

Dime ADVENTURES



***PRAIRIE DOGS
RIPPED MY FLESH!***

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Written by
Jesse Pingnot

Edited by
Thorin Tabor &
Jesse Pingnot

Saga Machine system by
Thorin Tabor

Tab Creations is
Ben Goreham, Jesse Pingnot, Matthew Pennell, Thorin Tabor

Exceptional playtesting by
Kat Davis, Carroll Emerson, Ben Goreham, Micah Hollis-Symynkywicz,
Matthew Kamm, Jesse Pingnot, Brian Richburg, Darin Strouts, Eric Wirtanen

Art by
Arten Stokolya, Frederic Remington, Jesse White



Tab Creations



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INTRODUCTION

Contained in this book is a complete scenario for *Dime Adventures*. The material presented here should be enough to cover somewhere between two and four evenings of play, depending on the pacing provided by the GM and the actions of the players.

Over the course of the adventure the heroes will foil a bank robbery, discover a series of hidden tunnels, fight lots and lots of blood-thirsty prairie dogs, face off against a corrupt lawman and uncover a sinister town secret!

AUTHOR'S FORWARD

You might have seen floating around the depths of the internet the cover of an old magazine called *Man's Life*. Setting aside its rampant misogyny (“Can women justify their need for extra-marital relations?”), it features some absolutely glorious cover art, a common theme of which seems to be “[vermin or other animal] ripped my flesh!” The cover then has a man fighting off a swarm of said animals, sometimes defending a woman from the swarm, her blouse just on the verge of bursting open. For some reason, her blouse is always red.

Marvelously ridiculous artwork! Sometimes I wonder if the artist had to go and have a lie down while inking it all in, just to cool off.

My favorite story title remains, “Attacked by the Furred Furies of Hell!” How do you top a name like that?

Over-the-top and weird pulp adventure is what *Dime Adventures* is all about! So when I was brainstorming ideas for scenarios, *Man's Life* and its over-the-top, absolutely bizarre stories of pulp adventure quite naturally came up.

We here at Tab Creations do not suggest that men remove their shirts before fighting swarms of small animals, as the men always seem to have done in the *Man's Life* cover art. We're all too familiar with the physiques of many RPG nerds. We do recommend all women dress appropriately for adventure, including durable clothes and comfortable shoes. If *Man's Life* is to be believed, I would avoid a red blouse, and would highly recommend undergarments of some sort. Those ladies seem to have misplaced theirs.

All kidding aside, have fun with this adventure and try to leave the misogyny at the door. I'm not bringing that along. We don't go in for that much ridiculousness.

SYNOPSIS

For a generation the town of Murcia, Illinois has harbored a terrible secret. Finding themselves living in proximity to strange, carnivorous prairie dogs, the townsfolk began a practice of sacrificing visitors and unwanted riffraff to appease these bloodthirsty rodents.

The most recent scheme involves placing ads in newspapers across the USA, promising food, board and good pay in return for “dealing with some prairie dogs.” Of course, visitors hired by mail to exterminate the rodents soon find themselves eaten by those very beasts. And so the town’s secret continues.

The bloodthirsty prairie dogs come in two varieties: giant mutant prairie dogs as big as horses, and the smaller but no less bloodthirsty prairie dog swarms. The town has even taken to capturing and selling the giant prairie dogs to a mysterious buyer going by the alias “Aaron Burr.” They’re tranquilized, loaded into cargo crates and shipped elsewhere by rail with the manifest listing them as “special tractors.”

What is a Prairie Dog?

When we first announced this scenario we had a fan from outside North America ask what exactly a prairie dog is. As a company comprised of people who grew up on the Great Plains, it hadn’t occurred to us that some people might not know.

A prairie dog is a type of burrowing ground squirrel which was historically found throughout the Great Plains of North America. They live in underground communities called “prairie dog towns” which can consist of hundreds of individuals and miles of tunnels.

Their name comes from the fact that they will take shifts watching for predators, and make a sharp “barking” sound when a threat is spotted, alerting the others in the colony.

When this scenario begins, the heroes have responded to one of the town’s job ads, placed by a farmer and rancher named John Mills.

After arriving at Murcia by train, the heroes should quickly get the feeling that not everything here is as it seems. The people of the town are close-mouthed and standoffish. Few will look the heroes in the eyes.

Exploring the town will soon be interrupted by a bank robbery! The heroes will have a chance to stop the wanted criminal Edwin Abadie and his minions from making off with an array of valuables from the bank’s vault.

Stopping the robbery may win the heroes some recognition from Jack Fowler, a man with a video camera, and a dire warning from a woman named Maggie Bracken. Maggie is deeply troubled by the town’s secret and she wants to warn the heroes away. Unfortunately, Maggie may soon end up dead.

The heroes can meet John Mills, but on the way to his ranch they will be attacked by swarms of vicious prairie dogs. Once they’ve fended off these rodents, the heroes will be given some dynamite and their task: exterminate the prairie dog infestation.

After defeating a couple prairie dog towns, the heroes will uncover a secret tunnel running under the Mills farm. If they hesitate, Mills will prompt them to investigate further.

Descending down into the darkness, the heroes will face off against environmental challenges and lots and lots of prairie dogs! As they explore, they will discover evidence that they’re not the first to be sent down into the tunnels. In fact, it appears that the town is willingly hiring outsiders and sending them down here to their deaths! The town’s secret has now been uncovered.

Returning to the surface, the heroes will find the Mills house vacant. Here they may discover that the people of the town are selling the giant prairie dogs a buyer with the alias "Aaron Burr." But before things are over, they have one more challenge to face.

Upon attempting to leave the ranch, the heroes will be accosted by Sheriff Gerand Blaston and a posse of townsfolk. They've come to make sure that the heroes don't live to spread the town's secret.

The posse defeated, the town's mayor, Frank Ness, will explain everything and beg the heroes to keep their mouths shut. From here the players may do as they wish. They might report the townsfolk to the state or federal authorities, having them all arrested. Or they might accept payment and agree to keep the town's secret while others are lured to the town to become prairie dog food.

Ready-Made Heroes

The player characters presented in *Dime Adventures: Ready-Made Heroes* are ideal for use with *Prairie Dogs Ripped My Flesh!* Simply print out the character sheets, let players choose which character each prefers and you are good to go!

Of particular note are Jutta the Mountain Woman and Milandre Two Rivers, both of whom have traveled across the Great Plains. Moraika and Nofoto Hangala may also be of interest, because of their experience with animals. Finally, Oswald Fuchs may enjoy playing with dynamite in the scenario!

Other Adventures

Prairie Dogs Ripped My Flesh! can be used alone or in conjunction with other published *Dime Adventures* scenarios. Below are some notes on how to combine this adventure with others.

- **Circles in the Sky:** Perhaps the heroes' airship breaks down shortly after departing Saint Louis and they find themselves stuck in Murcia. The people of the town promise to fix the ship, but only if the heroes deal with the prairie dog infestation in the meantime.
- **Skull-Spider Island:** Perhaps John Mills is in possession of the Eye of Wadjet, and promises it to the heroes if they rid his farm of prairie dogs. This could then lead into the other adventure, cutting to the heroes crossing the ocean with the Eye.
- **World's Fair:** John Mills might travel to the World's Fair to recruit the heroes. Alternatively, the heroes might be trying to capture the prairie dogs in this scenario to display at the World's Fair.



THE TOWN THAT CALLED FOR AID!

In this chapter the heroes will explore the town of Murcia, Illinois, foil a bank robbery, receive a dire warning, meet their patron, fight some prairie dogs and unearth a mysterious tunnel.

TRAIN TO MURCIA

This scenario begins with the heroes on a train bound for Murcia, Illinois, a town about 20 miles south of Moline, along the Mississippi River. They are seated together, and they all know that one John Mills, a farmer on the outskirts of Murcia, has hired them to exterminate a massive prairie dog infestation.

To advertise the job, John Mills posted an ad in several newspapers, to which the heroes responded and were hired via mail correspondence. Their last letter included their train tickets, a small amount of pocket money for food and lodging along the way

and instructions to meet Mills at Murcia's old grist mill after they have bought any supplies they need. However, he has left firm instructions that the heroes are not to use any poison. Mills does not want any of his soil contaminated or his livestock killed.

- Give the players some time to interact and get to know each other.
- In theory, the job should take a week or so and each hero will receive a Wealth 5 payment for her time.

ARRIVING AT THE STATION

When the conversation winds down, the train will pull into Murcia. It is the end of the line.

- As the heroes are getting off the train, a successful Per/awareness-8 flip will bring their attention to some crates that are being loaded into a cargo car. The crates are huge—big enough for elephants! Low,

Murcia, Illinois

The town of Murcia, Illinois was founded in 1843. The center of its economy is farming, the grist mill and the local ferry across the Mississippi River.

In 1850, the Second Sauk War (also known as the Second Black Hawk War, despite being led by Black Hawk's son Nashashuk) destroyed the town of Bison, which had perviously been across the river. The survivors of the Bison Massacre settled in Murcia. Only the ferry landing and the foundations of the First Baptist Church of Bison remain on the other side of the water.

Murcia is a town of about 350 buildings, including the grist mill, post office, train depot, general store, some small manufacturing buildings and about 300 homes.

vicious growls emit from one of them, and it shakes violently as it is loaded into the car.

- The heroes will not be allowed near where this is happening, as it is obviously dangerous, and the workers do not want to be distracted. They will not answer any questions, instead telling players to stay back and let them work.
- The crates each contain a giant killer prairie dog. If necessary, use the Giant Killer Prairie Dog stats on page 238 of the *Dime Adventures* core rulebook.

EXPLORING THE TOWN

The heroes may now buy any supplies they wish and begin to explore the town. Generally speaking, the people of Murcia are uninterested in the heroes. They will answer questions, but don't otherwise engage the characters. They don't know much outside their town's history and day-to-day business.

- A successful Per/socialize-10 flip will allow a hero to conclude that they are actively being avoided.
- With a successful Per/streetwise-12 flip, the character may realize that some townsfolk are casting furtive glances at the heroes, some fearful and some pitying.

INTERACTIONS IN TOWN

While the heroes are exploring town, there are a number of characters with whom they might interact.

- Jack Fowler is the only other outsider in town. He is also one of the most talkative characters with whom the heroes might interact. He is a cameraman from Philadelphia who is here to shoot a (silent) film about daily life on the frontier. See his sidebar on page 11.

- Gerald Blaston is the sheriff of Stone Island County and Murcia is the county seat. If the heroes cause any problems in town, he will be sent to deal with them. His description and stats are found on page 28.

- The mayor of Murcia is Frank Ness. If the characters persist with questions, they will be directed to him. He will be visibly uncomfortable. His description and stats are found on page 30.

- Finally, Maggie Bracken is an older woman from the town who is having a crisis of conscience. She may attempt half-heartedly to get the team's attention, but only if no one else in town is watching. See her sidebar on page 12.

BANK ROBBERY!

When the party is almost done buying supplies, shots will ring out from the direction of the post office, which also functions as the town bank. The bank vault is being robbed!

SETTING UP THE SCENE

When the shooting begins, the heroes will be in the general store, on the south side of the road. The post office is across the street, to the north. On either side are houses. The house east of the post office shares a wall with it.

- When setting up the combat map, the street is its own zone, as is each building, except the post office.
- The post office has three zones: the entrance, the counter (where the tellers are) and the back room. The bank's safe is in the back room.
- Behind the post office is an alleyway, which is its own zone as well. In the alleyway is a car (a 1904 Corbin with a cargo tonneau).

Edwin Abadie

"I will be a legend!"

Str 6, **Dex** 6, **Spd** 8, **End** 7, **Int** 6, **Per** 7, **Chr** 7, **Det** 9

Defense 10/21, **Willpower** 11/22, **DR** 1(3♠), **HP** 23

Skills: Animals 1, Athletics 4, Awareness 3, Deception 2, Guns 5, Mechanics 2

Medicine 1, Melee 4, Persuade 4, Socialize 1, Streetwise 4, Tactics 4, Vehicles 3

Shotgun: +9♥ vs. Defense (♠12/♥9/♦6/♣3). Hands 2, Range 3, Reload 2, Shots 5.

♥ **Shredding Shot:** Increase the target's Bleeding consequence by a severity, or by two severities with a critical hit.

Sword: +7♥ vs. Defense (♠13/♥10/♦7/♣4).

Villain: HP doubled, 5 AP per round. This is already factored into the above stats.

Equipment: Shotgun, Sword, Leather jacket (Worn), Military Helmet (Helmet, Worn), Pants (fancy).

Edwin Abadie has told countless conflicting stories about where he came from and why he does what he does. One or two of them may even be true. At his core, Edwin is vain. He wears a red leather jacket, bright blue pants and bright orange gloves to better flaunt his criminal capers. He is determined to make himself a legendary bank robber whose story will be told for centuries. To this end, he will gladly chat up his victims and loves to taunt those who oppose him with long speeches. If Errol Flynn were famous yet, Abadie would be trying to emulate him in every way. He views Pancho Villa as a rival for fame in banditry.

- A locked and heavily-secured door connects the post office entryway with the back room. It is open at the beginning of the combat.
- Moving from the entryway to the counter zone requires a Dex/athletics-12 flip, as the character must squeeze between the counter itself and the grill above it. It is placed there to keep people from hopping the counter easily. Anyone within the counter zone has a Cover (moderate) consequence against people attacking from neighboring zones.
- On the west end of the street is Jack Fowler, who has a motion picture camera. He will record the whole incident from this position.
- At the beginning of the combat there will be two bank robbers in the street, one in the post office entryway, two in the counter area, three in the back room and a getaway driver in the car in the back alley. That's nine bank robbers total. All bank robbers will fall back toward the back room and the alleyway as they fight. Use the Bank Robber stats on the next page. All are minions.
- Edwin Abadie, the bank robber leader, is also in the back room with the safe. He has his own stat block provided above.

Bank Robber

"What's yours is mine!"

Str 6, **Dex** 5, **Spd** 7, **End** 6, **Int** 3, **Per** 6, **Chr** 2, **Det** 6

Defense 9/18, **Willpower** 5/11, **DR** 0, **HP** 12

Skills: Animals 1, Athletics 2, Awareness 2, Guns 2, Mechanics 1, Melee 2, Persuade 2, Stealth 2, Streetwise 3, Tactics 2 Vehicles 1

Blackjack: +5♥ vs. Defense (♠9/♥7/♦5/♣3). Stun.

Pistol: +5♥ vs. Defense (♠10/♥7/♦5/♣2). Range 2, Reload 2, Shots 8.

♦♣ **Fast Draw:** The bank robber may opt to switch weapons as a free action.

Equipment: Pistol (Conceal), Blackjack, Bullets, Bandana.

Some people have valuables. Other people want to take those valuables. These bank robbers are of the latter variety. They will steal through coercion if possible, through violence if not.



RUNNING THE COMBAT

Here are a few events and other things to keep in mind during the combat.

- The bank robbers will close the door to the bank's back room at the end of Round 3, forcing the heroes to go around, pick the lock or bust their way through.
- The door requires a Dex/thievery-14 flip to open without the key. It cannot be forced, but it can be destroyed if it takes a total of 40 damage.
- When the first hero makes her way into the back room, Abadie and two of his henchmen will be carrying the bank safe towards the door. The trio will retreat with the safe to the alley with the getaway car. Abadie will also command his other men to cover their retreat.
- It will take the trio 2 AP to enter the alleyway, 1 AP to stow the safe in the tonneau, 1 AP to jump into the Corbin and 1 AP drive way. They can be slowed by incapacitating any of the robbers carrying the safe. It will take an additional AP for

Jack Fowler

“The people will love to see this!”

- If for some unlikely reason Jack Fowler becomes involved in combat, he uses the Citizen stat block on page 223 of the *Dime Adventures* core rulebook.

Jack Fowler is a man with a motion picture camera. He works for the Dublin Manufacturing Company out of Philadelphia. His bosses sent him to the frontier to film the daily life of its inhabitants. The goal is that this will entertain eastern audiences. He will have just set up and started filming on the main street in Murcia when the bank robbery begins. He is extremely excited! With real bank robbery footage, he can produce an “authentic” bank robbery film about some bold and daring bank robbers! He believes this will make him a fortune.

another bank robber to grab the safe and get it moving again.

- Should Abadie die, he will linger long enough for a dramatic final speech for all to hear. His final words will be “We just wanted to live free of these dogs.”
- Sheriff Gerald Blaston will show up on Round 10, if the combat lasts that long, and will help finish off the bank robbers. Use his stats on page 28.

AFTERMATH

Whether or not the bank robbery is successful, the people of the town will, reluctantly, thank the heroes for stepping in. If the team successfully thwarted the robbery, the town’s banker—Robert Barker—will even cough up a Wealth 4 payment to the heroes for their valiant efforts.

MAN WITH A CAMERA

Jack Fowler, the man with the movie camera, is overcome with excitement. He now has on film something *The Great Train Robbery* doesn’t have: real action. He had been recording scenes of Murcia to do a film about the daily life of a town “on the very edge of

civilization,” but now he has an idea to make a film about some brave bank robbers using the footage he took of the robbery.

- Jack Fowler is described in the sidebar above.

MAGGIE BRACKEN’S WARNING

Having heard about the heroes’ defense of the bank, Maggie Bracken—one of the townsfolk—has been moved enough to warn the heroes that they are in danger. Towards this end, she pays a local child a penny to bring the heroes a message.

The kid will catch up with the heroes before they leave town. He tugs gently on one of the characters’ pant legs and says with a childish lisp, “Hey, mister [or ma’am], Maggie wants to speak to you. Maggie Bracken.” He knows Maggie approached him on main street, but doesn’t know where she is now.

- With a successful Per/socialize-8 flip, the characters can track down Maggie. Depending on the time of day, she might be encountered in the general store, at her home or on the street.
- If the heroes talk to her in front of other townsfolk, she will simply thank them for

Maggie Bracken

“Those poor souls. I must do something!”

- If it becomes necessary, Maggie Bracken uses the Citizen stat block on page 223 of the *Dime Adventures* core rulebook.

An older woman whose children have moved away from Murcia, Maggie Bracken is a strong and responsible figure. She believes vehemently in God, and so she finds the town’s actions utterly reprehensible. In the past, she has been threatened and bullied repeatedly when she has advocated trying to solve the town’s problems and for the cessation of hiring new outsiders to feed to the prairie dogs.

She now lives in constant fear. Yet her compassion for people—even strangers—and her hatred of the town’s sins compel her to warn the heroes. She is too afraid to say much, and will not give details, no matter what, as her family could be harmed in retaliation.

their service at the bank. However, if they approach her discreetly, she will warn them to leave town as soon as possible. “You’re in terrible danger.” She won’t reveal the nature of the threat, but she will tell them they should get on the next train out of town. “Don’t go out to the Mills ranch.”

- If the heroes ask anyone else in the town about Maggie, they will claim they have no idea why Maggie might want to speak with them. Maggie will also reappear later in the adventure, in the prairie dog burrow—or at least some of her hair and clothes will. Maybe it’s a bad idea to tip off the townspeople that one of them may be betraying the town’s secret.
- Maggie Bracken is described in the sidebar above.

HEADING ON

Once the heroes are done with everything they wish to do in town, they are free to go meet John Mills at the grist mill.

THE RANCH BESET BY HELL!

John Mills greets the team as they approach the old mill. He introduces himself, welcomes them to Murcia and bids everyone follow him out to his ranch house, about a twenty-minute walk out of town.

ATTACK OF THE PRAIRIE DOG SWARM!

As Mills and the heroes are approaching the ranch house, there will be a rustling in the field beside the road. Suddenly, swarms of prairie dogs pour out of the field and rush into combat with the heroes!

- There are three zones: the road and the fields on each side of the road. Each field grants the Concealment (light) consequence to all characters in it, as the grain stalks obscure the target.

John Mills

"Murcia is depending on me for a good harvest."

Str 5, **Dex** 4, **Spd** 6, **End** 10, **Int** 7, **Per** 8, **Chr** 4, **Det** 9

Defense 9/18, **Willpower** 10/20, **DR** 0, **HP** 30

Skills: Animals 4, Athletics 2, Awareness 3, Deception 4, Guns 4, Lib-Arts 1, Mechanics 2, Medicine 1, Melee 3, Naturalist 1, Persuade 3, Socialize 1, Vehicles 3

Revolver: +7♥ vs. Defense (♠10/♥7/♦5/♣2). Range 2, Reload 2, Shots 6.

Knife: +6♥ vs. Defense (♠10/♥7/♦5/♣2).

Villain: As a villain, John's HP is doubled, he gains 4 AP per round and he may take up to two actions requiring a flip each round.

Equipment: Keyring (keys to the ranch house and farm equipment), Knife (Conceal), Revolver, Sturdy Boots

John Mills was born in Murcia. His grandfather took control of the old Hurst farm after the troubles, and it's been the Mills farm ever since. He is a quiet, stoic farmer, dedicated to his farm and to the welfare of Murcia. As owner of the Mills farm, he feels responsible for the wellbeing of the whole town. Decades of working on and managing the farm have caused him to have a stony personality: cold and rough, but solid.

- There will be one Prairie Dog Swarm per hero. Use the Prairie Dog Swarm stats found on page 19. They are all minions.
- Each swarm will attack until it reaches half its HP, then it retreat into the field. Once in the field, a prairie dog swarm may take a move action to run away, retreating underground into a vast network of prairie dog-sized tunnels.
- John Mills uses the stats in the sidebar above.

INSIDE THE RANCH HOUSE

Once combat is over and the prairie dogs swarms have dispersed, Mills will loudly curse the prairie dogs and guide everyone into the house. If he has been incapacitated, he will wake up once he has been given first aid.

Safely inside the house, everyone can treat their wounds while Mills explains:

- "Them Sauk have gone and brought prairie dogs into my fields. They're trying to drive us off, you see. Destroy our crops and we either starve or leave. I don't know how they done it, but they released a few hundred south of here a few years ago, I think. They've had a capital time, burrowing and feeding on our grain. Now there's thousands of them, and they're eating all my crops!
- "I want you to go hog wild on them prairie dogs. Shoot as many as you can. Dig up their burrows. Blast their nests with dynamite. Do what you have to to kill them all. Just don't use no poison. I don't want none of my chickens, nor

sheep, nor cattle falling dead because some jackwagon done used poison. I need the soil to be useful again, and poisoning it ain't helpin' that at all. You use poison and you're fired, you got that?"

- "Now rest up, if you're wounded too badly, but otherwise get to work!"

TOOLS OF THE TRADE

Mills will give the heroes each a healthy supply of bullets—so much so that the players needn't keep count of their ammo for the rest of the scenario. He will also give them five bundles of dynamite, some wire and a detonator. The detonator has a T-handle that's pushed down to generate and direct electric current to the wires, which then detonates the dynamite. He tells the team there's plenty more if they need it, but this will get them started.

With that, the heroes can gear up and head out to the fields.

- Dynamite stats can be found on page 192 of the *Dime Adventures* core rulebook.
- He has both pistol and rifle bullets readily available, as well as slugs for shotguns. If needed, stats can be found on page 193 of the *Dime Adventures* core rulebook.

THE FIELDS

The fields are positively riddled with prairie dog burrows. The heroes may take pot shots at individual prairie dogs as they move, but the rodents won't attack until they locate a prairie dog town.

- Prairie dog towns can be found by following the warning calls of the prairie dogs or tracking the density of the burrows. A successful Int/naturalist-10 flip is required to find each town.
- As the players approach a prairie dog town, swarms of prairie dogs will pour out, usually about half as many as there are player characters. Use the Prairie Dog Swarm stats on page 19. They are all minions. These will fight to the death.
- Once the swarms are fought off, the heroes can blow up the burrows. It will take one well-placed bundle of dynamite to destroy a single town, requiring a successful Per/tactics-10 flip.
- The heroes may take a breather if they wish to recover from any wounds suffered while fighting the swarms. Resting eight hours will restore a number of HP equal to the character's Endurance stat. This happens even if the characters don't sleep.

Managing Party Health

It possible that several of the heroes are in pretty bad shape after their confrontation with the Abadie Gang and the prairie dog attack on the way to the ranch house. If this is the case, Mills will look them up and down, saying something along the lines of "You ain't good to nobody in the shape you're in. You lot are welcome to stay in the barn tonight to sleep off your wounds, but don't go gettin' lazy on me. The work starts first thing in the morning."

This gives the heroes a chance to heal for the night. It also helps prevent the GM from accidentally killing members of the team.

but merely rest in the shade during the heat of the day. After the second day, however, Mills will insist they “stop lolly-gagging around” and finish the job.

SECRET TUNNEL!

After blowing up the second prairie dog town, the heroes will uncover a gigantic tunnel unearthed by the blasts. They might choose to enter right away, or they go back to the ranch house to resupply.

If asked about the tunnels, Mills will act genuinely surprised and ask the characters to investigate inside.

- A suspicious character may attempt a Per/deception-14 flip. On a success, the character notices that Mills’ surprise is just an act.
- If the heroes confront him about lying, he will tell them he’s suspected that the Sauk use tunnels to restock the prairie dogs without being noticed, but was afraid people would think he was paranoid. Another successful Per/deception-14 flip will see through this lie as well.



- If found out again, he will merely offer the players more money—a Wealth 7 payment—to finish the job and clear out the tunnels. Under no circumstances will he confess to anything.

HEADING ON

Once the team decides to explore the unearthed tunnel, move on to the next chapter.

Help! My Players Have Decided to Leave!

So your players decided to heed Maggie’s advice and leave town, or they have found out Mills knew about the tunnels and don’t trust him enough to finish the job—even with the extra money. What now?

They are certainly free to leave! It’s the smart thing to do...

...But the next train out of town doesn’t depart until tomorrow, and the town maybe thinks the heroes know too much to just let them leave. It’s a long night, and all sorts of things can happen while they sleep. The townsfolk might form a lynch mob. Giant killer prairie dogs might attack the town. The Abadie Gang might come back for revenge. Who knows what can happen in the night?



IN THE WARREN OF THE SATAN'S BEASTS!

In this chapter the heroes will explore the tunnel they discovered under the Mills farm. Along the way they will face countless blood-thirsty rodents, collapsing tunnels and stale air. In the end, they will make a terrifying discovery and must escape to tell the tale!

EXPLORING THE TUNNELS

Once the heroes are ready—ideally restocked with fresh supplies of dynamite and ammunition—they may descend into the large tunnel to explore its vast depths.

- Remember that tunnels are dark! Does the team have a light source? If not, they better go get one before pressing onward.
- A Per/naturalist-10 or Per/mechanics-10 flip will determine that the tunnel is not man-made, but rather dug out by something with claws—something big!

AMBUSH!

Once the heroes have gone far enough into the tunnel that natural light can no longer be seen, they suddenly will be ambushed by more prairie dog swarms! The prairie dogs burst from freshly-dug burrows all around them.

- The rodents will attempt to surprise the heroes. Have each character make a Per/awareness-12 flip. Anyone who fails begins the combat surprised.

- There will be half as many swarms as there are player characters. Use the Prairie Dog Swarm stats on page 19. They are all minions. These will retreat once they are reduced to half HP.

THE PATH FORKS

As the team pushes deeper into the tunnels, the way will twist and turn, threatening to loop back on itself and disorienting all but the most skilled subterranean navigators. Soon, however, the team will come to a place where the tunnel they are following forks. One path continues straight ahead, while another leads to the right.

STRAIGHT PATH: THE SUFFOCATION PIT

If the heroes decide to go straight, the tunnel will dip, then the bottom of it will give way to a pit, with the tunnel continuing on the other side.

- The GM should estimate time as the players decide what to do. This part is time-sensitive.
- At 30 seconds, all party members must make an End/awareness-12 flip. Anyone who fails increases her Fatigue consequence a severity, as some sort of invisible albeit suffocating gas has filled this lower part of the tunnel. Those who succeed realize that something is wrong and may react accordingly, such as by moving away from the suffocating air.



- An Int/science-12 or Int/naturalist-12 flip will allow a character to recognize the nature of this hazard, otherwise all the characters know is that they are getting awfully tired awfully fast.
- If by some chance the characters decide to linger, they must succeed on an End-12 flip every 30 seconds, otherwise their Fatigue consequence continues to increase.
- Jumping over the pit requires a successful Str/athletics-12 flip. Failure results in a fall, with the character taking 5 damage. There is nothing on the other side to tie a rope to, so at least one character must cross the pit somehow.
- At the bottom of the pit is another tunnel and more suffocating air.
- Climbing out of the pit requires a successful Str/athletics-10 flip, and forces the character to make an End-12 flip or take another severity of Fatigue.

RIGHTHAND PATH: HEART OF THE SWARM

The righthand tunnel is a straight shot that bypasses the aforementioned pit and the lower section of tunnel. If the heroes take the right path, they will continue forward until they encounter several more forks (see the map of the tunnels above).

- A short way down the path, any surviving prairie dog swarms from the earlier attack will make another attempt on the heroes. Use the Prairie Dog Swarm stats on the next page. This time they fight to the death.
- The walls of the tunnel here are peppered with numerous small openings, each about 6 inches (15 cm) in diameter. These lead to a network of small tunnels which the individuals of the prairie dog swarms can use for cover or to ambush the party.

Prairie Dog Swarm

Their many sharp teeth glitter in the available light.

Str 2, **Dex** 7, **Spd** 5, **End** 4, **Int** 2, **Per** 6, **Chr** 4, **Det** 8

Defense 9/18, **Willpower** 7/14, **DR** 0, **HP** 12

Skills: Athletics 4, Awareness 4, Melee 3

Bite: +6♥ vs. Defense (♠4/♥3/♦2/♣1).

♠ **Artery Hit:** One of the swarm's bites hits an artery. Increase the target's Bleeding consequence a severity.

♣ **Small Fury:** The swarm attacks with special fury. Increase the target's Dazed consequence a severity.

Swarm: A prairie dog swarm isn't a single creature, but rather a moving mass of smaller creatures. Any attack that isn't an Area Attack only deals half the normal amount of damage. Any swarm reduced to 0 HP simply dissipates into dying and scattered individuals. It uses its Determination instead of Strength to calculate HP.

Normally prairie dogs are not known for swarming. But decades of selective breeding and proximity to the giant killer prairie dogs has severely altered their behavior.

OLD TRAP

Hidden on the floor of one of the tunnels is an old bear trap. The trap is concealed underneath a layer of soft dirt and scattered debris. It is both active and coated with a potent poison. It was left behind by one of the previous groups of prairie dog exterminators who explored these tunnels before meeting an untimely end in the death warren (see page 21).

- Have the hero in the front of the group make a Per/awareness-12 flip to notice the trap. On a failure, she steps on it, causing it to clamp on to her leg and dealing 3 damage in the process.
- Removing it from her leg requires a successful Str-10 flip. Failure causes her an additional point of damage.
- If for some reason she decides to walk around with a bear trap on her leg, she takes

another point of damage every 15 minutes, and the clanking sound as she walks causes her to suffer a -4 penalty to stealth flips.

- Shortly after the trap is removed (or not) the character should also make an End-14 flip to resist the poison. Treat it as cobra venom (see the *Dime Adventures* core rulebook, page 135).

TUNNEL NARROWS

One of the tunnels gradually begins to narrow until it is too small for the group to easily pass through.

- If a character tries to squeeze into the passage, have her make a Dex-10 flip. On a success, she manages to make it another 10 ft (3 m) or so until continuing becomes impossible. She is, however, able to spot something small shining in the darkness.

Combat Becoming Repetitive?

By this point, the heroes have faced off against prairie dog swarms a number of times, and as they explore the tunnels they are likely to encounter even more. If at any point combat begins to become repetitive, the GM should instead employ the Quick Combat system for these small, chance encounters (see page 112 of the *Dime Adventures* core rulebook). This is exactly the sort of situation for which that the system was designed.

- Reaching the shining object is difficult and requires a Dex-12 flip. On a success, she grasps a gold ring with a ruby embedded in it. This ring belonged to a member of one of the previous groups of prairie dog exterminators. It is worth a Wealth 5 payment.

UNSTABLE FLOOR

At one three-way intersection of tunnels the ground is particularly unstable. Tromping across the floor too roughly may cause the tunnel to collapse.

- As the player characters press onward into this intersection, ask how closely the group is staying together. How far apart is each character? If the players answer that they're staying close together, giving

a distance of 6 ft (2 m) or less, the tunnel will collapse as soon as the third hero enters the intersection.

- Have the players each make a Spd/athletics flip. The difficulty of this flip will vary with their marching order. For the third hero this flip will be TN 14. For adjacent heroes it will be TN 12. For anyone else it will be TN 10. On a success, the character manages to leap aside, avoiding any falling debris. On a failure, however, the character is caught in the collapse. She takes a number of points of damage equal to the magnitude of her failure. She has also been buried in debris. Getting out requires a Str-12 flip.
- If the intersection collapses, it will become impassable. The heroes will need to seek a different route.

Pulled From the Jaws of Defeat!

If at any point the entire party is rendered unconscious while in the tunnels, this doesn't necessarily mean death! Instead, the heroes will awaken later, tired and battered, but very much alive. They will find themselves in the death warren, the same open chamber they are about to visit. It will be filled with bones.

Shortly after they wake up, they will begin to hear a barking sound, then see many sets of eyes peering at them from the darkness. It appears that one of the giant killer prairie dogs dragged them back here to feed them to its young!

THE DEATH WARREN

The GM should improvise at this point, letting the heroes wander and explore. They might find other cross-tunnels, more prairie dog swarms or even stretches of tunnel with a dangerously unstable ceiling.

Eventually, however, they should reach a large, open chamber. The floor of this chamber will be littered about two feet deep with bones—many of them human.

- If Maggie Bracken warned the team earlier and they let it slip that she talked to them, they will also find her half-consumed body here, visible among the bones.
- A Per/investigate-10 flip will reveal a lot of weapons scattered amongst the bones. These include several knives, a few rifles pistols, assorted ammunition, a few bundles of dynamite and a couple detonators. The detonators and bullets look exactly like the ones John Mills provided.
- An examination of any of the bones reveals that they have been gnawed on repeatedly by something with gigantic teeth. Hidden underneath one of these bones is the remains of a tattered letter from John Mills, confirming that someone has been hired to deal with his prairie dog infestation.
- Just in case the players don't put it all together, an Int-10 flip will confirm that it looks like the heroes aren't the first team that John Mills has sent down here. There are the remains of at least fifty people in this chamber, scattered among the bones of hundreds of other animals.

TIME TO LEAVE...

Once the heroes come to this realization, or once they try to leave the chamber—



whichever comes first—they are in for another nasty surprise. A giant killer prairie dog bursts forth from another tunnel leading into the chamber. It growls at the heroes, baring its terrible teeth, then moves to attack!

- Use the Giant Killer Prairie Dog stats on page 238 of the *Dime Adventures* core rulebook.
- At the end of the first round, have the hero furthest to the back make a Per/awareness-10 flip. On a success, she notices a second giant killer prairie dog approaching from behind. Otherwise, it will surprise the heroes, seizing the initiative and acting first in the second round, regardless of who acted last in the first round.
- Once the two killer rodents are defeated, the team will have a moment to apply first aid and head out. If they linger longer than that, however, they will begin to hear other giant prairie dogs moving through the tunnels towards them. It should become obvious they need to perform a fighting retreat.

THE PERILOUS JOURNEY BACK!

At this point the heroes will be deep underground and must make it back to the surface. The GM should make a point to keep the pressure high and the action intense. Describe how the heroes hear the footfalls of many giant prairie dogs in the tunnels somewhere behind them, their steps shaking the ground slightly.

- Anytime the heroes slow down, have them face another prairie dog swarm. Use the Prairie Dog Swarm stats on page 19. These will be minions.
- Make it a fighting retreat! Standing and facing the creatures will only bring more bloodthirsty rodents down upon them! If the players aren't catching on to this, the GM should feel free to point it out directly.
- Make sure to reward clever tactics! The heroes might dynamite the tunnel. They might leave traps behind them. They might fool the prairie dogs with gizmos or paranormal



tricks. Make this fun! If one of the players comes up with a clever idea, reward her a Moxie whether the idea works out or not.

- The heroes cannot simply blast their way out with dynamite. There are several tons of rock and dirt about their heads. Attempting to blast upward simply causes the ceiling to fall down, collapsing the tunnel and creating another obstacle.
- Digging out is a slow process that will be hampered by prairie dog attacks.

SINKHOLE!

On the way out, a section of the tunnel floor will begin to collapse—whether destabilized by dynamite being set off or the footfalls of so many giant rodents. A sink hole will open up in front of the team, forcing the heroes to leap over it or turn around.

- To jump the sinkhole, have each player make a Spd/athletics-12 flip. Failure by Mag 1 or 2 results in the hero barely catching the other side with her fingertips and needing help getting pulled up. Failure by more than that sends the hero careening downward into the darkness, resulting in 5 damage from the fall.
- The bottom of the sinkhole is filled with suffocating gasses. Anyone heading down into the hole must make an End-12 flip or increase her Fatigue consequence a severity. Anytime a character attempts to get out of the hole and fails, this flip must be repeated. Similarly, spending 30 seconds in the hole will require a repeated flip.
- Climbing out of the hole necessitates a Str/athletics-12 flip. Critical failure results in the character taking another 5 damage from a repeated fall.

DYNAMITE!

One possible retreat tactic might involve using dynamite, a grenade or some other explosive device to collapse the tunnel behind the heroes. While temporarily effective, this will only delay the prairie dogs, as they are burrowing animals. Setting off explosives underground can also be very dangerous, with the general lack of support in the tunnels, as well as the improvised and hasty nature of the action.

- Successfully collapsing a tunnel requires a Per/tactics-10 flip. Failure by Mag 4 or less simply means the tunnel did not collapse. On the other hand, failure by Mag 5+ means the tunnel collapsed on top of one or more heroes at the rear of the group (the number is up to GM's discretion). A critical failure means the dynamite went off in the character's hands. Flip a card to determine damage to the character and everyone around her.
- Exploding or digging their way to the surface is not an option. The team is too deep, nor do they have the time to figure out how to excavate correctly. Any attempt to blast a new tunnel upward will only

collapse the tunnel the characters are already in, and give the ravenous horde pursuing them a chance to attack.

- Rules for cave-ins are found on page 138 of the *Dime Adventures* core rulebook.

HOW ABOUT A LITTLE FIRE!

If one of the characters has a flamethrower, it will prove very effective against the prairie dogs. Unfortunately, it will also consume the oxygen in the tunnel.

- Should this happen, have each member of the team make an End-12 flip. Failure results in increasing the character's Fatigue consequence a severity. This flip will be repeated unless the character immediately moves away to a different section of tunnel that still has oxygen.
- Repeated uses of a flamethrower will slowly deplete the oxygen in the entire tunnel system. After three uses, the characters will need to make End-12 flips like this every 10 minutes. Cut this interval in half for every three additional uses of the flamethrower.

My Players Took a Different Route Back!

If the team split up and the characters did not take the same route back to the surface, worry not! The characters can wander around the tunnels, avoiding danger and exploring individually for a time, before chancing upon their fellows at the next junction. Maybe they'll even find themselves on opposite sides of the sinkhole, cornered with prairie dogs on both sides or in some other fix!

- Wandering the tunnels alone in the dark, however, makes it easy to get turned around and lost. Have any character doing this make a Per/science-12 or Per/naturalist-12 flip. Failure results in a complication of some kind.



LIGHT AT THE END OF THE TUNNEL

Eventually, the team will see the exit up ahead. Just when they think they've made it out, however, a giant killer prairie dog will move to block the path.

- At this point, the GM should bust out the combat system. The tunnel the heroes are in is a zone. The tunnel up ahead with the prairie dog is another zone. The tunnels behind them is a third zone. And finally, beyond the prairie dog ahead of them, is a fourth zone representing the outdoors.
- At the beginning of Round 2, a second giant killer prairie dog will appear in the tunnels behind the heroes.
- At the beginning of Round 3, a third prairie dog will dig its way up into the zone the characters started in.
- If the heroes are having a difficult time with this encounter, have the remaining prairie dogs get distracted when the first one drops. Instead of attacking the heroes that turn, they stop to eat the fallen.

- Use the Giant Killer Prairie Dog stats on page 238 of the *Dime Adventures* core rulebook.

THINKING THINGS OVER

The prairie dog behavior the characters have witnessed so far isn't normal.

- If at any point one of the characters stops to consider it for a moment, an Int/animals-8, Int/naturalist-10 or Int/science-12 flip will back up this conclusion. Something very strange must be happening for the prairie dogs to act this way.
- Scientifically-inclined characters might want to capture one of the prairie dogs to study. After several days of observation and a successful Int/science-10 flip, the scientist may conclude that these prairie dogs have numerous small phenological differences that distinguish them from common prairie dogs, including sharper teeth, claws and digestive differences that cause them to crave raw meat.

RETURN TO THE RANCH HOUSE

If the team returns to the Mills ranch house, they will not find their patron there. However, they may freely search the premises. Even just entering and making themselves at home might be enough to allow the heroes to stumble across a good deal of evidence.

- A Per/investigate-10 flip in the living room will uncover a copy of a bill from the Mills Farm to one Aaron Burr, billing Mr. Burr a Wealth 10 payment for the delivery of five “special tractors.”
- If the players cannot figure it out themselves from the information available, a further Int/deception-10 flip will reveal that “tractors” is likely a code word for “giant killer prairie dog,” providing a good cover for shipping an anaesthetized animal the size of an elephant.
- A Per/investigate-10 flip in the office will find charred fragments of many job application letters in Mills’ fireplace. It appears that he burned a large stack of applications from all over the country just last night. The heroes may recognize some of the fragments as being from their own correspondence with Mills, but there are many others in there as well.
- A Per/investigate-10 flip in Mills’ bedroom will uncover his savings under his mattress. It amounts to a single Wealth 7 payment (Wealth 6 if split two ways, or Wealth 5 if split four ways, etc.)
- An Int/deception-10 flip will allow a character to conclude that the town must know about what is going on out here. There is far too much going on at the ranch to be covered up by a single rancher acting alone.

- With an Int/empathy-10 flip, a character may realize that this deception might explain the strange reactions of many of the townsfolk earlier. They’re trying to deal with the guilt over feeding the heroes to the prairie dogs!
- The ammunition and dynamite are still there, allowing the team to restock.

WHAT NOW?

At this point, allow the players to decide what to do. It’s possible that they’re badly injured after their time in the tunnel. If so, it won’t be difficult to find a safe spot to rest for the night, allowing them to heal some of their injuries.

On the other hand, the heroes might decide to head back to town. They likewise can find a safe spot there for the night. Checking into a motel is covered for anyone with Lifestyle 2 or higher. Otherwise, it will require a Wealth 2 payment.

Finally, the players might opt to immediately go and confront the townsfolk. If this is the case, skip immediately to the next chapter. It won’t be long before Sheriff Blaston comes to deal with the heroes.

Regardless of what the team decides to do, trouble will soon find them in the morning.





REAP THE WHIRLWIND!

In this chapter the heroes must face the wrath of a town looking to cover up its misdeeds. They will also receive a questionable offer.

WHEN TROUBLE COMES CALLING

Regardless of what the heroes decided to do at the end of the last chapter, it won't be long before trouble comes looking for them. Worried that the team may know too much, the townsfolk have gathered a posse to hunt down and silence the characters once and for all.

- If the team heads into town, people will begin locking themselves in their houses the moment the characters are spotted. The heroes will soon find the street vacant and the posse will show up soon after.
- If the characters decide to leave without first heading into town, the posse will track them down. Mills will discover the team's tracks—whether in his house or when he goes out to check on them—and will go get the sheriff's help bringing them in.
- On the other hand, if the characters are holed up in the Mills farm, the posse will come up to the house. Mills noticed that his house was occupied on the way home, guessed who it was, and went back to get help. The team may attempt to hide in the house, but it will only be a matter of time until they are discovered.

THE POSSE

The posse consists of John Mills, Sheriff Gerald Blaston and number of dogboys. The latter group are like cowboys, only instead of riding horses, each rides a giant killer prairie dog as a mount. Mills and Blaston are both on horseback.

The group will ride up with the dogboys hooting and hollering. Sheriff Blaston will then loudly call for the heroes' surrender. Unless the team immediately and unconditionally complies, he will then order the group to attack.

- John Mill's stats are on page 13.
- Gerand Blaston's stats are on page 28.
- The Dogboys' stats are on page 29. There are half as many of them as there are player characters. The Dogboys are all minions.



Gerald Blaston

"I am the law on this frontier."

Str 6, **Dex** 7, **Spd** 7, **End** 6, **Int** 5, **Per** 7, **Chr** 5, **Det** 6

Defense 10/21, **Willpower** 8/16, **DR** 1, **HP** 24

Skills: Animals 3, Athletics 4, Awareness 4, Deception 2, Empathy 2, Guns 3, Lib-Arts 1, Melee 3, Naturalist 2, Persuade 3, Socialize 5, Streetwise 3, Tactics 4

Rifle: +6♥ vs. Defense (♠14/♥10/♦7/♣3). Hands 2, Range 3, Reload 2, Shots 5.

♥ **Disabling Shot:** Increase the target's Disabled consequence a severity, or by two severities on a critical hit.

Staff: +6♥ vs. Defense (♠11/♥8/♦6/♣3). Defense 1

Villain: As a villain, Gerald's HP is doubled.

Equipment: Rifle, Staff, Leather Jacket (Worn), Book of Laws.

Gerald Blaston is the sheriff of Stone Island County. Born and raised in Murcia, he witnessed the town's coverup of the death of a previous sheriff, who found out the town's dark secret. Determined that the town would not have to do this again, he aggressively trained himself to become a lawman, winning election to county sheriff at the turn of the century. He is a man of singular determination. He is willing to negotiate with most criminals to secure their safe capture, but he has had to put down his fair share of those who saw that as a weakness. He is the law in Stone Island County, and he will protect the county—and especially his home town—from any who threaten it.

Posses in the Period

Posses are a staple of Wild West fiction: the sheriff (or sometimes town marshal) gathers up a group of volunteer townsfolk, who then ride out to confront the accused. Ideally, the posse makes an arrest and brings the accused back to see a judge. It is an unfortunate fact of history, however, that in practice many posses were used for summary execution or to intimidate striking laborers.

Dime Adventures is set in an alternate 1904, at the tail end of what we think of as the Wild West, and posses are very much still in use.

For instance, in the real world, this is only seven years after a posse killed 19 striking immigrant miners near Hazleton, Pennsylvania. It is four years since a posse in Saint Louis, Missouri fatally shot three striking railcar workers and wounded 14 others. And it is one year since a posse in Stanaford, West Virginia killed three black coal miners who were likewise on strike.

Posses continued to be used sporadically to put down strikes and other labor uprising until at least 1921. So while we tend to think of posses as a Wild West thing, they continued to see use well into the twentieth century.

Dogboy

"Murcia must be protected!"

Str 4, **Dex** 6, **Spd** 7, **End** 7, **Int** 4, **Per** 5, **Chr** 3, **Det** 6

Defense 9/18, **Willpower** 6/13, **DR** 1, **HP** 11

Skills: Animals 3, Athletics 3, Awareness 2, Deception 1, Guns 3, Melee 3, Naturalist 3, Persuade 1, Socialize 3, Streetwise 3, Tactics 2

Rifle: +6♥ vs. Defense (♠14/♥10/♦7/♣3). Hands 2, Range 3, Reload 2, Shots 5.

Lasso: +6♥ vs. Defense (♠5/♥3/♦2/♣1). Hands 2, Thrown. Automatically grapples.

Knife: +6♥ vs. Defense (♠9/♥6/♦4/♣1).

♠ **Trample:** Increase the target's Prone consequence a severity, or two with a critical hit.

♣ **Bite:** The dogboy lets his mount take a bite out of the target, resulting in an additional hit which deals 5 damage.

Vicious Mount: If a dogboy is knocked out of combat, his giant killer prairie dog mount is no longer under control. Draw a card. If it's a spade, it will rush to attack a player character. If it's a heart, it will attack a hostile NPC. Otherwise, it will simply run away. Use the Giant Killer Prairie Dog stats on page 238 of the *Dime Adventures* core rulebook.

Equipment: Rifle, Knife (Conceal), Leather Jacket (Worn), Cowboy Hat.

Cowboys herd cattle and are famed for their tough nature. Dogboys, on the other hand, herd giant killer prairie dogs, making them as hard as iron. They also get to ride these great rodents into battle!

THAT EXPLAINS EVERYTHING!

Once the posse is defeated, the heroes are bandaging their wounds and the dust is settling, they will see a lone figure approach with his hands in the air. This will be Frank Ness, the mayor of Murcia. Seeing that all other attempts to silence the characters have failed, he is here to make them an offer. He explains the following:

■ "It all began when the Sauk killed the folk of Bison, the town across the river. A few years after that, people started disap-

pearing. They'd go out to work in a field, or out for a walk or swimming, and they'd just never come back. I was four years old at the time. We thought we had a killer in our midst. The refugees from Bison blamed the Murcians, the Murcians blamed the Bisons. Things got ugly. A few people got beaten up pretty bad. Fortunately, we didn't get so far as any lynchings. But it wasn't far off."

■ "One day, Jenny Fowler came screaming into the mayor's office. Her sister's family had been murdered. Eaten, she said. She and her husband went over to her sister's

for Sunday dinner like normal. When they got there, they found blood everywhere. Found her sister's hand in a corner, bitten off. The children... well, they found bits of them. And they found a giant hole in the house. The whole side of the house was torn in, just about. Nobody knew what to make of it at first. But it was clear this wasn't a murderer. This was something else."

- "For a few more days, people kept disappearing. The whole town was terrified. Then old Bobby Townshend saw it—a prairie dog the size of a barn, he said. Covered in blood and chewing on somebody. He recognized the clothing: it was Ted Hurst. Used to own the Mills farm, back when it was the Hurst farm. We rounded up a posse and went out... and found the beasts. Lost Wes Jenkins

on the way back. But we discovered worse news: prairie dog pups the size of mastiffs. We had a mating pair out there."

- "That night we had a town council. After all the hardships we'd been through, what with the Black Hawk War and all, we weren't going to give up our land. But what could we do? Ned Wilkins figured it out. The prairie dogs need meat. If we don't feed them, they'll eat us. Feeding them cattle would bankrupt the town. But if we brought in strangers and feed them to the rodents, then we can survive."
- "So a plan came together. We hire strangers from all over. It's cheap enough for them to travel here. And by promising to pay at the end of their week, we never need to pay them."

Frank Ness

"I will do whatever it takes to make sure Murcia survives."

Str 5, Dex 6, Spd 7, End 8, Int 8, Per 6, Chr 8, Det 8

Defense 9/19, Willpower 12/24, DR 1, HP 13

Skills: Animals 1, Athletics 2, Awareness 4, Deception 4, Empathy 4, Guns 2, Lib-Arts 3, Melee 1, Persuade 4, Socialize 3, Streetwise 3

Pistol: +5♥ vs. Defense (♠10/♥7/♦5/♣2). Range 2, Reload 2, Shots 8.

Unarmed: +4♥ vs. Defense (♠6/♥4/♦3/♣1).

Equipment: Pistol (Conceal), Porkpie Hat, Clothes.

Frank Ness is the mayor of Murcia. Like most other Murcians, he was born there and never left. He completed high school in Murcia's one-room schoolhouse and continued his education by ordering books in the mail. He is a natural leader, and well-loved by the people of Murcia. He is utterly devoted to the survival of the town, willing to do absolutely whatever it takes to preserve it. He abhors the town's dark secret, but he believes the town was given a hard burden to bear, and he must honor the lives of those who died to protect Murcia—in the Sauk Wars, and even the town's victims. He genuinely grieves the town's misdeeds but sees no way out of the situation.

- “You have to understand. We are just trying to survive! We’ve all lost family, friends and loved ones. We already lost many to the Sauk in the wars, and in the raids thereafter. If we left, if we gave up our land, they died for nothing. So we had to stay. But if we stayed, we’d get eaten. We had to find some way to survive! We tried cattle—we really did! But before long, we couldn’t buy them anymore. So, we gave in. Better some drifter than the neighbors.”
- “Please, forgive us! Don’t let anybody know!”

THE MAYOR’S OFFER

If the heroes appear disinclined to agree, Mayor Ness will up the ante, offering them money in exchange for their silence.

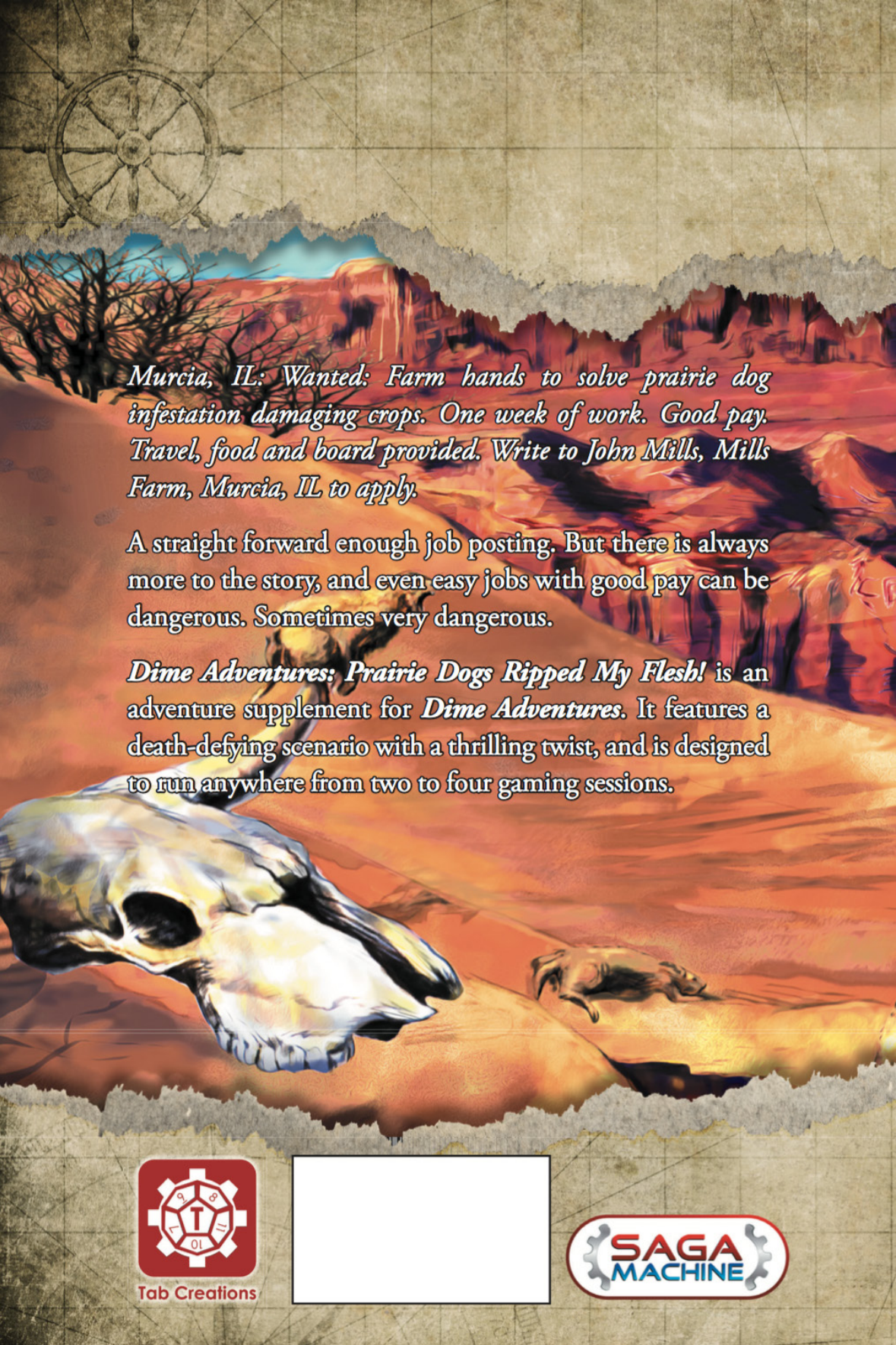
- He will go as high as a single Wealth 8 payment or a promise of Wealth 5 payments monthly for as long as the heroes keep quiet.
- If asked about the payment from Aaron Burr or the prairie dogs being shipped on the train, he will answer that a man came through town about thirty years ago and discovered everything. But rather than being horrified, he offered to pay if the people could capture any of the prairie dogs and send them to him. They agreed and began shipping off the extra adults to the address he gave. Said his name was Aaron Burr. They don’t believe it’s *that* Aaron Burr: he died in the 1830s, after all. Just a funny coincidence... right?
- If the heroes decide to fight or capture Mayor Ness, he will surrender without a fight, but will attempt to escape at the earliest possible opportunity.

WHAT TO DO ABOUT THE ARCH FIEND?

The heroes must now decide what to do with this information. Are they going to leave peaceably? Are they going to punish the town in some way? Are they going to report what’s going on here to the governor? Perhaps they will publish the story in a newspaper or in a pulp magazine? If they know about of the transactions with Burr, maybe they will try to track him down.

How these resolve is largely up to the GM, but here are a few considerations:

- If the characters go public with the town’s secrets, make sure to reference this in future sessions. If they went to the governor, they might hear about how the Illinois National Guard had to go defend a small town against a Sauk invasion but arrived too late and the town had been leveled (an obvious cover story). If they published the story as fact, people will talk about it as a rumor and snidely remark on yellow journalism. If they published it as entertainment, they might spin its commercial success into a Wealth 6 payment. Be creative with how the news is received and spread or covered up.
- If they tell no one, the heroes will continue to see the same ad they answered in the paper whenever they’re in Illinois, reminding them of the terrible secret they carry.
- Finally, do they want to track down this mysterious Aaron Burr? Did they expose the town and Aaron wants revenge? Then be sure to buy the next exciting issue: *The Mummy Monarch of Monterrey!*



Murcia, IL: Wanted: Farm hands to solve prairie dog infestation damaging crops. One week of work. Good pay. Travel, food and board provided. Write to John Mills, Mills Farm, Murcia, IL to apply.

A straight forward enough job posting. But there is always more to the story, and even easy jobs with good pay can be dangerous. Sometimes very dangerous.

Dime Adventures: Prairie Dogs Ripped My Flesh! is an adventure supplement for *Dime Adventures*. It features a death-defying scenario with a thrilling twist, and is designed to run anywhere from two to four gaming sessions.



Tab Creations

