money.

Evans confesses readily that exposing the incumbent's involvement with the New Orleans Mob will certainly aid his own campaign, if not win it outright. However, he is a genuinely ethical man and honestly wants to break the union free of any ties to the Black Hand. From the heroes' reputation, he's fairly certain that if any

such connection exists, they'll find enough evidence to prove it fairly quickly.

The aspiring union leader is willing to pay any reasonable rate and expenses for the investigators' services. However, he provides no more than \$200 up front and insists on detailed receipts for any expenses incurred. Assuming the group agrees, he gives them the details of the job.

THE USUAL SUSPECTS

Thanks to his own audit, he's been able to identify two businesses he believes are integral to the suspected money-laundering scheme. Evans explains there is a regular monthly income from Reeve Automotive Supply that is matched to the penny by an outlay to another company, Barstow's Bakery. He wants the investigators to get a look at the business ledgers for those two entities and see if they can tie the funds to the Black Hand at either end.

To that end, he provides them with letters of introduction from the union. He explains that those letters identify them as private auditors for the organization. Thanks to the standard vendor agreements the organization requires, any company doing regular business with the union is required to allow reconciliation audits from union representatives. This procedure is in place to protect against management siphoning off union funds and hiding it with false ledger entries, but Evans tells the shamuses he believes exposing racketeering is also within the spirit of the agreement.

The activist tells the detectives he doesn't want them approaching the union or its members directly—at least not yet. He wants to keep his little investigation as much of a secret as he can right now, so that Beauregard and his cronies don't start covering their trail just yet. Once they've got the foundation of a case, that might change, but for now, he wants to keep things hush-hush. (If they do anyway, see the **Going Rogue** sidebar.)

Evans answers any questions the characters might have to the best of his ability, but he's not got much more information himself. He's been avoiding poking his nose too deeply into the union's books as he doesn't know who he can really trust, outside of his secretary Chelsea. For example, he doesn't even have a solid figure for the monthly amounts to the companies he named. He only knows that the amount is in the thousands—which is a bit of dough for a union to be shelling out to a bakery on a monthly basis.

Once the meeting winds down, the activist tells them he's leaving the details of how they go about the

GOING ROGUE

If the heroes ignore Evans' instructions and approach the union, they're stonewalled almost immediately. Beauregard's staff is loyal, and a few of them are quite dirty themselves. No amount of fast-talk, cajoling, intimidation, or outright bribery can get the investigators access to the union records. The letters of introduction are worthless, as the first clerk they wave them in front of points out they authorize the detectives only to view third-party books, not the local's ledgers.

The direct approach does, however, alert Beauregard to the fact that someone—likely cronies of his rival—is stirring up trouble for him. He wastes no time in letting the Black Hand know there is a group of nosy parkers afoot. How much trouble this poses for your heroes is up to you, Marshal, but it is a *great* opportunity to teach them a lesson about the fine art of not drawing attention to oneself!

investigation up to them. He'd like regular updates on their progress if possible, but he trusts their discretion in the matter.

REEVE AUTOMOTIVE SUPPLY

Reeve Automotive Supply is located in the Warehouse District. On the surface, it appears to be an industrial-scale automotive supply firm that caters primarily to trucking companies—companies that usually have a staff filled with members of the Teamsters' union. It generates a good deal of its revenue through references, and anyone not delving too deeply into its affairs is likely to assume any funds it passes to the union are kickbacks for referrals.

Actually, Reeve is one link in a Black Hand money-laundering chain that starts in Storyville and ends at a dime store in Tremé. Cash from the brothels in the city's red light district move through Reeve to Local 270, then down to a bakery in Marigny-Bywater, and finally into the Mob's coffers. Each element's books, on the surface, appear to be in order and only when viewed as a whole does the route become obvious. It's exactly the sort of link Evans is hoping the investigators find.

LOGAN ST. CLAIRE

If the heroes try the front-door approach, the secretary gives the letter of introduction only a cursory inspection before paging a "Mr. St. Claire" on her intercom. After a brief pause, the secretary directs them to St. Claire's office, explaining he is the company's in-house accountant.

St. Claire is by no means an imposing figure, at least physically. He stands barely 5'4" tall and is underweight even for that height. He has a motley comb-over and thick, horn-rimmed glasses. However, his suit is tailored and any character familiar with high-end fashion may make a Notice roll to realize it is both Italian and *very* expensive.

The accountant is uncooperative until the investigators present their letters of introduction. Once he's reviewed them, he grudgingly allows them access to the company's ledgers. At this point, allow the detectives a Notice roll to catch tell-tale signs of nervousness in his behavior: his hands shake slightly, and he begins to sweat visibly despite a pair of ceiling fans pushing air through the office.

THE LEDGERS

Unfortunately, the investigators don't have time to use Hitting the Books (from *Deadlands Noir*) to ensure they find the important clues. Even with the letters of

introduction, St. Claire limits their time poring over his records to no more than an hour. If they try to force him to let them peruse the ledgers longer, he summons security to escort them out. Should that fail, he doesn't hesitate to call the police.

Finding record of the monthly transaction with the Teamsters isn't difficult, and doesn't require a roll. Like clockwork, a several-thousand-dollar payment is made at the end of each month to the union. Although the total amount varies from month to month, it is always in excess of \$4000. It's annotated as "preferred vendor fee."

If asked, St. Claire explains it is a regular payment Reeve makes to the union for referrals and advertising. He responds to any comment that the amount seems exorbitant by claiming most of Reeve's business is either directly through union members or due to referrals from them.

An actual Investigation roll turns up the vital piece of evidence in the supply company's ledger. The book contains regular entries of payments from several brothels in Storyville. Each month, the houses listed pay a set fee, which is annotated as "repair and removal service fee." Oddly, the amount of those fees adds up to exactly the same as the funds paid to IBT Local 270.

If the investigators question St. Claire about those entries, he explains they are agreements between the Storyville businesses and Reeve to provide service not only to the houses' own vehicles, but also to those of customers who experience automotive trouble. Obviously, many customers want to maintain their anonymity, so the brothels' engage the company's services as a middleman to avoid any embarrassing situations. Should the characters point out the fact the total amounts match the referral fees to the Teamsters, he dodges the question, saying, "Well, we do considerable business in the course of a month. It's nothing more than an unusual coincidence. I'm sure you can find a number of accounts which would total up to that figure if you looked long enough."

Once that topic is broached, St. Claire announces the audit is over, as the investigators have clearly expanded their research beyond those dealings involving IBT Local 270. If they refuse to leave, he calls security as noted above. As soon as they leave, St. Claire makes a call to Beauregard and another to the Black Hand, alerting both to the fact that someone is poking around where they shouldn't.

• **Security Officers (2):** Use the stats for Thug from *Deadlands Noir*.

AFTER HOURS

If the shamuses decide to break into Reeve after closing, they find a single security guard and attack dog patrolling the grounds at night. Treat the guard as active for the purposes of Stealth rolls, but it's also easy enough to simply wait for him and his canine partner to move to another side of the building on their patrol before trying to enter. Any noisy combat results in the police being alerted either by the guard himself or another nearby business. A pair of patrolmen arrives on scene within five minutes.

All exterior doors are locked, requiring the snoops to make a Lockpicking roll to enter. Once inside, the heroes can dig through the ledgers as above, with the only difference being that St. Claire isn't present to give half-hearted explanations for the entries. There is nothing else to be learned, though.

- **Security Officer (1):** Use the stats for Thug from *Deadlands Noir*.
- **Guard Dog (1):** Use the stats for Dog from *Savage Worlds*.
- **Patrolmen (2):** Use the stats for Police Officer from *Deadlands Noir*.

BARSTOW'S BAKERY

Barstow's, the second establishment Evans listed, is a small, family-owned bakery in Marigny-Bywater. It's been in business since before the Civil War. The current owner is Becky Barstow, the great-granddaughter of the founders. She's a chubby, friendly woman who welcomes the detectives personally when they enter the store, inviting them to try some of her "famous croissants." Her teen-aged daughter, Emily, manages the cash register, ringing up any goodwill purchases the characters might make.

Either Barstow is polite, but evasive. Presenting the letters of introduction gets Becky to open her accounting records to the heroes, but she keeps her answers as uninformative as possible.

COOKED BOOKS

As before, the investigators have no problem locating the ledger entry attributed to the Teamsters. Every month, the bakery receives an amount of money from IBT Local 270, annotated as "baked goods." If the shamuses have already visited Reeve Automotive, they instantly recognize the amounts correspond exactly to those Reeve's sends to the union. Furthermore, if they noted the dates of the payments, it arrives within days of the Reeve payment to the union.

An Investigation roll (+2) turns up a debit from Barstow's for the same amount going out the day after the union funds are received. The outgoing payment is to Levy's Five-and-Dime, and a note beside it indicates it's for "office supplies and sundries." If questioned, Becky says they purchase boxes, bags, as well as some baking supplies from Levy's. However, a Notice roll spots several nervous tics on the baker as she's explaining that.

SWEET-TALKING THE BAKER

Barstow's is indeed involved in the money-laundering scheme. The Black Hand has intimidated Becky and her daughter into silence through threats of violence and worse. While the heroes may suspect that's the case, it takes at least three successes on a Patter attempt to get Becky to give the investigators the scoop. Taunt rolls for this purpose receive -4 penalty.

Once they get Becky to open up, she tells them that about a year ago, a thick-necked goon stopped by and informed them his security company would protect the bakery from accidents if she were to perform a service in return. To illustrate what he meant by "accident," he proceeded to smash one of their display cases.

While this is a standard M.O. for a Black Hand extortion racket, the thug didn't ask for a payment. Instead, he told them every month, they would receive a check payment from IBT Local 270. She was to record it in the bakery ledger and then pay the money back out to Levy's, again noting it in the ledger. Should the heroes think to ask, she recalls the union checks are always signed by someone named Simon Beauregard.

No one at the bakery reports the heroes' investigation to either the union or the Mob, but if the group was clumsy about their methods, they may inadvertently bring unwanted attention down on Becky and her daughter!

TOSSING A BAKERY

It's possible the group may decide a break-in is the recipe for success at Barstow's. The bakery closes at 6 p.m. and opens each morning at 3 a.m. to begin making bread. Not surprisingly, it is not guarded during the hours it's closed.

Searching the building turns up nothing unusual, and a search of the ledgers produces only the information noted above. If they pursue this route of investigation, the detectives *won't* learn any of the information Betty herself provides, unless they visit again during operating hours—and then they might have to tread lightly to avoid implicating themselves in a burglary!

LEVY'S FIVE AND DIME

If the group chooses to follow up on the lead from Barstow's Bakery about Levy's Five and Dime, it turns out to be a small general store in Tremé. It's been operating for over a decade and is owned by Stanley and Martha Tolutti, second-generation Italian immigrants whose parents settled in New Orleans in the late 19th century. The couple has five children—all boys—and the oldest help around the store while the younger ones often play in the street outside.

The store is also heavily connected to the Black Hand. Stanley's brother, Charlie, is a made man, and the criminal organization has been very generous with him and his family over the years. Levy's is not only the end point of the money-laundering scheme, but it also serves as a safehouse for Black Hand members on the lam.

Visiting the store itself isn't actually a necessity for the heroes' purposes. A bit of Legwork informs the shamuses that Levy's is a front operation for the Black Hand, as well as a safehouse for gangsters on the lam. While it doesn't give any details of the business's role in the money-laundering operation, there's very little incriminating evidence to be found at Levy's anyway.

KEEPING IT IN THE FAMILY

The easiest way to speak to Stanley or Martha is to simply walk through the front door during business hours. There's an even chance that one, the other, or both are minding the store at any given time. However, draw a card from the Action deck. On an Ace or Joker, two Black Hand goons are also present.

The Toluttis come across as friendly and jovial, especially if the investigators appear to be customers. They ask if the characters are new to the neighborhood and even offer cups of coffee for being first-time customers. The Toluttis claim no connection to the Teamsters, so the letters of introduction are useless in getting either to open up. In fact, the letters tip the Toluttis off that someone is probably tracing the dirty cash they pass to the Black Hand!

CANNED ANSWERS

If the heroes try to pump either owner for information, the Toluttis have a set of prepared answers they've been coached to give by the Black Hand. They claim they don't keep a strict accounting of their sales and purchases, saying Levy's is just a small, family-run business. They simply don't have the time or need to keep a strict set of ledgers. They keep some receipts here and there for taxes, but there's no formal record as such.

If one of the investigators mentions the large volume of transactions with Barstow's, they feign surprise. The Toluttis say they knew they did a lot of business—office supplies and baking ingredients—with them, but they had no idea it was that much. While they claim they can't verify the amount, what with no real records on hand, they laugh and say they'll have to be sure to show their appreciation to Barstow's somehow—assuming the investigator's claims are accurate, that is.

They meet any further questions with increasing evasive and curt responses. Should the detectives not take the hint, the Toluttis ask them directly to leave. If any Black Hand mooks are present, one claps a hero on the shoulder and roughly shows him the door.

As soon as the investigators leave, one of the family calls brother Charlie to warn him some nosy parkers are looking into the organization's business. If the characters weren't circumspect in their questions, the Toluttis also tip the Black Hand off that maybe Becky Barstow is speaking out of school.

- **Black Hand Goons (2):** Use the stats for Mafia solder from *Deadlands Noir*. Armed with .38 revolvers (Range 12/24/48, Damage 2d6, RoF 1) and brass knuckles (Str+d4).

SOME HARMLESS B & E

A particularly direct group might decide to break into Levy's after business hours. The snoops may find that while getting in is relatively easy, getting out may well be a whole other story. During the evenings, the store often serves as a gathering point for Black Hand goons; on Thursday nights, there is even a regularly scheduled poker game! On top of that, there is usually a couple of thugs hiding out in a secret room above the storeroom.

The investigators can try the front door, but that means picking the lock while standing on the open street. The loading dock provides the easiest entry to Levy's after hours. Neither the back door nor the sliding door is locked at night, since there are frequently gangsters present or coming and going from the back room.

If the group enters the store, have them make Stealth rolls. Treat any gangsters present as inactive guards, so only a failure on the roll alerts them. A door marked OFFICE leads to a room under a narrow staircase which leads to the safe room upstairs. A virtual wall of crates and boxes shields the opposite corner of the storeroom, but any detective making a Notice roll can hear the low murmur of voices from behind it.

Two men (the Mafia soldiers) are in the upstairs room, while the rest are around the poker table in the

back corner. Once the heroes round the boxes and crates hiding the poker table, allow the thugs Notice rolls to spot them. As soon as the Black Hand mooks spot the intruders, they attack.

Any gunfire eventually draws the police, so the gangsters stick to fists and melee weapons until fired upon. Since the shamuses are technically committing burglary by even being in the store after closing, an encounter with the cops likely ends with them spending a little time in the slammer unless they've got connections. A Persuasion roll (-4) lets the characters sweet talk their way out of a trip to the pokey, and every \$25 added as a bribe gives that roll a +1 bonus to a max of +4.

The Black Hand thugs, on the other hand, are in the building with permission (and have already pre-bribed the local boys in blue). They get off scot free.

- **Mafia Soldiers (2):** Use the stats for Mafia Soldier in *Deadlands Reloaded*. One is armed with a sawed-off shotgun (Range 5/10/20, Damage 1-3d6, RoF 1-2), while the other has a .45 automatic (Range 12/24/48, Damage 2d6+1, ROF 1).

- **Mafia Goons (1 per hero):** Armed with .38 revolvers (Range 12/24/48, Damage 2d6, RoF 1), switchblades (Str+d4), and one has a pump shotgun (Range 12/24/48, Damage 1-3d6, RoF 1).

WASTED EFFORT

Whether they get in a fight with the Black Hand mooks or not, the detectives learn little more from the break-in beyond the fact that the store has obvious ties to the Mob.

The Toluttis weren't lying about their ledgers. They don't maintain any discernible accounting system. An Investigation roll on the lone filing cabinet in the office turns up a mishmash of receipts from a variety of individuals and business, but in no logical order. It would require more than a week of work sorting through the scraps of paper and notes to begin to make sense of their transaction records.

A Notice roll (-2) locates the only piece of evidence the investigators can salvage from the burglary. There is a list of names and numbers pinned to the wall next to the phone. A Streetwise roll identifies several of the names as individuals either directly or indirectly associated with the Black Hand, but one in particular sticks out: Simon Beauregard. If the heroes spoke to the Toluttis, they may know the couple claims to have no connections to the Teamsters, which should make the presence of Beauregard's office number suspicious.

MAKING THE CONNECTION

The snoops now know that money flows from the brothels to Reeve Automotive to the Union to Barstow's Bakery to Levy's Five and Dime—who "don't keep good records."

There's no smoking gun here that ties the Teamster's Union to the Black Hand or even any overtly illegal activities. That's okay though, the point of Evan's investigation isn't to bring anyone to trial (though he would be happy if such evidence were found, of course).

He just needs enough evidence to convince the average, hard-working Union members that Simon Beauregard is in bed with organized crime—and there's plenty of that here. Then he can win the election and clean things up from within.

Evans won't go public with the news the investigators found yet—he thinks he *can* find a smoking gun if he stays diligent. He's not going to get that chance, unfortunately, but that's his plan.

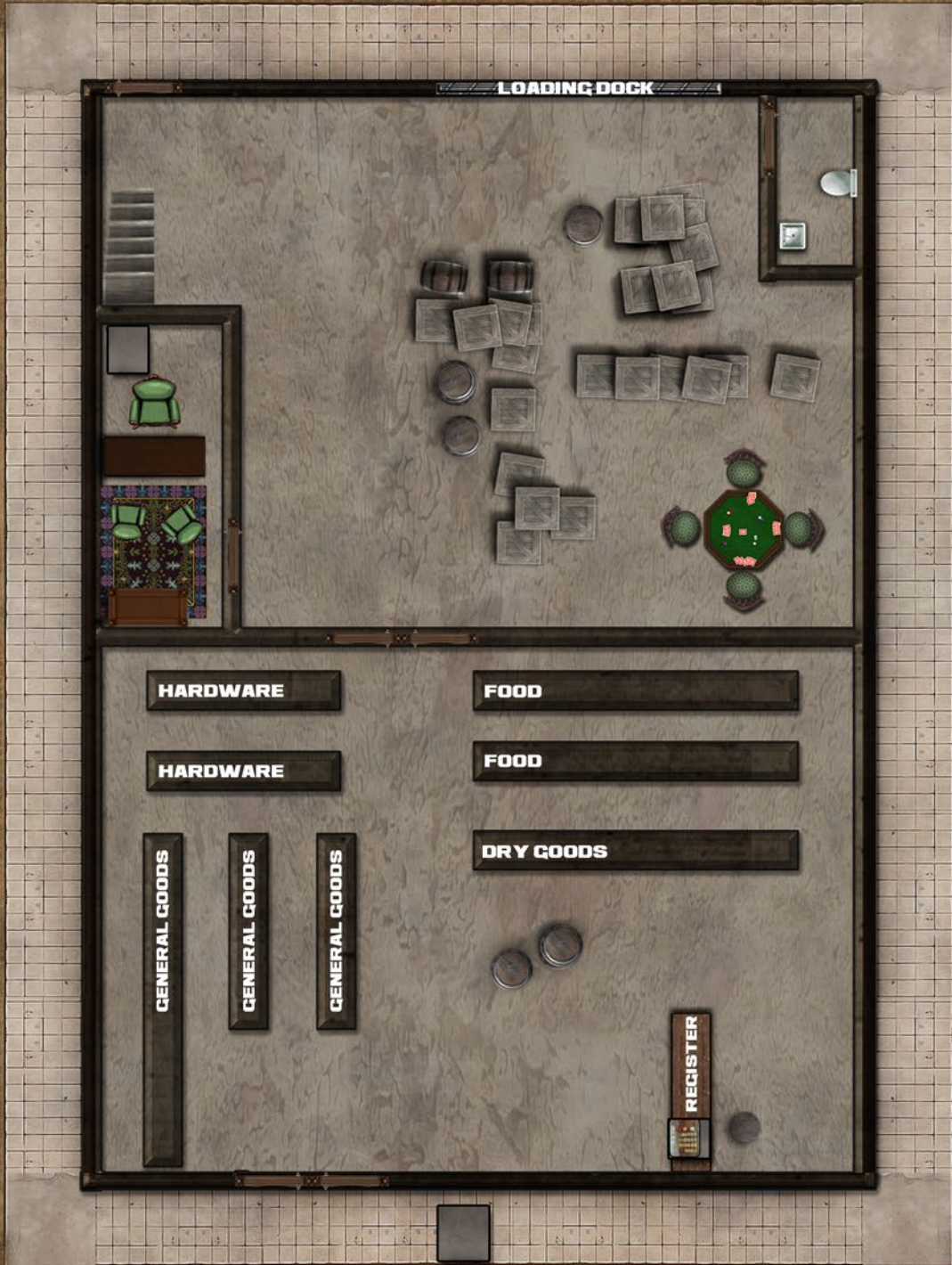
REPORTING IN

Once the group has put together the money-laundering chain enough to link both ends back to the Black Hand, Evans has them put a hold on any further investigation. He tells them he needs to run what he has past a lawyer pal. If he can prove the union boss is in bed with the Mob, it's possible he might even be able to get Beauregard ousted without having to wait for the election.

Evans settles his bill with the shamuses, and as long as they didn't barge into the union offices and obviously tip Beauregard off to what they were doing, he even throws in a \$100 bonus from his own pocket. Granted, it's almost certain Beauregard and the Black Hand are both well aware of the investigation, but Evans doesn't know this.

He asks for a business card—if they haven't already given him one—and promises to refer any friends or colleagues in need of similar services the heroes' way. Neither he nor the investigators realizes just how soon that first referral is going to occur...

LEVY'S FIVE AND DIME





THE SECRET INGREDIENT

Within a day or so of wrapping up Evans' investigation into Beauregard's corruption, the detectives receive a call from his secretary, Chelsea Gedde. This time, she's not calling for her boss, though. Chelsea tells them she believes her father was murdered and she wants to engage their services to find his killer.

FAMILY HISTORY

Chelsea's father, Bob Gedde, was a former NOPD detective. When his wife died about 15 years ago, Gedde started a love affair with the bottle. It ended up costing him his career around five years later and then his relationship with his daughter, once she was old enough to move out on her own.

Gedde managed to kick his habit not long ago and was trying to claw his way out of the hole his addiction dug for him. One of the first things on his list of rights to wrong was what little family life he had left. He tried to make direct contact with Chelsea, but his daughter, thinking he just wanted something from her like always, refused to speak with him.

The former cop wasn't ready to give up that easily. He learned she had taken a job working for Travis Evans, and he got acquainted with her boss's election bid in the Teamsters. He still had some of his old flatfoot skills and used them to dig around in the union's dirty laundry, looking to find something he could use to give Evans' career a boost—and through him, he'd be helping his daughter, as well.

All too aware of his history of failures, he decided to keep his off-the-books investigation a secret from even his daughter, at least until he had something concrete to bring to the table.

SPECIAL DELIVERIES

Chelsea's father didn't have the accounting smarts her boss did, so he overlooked the money-laundering angle. However, he did have a wily veteran's nose for hinky business. Gedde spotted a few instances of a Teamster being paid directly from the union treasury, and each of those payments was directly authorized by Simon Beauregard himself.

One of the things that triggered Gedde's cop sensibilities was the paucity of info available for these jobs. Each of the payments was for a "special delivery," but no bill of lading was ever prepared. The driver was never named; the payments were made from petty cash, instead of by check. While the deliveries were fairly regular, occurring about once a month, no destination was listed. The only thing Gedde could identify was the pick-up point: Hillberg Jumbo Shrimp Company in Marigny-Bywater.

Gedde's background on the force came in handy again, as he was able to parley it into a job as a night watchman at Hillberg. The job gave him the perfect vantage point to watch for the suspicious union contact. It also let him poke around inside the building after hours—and he found a *lot* more than he ever expected behind those closed doors.

RETIREMENT CEREMONY

Gedde realized that what he'd stumbled onto was much bigger than a crooked union or its ties to the Black Hand. He made contact with a newspaper reporter at the *Times-Picayune*, planning to blow the lid off the entire, horrific scandal.

Unfortunately, one thing about secret societies, cannibal or otherwise, is that they tend to be pretty

determined to keep their secrets. The cult caught on to Gedde's late-night inquiries and called in a Brotherhood sorcerer to eliminate the whistle-blower with some of that old black magic. The spell that took him down left no mark on his body, so the cultists figured why let a perfectly good body go to waste and stashed him for their next ceremony.

A few days after they put Gedde's corpse on ice, Brassi caught wind of the entire affair and convinced the Brotherhood that continued secrecy was probably more valuable than an ironic snack. He had some of his boys pick the body up and transport it to Fancy's, one of the Black Hand's more...affordable brothels in Storyville. The manager at Fancy's reported Gedde's death as a heart attack, and the employees—all carefully coached as to their stories—backed up.

CHELSEA'S PLEA

Chelsea agrees to meet the investigators when and wherever they want. She gives the shamuses a quick rundown of the facts in her father's death. She was notified he was found dead in Fancy's, a house of prostitution in Storyville four days ago. The coroner ruled it to be natural causes, most likely a heart attack. The prostitutes and other employees at the brothel all basically told the same story, that he was a customer whose ticker just gave out on him. All of that together means the police have absolutely no interest in looking into it any further.

However, Chelsea is adamant in believing there's more to be found than meets the eye. She doesn't try to put a bright shine on her father's history, but tells them he had recently tried to contact her, claiming he was getting his life back in order.

The last thing he said to her was that he was going to make things up to her. He had a line on something that was going to give her a leg up. Her father cryptically wouldn't tell her what he was talking about, only insisting she'd know when it happened. Chelsea assumed at the time he had fallen into gambling or worse and brushed him off. Now she's not so sure.

She's clearly upset by her father's death. Her normal grief is clearly made even worse by the fact the last time he tried to contact her, she basically told him to make tracks. After even a few minutes of speaking to her, the investigators

might well get the impression a sense of guilt is making her see shadows where there are none.

If the detectives are reluctant to take her case, she outright begs them. She admits she can only afford their services for two days. They did such a good job for her boss she's sure if there's anything fishy to be found the heroes will find it in that time.

WHAT CHELSEA KNOWS

She begins by insisting he'd never have visited a house in Storyville. It was the loss of his wife that drove him to drink in the first place. For all his faults, he never so much as looked at another woman after her death. She is at a complete loss as to why the employees at Fancy's would lie about his death, though.

Chelsea does not know much about her father's activities, including where—or even if—he was employed. Although she's not darkened the door in years, she does have a spare key to his apartment, a second-floor walk-up in a run-down Irish Channel building.

She also provides them with her copy of the coroner's report. It's a fairly standard one, detailing the cause of death as "natural causes." The coroner did not perform a full autopsy, since there was no sign of foul play, and the witness testimony was consistent with his diagnosis. She lets them know the coroner, Dr. Jeremiah Holbrook, did tell her to feel free to contact him with any further questions. She recommends they follow up with him.

Her father's funeral was yesterday. Chelsea had him cremated, as neither she nor her father had the money to purchase a crypt. For now, she's keeping his ashes at her apartment.

Once she's provided them with the report and spare key, Chelsea answers any other questions the investigators may have to the best of her ability, but leaves them to their own devices. She's convinced—maybe just clinging to hope—the heroes are the miracle workers her boss talked them up to be.



INITIAL INVESTIGATIONS

The heroes can begin their legwork at any of the following locations. It's possible your players may come up with an avenue of investigation not covered in one of the areas we've listed below. If so, use your judgment and the information provided to determine what, if anything, they learn.

THE CORONER'S OFFICE

Following up with Dr. Jeremiah Holbrook, the pathologist who conducted the examination of Bob Gedde's remains, requires a trip to the coroner's office which is located in the NOPD Headquarters on Lafayette Square. Dr. Holbrook is one of the physicians on staff with the office and maintains his office there. It's relatively easy to find him at the lab, or failing that, set up an appointment with him.

True to his word to Chelsea, Dr. Holbrook is forthcoming with answers to any questions the heroes ask. He explains that his examination was mainly cursory. Full autopsies are usually conducted only if there's a suspicion of foul play, and there was none in Gedde's case. Several witnesses at Fancy's all told collaborating stories about his visit and the circumstances of his death. Office policy dictated no in-depth procedures.

Dr. Holbrook says all indications were the victim suffered a heart attack, no doubt induced by years of alcohol abuse. He cites traces of jaundice in the sclera (yellowing of the whites of the eyes) and spider angionomas (enlarged blood vessels) in Gedde's face as tell-tale signs of long-term alcoholism. He adds some of the officers in the NOPD confirmed Gedde had a problem with booze for years.

He did note an unusual smell coming from the body and traced it to Gedde's hands. A few tests revealed it to be nothing more than photography stop-bath and fixer chemicals. If asked, he checks his file and confirms no photographic equipment was found with his body.

Should the detectives ask if he found anything unusual at all about the corpse, Dr. Holbrook thinks for a moment and reviews his notes. He then says there were in fact two unexpected findings. (If the investigators don't think to ask, he recalls it on his own and stops them before they leave to tell them.)

First, by the time he examined the body, post-mortem lividity had set in—in other words, Gedde's blood had pooled to the lowest parts of his body. However, the blood was cherry red, instead of the usual purple. This usually indicates the victim suffered from

carbon monoxide poisoning. Since there were other individuals (the girls at Fancy's) present at the time of his death who *didn't* die from carbon monoxide, Dr. Holbrook attributed this to a defective cardiovascular system, no doubt brought on by his alcoholism.

Second, when he checked the body core temperature, he found it to be lower than room temperature. He has no explanation for this, as a corpse cools from the extremities first, not the core. His only guess is that perhaps Gedde had been suffering from hypothermia when he reached Fancy's, and it, combined with his... exertions at the brothel... may have caused his demise.

An investigator with some medical smarts can make a Knowledge (Medicine) roll at a -2 penalty. If she succeeds, she recalls that a body subjected to freezing shortly after death can also exhibit a cherry-red lividity similar to that caused by carbon monoxide poisoning. Dr. Holbrook confirms that if she points it out, but says the witness testimony proves Gedde was alive when he entered Fancy's and it would take hours, if not days, to completely freeze a human body completely.

GEDDE'S APARTMENT

Chelsea's father lived in an apartment over a corner barbershop in the Irish Channel. No one in the building had much to do with him, and he had a reputation as a boozier for years. A Streetwise roll tells the heroes Gedde had apparently given up the bottle recently and even taken steady employment about a month ago. Although no one knows where, he seemed to mainly work nights.

The door to the apartment is locked when they arrive, but Chelsea's key opens it with no problems. Inside, the apartment has a living room with a tiny kitchenette at one side, a small bedroom, and a full bathroom. A window in the main room is open a few inches, and it doesn't take an experienced eye to see the apartment has already been tossed by someone. Gedde's belongings are scattered everywhere.

Apart from the open window—which leads to a fire escape—there is no sign of forced entry.

SHIFTING THROUGH THE MESS

The apartment is a mess, with furniture overturned, cushions cut up, and the contents of drawers spilled haphazardly on the floor. Digging through the wreckage is a tedious and time-consuming task. Every 15 minutes the group spends searching the apartment, allows them to make a Notice roll.

On a success, a shamus finds one of the clues below until all have been found:

- Near an overturned desk, a pair of pay stubs lie on the floor. They are from the Hillberg Jumbo Shrimp Company. The company address, in Marigny-Bywater, is on the stubs. Bob started working there less than a month ago. His last paycheck was received the prior week.
- Not far from the pay stubs are several deposit slips for an account at the First Bank of New Orleans. The account is in Chelsea's name and was opened shortly after Gedde began working at Hillberg. Each deposit is for about one-half of his paycheck for that week, with the exception of a deposit for \$100 a little over a week ago that does not correspond to any of his pay periods.
- A framed photograph sits on a nightstand beside Gedde's bed. It is of a middle-aged woman. This is his late wife, Mary. Other than a picture of Chelsea in the living room, this is the only photograph he has in the apartment.
- Under the sink in the kitchenette is a large flat pan, various film developing chemicals, a piece of clothesline and a heavy blanket. A red light bulb is in a light socket above the sink. A Common Knowledge roll (with a +2 bonus for any character with a background in photography) identifies these as items that could be used to create a crude darkroom around the sink. There is no other photography gear or photos in the apartment, though.
- A pile of mail sits beneath the apartment's mail slot. It's all bills—and most overdue—except for a single, plain, white envelope with no return address. The postmark is from New Orleans the day before the investigators visit the apartment. If the detectives open the letter, give them **Handout A** (page 45).
- A pad of legal paper with several sheets torn out lies half-covered by a gutted cushion. An investigator making a Notice roll can make out faint indentations of handwriting on the top page. If the sharp-eyed shamus uses a pencil or crayon to highlight the indentations, give him **Handout B** (page 45).

FANCY'S

Even a casual glance tells an observer there's little truth in the name of this establishment. It's flatteringly described as "unremarkable." It's a three-story building with a threadbare lobby on the ground floor where prospective customers choose their companion for the evening, hour, or half-a-dozen minutes, depending on the size of the wad of cash in

A FAMILIAR NAME

Fancy's was one of the brothels recorded in the ledgers as making regular payments to Reeve Automotive Supply. Any hero who thinks to ask remembers seeing the name in the ledgers. If none do, you can allow any detective who reviewed the books to make a Smarts roll to recall that—or if you're feeling generous, Marshal, you can just tell the shamus without requiring a roll.

A bit of Legwork also tells the investigators that Fancy's is under Black Hand control, and in Storyville, that means it's one of Chrissy Colucci's joints. Either way, the gumshoes should get the idea they're playing in the Black Hand's sandbox again.

their pocket. A complimentary bar provides heavily watered-down drinks to keep potential customers' inhibitions, whether moral or financial, at bay.

As the detectives enter, the madam working behind the bar sizes them up and asks what she can do for them. If they indicate their visit is in anyway associated with Gedde's death, she asks the characters to wait a moment, then shows them to an office off the lobby. Before they're allowed to enter, a pair of massive goons frisks them and confiscate any weapons, explaining they'll be returned when they leave.

- **Goons (2):** Use the stats for Thug, from *Deadlands Noir*.

MISS YVETTE

Fancy's is run by Miss Yvette, a former lieutenant of Chrissy Colucci's who skimmed enough money off her last job to fall out of favor, but not enough to end up walking on the bottom of the Mississippi in cement pumps. Her office is well appointed and the walls are lined with paintings and photos of people engaged in various carnal acts.

Miss Yvette is businesslike and volunteers nothing, but offers the information below if the investigators ask the right questions.

- Gedde arrived shortly after 2:30 a.m. the night he died. Gedde was so drunk he could barely stand on his own. He paid in cash, up front.
- Sunny, the girl who found Gedde, told the police everything she knew. She was understandably traumatized by the event, so Miss Yvette gave her some time off.
- Sunny only works nights, and Miss Yvette expects her girls to earn while they're on the clock. If the detectives want to speak to her, they can pay her working rate.
- Miss Yvette had never seen Gedde before, so she can say with certainty he was not a regular.

As soon as the interview is over and the heroes leave, Miss Yvette calls Chrissy Colucci and reports what transpired. Unless the heroes were very clever and circumspect, the Black Hand knows the group is poking its nose into Mob business—again!

The toughs outside the office give the investigators their weapons back and escort them to the lobby. There it's made crystal clear that if they're not buying, they're not staying.

SUNNY

True to Miss Yvette's word, Sunny works in the evenings, arriving around 8 p.m. She's a dishwasher-blond in her late 20s, although the wrinkles around her eyes make her look ten years older. If an investigator is willing to pay for an hour of her time (\$10—plus tip), she tells them what she knows.

It's important to note that Sunny, unlike Miss Yvette and her muscle, didn't know Gedde's corpse was planted. Instead, she was set up to discover it so her delivery would seem completely natural and there was no chance she'd trip over a lie.

Sunny says she was just coming back off a short break when Miss Yvette told her she had a customer already waiting in her room. Miss Yvette warned her the man was pretty drunk. Sunny explains drunks are

never good customers: they get sick, they pass out, or sometimes they get violent.

Anyway, as soon as she got in the room, she found the man lying dead on the bed. He was on his back, not breathing. She slapped him gently, thinking maybe he'd just passed out, but he didn't move, and it felt like he was already cold. She ran downstairs to report it to Miss Yvette, who called the cops.

She'd never seen a dead body up close like that, and it messed her up a little. Miss Yvette insisted she take a couple of days off and even gave her \$20 to make up for the lost time on the job. Sunny also says, *"Did you know dead guys smell a little like fish? I didn't know that, but that guy did. What do you think about that?"*

Sunny says she found Gedde around 3 a.m. She remembers the time distinctly, because her favorite radio show, the KZNO 890 AM Jazz Revue had just finished. It broadcasts every night from 2 a.m. to 3 a.m.

She'd never seen the man before and didn't even know his name until one of the police officers mentioned it to her. No one else at Fancy's seemed to recognize him either, so she doubts he was a regular.

THE HILLBERG JUMBO SHRIMP COMPANY

By the time the investigators have tapped out their initial leads, they should have a pretty strong clue that Gedde was working at Hillberg and that maybe his death was related to it in some way.

The shrimp company is housed in a warehouse complex near the river. It consists of a loading dock for shipping and receiving, enormous saltwater vats where shrimp are cleaned and detritus are sorted out by factory workers, freezers where the shrimp are frozen for shipping, and machines that shred enormous blocks of ice for packing the shrimp in for transport. The facility was once a meat-packing plant, and a drainage system in the floor that once ejected offal into the Mississippi now drains ice and seawater.

A simple Streetwise or Investigation roll turns up a bit of background on the company. It's a large operation in Marigny-Bywater that buys large quantities of shrimp each evening from boats that work the Gulf. Hillberg then packs the shrimp in ice and sends them overland to distributors by truck or rail. By default, they do a lot of business through the Teamsters.

Hillberg's large freezer system hides a far darker purpose. Buried behind a labyrinth of ice blocks is another meat-processing room. There, the bodies of

hoboes and transients are butchered and frozen for later distribution to the Brotherhood cannibals. This ghastly secret results in the entire warehouse having a Fear Level 4. Inside its walls, the shadows seem unnaturally deep, the old bloodstains on the floor never fade, and the rust on the long-unused meat hooks overhead looks is unpleasantly reminiscent of gore and pieces of flesh.

HILLBERG BY DAY

If the detectives visit during business hours, they're directed to the office where they're met by a young secretary, Anna Jennings. If they mention Gedde or any sort of investigation, she asks them to wait while she gets the manager. After a few moments, Jennings shows them into a large office with an old wooden conference table.

A short time later, a portly, middle-aged man with sweaty, pale flesh enters and introduces himself as Jordan Alder, plant manager. If the heroes have openly stated their interest in Gedde or his death, Alder expresses his deepest condolences about the man's death. After pleasantries are exchanged, he asks how he can help the group.

Depending on their questions, he provides the following answers:

- Gedde had been with the company for only about a month. He worked as a night watchman and was hired due to his experience on the NOPD, even if it was some years ago. If pressed for some reason, he can provide an exact hire date—just make one up that fits with your campaign's timeline, Marshal, and is about five weeks prior to the date of the gumshoes' visit to Hillberg.
- Alder heard Gedde was a model employee. Although some of the other men said he had a drinking problem, Alder never saw any evidence of it himself.
- Hillberg first learned of Gedde's death when he didn't show up for work for a few days. After failing to reach him directly and fearing mishap, they contacted the police who informed them of his death.
- Alder claims to know nothing of the circumstances of Gedde's death outside of what is public knowledge.

Should the investigators ask to see the facility itself, Alder refuses, first politely, then firmly. He states they restrict access to the work floor for sanitation purposes—after all, it is a food-processing plant. He adds that the company's insurance does not allow

FALSE PRETENSES

It's possible a group of clever detectives may attempt to gain access to the facility through a pretext of some sort. ("Pretext" is a fancy word private eyes use for "lie.") For example, they might pass themselves off as delivery drivers or even health inspectors. That's fine, Marshal. In that case, just use the information presented here to determine what they find out based on the approach they use.

However, the shrimp company management knows an outsider stumbling onto a freezer stocked with human body parts would be bad for them. Under no circumstances do they allow anyone to get within spitting distance of the hidden freezer area. If a group gets pushy about it, Alder or one of the foremen calls in security to escort them off the premises. Should the characters resist the guards, there are also about 15 factory workers who are happy to join in any fisticuffs to subdue the heroes.

- **Hillberg Guards (4):** Use the stats for Thug from *Deadlands Noir*. Armed with billy clubs (Str+d4).
- **Workers (15):** Use the stats for Citizen from *Deadlands Noir*. Armed with knives and other various tools from around the warehouse—crowbars, hammers, box cutters, etc. (Str+d4)

non-employees to enter the work floor, accompanied or otherwise.

After ten minutes or so, regardless of the route they pursue, Alder insists he has an important meeting and bids the gumshoes good luck in their investigation. He stands and ushers them toward the door, and asks Jennings to show them out.

THE JUMBO SHRIMP COMPANY

SWAMP



SHUCKING



WAREHOUSE



ICE FACTORY

MISSISSIPPI RIVER

EMPLOYEE
PARKING

GATED ENTRY

SWAMP



HILLBERG BY NIGHT

At night, the gates to the company are closed. A Notice roll spots a number of tough-looking individuals walking the grounds. It doesn't take an Einstein to figure out there are a lot of guards for a pile of shrimp.

Management is keen to keeping its side business a secret, but since Gedde's snooping, Hillberg isn't willing to risk hiring more outsiders to guard the grounds. Brassi and his boys were happy to step in and solidify the relationship, and now a handful of Black Hand torpedoes patrol the grounds to keep any more meddlers away.

Stealthy investigators can slip into the building through a combination of careful observation and planning. The Mob goons aren't exactly crack security specialists. A successful Notice roll detects a fairly regular pattern in their roving, allowing the gumshoes to sneak past on a simple Stealth roll. Otherwise, treat the thugs as active guards, requiring the heroes to win an opposed Stealth roll vs. the mooks' Notice.

More creative groups might try to fast-talk their way in, for example pretending to be delivery drivers, stage a distraction, or employ another less-direct stratagem. In that case, Marshal, use your best judgment. And

remember, while the Black Hand soldiers are ruthless and violent, they're also not exactly the shiniest bullets in the cylinder, else they wouldn't be guarding a shrimp warehouse.

If the detectives slip up and get spotted, or just go for a frontal assault from the outset, the toughs don't skimp on the lead. Even if the cops get called in to break up a gunfight, the Black Hand goons know they're covered. They're working a "legitimate" security gig—and the Mob lawyers have them out of jail before breakfast.

- **Guards (1 per hero):** Use the stats for Mafia Soldier from *Deadlands Noir*. Armed with .45 automatic pistols (Range 12/24/48, Damage 2d6+1, RoF 1), switchblades (Str+d4), and one spare magazine.

BEHIND CLOSED DOORS

There are no workers or guards inside the warehouse once the shrimp company closes down at night. Only a few of the employees have any idea of the dark secret hidden in the dark corners of the warehouse, and the cult's special monthly deliveries occur only after the rank-and-file have long since gone home for the day.

All interior lights are off except for those in the bathrooms along the same wall as the offices, so the Black Hand security goons can find their way to them

in the dark. If the heroes turn on any other overhead lights, the men outside immediately take note and move to investigate. Most of the windows are above head height, at least to observers on the outside. As long as the investigators are careful to keep the beams away from the windows, they can search by flashlight without too much worry of drawing attention to themselves.

There are three main areas for the flatfoots to explore: the offices, the main floor, and the freezer. The freezer is where the real “meat” of the story lies, but there are some valuable clues to be found in the other areas as well.

The Main Floor: Searching the primary work area turns up nothing of interest, just a lot of vats of brine and shrimp, crates with shrimp and oysters in ice, and lots more empty packing crates. Hillberg’s management knows better than to let its criminally-underpaid floor workers find out about their extremely illegal side business!

Accountant’s Office: The accountant’s office contains the company’s ledgers, and those detail all the regular transactions Hillberg undertakes. There is little incriminating evidence to be found in them. The accountant isn’t foolish enough to list “human flesh” as an entry.

In a locked desk drawer, though, he does have a separate ledger that includes the names of several prominent New Orleans families, including the Durands, Jeffersons, and Handleys (and any other you might want to implicate in your own campaign, Marshal). The ledger details orders and deliveries, noting only how many pounds were shipped to a given family each month, but not what the shipment entailed. All of the shipments are delivered to the families on the same day of the month. Should anyone check, the exact date varies, but it always corresponds to the new moon.

The same ledger also lists a payment at the same time to Simon Beauregard. This is to reimburse him for the off-the-books driver he details to make the drops.

Manager’s Office: Digging through Alder’s desk turns up an envelope addressed to a Roland Finch at the *Times-Picayune*. There is no return address, but a Notice roll at -2 identifies it as Gedde’s handwriting, assuming the gumshoe encountered it at some point. The envelope is open, and the letter itself missing, but it still contains the photographs of a couple of Hillberg company crates packed with

human body parts—heads, arms, torsos, and all. There is also a photo of a door that appears to be inside the warehouse’s freezer labeled “Warehouse 5.”

In the top drawer of the desk is a key ring containing a large number of keys. Although the keys aren’t labeled, there is one for every lock in the building—including the padlock on the door to Warehouse 5.

WAREHOUSE 5

Inside the massive freezer section, more crates and boxes are stacked high and deep, forming a veritable maze. There are no external windows in the freezer, and there is a single light on the wall adjacent to the secret freezer. It does little to illuminate the interior of the cold storage, but does much to make the shadows longer and deeper.

There is little of interest to the case in the main freezer compartment itself. A Sherlock making a Notice roll detects that many of the crates and boxes have been roughly opened and are empty of anything except ice and a few empty shrimp or oyster shells, almost as if someone decided the freezer was actually just a big all-you-can-eat seafood buffet. Still, employee pilferage probably isn’t the sort of thing the investigators broke into Hillberg to discover.

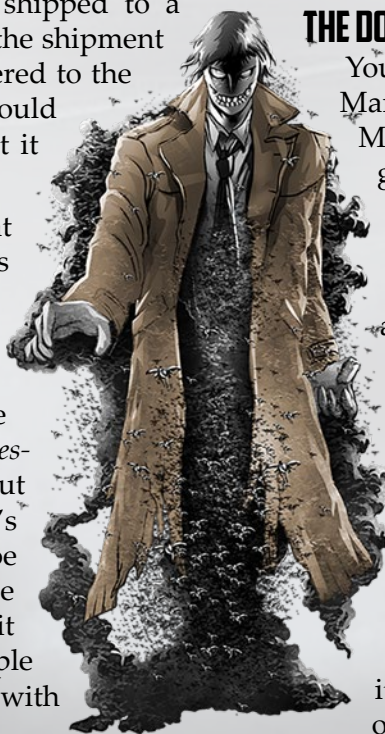
Of course, if they’ve found the note in Alder’s office or Gedde’s note to Roland Finch, they should have an idea they’re looking for a door inside the freezer. Even if they haven’t, apparently the company decided to start placing a guard at the door to Warehouse 5 to keep anyone else from getting inside.

THE DOOR GUARD

You probably noticed we said “apparently,” Marshal. That’s because he’s not really a Mob goon—or even human. In fact, the good folks at Hillberg don’t even know the thing is inside their facility.

The cockroaches Gedde wrote about were actually the forerunners of an abomination known as a swarm man. The horrors stored in the secret freezer drew it to Hillberg’s slaughterhouse like a candle does a moth. It comes up through the sluice drains each night and tries to find a way into the secret freezer. The door is secured with a padlock and airtight though, and is proof against even carnivorous cockroaches.


For the most part, it’s been satisfying its hunger on shrimp. A few days ago, one of the day-laborers left his coat at the



warehouse and returned after hours to pick it up. He was unlucky enough to run into the swarm man. His bones are piled behind some boxes in one corner of the freezer. A Notice roll at -4 uncovers their hiding space.

Once the abomination becomes aware of the heroes, it decides to forego trying to breach the door and grab some delivery food instead—the characters! Until it crumbles into a swarm of creepy-crawlies, the flatfoots are likely to believe they're just faced with a normal guard or worker; it takes a Notice roll at a -6 penalty to spot something amiss due to the poor lighting and the creature's natural ability at mimicry. When it does transform, don't forget the resulting Fear check, which is at a *hefty* minus!

If the group resorts to firearms, not only are they fairly useless, the sound may draw the guards from outside. The freezer is pretty heavily insulated, which helps muffle the noise. If the main freezer door is closed, the guards must make a Notice roll at -2 to hear the shots. Roll only once each round, but check each round a weapon is fired.

 **Swarm Man:** Use the stats for Swarm Man from *Deadlands Noir*.

FREEZER OF HORRORS

The key ring from Alder's office holds the key to the padlock on the door. Otherwise, getting past the padlock on the door marked Warehouse 5 takes a Lockpicking roll at a -2 penalty.

Inside the smaller freezer compartment is a large metal table, some butchering tools, a few crates, and meat hooks along the walls. There's dried and/or frozen blood in copious amounts on the table and around it on the floor. This compartment was sectioned off from the main freezer after Hillberg took over the building and doesn't have access to the drainage system. While that serendipitously kept the swarm man out, it also means the blood tends to pool in a tacky mess on the floor.

One of the hooks holds the body of a man. It's hard to tell how long he's been dead as he's frozen solid, but a look at his clothes and general unkempt appearance gives the impression he was a transient. There is no ID or other personal belongings on him. However, anyone searching the freezer can make a Notice roll to spot a crudely-made and very obvious voodoo doll near the wall nearby. Inspecting the thing, the shamus finds a silver pocket watch stuffed inside, with only the end of the chain hanging out a tear in its chest. Inside is a picture of Gedde's wife, likely recognizable from Gedde's apartment, and behind it an inscription "*Love always, Mary.*"

Most of the crates are empty, but one has numerous human body parts packed in ice inside. There is no label or other documentation on the crate, or elsewhere in the freezer.

THE BLACK-HANDED SLAP

At some point in the Gedde investigation, after the characters have visited Fancy's, Brassi decides he's heard the flatfoots' names involved in association with his business one time too many. The preferred method of handling a bunch of bothersome punks like the heroes would be through a simple, though fatal, case of lead poisoning. But in this case, Brassi doesn't want to draw any greater attention to his own schemes than the detectives already have, so he decides the best way to handle it is to frame the group for a serious, high-profile crime.

Brassi figures to kill two birds with one stone. He puts a hit on Travis Evans, thus getting rid of Beauregard's personal ulcer, and then leaves evidence at the scene to make it look like one or more of the characters was responsible.

All this is putting the pieces in place for the next chapter, **Wanted**. If you can sandwich this encounter in before the heroes visit Hillberg's warehouse, Marshal, all the better. There's nothing like finding a crate of body parts to make a guy forget about an innocent bit of petty larceny!

THE SETUP

At some point while one or more of the shamuses are in a public place, a pickpocket and Mob flunky by the name of Ricky "Fingers" Matrone makes a grab for one of the heroes' heaters. If he wins an opposed roll of his Stealth vs. the character's Notice he makes off with the gun unnoticed. The victim notices the theft a little while later, but Fingers is long gone by then. If Fingers wins with a raise, the poor sap doesn't even notice her gun is gone until the next time she draws it—which could be disastrous!

Should Fingers lose the opposed roll, he still nabs the flatfoot's roscoe, but the target realizes it immediately and spots the thief running through a thick crowd. Use the Chase rules from *Savage Worlds* to handle the pursuit. If the heroes manage to catch Fingers, he swears he's just a simple street thief. Three or more successes on a Patter attempt get him to fess up to being hired to grab the gat and give it to Stanley Tolutti at Levy's Five and Dime, but he doesn't know why.

If confronted, the Toluttis deny any knowledge of the theft. And they're not lying. They aren't actually in on the gig, but they've been Black Hand stooges for long enough to know when someone gives them a gun to hold for the Mob, they hold it until asked.

WRAPPING IT ALL UP

From the envelope at Hillberg and the remnants of the note at Gedde's apartment, the gumshoes might swing by the *Times-Picayune* looking for a reporter named Roland Finch. They quickly discover no one by that name works for the paper, but they're intercepted as they leave the building. A reporter named Harold Leech introduces himself and explains he uses the name Roland Finch as an alias when dealing with contacts on the force. If they turn over the evidence they've put together to Leech, it leads to a front-page story in the next day's paper.

The photos Bob took alone are enough to blow the entire operation at Hillberg open, whether they present them to Leech, the NOPD, or another reputable paper in town. Within hours of either the police being alerted or the paper bearing the story hitting the streets, the cops raid the facility, shutting it down permanently. Alder and others in the management chain are led away in handcuffs amidst the flash of press cameras.

The prominent families named in the accountant's documents, however, are never even mentioned, must less brought in. Wealth and influence have their privilege after all. The detectives can take small solace in the fact that at least they made it a little harder for the cannibals to procure their victims.

Although they don't have conclusive evidence that someone at Hillberg was responsible for Gedde's death, there are certainly some questions raised—especially if they found his watch in the secret freezer. Even though his killers may never face charges, the heroes have cleared her father's name as far as Chelsea is concerned, at least.

If the group made a connection between Beauregard and the flesh-smuggling scheme at Hillberg, she promises to take that info to her boss as well. It could well be the final nail in the coffin of Beauregard's career in public office. After all, Mob ties are one thing, but it's pretty hard to whitewash connections to a group of ghouls.

It might seem all is well in the Crescent City as far as the gumshoes are concerned, but things are just getting rolling. The group has made a powerful enemy, and he's about to extract a little payback.

100th ANNIVERSARY
The Times-Picayune was first published in January 1837 by Francis Lumsden. A "picayune" is a Spanish coin equal to 6.25 of a dollar.

The Times-Picayune

Weather

The forecast calls for rain, followed by sun, followed by more rain, miserable humidity, a brief and wonderful cool spell, then more rain and humidity.

Volume C1—NO. 13

New Orleans, 1937

Single Copy 5 Cents

MURDER AT THE HILLBERG JUMBO SHRIMP COMPANY!

by Harold Leech

NEW ORLEANS A shocking tale of murder and mayhem has unfolded at the Hillberg Jumbo Shrimp Company. Photographic evidence reveals that Hillberg employees were using a hidden freezer located at the back of the company's warehouse to store the dead bodies of several people murdered on the premises.

Details of the crimes are incomplete pending a full police investigation. The systematic nature of the murders may indicate that Hillberg employees are involved in a larger, organized criminal plot.

Documents obtained by this reporter name several Hillberg investors and employees as potential accomplices, and will be turned over to the New Orleans Police Department as evidence.

NO END IN SIGHT FOR GREAT DEPRESSION

by Moira O'Malley

President Garner urged passage of his new Military Expansion Act, encouraging all the Confederate States to provide men for the national army in anticipation of rising turmoil in central Europe. "These new regiments will provide jobs in these hard times and give the nation much-needed strength in arms in the event of European war—or Northern aggression. This is how we end the Great Depression."

Governor Huey Long applauded the expansion of the military and jobs creation, but denied support for intervention in Europe. "We've seen enough war this century," Governor Long said to reporters Thursday. "If building a new colonial empire is President Garner's plan to end the depression it's time for some new thinking in Richmond."

WANTED!!!

In this chapter, the gumshoes discover what it feels like to snatch defeat from the jaws of victory. On the heels of breaking open a major front-page case, they find themselves on the lam from the cops, the Black Hand, and the Brotherhood of the Flesh.

REVENGE SERVED WITH HOT LEAD

The day after the news about Hillberg hits the stands, Travis Evans is preparing to drop a bomb of his own. He's finally put together the information the heroes provided him back in **Short Haul Shenanigans** and delivers it to both the cops and the press. Beauregard resigns in disgrace that very day.

But Evan's triumph is short lived. The morning before he takes his packets to the police and press, he's discovered behind his desk, a bullet hole drilled neatly through his forehead. A Black Hand hitter by the name of Mikey Cosimo carried out the murder and planted evidence to frame the party.

Clutched in one hand is a letter that implicates each of the heroes in blackmailing him to go public with fabricated evidence regarding Beauregard's involvement with the Black Hand. Also, if the pickpocket was successful in nabbing one of the gumshoes' gats, the gun is found at the scene. (If he wasn't, see the **Fingers Fumbled** sidebar.)

It takes the NOPD about six hours to get the necessary warrants and make a concerted effort go after the investigators once the body is found. Luckily for them, Chelsea, who knows it's a set-up job, tips them off well in advance, giving them at least a fighting chance at staying ahead of the cops.

CONCERNED CITIZENS

About the time the heroes get word of Evans' death and the impending warrants for their arrest, they also receive some unexpected visitors. To make sure they don't slip the noose of (in)justice, Brassi has sent a few of his boys over to keep the shamuses on ice until New Orleans' finest can swing by to put the collar on them. The goons' orders are to detain the characters for the police if possible. If they can't, their boss made it clear they're not to spare any bullets keeping them from getting away.

Whether you want to play this out as a straight-up fight with the Black Hand thugs or turn it into a cross-city pursuit (using the Chase rules as appropriate from *Savage Worlds*), dodging both the Mob and the police, Marshal, is entirely up to you.

FINGERS FUMBLED

Should Fingers fail or get nabbed, Brassi settles for using a "cold" piece (a gun that can't be traced) from the Black Hand's stash. He forks over some moolah to the right hands and gets documents forged to make it look like the gun belonged to one of the gumshoes. It won't have the hero's fingerprints on it, and the forged documents might not stand up to a serious examination, but given how many corrupt cops are on the Black Hand's payroll, it's probably good enough to do the job.

MURDER AND SLANDER IN THE CRESCENT CITY

by Harold Leech

NEW ORLEANS In a bone-chilling turn of events, Travis Evans, rival of recently-resigned IBT Local 270 President Simon Beauregard, was found dead last night with an apparent blackmail note clutched in his hand.

The note detailed a conspiracy by Evans and a group of detectives to falsely accuse Beauregard of taking bribes from the Black Hand.

Evans was found last evening dead at his desk, the victim of a gunshot wound to the middle of his forehead.

"Evans and these criminals appear to have been in league together," said Lt. Reggie Coombs, the New Orleans Police Department detective assigned to the case. "The evidence couldn't be more clear. The detectives' names are in the note and Evans' ledger, and one of their guns was found at the scene."

In either case, it should be clear to the investigators they need to find a safe house of their own, or at least somewhere they can go to ground for a little while as they work to clear their names. A Common Knowledge roll at a -2 penalty uncovers a suitable abandoned building—most likely in Tremé or the 9th Ward—if the heroes don't know of any off the tops of their heads.

Remind the players that if their characters actually attack the police, they will end up with very real criminal charges against them. The NOPD pulls out all the stops to bring them in, dead or alive. If that happens, Brassi even has his torpedoes back off, content to let the heroes cook their own geese at this point.

• **Black Hand Muscle (2, plus 1 per hero):** Use the stats for Mafia Soldier from *Deadlands Noir*. All are armed with .38 revolvers (Range 12/24/48, Damage 2d6, RoF 1) and brass knuckles (Str+d4).

REGROUPING

Assuming they've made their way to a relatively safe hideout, give the party time to formulate a plan of action. The group needs to stay low and out of sight. A gumshoe who can put together disguises or false IDs is worth her weight in gold here!

SHOCKING TWIST TO CORRUPTION SCANDAL AT IBT 270

by Harold Leech

Sgt. Penelope Depriese spoke to the Times-Picayune at the Evans crime scene: "There's more to this case than meets the eye. It all seems scripted somehow."

"What my colleague means to say," interjected Lt. Coombs, "is how happy we are this case will be easy to prosecute once the suspects have been charged." Coombs later added "We want everyone to remember these are cold-blooded killers. They're armed and dangerous and should be shot on sight. The killers are also notorious liars, and so citizens shouldn't believe any wild stories they might be spreading to escape the long arm of law."

A country-wide manhunt for the suspects is ongoing as of press time.

The New Orleans Police Department wants to remind readers that the suspects are armed and dangerous, and citizens should not to attempt to apprehend these suspects themselves.

The police and the Black Hand are keeping watch on any known residences, places of employment, hangouts, and local family connections around the clock. A Notice roll at any of these locations spots one of the surveillance teams before the shamus gets fingered. A raise on the roll identifies both groups. Failing the roll means the hero is spotted and pursuit ensues. Use the Chase rules from *Savage Worlds* if this occurs.

A Common Knowledge roll clues the flatfoots into the fact their home and office phones are likely tapped as well.

BAD NEWS

The day after Evans' murder, the story hits the morning edition of the *Times-Picayune*. It features grainy pictures of the characters under the headline "MURDER AND SLANDER IN THE CRESCENT CITY!" The story carries the details of the case thus far: Evans was found with a bullet hole in his forehead; there was a blood-spattered note clutched in his hand detailing a blackmail scheme to slander Beauregard; and each of the heroes is named in the plot.

The story has a few bits of information the sherlocks might find of interest. It was penned by Harold Leech, who the characters may have made contact with during the investigation of the Hillberg Jumbo Shrimp Company. The lead investigator on the case is Lt. Reggie Coombs, and he's on record saying the evidence couldn't be more clear or damning against the heroes.

However, Leech quotes another officer, Sgt. Penelope Depriesse as saying she believes there is more to the case than meets the eye. She says that everything seems a little *too* neat. Her statement is followed by another from Lt. Coombs contradicting her.

CLEARING THEIR NAMES

The detectives' first priority, after not getting tossed in the slammer, should be clearing their names. Here are the most likely avenues of investigation open to them, given their current circumstances.

CHELSEA, LATELY

From their previous contact with her, the flatfoots have contact information for Chelsea Gedde. She's convinced of their innocence in the charges and willing to do what she can to help them if they get in touch with her. Unfortunately, given her current circumstances, that isn't a tremendous amount.

She tells them the police sealed off Evans' office and won't allow her any access. They took a brief statement, and while she insisted the heroes weren't guilty, the investigating officer didn't seem to have any interest in what she had to say. Should they ask, she tells them the officer's name was Lt. Coombs.

Chelsea also says that on top of everything else, she's lost her job. The union asked Beauregard to resume his position the very day Evans' body was found. She says he was grinning like a Cheshire cat, and one of his first acts was to give her the boot.

Beyond that, Chelsea doesn't know anything else about the investigation, but can serve as a set of eyes on the street for the heroes if they want. If need be, Marshal, don't be afraid to use Chelsea to help keep the investigators on track.

HAROLD LEECH

If the detectives made contact with Harold Leech during the Hillberg investigation, they can reach him at the *Times-Picayune*. Calling for Leech himself just gets them routed to an intern who promises the reporter will call them back—which likely poses a problem

"BE ON THE LOOKOUT..."

If you want to complicate your gumshoes' lives further, Marshal, you can always keep them dodging police patrols anytime they hit the streets. The NOPD circulates the heroes' photos to its officers, and there is a blanket BOLO (Be On the LookOut) for them as long as they remain suspects in Evans' murder. However, just because a patrolman has seen a picture of one of the characters, it doesn't guarantee he recognizes the fugitive on sight.

Anytime a patrol car passes an undisguised hero on the street, the officers inside can make a Notice roll to spot the character(s), modified by lighting and any other condition you feel appropriate. If the cops recognize them, they immediately attempt to apprehend the heroes.

The good news is the NOPD's patrol cars, like most during this time period, are only equipped with radio receivers. Police officers can't call for backup without stopping to make a phone call, which gives the shamuses a bit of an advantage.

- **Patrol Officers (2):** Use the stats for Police Officer from *Deadlands Reloaded*.
- **Patrol Car:** Use the stats for Sedan from *Deadlands Reloaded*.

with men and women on the run. However, if they call for “Roland Finch,” they’re immediately transferred to Leech, since that’s the alias he uses for his best sources.

Leech tells them there’s definitely something fishy going on in the investigation. Lieutenant Coombs seemed in a rush to charge the gumshoes. Coombs is rumored to be deep in the pocket of the Black Hand, but no one has ever been able to back that up with hard evidence.

The reporter asked for access to the police reports, but was denied access. This isn’t surprising for an active investigation, but they were quick to give him access to paperwork identifying the gun as belonging to one of the group. If Fingers managed to nab a gun from one of the characters, the police also let Leech get a look at the weapon’s fingerprint records. Leech says that level of cooperation usually means someone in the department is looking to hang a guilty verdict on a suspect long before a trial.

He does have the contact information for Sgt. Depriesse and offers to share it with the investigators. He says she also seems to be of the opinion something about the case smells.

Lastly, he tells them that Beauregard has been reinstated at the IBT Local 270. Leech’s sources tell him that other than a single visit to the union office—presumably to gloat—the man’s been lying low in Blue Iris, his Garden District mansion. He’s pretty sure Beauregard is tied to Evans’ death and the frame job, if for no other reason than he’s the one who most directly profits by it, but he has no hard proof.

He’s careful throughout the conversation not to ask the detectives about where they are or their plans. Leech has dealt with the police department long enough to know there’s a very good chance there’s a tap on the heroes’ phone, his own, or both.

THE NOPD

The gumshoes may decide to get in touch with someone inside the NOPD. The two most obvious candidates are Sgt. Depriesse or Lt. Coombs, as they’re the two officers named in the newspaper. Also, they may have direct contact info for Sgt. Depriesse from Leech, which makes things much easier.

If one of the heroes has a Connection inside the force, Marshal, you can either have that individual provide the information the group would have obtained from Sgt. Depriesse, or the contact can put them directly in communication with the sergeant.

A particularly foolhardy patsy may even try to sneak in a search the records himself. In that case, the

overconfident sherlock has to get past a virtual battalion of cops, all of whom are probably looking for his ugly mug. At the very least, the sneak has to make several opposed Stealth rolls and/or a few opposed Persuasion rolls to bluff his way inside the precinct house.

SERGEANT DEPRIESSE

The sergeant is one of the good guys on the NOPD. She’s college-educated and dedicated to doing the right thing. She’s pretty sure Coombs is on the take and believes the heroes are being railroaded. However, even though she’s got her suspicions about the case, she’s not about to spill the beans on an active investigation to the suspects themselves, especially if they’re fugitives.

Still, she does want to see justice done. Provided the characters give her a good pretext and don’t reveal their actual identities—keep in mind as one of the investigating officers, she’s very familiar with their appearance—she is cooperative. The easiest way for the group to accomplish this is by *not* meeting the sergeant face-to-face. She’s more than happy to accommodate that as she’s bucking the system by even speaking with outsiders about the case in the first place.

She says the case feels too pat to her. Why would the suspects have shot Evans, presumably to cover up their blackmail operation, then leave a note in his hands fingering them for that exact crime? Ditto for leaving the gun at the scene. It just doesn’t make sense to her.

Depriesse is very upfront with her opinion that Lt. Coombs is on the Black Hand’s payroll. She says she’s heard tell of him tinkering with evidence in other cases in the past. The sergeant tells them that if Coombs is manufacturing evidence, odds are the Mob is involved somehow.

Penelope suspects the murder is tied to getting Beauregard back into his job with the Teamsters. She’s kept tabs on Coombs since the investigation began and knows he’s visited Beauregard’s house at least once since Evans was found dead. Depriesse would love a reason to put the union boss under some heat in the interrogation room, but she’s got no hard evidence.

LIEUTENANT COOMBS

A truly ambitious group of detectives may decide to go to the horse’s mouth on the case, Lt. Reggie Coombs. Coombs is a 10-year veteran of the NOPD homicide squade. He’s put more than one patsy behind bars in his time, but he’s also brought down no small number of actual killers too, so his word carries some weight around the department when it comes to murder investigations.

Reggie is also deep in the pockets of the Black Hand. He has no compunctions about planting evidence or doctoring reports, and thanks to his reputation, considers himself above suspicion. The lieutenant justifies his flexible morality by telling himself the corrupt politicians he works for are already taking bribes from the Mob, so he's still working for the same boss in the end.

Any attempt to parley with Coombs is doomed. The lieutenant doesn't waste time talking to the investigators; he knows the heroes are innocent, after all. He goes straight for the collar, and if the characters resist, well, let's just say dead men don't testify.

The only way to get anything out of the corrupt cop is to nab him off the street or from his home. Even then, the gumshoes have to score five successes in an Interrogation (see *Deadlands Noir*) before he gives up any of the goods. He's overconfident, so Taunt attempts that play on his ego get a +2 bonus. On the other hand, Persuasion attempts suffer a -2 penalty; there's very little the heroes can offer him to convince him to sing.


Assuming he does knuckle under, Coombs spills his guts. He had nothing to do with the murder and didn't plant the gun. He doesn't know who killed Evans, beyond the fact it was a Mob hitman. Emilio Brassi, a capo in the Black Hand, just told him they wanted him to make sure the heroes went down for the murder.

Reggie's basically been talking the case up in the press and smoothing over any rough spots the frame job might encounter. For example, if the Black Hand had to falsify registration documents for the planted gun, he's making sure no one looks too closely at them.

If questioned about Beauregard's involvement, Coombs tells them he's under orders from Brassi to keep Beauregard up to date on any developments in the case. He knows the union boss is on the take as well and figures the gangsters want to keep him in the job.

As to why they picked the heroes to take the fall, he offers, "I guess you did somethin' that stuck in Brassi's craw. Maybe it was rattin' out Beauregard in the first place... or maybe it was that Hillberg job. That got a lot of press." While Coombs didn't know about the flesh-smuggling operation, he knows Brassi had his eye on it before the flatfoots got mixed up with it.

Once they've gotten all the info out of Coombs they can, the heroes are faced with what to do with the rotten cop. Kidnapping a police officer is serious business. To dodge the rap on that, the group not only has to prove their innocence in Travis' death, but also that Coombs, a decorated veteran of the force, is crooked!

 **Lieutenant Coombs:** Use the stats for Police Detective from *Deadlands Noir*.

THE SCALES OF JUSTICE

It's always possible the heroes decide to turn themselves in and trust the system to find them innocent. After all, only the guilty have anything to fear, right? If that's what the flatfoots think, they've not been in New Orleans very long.

Surrendering to the police (or getting apprehended by them) subjects the investigators to the machinations of a legal system thoroughly corrupted by Black Hand bribes, blackmail, and coercion. It does make for a very different solution to this chapter of the adventure, but it may be an interesting change for your players if they choose to go this route.

To resolve the courtroom drama, use the Social Conflict rules from *Savage Worlds*. Unless one of the group is an attorney, a public defender is appointed for them. Either way though, allow one of the investigators to plead the group's case using her Persuasion.

The state's case is presented by a district attorney who opposes the heroes' Persuasion roll with his own Persuasion d8. The court system is corrupt, so the district attorney gets a +2 bonus to his Persuasion roll each round to represent the inherent corruption in the system and the evidence the Black Hand manufactured against the heroes.

The detectives aren't completely out of luck. Producing evidence of their own, such as proof of Beauregard's ties, Chelsea's testimony, or a receipt showing Evans actually hired them grants them a +1 bonus of their own during the round of conflict in which they introduce it. Furthermore, a successful Investigation roll each round of the conflict allows the shamuses to find a chink in the state's case and negates the prosecutor's +2 bonus. A raise on the roll exposes a crucial, possibly damning flaw in it, and not only cancels the district attorney's bonus, but saddles him with an additional -4 penalty on his roll!

What happens after that is up to you, Marshal. If they lose, the patsies are likely headed for the state's notorious penitentiary at Angola, but there's always the possibility of an appeal. If they win, they beat the rap, but the trail that could have led them to the Brotherhood of the Flesh may have gone cold.

BLUE IRIS

At some point, the investigators should realize all roads lead to Simon Beauregard. If not, Chelsea or Harold Leech can nudge them in that direction.

THE HONEYMOON'S OVER

What the heroes don't know is that things have taken a turn for the worse in the relationship between the Brotherhood of the Flesh and the Black Hand. With the Hillberg operation exposed, Brassi no longer has a hold over the Brotherhood. Not only are the cannibals interested in cutting ties with the Mob, but they've also decided the gangsters are to blame for their private butcher shop getting closed down.

The Brotherhood has also figured out that the head of the teamsters probably ratted them out to Brassi in the first place. And if there's one thing cannibal cults aren't known for, it's a kind, forgiving nature. The cabal has decided to have Beauregard for dinner at their next ritual feast...maybe with a light hollandaise sauce and a side of jambalaya.

Fortune smiled on the corrupt teamster though, as the Brotherhood's attack began only minutes before the heroes arrived at the front gate to Blue Iris.

UNDER SIEGE

Blue Iris is located on a street where most of the residents come from money so old it still has King Louis' face on it. It's not the biggest estate in the neighborhood, but the very fact that a union boss could afford to be here speaks volumes about how much dirty money he must be shoveling into his bank accounts.

While it might be a little smaller than its neighboring mansions, Blue Iris is surrounded by meticulously tended grounds—and an eight-foot, wrought-iron fence. The gumshoes can try to sneak in or go through the front gate.

If they go the stealthy route, it takes a Climbing roll to scale the fence. Toss a few Stealth rolls at them to keep them on their toes, but the truth is what guards Brassi lent to Beauregard are already occupied, if they're not already dead.

If they check the ornate gate that grants entrance to the front of the estate, they find it stands open when they arrive. Any snoop who examines the gate or makes a

Notice roll (-2) as he passes through sees the fancy lock that normally secures it has been broken open.

Once inside the grounds, the group immediately sees a pair of Ford Model B sedans parked in the mansion's driveway. Beyond them, the front doors to the mansion stand open to the night. The investigators might be forgiven for overlooking that at first, as a pair of bodies lie on the short steps leading up to Blue Iris' main entrance.

A quick check confirms they're quite dead, most likely from the broken necks they both suffered. From their dark suits, noses that have been broken more times than a schoolboy's heart, and .38-caliber heaters in shoulder holsters, the deceased were most likely Black Hand muscle. Before the detectives can examine the bodies further, a woman's scream echoes from inside the mansion.

TO THE RESCUE!

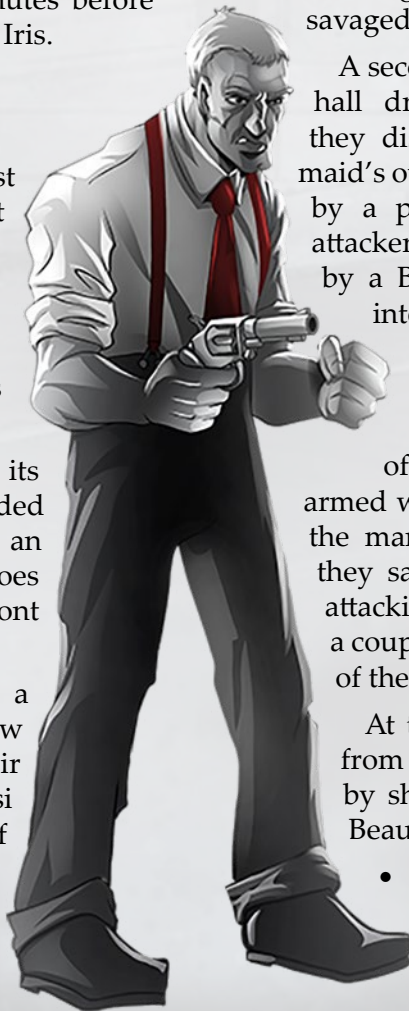
The lock on the doors has been broken, apparently shattered by a great impact. Immediately inside the doors, the shamuses come across another body. Unlike those out front, this one appears to have been the butler, not a Mob gunman. His face and body have been savaged by several deep, slashing cuts.

A second scream from a room off the entry hall draws their attention. Investigating, they discover a middle-aged woman in a maid's outfit being apparently being menaced by a pair of shabbily dressed men. The attackers are actually walkin' dead, raised by a Brotherhood magician. If the heroes intervene, the undead immediately shift their focus to them.

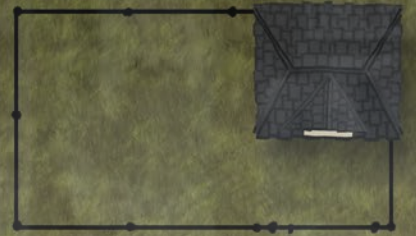
After her rescue, the maid hurriedly tells the group a group of men, including a veritable giant armed with a machete, forced their way into the mansion only moments ago. She says they said nothing and immediately began attacking anyone in sight. Beauregard and a couple of bodyguards ran toward the rear of the mansion.

At that moment a single shot rings out from further inside Blue Iris, followed by shouting. The maid says, "That's Mr. Beauregard!"

- **Walkin' Dead (2):** Use the stats for Walkin' Dead from *Deadlands Noir*.



GUEST HOUSE



MAIN HOUSE

BLUE IRIS



BLUE IRIS—UPSTAIRS



RELUCTANT SAVIORS

If the detectives hesitate to pursue Beauregard's attackers, or just decide to let the corrupt teamster get his just desserts from whatever is killing the gangsters, remind them it's very possible he holds the key to proving their innocence. And if he dies, they might be left holding the bag for his *and* Evans' murder!

The commotion guides the heroes to the rear of the house, into a large, oak-paneled smoking room. A huge mahogany desk indicates the room also doubles as Beauregard's office when he's in Blue Iris. When the investigators reach the chamber, the massive hardwood slab is serving more as a shield than a workspace, with the union boss cowering behind it as the last of his bodyguards is torn apart by a wave of walkin' dead.

The zombies are led by a tonton macoute, and unless the flatfoots enter the room quietly, the majority of the horde immediately turns on the group. Even if they did take a more stealthy approach, as soon as Beauregard spots one of the gumshoes, he shouts, "Save me—I can clear your names!" Which, of course, alerts the undead and tonton macoutes to the heroes presence.

Two of the walkin' dead continue toward Beauregard, while the rest of the throng, including the tonton macoute, turn to face the investigators. Unsurprisingly, all fight to the death.

- **Walkin' Dead (2, plus 1 per hero):** Use the stats for Walkin' Dead from *Deadlands Noir*.

- **Tonton Macoute:** Use the stats for Tonton Macoute from *Deadlands Noir*. Armed with a machete (Str+d6).

SIMON SAYS

Once he's been rescued, Beauregard stands by his word. He doesn't have an ounce of honor in his body, but he does know the Brotherhood of the Flesh obviously wants him out of the picture. He figures the heroes might be his only chance at saving his own hide.

Beauregard quickly gives the investigators the scoop on what was going on at Hillberg. He was taking money to arrange some clandestine deliveries to a group of some of the most influential individuals in New Orleans. Guessing there was an angle to be played, Beauregard took a look at one of the shipments and discovered it to be neatly butchered human flesh.

The union boss knew immediately he might be in over his head. He tipped Emilio Brassi off to it and asked for advice. The Mob capo decided he'd take advantage of the situation himself, hoping to blackmail the cannibals, who Beauregard learned called themselves the Brotherhood of the Flesh. Brassi found out they were using the bodies of their victims in some sick, black magic ritual they thought would give them eternal youth or something crazy like that. The Brotherhood even offered to bring the gangster in on the deal if he'd play ball with them.

When Bob Gedde stumbled onto the operation and the Brotherhood killed him, Brassi offered to help cover up the murder, intending to protect his leverage over the Brotherhood. The flatfoots gummed up that plan with their investigation. The Brotherhood lost its easy pipeline for human flesh, and Brassi lost his leverage over them.

The cannibals blamed the Black Hand capo. They also came to the conclusion that Beauregard was the Black Hand's minion and decided to off him, since he

knows quite a bit about their operation. The union boss is sure the Brotherhood won't quit until he's dead.

Beauregard can't go to his friends at the New Orleans Police Department because the Brotherhood has some pretty serious connections of its own, and he doesn't know who he can trust.

WHERE AND WHEN

Thanks to the deliveries, Simon knows where the Brotherhood holds its rituals—or at least the general area. The deliveries always went to a dock out in the swamps to the south of the city. There are a few old plantation houses out there, and he's guessing the group is using one of them. He can draw the investigators a detailed map to the dock.

He's also got a good idea when. The group always scheduled the deliveries on the night of the new moon. Beauregard says that's the gumshoes' best chance to catch the cabal red-handed. The families have more than enough pull to sweep anything else under the rug.

Beauregard adds that Brassi seemed pretty intrigued by the Brotherhood's original offer. He thinks the mobster may still try to cut a deal with the group. If Brassi does, Beauregard says both he and the investigators had best make sure their life insurance policies are paid up, as they are all huge liabilities.

THE LONG ARM OF THE LAW

The sound of gunfire in the posh neighborhood results in several patrol cars arriving in short order. Beauregard has time to give the heroes all the details on the Brotherhood and Brassi before they get to Blue Iris, but not much else.

The police initially assume the investigators are the bad guys, but before things get out of hand, Beauregard speaks up on their behalf. After all, he's pinning his hopes on them now, and they can't do him much good in a jail cell—or on a slab in the morgue! Still, they're wanted fugitives, so the cops take both the gumshoes and Beauregard downtown.

The group ends up spending the night in the slammer, but after the union boss spills his guts, the district attorney drops the charges against them. Lt. Coombs is sought for

questioning as well, under suspicion of tampering with an investigation. The corrupt cop gets the word through the grapevine and splits town rather than risk spending the rest of his days in Angola—with more than a few convicts he framed himself.

DERAILED INVESTIGATORS

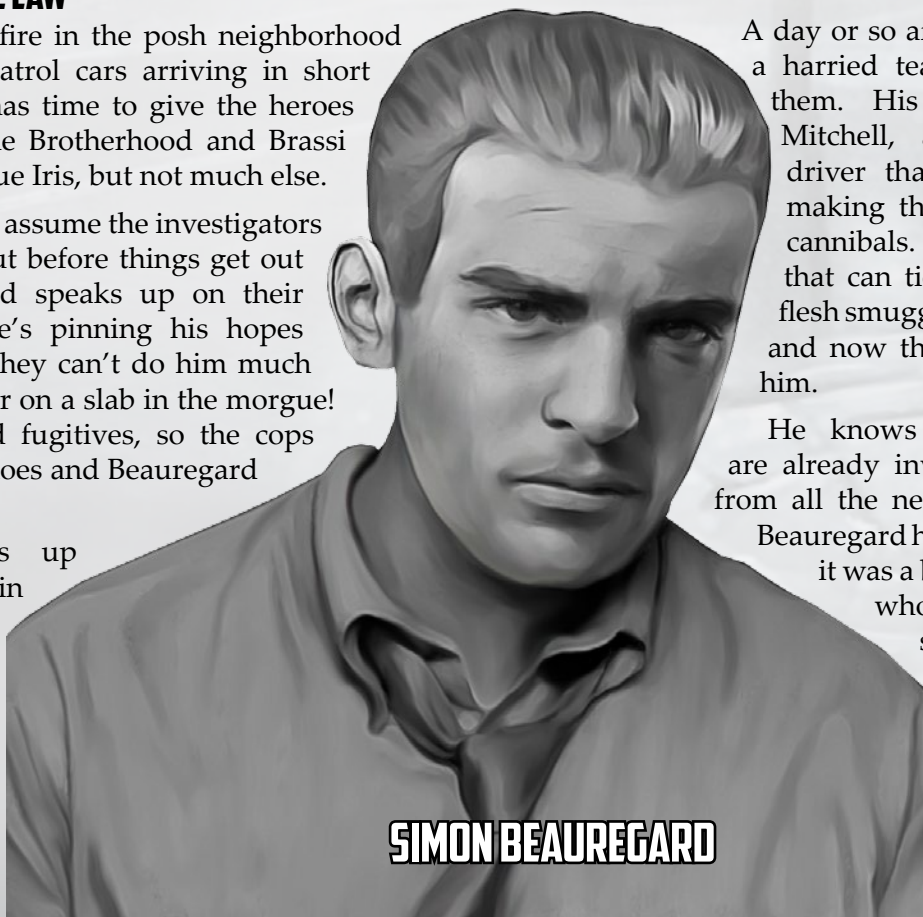
If the heroes opted to give the court system a go and won, it's fairly easy to get things back on track for the final chapter of *The Case of the Jumbo Shrimp*. Simon Beauregard is still in dutch with the Brotherhood and needs someone to bail him out. Once the heroes are out on the street, he approaches them with the same deal as in **Simon Says** (page 30). Granted, he can't offer much in the way of clearing their names since they've already done that themselves, but they do still share a mutual, very powerful set of enemies.

If they lose the case, Beauregard visits them in jail with the same offer before they're transferred to Angola. If they agree to help him, he offers to produce all the evidence necessary to get the conviction overturned. He's true to his word, but as before, the Brotherhood and Brassi still pose a threat that needs to be addressed.

Finally, if the gumshoes decide to let the Brotherhood's abominations finish the union boss off, or they simply fail to protect him, all is not lost. Documents found in Blue Iris serve to clear the group of the charges and indict Lt. Coombs in evidence tampering.

A day or so after the dust clears, a harried teamster approaches them. His name is Frank Mitchell, and he was the driver that Beauregard had making the deliveries to the cannibals. He's the last link that can tie the group to the flesh smuggling from Hillberg, and now they're trying to kill him.

He knows the investigators are already involved in the case from all the newspaper coverage. Beauregard had filled him in that it was a bunch of rich kooks who were practicing some sort of black magic. He knows the when and where of the rituals, thanks to making the deliveries.





THE HIDDEN TEMPLE

Baron LaCroix might be the most infamous of all *bokkor* in the history of New Orleans, but even he had to learn from somebody. That somebody was a Haitian conjure doctor by the name of Papa Natanga. And the old man didn't just teach LaCroix the dark arts; he also taught him a good deal about evil as well.

Papa Natanga was old by the time he made it to New Orleans in the late 1860s. Rumors at the time claimed he'd even fought in the Haitian rebellion at the end of the 18th century. Age didn't put a damper on the man's ability though. Baron LaCroix tolerated the arrogant sorcerer for years, hoping to pry even more secrets from him. When LaCroix's star waned in the Crescent City, Papa Natanga retreated into the dense wetlands south of the city rather than risk suffering almost inevitable reprisals at the hands of the citizenry for years of his abuses under the voodoo lord's rule.

In time, even the most evil of mortal men die. Papa Natanga breathed his last breath alone in the trackless swamp, surrounded only by his own foul creations. His home, far from the beaten path, sat unmolested for decades, the dark secrets he'd mastered moldering in the bayou. Time passed, and his name faded to little more than a bogeyman haunting children's bedtime stories.

IDLE HANDS

Michael Handley, heir to the massive Handley fortune, came to believe there were no worlds left to conquer. He already possessed more money than he could ever spend and his wealth granted him inconceivable influence in the corrupt halls of Louisiana's government. The only thing he did not own was any measurable sense of morality. In a city as steeped in a history of dark secrets and mysticism,

it was almost inevitable that he turn his attention to experimenting with black magic.

His early attempts were surprising successful, for if the Reckoners love anything more than creating a new willing and powerful minion, they've not found it yet. Delving into the history of the dark arts in New Orleans, he stumbled across tales of Papa Natanga. Further research eventually led him to the location of the old *bokkor*'s last sanctum. The old voodoo practitioner's presence placed an irrevocable taint on the surrounding swamp, which the locals call *Bayou Cauchemar* (Nightmare Bayou), and Handley was able to purchase the property for a pittance.

Inside the walls of Papa Natanga's house, Handley found a depth of arcane knowledge beyond his wildest imaginings. While much of the *bokkor*'s art remained outside his reach, Handley was able to master some of the more practical applications, including the crafting of curse objects, the creation of true zombies, and most importantly, the ritual to extend one's life indefinitely.

With this last, Michael was able to sway others of similar social status and means to his side. What better to offer the man or woman who has everything—except a shred of humanity or morality, of course—than eternal life?

And thus, the Brotherhood of the Flesh was formed. Each month, on the new moon, the members meet in a clearing behind Papa Natanga's old house to enact their horrid ceremony. The isolation of the swamp protects them from discovery. They know all too well even their massive power and influence would not be able to protect them if their disgusting practice were ever exposed.

LOST PROPERTY

At this point, the heroes have much of the story on the Brotherhood of the Flesh—or at least the important parts: they're powerful and they're likely going to be out to get the investigators. Oh, and they also eat people. The group also knows, thanks to either Beauregard or Frank Mitchell, that the Brotherhood has its pound (or twenty) of flesh delivered to a dock out in the boonies south of the city once a month on the night of the new moon.

What they don't know is to where the package goes after it leaves the dock. There are several ways the shylocks can go about tracking down its final destination. Bookworm types may hit the public records to find a lead, but the more hands-on investigators might decide a trip out to the backwoods is more in line with their skill set. Or a group might try multiple routes to get a line on where the Brotherhood is meeting for its dark ritual.

PAPER TRAIL

The dock where the truck drops its package off is about two miles from nowhere on a stretch of dirt road in southern Jefferson Parish, west of the city. Looking at a map of the region, the nearest town is a tiny dot on the map named Grand Bayou. However, there is nothing near the actual dock but lots of water and trees. A detective can hit the Jefferson Parish courthouse in Gretna, across the river from the Garden District, to search the parish records.

Assuming the heroes have the list of names discovered in the Hillberg accountant's office, they can compare it to the records in Jefferson Parish. If they don't and you want to cut them a break, you can have Beauregard be aware of Handley's name—maybe through Brassi. Without his name, any records search, no matter how thorough, is pointless.

Hitting the Books (see *Deadlands Noir*) eventually turns up Handley's name associated with a deed to a piece of property deep in the swamps southwest of New Orleans. No roads lead to it, and the closest access point is the dock in question, which lies about five miles away, as the crow flies. Tracking the records back finds he purchased it from the state about 15 years ago, and there is no record of any private ownership prior to that point. The deed references only the land—waterlogged as maps appear to make it—and mentions no structures on it whatsoever. (Papa Natanga never bothered buying the land he settled on, so there's no official record he lived there or that he built a house on it.)

HANDLEY'S RITUAL

The ritual doesn't grant actual immortality. It prevents aging and renders the participants immune to disease. The recipient of the magic can still be killed by violent means: stabbing, poison, drowning, and so on. However, eternal youth and health is nothing to sneeze at, especially when you're mind-bogglingly rich to begin with.

We won't go too far into the unpleasant details of the ceremony beyond the facts you already know. It requires the participants to consume human flesh, and it must be performed on the night of the new moon.

There are also a number of *petro vèvé* and other foul arcane symbols that must be inscribed in blood at the site of the unholy feast, which is another reason the Brotherhood uses the swamp island. Writing the symbols is a time consuming process, taking a couple of days to complete. It's just easier to do it somewhere they can leave them up for reuse. The blood, guts, bones, and weird *vèvé* would also be hard to explain to the maid in the morning.

Failure to enact the ritual each month causes the individual's true age to catch up to her overnight. Any diseases that had been held at bay ravage the body as well. While the black magician can perform the ritual again on the next new moon, it does not restore any lost years and only once again stops the progress of time from that point.



GRAND BAYOU

Should the heroes head out the back roads to poke around looking for clues, the dock itself offers little help. It's at the end of a short dirt road that branches off from another dirt road that carries what little traffic moves through this part of the wetlands. There are tire tracks leading to and from the dock, but nothing else of interest. Beyond the end of the dock, a lone channel leads off into the depths of a heavily-forested bayou.

Grand Bayou, a tiny burg that lies about two miles further down the main road, is the closest thing that passes for civilization. The collection of half-a-dozen badly weathered clapboard buildings looks like much of the present century has passed it by. A total of two aging pickups appear to be the only two motor vehicles in town, but what Grand Bayou lacks in internal-combustion, it makes up for in chickens and a goat or two that roam free throughout the town.

A single overhead phone line leads into town, ending at the largest building in town, a one-story structure with a hand-painted sign over the door that reads GENERAL STORE. The rest of the façade is adorned by a variety of smaller signs, advertising soft drinks, snack foods, and shaving cream. A single gas pump sits out front.

LOCAL COLOR

Asking around town for leads to the possible location of the Brotherhood's meeting spot could prove tricky. The detectives should also feel exactly how isolated they are in the tiny hamlet, as people peer at them from between ragged curtains or outright stare as they walk down the street. The heroes might also consider that it's very possible the Brotherhood has one or more of the townsfolk on their payroll—they don't, but a little paranoia never hurts.

Investigators bluntly asking about cannibals or cultists are usually met with a blank stare or door slammed in their faces. Questions about rich or city folks in the area does reveals the locals do occasionally see fancy cars to the north of town (near the dock). The vehicles show up late in the afternoon and again early in the morning hours the next day. (The drivers drop their employers off and pick them up again after the ceremony, but most of the townsfolk don't know this.)

A Legwork attempt eventually leads the group to an old man sitting in a rickety rocking chair outside the general store. As long as they ask some question about the swamp, strange locations, or odd occurrences—no matter how vague—he looks the heroes up and down, and says in heavily-accented English:

"There's somethin' mal out in Bayou Cauchemar. Everyone hereabouts knows to avoid it. The critters act funny and any crasse that lives out that way is best avoided. There's a grande maison on an island out there no one with any sense sets foot on. A few years back a couple of teenagers went there to sample a jug of 'shine pendant la nuit. We never found 'em—just parts."

The old man provides directions to the house, if asked, but calls the investigators "couyons"—or foolish people. An airboat can be rented from the general store at a cost of \$5 a day, and the detectives can also hire a pilot for it in Grand Bayou for another \$5 a day. Use the stats for Cajun Hunter from *Deadlands Noir* if the heroes hire a local guide to drive the airboat.

GUMSHOES IN THE WOODS

One fairly unwise tactic is for the shamuses to rent a boat as above and just head blindly off into the swamp hoping to stumble across the cultists' lair. Unless one or more of the group is a fairly experienced woodsman, this can quickly become a quick route to disaster.

To find Papa Natanga's island, the heroes must get four successes on a Survival roll at a -2 penalty. A raise on the roll counts as an additional success. Each roll represents about four hours of puttering up and down streams and channels in the swamp, so unless they get really lucky, it takes more than a single day in the bayous to discover the island.

Worse, each time the group fails a Survival roll, they run into one of the encounters listed in **Trouble in the Swamp** (page 36). You can roll randomly or just pick one to throw at the heroes, Marshal.

FOLLOW THAT BOAT!

As a last resort, the investigators may decide to hide out near the dock and follow the cultists' boat after it picks up the package of human flesh. This is a tricky proposition from the outset, but it's possible the heroes may find themselves reduced to grasping at straws.

The first step is making sure they have a boat. Their teamster source let them know the Brotherhood used an airboat to make the pick-up, so a rowboat or raft isn't going to do the trick. They can always rent one in Grand Bayou, as noted above, if the detectives don't have a suitable watercraft of their own.

Assuming they get to the dock ahead of time, the heroes find a suitable hiding spot in the nearby swamp from which to monitor the exchange. Thanks to the thick vegetation in the area and the fact the deliverymen aren't expecting any meddlers to already be in the bayou, the group doesn't need to make rolls



to avoid notice, as long as they're at least paying lip service to being careful.

Following the boat is where things get tough. This is a Tailing attempt, as detailed in *Deadlands Noir*. The boat pilot rolls the lowest of either his Boating or Stealth skill versus the Brotherhood flunky's Notice. If the party wins, everything's hunky-dory. The trip takes only about an hour, so they can follow the delivery boat all the way to the island.

If the detectives lose the roll but don't get noticed, they're stuck wandering the wetlands as described in **Gumshoes in the Woods** (above). The delivery boat does get them started in the right direction though, and there's some activity on the island to help them pinpoint it. They only have to make one Survival roll (at a -2 penalty) to find the Brotherhood's meeting spot in this case. Of course, if they fail the roll, they have to deal with one of the encounters listed in **Trouble in the Swamp** (page 36).

If the explorers get spotted, the cannibals' deliveryman tries to lose them in the swamp. Treat this as a standard Chase as detailed in *Savage Worlds* (five rounds length). If the investigators manage to catch their quarry, they can use the Interrogation rules from *Deadlands Noir* to get the boatman to sing about the location of the island.

If they forgo attacking, their pilot can attempt Stealth rolls instead. If he makes two in a row before the delivery boat escapes, the shamuses fool the other pilot into believing he's lost his pursuers and they can make another Tailing attempt.

The worst case scenario is that the delivery boat spots the detectives, then loses them in the Chase. Luckless heroes in this situation find themselves stumbling through the swamp as in **Gumshoes in the Woods** (above), and must make two Survival rolls at a -2 penalty to locate the Brotherhood's lair. This takes several hours, but fortunately the ritual is a lengthy one and the cannibals are just wrapping up when the cavalry arrives.

- **Delivery Boatman:** Use the stats for Cajun Hunter in *Deadlands Noir*.

"IT ALWAYS ENDS IN A BAYOU, DOESN'T IT? OR A CEMETERY. WHAT'S WITH THAT?"

—Harvey Jenkins,
Private Eye

BAYOU CAUCHEMAR

Fear Level 4

The swampland for miles around Papa Natanga's old haunt still bears the stain of the *bokkor's* dark practices. The passing of years hasn't blunted the taint of evil; in fact, rumor and dread of the place has spread through the surrounding area like a plague. The very name by which locals know that forsaken stretch of wetlands translates to Nightmare Bayou.

The swamp's appearance lives up to its name. The native cypress trees are stunted in height, but grow in thick copses creating deep shadows only a few feet from the maze-like channels that wind between them. Tree limbs stretch toward the waterways, reaching down like skeletal hands trying to snatch at a passing boat. A traveler's attention is constantly drawn to movement between the trees, only to discover it's just Spanish moss shivering in an almost-imperceptible breeze.

The water is blackish and almost totally opaque, but lily pads threaten to clog even the open channels. Mysterious bubbles and ripples serve to remind a visitor that while nearly anything could be floating just out of sight beneath the surface, *something* definitely is.

The trees and other vegetation deaden nearly every sound beyond a few feet. Conversely, any sound an explorer makes—the splash of an oar, a whispered word, or even just a foot shuffling against the bottom of a boat—seems far louder than normal. The silence is oppressive and makes the rare unexplained splash or crack of wood that much more ominous, as it reminds a hero that he is not alone in the dark and deep wilderness.

NAVIGATING THROUGH HELL

Although the small island on which Papa Natanga's aged house stands is only about five miles from the dock, the bayou forces any visitors to take a far more circuitous route to get there. Add in some time for the occasional snag or detour around a recent deadfall or shallow stretch and it takes a good hour or so to reach the isle by boat.

The maze-like nature of the channels, combined with deadfalls, hidden snags, and the like, make any trip through the bayou challenging. Even with directions or a map, navigating successfully through Bayou Cauchemar is a challenge requiring a successful Survival roll. If the heroes have previously made the voyage, say in an initial scouting trip, they receive a +2 bonus.

A failure on the Survival roll means the group has become temporarily lost and also runs into one of the encounters in **Trouble in the Swamp**. A second Survival roll is needed to get them back on track.

TROUBLE IN THE SWAMP

Bayou Cauchemar is a dangerous place to wander. Anytime the heroes fail a Survival roll to navigate through the bayou or locate Papa Natanga's island, they face one of the encounters below. You can either roll 1d6 or just choose one that seems fitting, Marshal. And of course, feel free to through any of the following encounters at your investigators just because you want to spice up their trek.

1) THE FERRYMAN

At the confluence of four waterways, the boat's pilot slows to survey the available routes. Allow the shamuses Notice rolls. The character getting the highest total spots an old, moss-covered skeleton propped against a tree trunk. The skeleton has obviously been here for decades. The wreckage of an old raft lies smashed on the bank nearby.

The skeleton's right forearm rests on the ground, hand outstretched, palm up, almost as if asking, or maybe demanding, an offering. Should one of the detectives go ashore and examine it, she finds a number of coins lying in the muck around it. Some were minted fairly recent, but the dates on others reach back to well before the turn of the century. Clearly, locals have left gifts to the old bones for decades.

If a hero drops a coin at the skeleton, the group gets +1 to all Survival rolls until they leave Bayou Cauchemar. This bonus does not persist if they leave and return later. A second gift to the skeleton does grant the bonus again.

If a sticky-fingered gumshoe decides to fill her pockets with the coins instead, the group instead gets a -2 to all Survival rolls in the swamp. Worse, all damage rolls against the thief herself receive a +1 bonus for as long as she is in the swamp—even if she leaves and comes back later. This persists until she returns the stolen coins to the skeleton.

2) GATOR BAIT

The party's boat gets mired in a thick morass of flotsam and swamp muck. To free it, the heroes must push it loose using poles, oars, or tree branches. Up to four characters can make Strength rolls to try to free it in this manner. A total of four successes are necessary to shove it clear.

A group of alligators is lurking nearby, and as soon as the investigators begin to work on the snag, they ram the boat. Everyone in the craft must make an Agility roll to avoid being tossed into the murky water. Those gumshoes who were working to free the watercraft receive a -2 penalty on their roll. As soon as some poor soul falls overboard, the alligators converge on him and attack.

The gators continue to bump the boat each round until the heroes free it and get underway, one or more characters is knocked into the water, or more than half their number is Incapacitated.

- **Alligator (1, plus 1 per 2 heroes):** Use the stats for Alligator in *Savage Worlds*.

3) IT WOULD HAVE BIT ME!

Give the heroes a Notice roll. Any who fail are surprised when a poisonous snake drops into the boat as it passes under a low-lying tree branch. The most likely type is a cottonmouth, but the bayous are home to nearly every type of venomous snake found in the Confederacy.

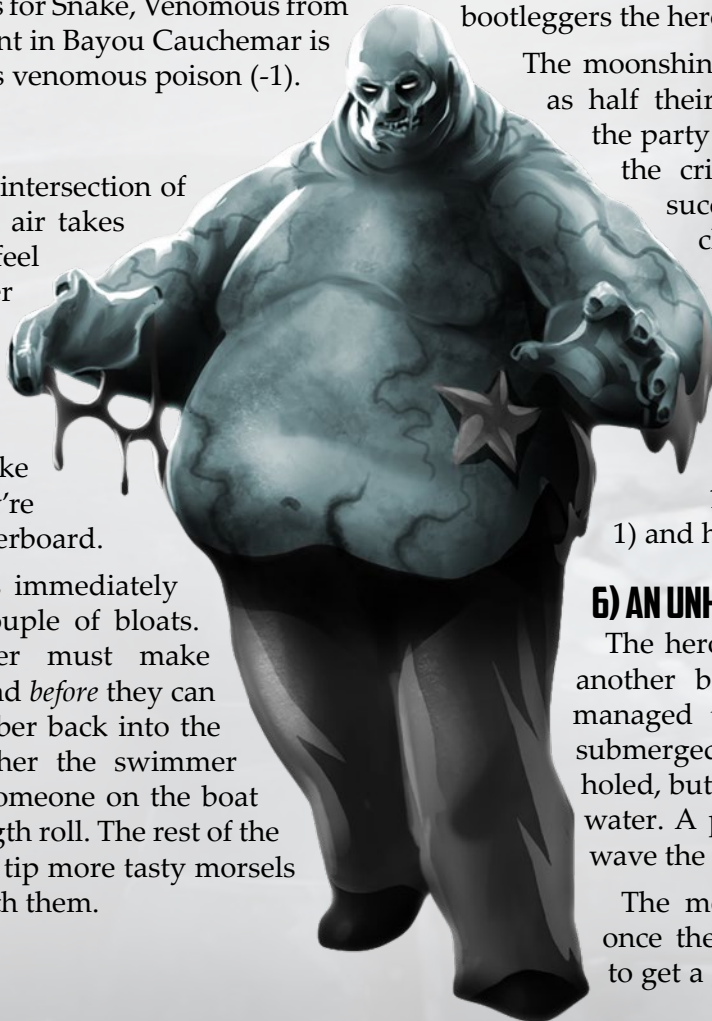
If any of the investigators was surprised, the snake attacks her first. It fights until slain.

- **Snake (1):** Use the stats for Snake, Venomous from *Savage Worlds*. The evil taint in Bayou Cauchemar is so powerful, the snake has venomous poison (-1).

4) SWAMP BLOAT

As the boat reaches the intersection of a couple of channels, the air takes on an almost palpable feel of dread. Out of the water burst several pairs of grayish, swollen hands that grab the sides of the craft and begin rocking it. All passengers must make Agility checks (at -2 if they're standing) or be thrown overboard.

Anyone in the water is immediately attacked by at least a couple of bloats. Characters in the water must make Swimming rolls each round *before* they can attack or attempt to clamber back into the boat, which requires either the swimmer make an Agility roll or someone on the boat pull them up with a Strength roll. The rest of the undead continue to try to tip more tasty morsels into the murky depths with them.



The bloats continue their attack until they are all defeated or the heroes pilot their boat out of reach.

- **Bloats (1 per hero):** Use the stats for Bloat from *Deadlands Noir*.

5) TROUBLE BREWING

Not every danger in the swamp is supernaturally evil. Outlaws have long used the twisting waterways and thick vegetation to hide from prying eyes, and it's no different nowadays. And while alcohol is no longer illegal, the revenue counters in Richmond look unkindly on anyone doing it without paying the appropriate taxes and fees. So, moonshiners still stash their stills in out of the way places—like islands in dense, supposedly haunted swamps where no one else goes.

The heroes just stumbled onto one such operation. Along the shore ahead of their boat, the detectives spot a fire flickering through the trees. If they investigate, the armed moonshiners take one look at the boat full of city-folk and take them for government agents there to bust up their equipment and haul them to jail. A fast-talking shamus might be able to talk them out of a fight before the buckshot starts flying. It takes a Persuasion roll at a -2 penalty and a good story to convince the bootleggers the heroes aren't revenueurs.

The moonshiners give up the fight as soon as half their number is Incapacitated. If the party decides to pass them by, give the criminals a Notice roll. If it's successful, the bootleggers give chase in their own airboat (see *Deadlands Noir*).

- **Moonshiner (1 per hero):** Use the stats for Cajun Hunter from *Deadlands Noir*. Armed with double-barreled shotguns (Range 12/24/48, Damage 1-3d6, RoF 1) and hunting knives (Str+d4)

6) AN UNHELPING HAND

The heroes come across the wreck of another boat. An inexperienced pilot managed to ground it on a partially-submerged cypress stump. The boat is holed, but the stump is keeping it above water. A pair of men on board tries to wave the investigators down for help.

The men are dressed in suits and, once the detectives are close enough to get a gander, look like pretty tough

customers. They're actually Black Hand muscle in the swamp under orders from Brassi. Either they're also trying to find the Brotherhood's lair or they're en route there to join Brassi in the attack depending on when the group encounters them.

As soon as the gumshoes come within boarding distance, out come the thugs' guns as they try to intimidate the strangers into giving up their boat. If the shamuses refuse, the hoods open fire. These hardcases fight until they're both down.

If the group instead passes them by, the goons open fire but only get a round or two of shots in before the swamp hides the investigators for view.

- **Black Hand goons (2):** Use the stats for Mafia Soldier in *Deadlands Reloaded*. One is armed with a Tommy gun (Range 12/24/48, Damage 2d6+2, RoF 3, Auto, AP 1), the other with a pump shotgun (Range 12/24/48, Damage 1-3d6, RoF 1). Both carry switchblades (Str+d4).

ISLE OF THE DAMNED

Papa Natanga's house is on one of the few stretches of dry land anywhere in Bayou Cauchemar. Cypress trees grow along the outer edges of the island, and Spanish moss hangs thickly from their branches, almost completely concealing the one-story clapboard construction from view. Almost as though they shun the house, no trees grow within 100' of it, but thick thorn bushes, poison ivy, and other unwholesome plants cover the ground thickly between the treeline and house. Moving through the vegetation quietly is difficult, and any Stealth rolls to do so suffer a -2 penalty.

A single short pier sits at the southern end of the island. A cleared path leads through the noxious undergrowth to the front door of the aged structure. The path is perpetually muddy, and a Notice roll finds ample evidence of footprints along its length, although the age is indeterminate. A Tracking roll spots recent prints, perhaps no older than a week. (These belong to Brassi's thugs who located the hideout only a few days before the heroes.)

If the party has time to actually look around the island, they find numerous sites suitable for beaching a boat besides the dock.

A Notice or Survival roll also spots several areas of quicksand hidden in the overgrowth. These are easily avoided, but if an unsuspecting victim stumbles into one, she sinks completely in three rounds and begins drowning. A Strength roll at a -4 penalty allows the victim to stop sinking, provided she has something to hold onto—a vine, tree limb, or rope, for example—

and a raise pulls her free. Her companions can assist with their own Strength rolls, but on a critical failure, they're pulled in and begin sinking as well.

HOUSE OF A DEVIL

The house itself shows its age, with missing shingles, rotting boards, and non-existent paint. There are only a few broken window panes, however, and the front and rear doors are intact. A snoop trying to sneak a peek through one of the windows finds the inside surprisingly dark and shadowed. No interior details can be observed from outside.

Anyone making a Notice roll detects the faint outline of badly weathered symbols and lettering covering much of the outside, particularly around any window or door. A Knowledge (Occult) roll recognizes them as foul sigils and inscriptions, and a raise tells the arcane scholar that the writings aren't intended to protect from harm so much as to entice evil entities *to* the structure. A Faith roll by a character with Arcane Background (Voodoo) provides the same results.

Inside, the house is a tangled mess of narrow hallways and confusingly designed rooms. Doors lead haphazardly between the various chambers without rhyme or reason. Scattered throughout the structure are all manner of strange knickknacks, talismans, and other paraphernalia associated with the occult, but none of any real power. Handley long ago pilfered anything of true magical value.

Behind the house is a large cleared patch of ground about 50' in diameter. In the center is a strange stone altar, its top heavily stained a dark, reddish-brown. Around it are various items and inscriptions that a Knowledge (Occult) roll or a voodooist can identify as associated with *petro* voodoo.

A group of investigators that conducts a detailed search of the house finds a trapdoor leading to an empty attic in one of the side rooms. From here, they can observe the ritual clearing through cracks in the gables. Unfortunately, the ceiling boards have begun to rot and weaken. Any round in which an investigator moves, there is a 1 in 6 chance of a board beneath her breaking. This requires her to make an Agility roll or fall and suffer 1d6+ damage. The noise immediately draws the attention of anyone in hearing range as well.

Although there is no cellar, due to the high water table, there is a crawlspace between the flooring and the ground under the house. This also makes a decent hiding spot—without the chance for a disastrous fall.

PAPA NATANGA'S ISLAND



PARTY CRASHERS

The night of the new moon, Handley and his fellow cultists meet at Papa Natanga's house to take part in the unsavory practices necessary to enact their ritual. The heroes can either arrive early to set up an ambush or surveillance if they're just trying to gather evidence to bring down the cannibals, or get to the island after the ritual is already underway if they just want to throw some lead at them. To keep the characters and Black Hand from tripping over each other, whichever course the heroes take, Emilio Brassi and his soldiers do the opposite. If the investigators get there before Handley, Brassi's group arrives during the ceremony, and if the party gets there later, Brassi and his torpedoes have been lying in wait on the island.

The Brotherhood arrives on the island by boat, shortly after nightfall. They come in groups of two or three, and after each boat delivers its passengers, the pilot takes it back into the swamp. The cultists' boats don't come from the same dock that Beauregard knows about. It wouldn't do for some country-bumpkin sheriff to spot some of New Orleans' more prominent socialites getting on a boat also carrying slices of human meat.

Michael Handley arrives by himself, accompanied by three companions. Two are obviously bodyguards, and they remain at the dock. He leads the third, a slow-moving vacant-eyed man, with a rope into the house.

This an actual voodoo zombie, something normally far beyond Handley's abilities to create. This one was left behind by Papa Natanga. The bokkor also crafted several amulets that protect the wearer from the undead juggernaut's attack, which Handley, his henchmen, and the rest of the Brotherhood wear around their necks.

The henchman remain to keep watch at the dock. They wave off any uninvited visitors and open fire as soon as any persistent meddlers get too close. They are under strict orders to stay at the dock, but if a loud fight or other commotion begins at the house or clearing, they come running. Should a gun battle (or other loud ruckus) begin at the dock, the Brotherhood doesn't leave the clearing, but does prepare to greet any unwelcome guests.

- **Handley's Henchmen:** Use the stats for Thug from *Deadlands Noir*. They are armed with pump-action shotguns (Range 12/24/48, Damage 1-3d6, RoF 1).

PARDON MY INTERRUPTION

If the heroes set up before the cultists reach the island, they can observe the Brotherhood begin the ritual. Handley leads it, and it involves a fairly complicated

series of incantations and a few burnt offerings. His followers perform a variety of tasks at various points, such as chants, lighting foul-smelling incense, and so on, as directed by Handley. The entire ceremony takes several hours, with the consumption of the flesh taking place only near the end.

Whether the investigators are able to gather compelling evidence against the Brotherhood's members during the ceremony largely depends on how they go about it. Flash photography is obviously a dead giveaway to their presence, but a clever group may come up with a workable plan.

Regardless, if the heroes are content to stand by and watch, Brassi and his boys interrupt the ceremony before it's complete. If the gumshoes instead decide to take down the cultists on their own, the Black Hand arrives three rounds after the fight begins. If the guards at the dock haven't been taken care of beforehand, the two men arrive two rounds into the fight—possibly with the Black Hand goons only a few steps behind them!

SHOWDOWN IN THE SWAMP

Brassi's original goal is to learn the secret of the Brotherhood's ritual. He wants to keep at least Handley alive long enough to teach him the necessary steps to eternal youth. Everyone else is expendable toward that end, and the capo doesn't plan to leave any loose ends once he's learned the ritual anyway.

The presence of the investigators, if they make themselves known, initially confuses the gangster, but ultimately doesn't complicate his plan. They're just more bullet-ridden corpses waiting to be made as far as he's concerned. The gumshoes have nothing to offer him, except testimony against him in court if they survive.


No plan survives the first round of combat, and that holds true for Brassi's. Handley's zombie attacks anyone not wearing an amulet as soon as they come close. The lesser members of the Brotherhood also attack with surprising, almost animalistic, fury, especially for folks who number among the elite of New Orleans high society. The dark rites, cannibalism, and repeated exposure to the evil influence of Bayou Cauchemar have so corrupted them that they temporarily lose all vestiges of humanity.

Handley is the only one who maintains his composure. As soon as he spots either the investigators or Brassi, he knows the gig is up if either of the interlopers prevails. If possible, he uses *fear* or *confusion* to confound any attackers long enough for the zombie to dispatch them. He can also use *zombie* to raise a few reinforcements from Papa Natanga's victims buried on the island.

INTERIOR DETAIL



The Black Hand goons try to submit if Brassi goes down. The Brotherhood of the Flesh isn't having any of that, though, and fights to the death themselves. The zombie continues to attack anyone without an amulet. Handley tries to bribe his way out of trouble if the fight goes against him, but only accepts surrender if he thinks he can't just kill his enemies outright.

 **Emilio Brassi:** See page XX.

 **Michael Handley:** See page XX.

- **Black Hand Soldiers (2, plus 1 per hero):** Use the stats for Mafia Soldier from *Deadlands Noir*. Half are armed with sawed-off shotguns (Range 12/24/48, Damage 1–3d6, RoF 1–2), and the others with Tommy guns (Range 12/24/48, Damage 2d6+1, RoF 3).

- **Brotherhood Cultists (5):** Use the stats for Cultist from *Deadlands Noir*. All are armed with knives (Str+d4), and two are carrying Star pocket revolvers (Range 10/20/40, Damage 2d6–1).

- **Zombie:** Use the stats for Zombie from *Deadlands Noir*.

AFTERMATH

One way or the other, the Brotherhood of the Flesh is disbanded after the investigators' raid. Even if Handley or the other cultists survive the fight, the ritual is disrupted leaving them to face the consequences—rapid aging and possibly even the effects of a debilitating disease or three. The cannibal magicians' bodies succumb to the unnatural strain and all pass away within days of the events on Papa Natanga's island.

If Brassi is killed, there are no reprisals against the gumshoes by the Black Hand. The Mob considers the entire affair repulsive, and it's not the sort of thing Silver Dollar Sam wants his name associated with. The Black Hand is a traditional organization. Numbers games, blackmail, even murder is one thing. Eating people is out of the question.

As long as the detectives don't go blabbing about Brassi or the Black Hand's involvement, Sam Carolla lets bygones be bygones. Should they get chatty, one of his goon squads pays the shamuses a polite visit explaining the situation. If the heroes don't take the hint, they might quickly find themselves in a war with the Black Hand.

HOW DO WE KILL THIS THING?

The zombie should pose a serious threat to any group. The only two ways to permanently defeat it aren't available to the heroes in the fight at the island. However, all is not lost.

Papa Natanga's amulets provide protection for anyone wearing them. You might allow the investigators a chance to notice them, including the fact that Handley's henchmen are also wearing them. It's easiest to take one from a downed cultist, but grappling one of the cannibals long enough to wrench it off is also a possibility.

Another option is luring the abomination into one of the quicksand pits around the island. While it won't technically destroy it, the quicksand does drag it down and trap it, at least for the duration of this adventure.

Inventive groups might also come up with other solutions, such as trapping it in the house long enough to bring the building down on top of it. Again, this doesn't necessarily kill the monster, but it does give the gumshoes time to escape.

And finally, there's always good, old-fashioned running away. The heroes might even benefit from learning they can't defeat every horror of the Reckoning by hurling more bullets. The zombie can't swim and ceases pursuit once it loses sight of its victim for more than a minute. If the heroes leave the island by boat, the abomination eventually returns to its former master's home.

Otherwise, if the group plays its cards right and don't ruffle the wrong feathers, the events in Bayou Cauchemar are effectively swept under the rug. The surviving family of the Brotherhood members quickly hush up any inquiries and might even offer hush money to the investigators to make sure their family names aren't ruined by rumors in the boardrooms and whispers in knitting circles.

IN THE WRONG HANDS

Now, if Brassi survives and gets his hands on some of Handley's documents, he scrounges up enough so that after a few months of experimenting he's able to piece together the ritual himself—almost like some supernaturally evil entity wanted him to...

In that case, like Handley before him, Brassi dangles the offer of immortality like a lure to hook him some powerful friends, both within the Black Hand and the New Orleans government. He doesn't quite secure enough power to overthrow Silver Dollar Sam, but Brassi quickly becomes a mover and shaker in the city.

The Fear Level in New Orleans also rises by one if Brassi succeeds. New Orleans is used to having a bunch of gangsters shaking down respectable businesses and buying off politicians. Brassi, with his own cult of cannibals, completely changes that paradigm, plunging the city into dark times indeed.

The heroes find themselves with a powerful enemy as well, as Brassi is aware they know his secret.



ROGUE'S GALLERY

SIMON BEAUREGARD

Simon Beauregard has never met a bribe he could turn down. While he worked his way up from the rank and file of the Teamsters to driving the organization's branch in New Orleans, he has become the consummate politician. And, as such in the Crescent City, that means he's deep in the Black Hand's pocket.

Although he's clearly eating well these days and the callouses from manual labor are long gone, Beauregard still remembers how to get things done the hard way. It's just that now he prefers to pay some other sap to do it for him. Now the only dirt he wants under his fingernails comes from dirty money.

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d8, Spirit d6, Strength d6, Vigor d6

Skills: Driving d8, Fighting d6, Intimidation d6, Notice d6, Persuasion d8, Shooting d4, Streetwise d6

Charisma: +2; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 5

Hindrances: Corrupt, Greedy, Yellow

Edges: Charisma, Connections (Black Hand), Filthy Rich

Gear: Cigar case, lighter, \$200.

EMILIO BRASSI

Even for a Mob capo, Brassi is ambitious. He's always looking for a chance to better his position in the organization. More than one rival gangster has ended up on the bottom of the Mississippi when they stood between Brassi and his next goal. However, he's very careful to not antagonize anyone in the Black Hand food chain—unless he has an iron-clad plan to make sure they don't pose a threat to him down the road.

When Beauregard came to him with chance to put the screws to a bunch of sick fat cats like Handley and his

cohorts, he jumped. Then, when those same depraved individuals offered him the chance to be young and strong effectively forever, he didn't hesitate to change his plans to accommodate that new opportunity. Now that those same high-society types think they can turn the tables on him, Brassi is going to teach them the last lesson they'll ever have the chance to learn.

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d6, Spirit d8, Strength d6, Vigor d8

Skills: Driving d6, Fighting d6, Intimidation d8, Investigation d6, Knowledge (Law) d6, Knowledge (Occult) d4, Notice d8, Shooting d8, Streetwise d10

Charisma: 0; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 9 (2)/ 10 (3) vs. bullets

Hindrances: Greedy, Vow (Black Hand), Vengeful, Wanted

Gear: .45 semi-auto (Range 12/24/48, Damage 2d6+1, RoF 1, Shots 7, AP 1, Semi), bullet-proof vest (AP 2/3).

MICHAEL HANDLEY

Michael Handley earned his money the old-fashioned way—he pried it from his father's dead fingers. Heir to a vast fortune (built primarily on foreclosing war widow's mortgages after the Civil War), Handley had lots of free time on his hands. Rather than fritter it away on polo ponies and coteries, he instead delved into the dark arts.

It turns out the promise of near-eternal youth is pretty attractive to those who already have everything else—as long as they weren't above a little social cannibalism. After discovering Papa Natanga's treasure trove of evil in the swamps outside New Orleans, Handley used that knowledge to build a cabal of like-minded high-society types. Over the years, the influence of the Brotherhood of the Flesh has grown to the point they

VESTMENTS OF THE BROTHERHOOD

This repulsive outfit is made from cured human skin and covered in various occult sigils and vévé. Papa Natanga crafted the vestments himself, and they carry a powerful, but supernaturally evil, enchantment.

It consists of a chest covering, a pair of gauntlets, and a crude head piece. All the pieces must be worn by the leader of the Brotherhood's life-extending ritual for the ceremony to be effective. Furthermore, if all the pieces are donned, it grants magical Armor +4 to the wearer. Non-magical AP is not effective against the vestments.

In addition to the obvious social drawbacks to wearing another person's skin, if all the pieces are worn at one time, the wearer contracts an insatiable hunger for human flesh. In effect, the owner gains the Habit Major Hindrance (Cannibal). Failure to indulge in the practice accrues a Fatigue level a day, but cannot cause Incapacitation. Those levels can only be recovered by succumbing to the craving.

This affliction persists even after the vestments are removed. It can only be removed by abstaining from cannibalism for at least three days—and giving up an Advancement opportunity. However, putting the vestments on again reinstates the unholy hunger.

It's a harsh punishment, but anyone who's willing to put on an actual suit of human skins probably deserves it!

aren't afraid to spit in the eye of even the notorious Black Hand.

Handley appears to be in the prime of life—handsome, young, and vital.

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d10, Spirit d10, Strength d6, Vigor d8

Skills: Fighting d6, Intimidation d6, Knowledge (Occult) d8, Notice d8, Persuasion d8, Shooting d6, Witchcraft d10

Charisma: +2; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 5

Hindrances: Arrogant, Dark Secret (Cannibal), Habit (Cannibal)

Edges: Arcane Background (Black Magic), Charisma, Connections (New Orleans Government), Filthy Rich, Power Points

Powers: *Confusion, fear, zombie*; Power Points: 15.

Gear: Ritual dagger (Str+d4+2, works only for him), *Vestments of the Brotherhood* (see sidebar).

Special Abilities:

- **Voodoo Doll:** Using a personal item of a given individual, Handley can create a voodoo doll to inflict pain and even damage on that person at any distance. To use it, he must win a contest of Spirit against the intended victim. If he wins, the victim is Shaken; if he wins with a raise, the victim suffers an actual wound. Each voodoo doll can be used only once, whether the attack is successful or not.

"DON'T YOU UNDERSTAND? WE'VE ALWAYS FED ON THE POOR AND DOWNTRODDEN. I'M JUST A LITTLE MORE HONEST ABOUT IT. AND I GOTTA BE HONEST, AFTER A WHILE, YOU GET A REAL TASTE FOR IT."

—Michael Handley,
Idle Rich and Cannibal Cultist

Bob,

I never received this "evidence" you promised, or even the story it's supposed to support. If you needed booze money that badly, I could have just loaned you some—but what you ought to do is get back on the wagon. I either want that "big story" or my hundred bucks back. That came out of the paper's petty cash and my editor's going to take it out of my check if I can't show something for it.

I'm stopping by on Friday since your phone has been disconnected (big surprise).

—Roland

HANDOUT A

...the cockroaches. If it hadn't been for them, I don't know that I'd have figured this out. They led me to that second, hidden compartment in the freezer.

I'm telling you, Roland, this is huge. There are some big names involved in this—names of people who can't afford for this kind of thing to go public.

These photos are just the tip of the iceberg. I'll send you more when I have the rest of the money.

—Bob

HANDOUT B

Notes