



MODERN

FAINT

TRANSMISSIONS



By Rich Redman

A Short d20 Modern Adventure for Four 2nd-Level Characters

A garbled, static-filled transmission in a foreign language emanates from a radio's speakers and tells the heroes to stop a vehicle from crossing a certain set of railroad tracks. But where does this transmission come from, and why can't anyone else hear it?

Faint Transmissions is an adventure that finds the heroes, wherever they may be. It is best used as a brief interlude between regular adventures in the campaign. The scenario outlines a task and describes those who oppose its completion. In addition, information is given about what "punishments" are levied against heroes who elect not to undertake the task at all.

This adventure requires no specific location. It can be played in an urban or a rural area; simply choose a location appropriate for your campaign. Most towns and cities have Tourism or Chamber of Commerce sites on the Internet that can supply details about weather, local plants and animals, and other features of the location to help you provide a sense of place.

Once you decide where to place the adventure, you may want to change the name of the locations mentioned to fit the area chosen. For example, if you choose to set the adventure in your home town, you may wish to change the name of the street crossed by the railroad tracks to an important street in your city.

LEVELS

Faint Transmissions is a short scenario for four 2nd-level heroes. With slight modifications, you can make it suitable for heroes at other levels (or groups as large or small as you're comfortable adjudicating). See the Scaling the Adventure sidebar for guidelines on adapting it for other groups.

You, the Game Master (GM), need a copy of the *d20 MODERN Roleplaying Game* to run this adventure. To get started, print out the adventure (including the map) and read it through. Familiarize yourself with the basic situation as well as the GM characters, their

Links to Other Adventures

Faint Transmissions is the second in the *Grim Frequencies* adventure series, all of which begin with bizarre transmissions. Each of these short adventures can easily be incorporated into an existing campaign.

These adventures do not provide enough rewards to advance the heroes in level. They should expect to advance via the main action of the campaign, with the *Grim Frequencies* missions providing brief interludes.

Each *Grim Frequencies* adventure puts the heroes in an increasingly complex moral conflict. Ultimately, the heroes must decide for themselves whether the end justifies the means.

This adventure series may not be the next great work of American fiction, but it should provide a fun ride. Jump on!

motives, and their abilities. Then make sure you are comfortable with the rules for combat, movement, and cover from Chapter 5 of the *d20 MODERN Roleplaying Game*.

The text that appears in shaded boxes should be read aloud or paraphrased for the players. Opponents' statistics are provided in abbreviated form.

CAMPAIGN MODELS

Faint Transmissions is a basic, low-FX (or even no-FX) adventure with eerie overtones. It can easily be adapted for any of the campaign models presented in Chapter Nine of the *d20 MODERN Roleplaying Game*. Specific recommendations for each model are given below.

Agents of PSI: The instructions come via a psychic message in the heroes' minds rather than a transmission. Punishments for not following the instructions come from a group such as PSI or the Knightly Order of St. Bartholomew.

Shadow Chasers: The transmissions use an ancient, dead language (such as Akkadian, Sanskrit, or Aramaic; see the

Scaling the Adventure

Faint Transmissions is designed for four 2nd-level heroes. The encounters reflect the danger inherent in modern-era gunfights. If your heroes find them too easy, or if you want to use the adventure with higher-level heroes, add character levels to the opponents in each encounter rather than adding opponents.

If your heroes are unfamiliar with the mechanics of vehicle combat, move starting position B (see The Setting, below) farther away from the tracks to give the heroes more time to stop the Hummer.

If you are running the adventure for low-level heroes, you can use it as a way to get the party together. In this case, each hero should hear a slightly different transmission that addresses him by name. Each transmission gives the same instructions and tells the hero to expect allies at the scene. If you like, the transmission may instruct the heroes to wear or carry some particular item (clothing of a particular color, a specific flower, a newspaper or magazine, an umbrella, or the like) so as to be recognizable to his allies.

Language Groups sidebar in Chapter Two of the *d20 MODERN Roleplaying Game*) that one of the heroes understands. Punishments for not following the instructions come from the Fellowship.

Urban Arcana: The radio transmissions are in a Shadow language (such as Celestial, Elven, or Draconic; see Languages of Shadow in Chapter One of the *URBAN ARCANA Campaign Setting*) that one of the heroes understands. Punishments for not following the instructions come from the Knights of the Silver Dragon. If you're using the full campaign setting and not just the URBAN ARCANA material from the core rulebook, try the Fellowship, the Knightly Order of St. Bartholomew, or St. Cuthbert's House instead.

BACKGROUND

While in the consumer electronics section of a store (or in a regular consumer electronics store), a radio on display addresses a hero directly and instructs him to go to a particular railroad track and stop a certain vehicle from crossing the tracks. You as GM must decide the exact source of the transmission, and whether it is technological or supernatural in nature.

The Mission

The heroes are to stop a white Hummer from crossing the railroad tracks. In fact, two white Hummers attempt to cross the tracks, but the first one they see is in fact the one they must stop.

The Opposition

The vehicle in question is occupied by Darryl Brzezinski, the son of a Russian mobster, and his two bodyguards. Though Darryl is involved with the *organizatsiya*, his purpose here has nothing to do with organized crime—he is in town only to scout locations for his next horror film. But because of his background, Darryl is more than a little paranoid, so he hires tough, dangerous people as assistants and security personnel. "Organized Productions," the name of his film production company, is emblazoned on the side of his Hummer.

The bodyguards' priority is to protect Darryl. If Jamie Oberholtzer (see GM Characters) escaped intact from the previous adventure, he is with Darryl now as one of the two bodyguards. If you did not run *Far Voices*, you can introduce Jamie or not, as you wish.

SYNOPSIS

The heroes can either follow the instructions given to them via the mysterious transmission or not. If they don't, unfortunate incidents begin to occur. If they do follow instructions, they must prevent the vehicle from crossing the tracks.

By successfully stopping the vehicle in question, the heroes divert a chain of events that would have resulted in a terrible tragedy if allowed to unfold, though they do not realize they have done so. What the heroes choose to do thereafter is of no consequence, as long as they prevent the crossing.



Department-7 in This Adventure

If you adapt this adventure for use with one of the standard campaign models (see the Campaign Models section), that model defines the role of Department-7. If you don't use it with a specific campaign model, consider the following suggestions for Department-7's involvement.

No Department-7: If Department-7 doesn't figure prominently in your game, you don't need it here.

Homeland Security: Make Department-7 a branch of Homeland Security, or the appropriate organization in the country where your adventure is set. In the course of tracking a terrorist threat, the department is investigating the transmissions and the heroes' involvement with them.

FCC: Make Department-7 a branch of the Federal Communications Commission, or the appropriate organization in the country where your adventure is set. The FCC routinely investigates pirate radio transmissions, and the broadcasts in *Faint Transmissions* fall into that category.

The immediate consequences of failure are outlined in The Punishment, below. In addition, the world slowly and imperceptibly drifts toward a horrible fate—unless the heroes manage to avert it in later adventures.

Character Hooks

As GM, you know best how to involve your players and their characters in an adventure. In this case, however, the hook is simple: The heroes do what they're told or bad things will happen. However, they might choose to get involved for other reasons as well. Below are a couple of possible situations that could set the events of this scenario into motion. As always, feel free to modify the details to fit your heroes.

- The heroes are telecommunications engineers who follow the instructions in the message just to discover how the transmissions occurred.
- The heroes work for the FCC or Department-7 and are assigned to follow the instructions so that their employers can learn more about the source.

BEGINNING THE ADVENTURE

The adventure begins when one or more of the PCs are in a consumer electronics store.

The latest and greatest electronics are waiting on the shelves, and eager salespeople hover around the customers, prodding them to buy. Eventually, the hum of the various speakers seems to fade into the background, and a radio on a display shelf begins whispering a name.

The radio is whispering the name of one of the heroes—specifically the one closest to it. Effectively, the transmission activates the speakers directly, bypassing the actual radio. This arrangement has the following ramifications.

- Everyone in the immediate vicinity hears the transmission.
- No one more than 5 feet away receives the broadcasts, even on a radio tuned to the same station as the one to which the hero is listening.
- The broadcasts occur even if the radio is turned off.
- The broadcasts interrupt any CD, tape, eight-track, or MP3 that is playing at the time.
- Turning the radio on or off does not interrupt the broadcast.
- Changing the station does not interrupt the broadcast.

Take aside the players whose heroes understand the language of the transmission and read or paraphrase the text below, addressing the hero whose name the radio was whispering.

Soft electronic whines and discordant buzzes pop from the speakers, interrupting the voice at irregular intervals. Eventually, the radio stops repeating the name and begins whispering a message. "The railroad tracks cross Martin Luther King Avenue at a certain point," says the voice. "In 20 minutes, a Hummer H2 will approach those tracks from the north. You must stop it from crossing the tracks until after the train passes. Do not fail."

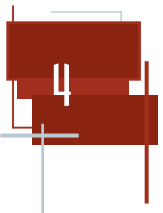
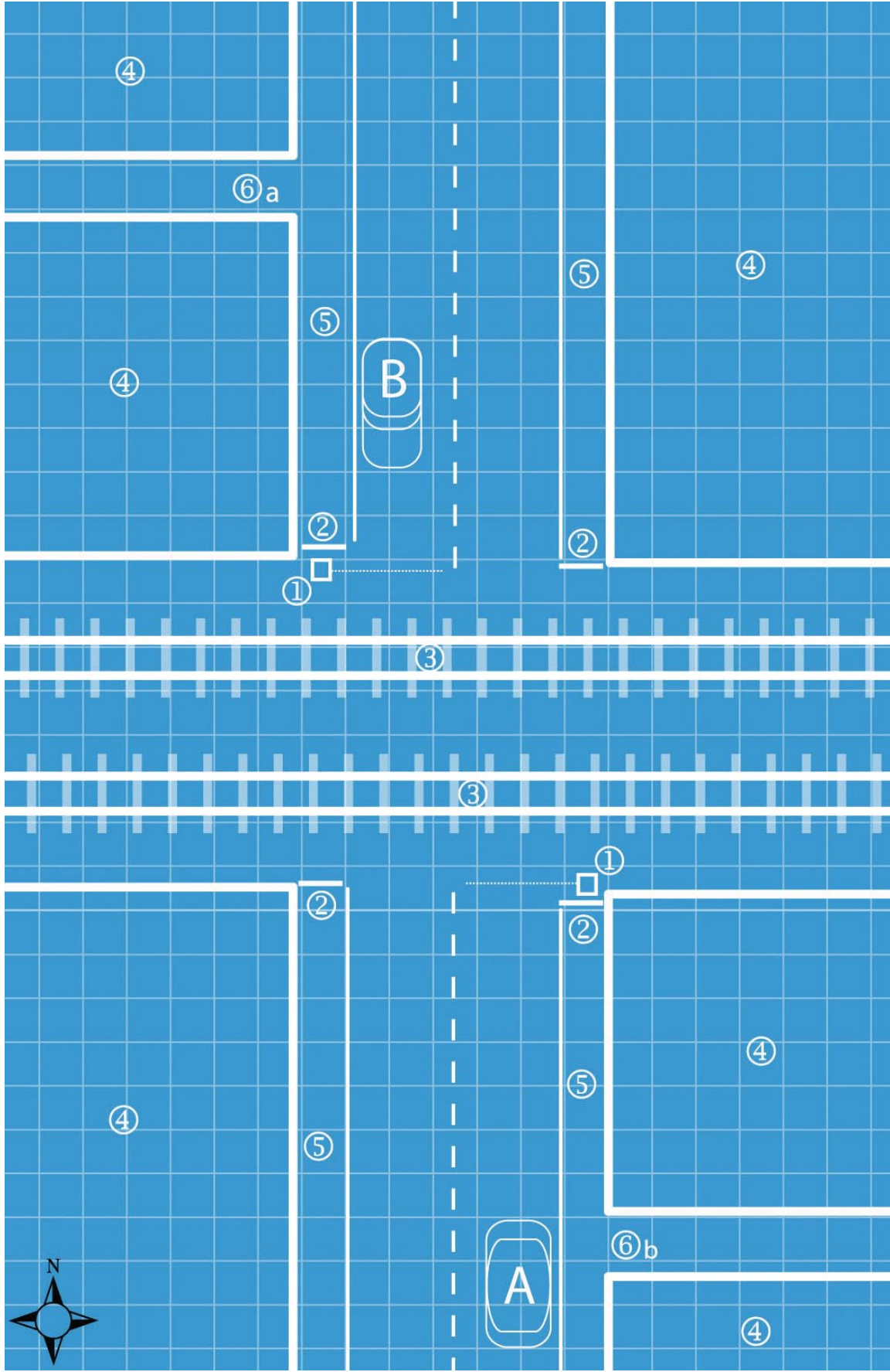
The broadcast is one-way, to the radio beside which the heroes are standing. Heroes who try to address the transmission get no response. The broadcast seems to be in the same voice as the one that addressed the heroes over the car radio in *Far Voices* (if they played that scenario).

Return the players you took aside to the main group now. Tell any players whose heroes do not understand the language of the transmission about the static, the strange electronic whines and buzzes, and the voice that speaks urgently in a language they don't understand. They do, however, understand the name of the hero addressed, the name of the street, and the name of the vehicle, since those words are spoken in the local language.

Development: If the heroes leave immediately, they can reach the specified intersection in 16 minutes. Let the players know the timeframe, and be sure they realize that this deadline leaves no time to return to offices, homes, or bases for equipment. Make it clear that they can spend 16 minutes discussing the situation and possible tactics, provided that they do so while the heroes are on their way to the specified location. If they discuss it in the store or on their way somewhere else, they have that much less time to prepare after arriving on the scene—if they get there in time at all.

THE SETTING: THE RAILROAD TRACKS

The railroad crossing is located in a once-prosperous neighborhood that was home to some light industry in its heyday. But times have changed, and the industry has moved away, leaving a struggling business district populated by laundromats, dry cleaners, appliance repair shops, pawnshops, thrift stores, and corner markets.



FAINT TRANSMISSIONS



The keyed areas on the map correspond to the following descriptions.

1. Poles

Warning lights, bells, and signs are mounted on poles where indicated. These poles also carry the bars that are supposed to drop across the oncoming lane of traffic when a train is coming, and the mechanisms that operate those barriers.

2. Fences

These 8-foot tall, chain link fences are topped with a few strands of barbed wire. The barriers are meant to keep pedestrians from simply walking onto the tracks, but most people just go around them anyway.

3. Railroad Tracks

The tracks sit on a gravel bed raised about a foot above the street. Anyone attempting to run or charge across them must make a DC 10 Balance check because of the uneven footing the gravel provides. Failure means the hero can still act, but she can't run or charge that round.

4. Storefronts

The local buildings are made of brick, and each of them stands two to three stories tall. Their doors and display windows are protected by iron grilles. The sides nearest the tracks have no windows and are blackened by soot and grime. The brick on that side is scarred by debris from the passage of trains.

5. Sidewalks

The sidewalks in this part of the neighborhood end at the fences (see area 2).

6a and 6b. Service Alleys

These narrow byways are unlit.

THE ACTION

The action proceeds in the order presented below unless the characters' actions dictate otherwise.

A. Surprise!

The heroes' lead vehicle starts at position A. The black AM General Hummer that they've come to stop is at position B. Emblazoned on its sides is a business logo that says "Organized Productions," and the vehicle has California license plates.

Since the no one in the Hummer has any idea that someone intends to impede their progress, let the heroes have a surprise round. Tell your players that the Hummer will move 44 squares this round unless they act to prevent it. Roll 2d6 secretly for the number of minutes until the police arrive (see encounter D, below).

On the next round, roll initiative for the Hummer while the players of the heroes who are driving roll initiative for their respective vehicles. Use the vehicles' initiative modifiers in all cases. Proceed to encounter B.

B. Stopping the Hummer (EL 6)

The three most likely ways that the heroes may try to stop the Hummer are detailed below in encounters B1, B2, and B3. They have 10 rounds in which to manage this encounter before encounter C begins.

B1. Shoot

The heroes probably can't do enough damage to a vehicle to stop it with the weapons they carry around on a day-to-day basis, but anything is possible. On the other hand, they could try shooting out the Hummer's tires and hoping that the driver fails a control check, or they could try shooting the driver (one of Darryl's bodyguards).

If the heroes attempt this solution, the attitudes of Darryl and his bodyguards immediately change to hostile. The bodyguards try to get Darryl out of the area on foot, since their first priority is protecting him.

B2. Ram

Ramming the Hummer with their vehicle is a perfectly acceptable way for the heroes to stop it. In this case, the initial attitudes of the GM characters after the "accident" are as described in The Opposition, above.

B3. Block

Unless the heroes have multiple vehicles, they can't really block the entire road. Darryl's driver may have to make some checks to avoid hitting the heroes' vehicle, but he tries to drive the Hummer around any blocking car. If the heroes do have multiple vehicles, the heroes may well discover that they have placed their vehicles in the path of an oncoming train.

If the heroes manage to stop the Hummer, they must deal with the bodyguards and Darryl until the train passes (see encounter C, below). Darryl and his lackeys are not anxious to start trouble, but they are upset about being detained and somewhat rude. Depending on how the heroes respond, this encounter could turn out to be low-threat or high-threat.

C. The Train

About 10 rounds (30 seconds) after the heroes begin their attempt to stop the Hummer, secretly make a DC 15 Listen check for each hero. Those who succeed hear a train approaching from the west. The bells, signs, and lights that would normally give warning of an oncoming train fail to do so, and the barriers do not come down.

After another 10 rounds (about 1 minute after the start of encounter B), another Hummer approaches the intersection from the same direction as Darryl's vehicle. This one is also white and has no "Organized Productions" logo on it. The vehicle approaches the tracks, accelerates around obstacles in the way. While crossing the tracks, it is struck and destroyed by the train—unless the heroes quickly take some desperate action to prevent that outcome.

If Darryl is still present and no actual combat is occurring, his attitude immediately improves to friendly, and his bodyguards become indifferent. Darryl tells the heroes that he doesn't know why they saved him, but he's very grateful that they did. He's happy to exchange insurance information with

them and otherwise forget about any inconvenience he suffered. If the heroes tell him about the radio message, he is skeptical but reiterates that it doesn't matter why they came; he's just glad they did.

D. The Law

The police arrive on the scene 2d6 minutes after the heroes do (use the number of minutes you rolled secretly in encounter A). Four low-level police officers (see Chapter Eight: Friends and Foes in the core rulebook for statistics) arrive in two police cruisers. Use the Ford Crown Victoria in Chapter Four: Equipment of the core rulebook if you need statistics for their vehicles, and see Chapter Two of the *URBAN ARCANA Campaign Setting* for additional information about police cruisers.

If anyone has a weapon in hand or is fighting, the initial attitude of the police officers is hostile, and they arrest everyone on the spot. If the heroes, Darryl, and the bodyguards are acting civilly toward one another, the police are indifferent. They ask some questions, take some photos, and file their report.

THE GM CHARACTERS

The attitudes, motivations, and statistics of the various GM characters are given below.

Darryl Brzezinski

Darryl Brzezinski became entranced with Hollywood films smuggled into the Soviet Union when he was a boy. As a teenager, he defected to the United States and helped build up Russian organized crime on the East Coast. When he had enough money, he left for UCLA's film school. His first independent films were hailed as groundbreaking, and he moved on to make several successful studio films. But his last few movies have been bizarre horror films of questionable worth, and the critics have begun questioning his sanity.

As noted above, Darryl is in town scouting locations for his next horror film. (If your campaign is set in southern California, Darryl and his crew need not have traveled at all, since their studio is there.) Because Darryl is connected with the Russian organizatsiya, he tends to hire thugs and bullies who can protect his interests in more than just the movie field. Darryl's initial attitude is unfriendly.

Darryl Brzezinski (Male human Smart Hero 3/Charismatic Hero 3): CR 6; Medium-size human; HD 6d6-6; hp 19; Mas 8; Init +1 (+1 Dex); Spd 30 ft.; Def 14 (+1 light undercover shirt, +1 Dex, +2 class), touch 13, flat-footed 13; BAB +2; Grp +2; Atk or Full Atk +3 melee (1d6/19-20, masterwork metal baton) or +4 ranged (2d6, Glock 20); Space/Reach 5 ft./5 ft.; AL Investor's Circle; AP 3; Rep +6; SV Fort +2, Ref +4, Will +6; Str 10, Dex 12, Con 8, Int 15, Wis 12, Cha 15.

Skills and Feats: Bluff +10*, Craft (visual arts) +17, Craft (writing) +14, Diplomacy +5*, Disguise +8, Forgery +8, Gamble +3*, Intimidate +10, Knowledge (art) +8, Knowledge (current events) +8, Knowledge (history) +8, Knowledge (popular culture) +8, Knowledge (technology) +8, Profession +7, Read/Write English, Read/Write Russian, Research +8, Search +8, Speak English, Speak Russian; Confident, Creative,

Deceptive, Iron Will, Personal Firearms Proficiency, Renown, Simple Weapons Proficiency.

*Situational bonus from fast-talk talent applies.

Starting Occupation: Creative (class skills: Craft [visual art] and Craft [writing]).

Talents (Smart Hero): Plan, savant (Craft [visual arts]).

Talents (Charismatic Hero): Dazzle, fast-talk.

Dazzle: Darryl can dazzle a target through the sheer force of his personality, coupled with a winning smile and some fast talk. Only a creature with an Intelligence score of 3 or higher is susceptible to a dazzle attempt, and the target must be within 30 feet of Darryl and able to see, hear, and understand him.

To dazzle, Darryl must use an attack action and make a DC 15 Charisma check with a +3 bonus. If the check succeeds, the target can try to resist by making a DC 15 Will saving throw. If the save fails, the target takes a -1 penalty on attack rolls, ability checks, skill checks, and saving throws for the next 2 rounds. Dazzle is a mind-affecting ability.

Fast-Talk: Darryl has a way with words when attempting to deceive others. This talent allows him to apply a +3 competence bonus on any Bluff, Diplomacy, or Gamble checks he makes while attempting to lie, cheat, or otherwise bend the truth.

Plan: Prior to an encounter, Darryl can develop a plan of action to handle the situation. Because using this talent requires preparation, he can't do so when surprised or otherwise unprepared. Creating a plan requires 1 minute.

After creating his plan, Darryl makes a DC 10 Intelligence check with a +3 bonus. He can't take 10 or 20 when making this check. The result of the check provides him and his allies with a circumstance bonus as given on the table below.

CHECK RESULT	BONUS
9 or lower	+0 (check failed)
10-14	+1
15-24	+2
25 or higher	+3

This bonus can be applied to all skill checks and attack rolls made by Darryl and his allies for the first 3 rounds after he makes the plan. Thereafter, reduce the bonus by 1 point (to a minimum of +0) for every additional round the situation continues, since the vagaries of circumstance can unravel even the best-laid plans.

Possessions: Light undercover shirt, Glock 20 (10mm autoloader), laser sight, concealed carry holster, masterwork metal baton, cell phone, PDA, various personal belongings.

Bodyguards

The two bodyguards are here to protect their employer, and doing so is their top priority. If they perceive a hero's actions as threatening to their charge, they hustle the filmmaker into service alley 6a. Once there, one bodyguard shields Darryl with his body while the other shoots at the heroes.

Bodyguard (Male human Tough Ordinary 4): CR 3; medium humanoid; HD 4d10+8; hp 30; Mas 18; Init +2 (+2 Dex); Spd 30 ft.; Def 17 (+2 light undercover shirt, +2 Dex, +3 class), touch 15, flat-footed 15; BAB +3; Grp +5; Atk or Full Atk +5 melee (1d3+2 nonlethal, unarmed strike) or +6 ranged* (2d6,



THE PUNISHMENT

Glock 20); Space/Reach 5 ft./5 ft.; AL Darryl Brzezinski; AP 0; Rep +1; SV Fort +4, Ref +3, Will +2; Str 14, Dex 14, Con 15, Int 8, Wis 12, Cha 10.

Skills and Feats: Drive +7, Knowledge (streetwise) +3, Sleight of Hand +7; Armor Proficiency (light), Improved Damage Threshold, Personal Firearms Proficiency, Point Blank Shot (*not included in ranged attack bonuses, above), Simple Weapons Proficiency.

Starting Occupation: Criminal (class skills: Knowledge [streetwise] and Sleight of Hand).

Possessions: Light undercover shirt, armor license; Glock 20 (10mm autoloader), spare box magazine (loaded), 20 spare 10mm rounds, concealed carry holster, firearms license; cell phone, various personal possessions.

Jamie Oberholtzer

If Jamie Oberholtzer is present, he recognizes any of the heroes he previously encountered in *Far Voices*. If he defeated the heroes then, he treats them with contempt now. If they defeated him, he's still angry about losing the fight and about the subsequent verbal abuse he took from his boss. His starting attitude in that case is hostile, and once he tells Darryl that the heroes are the same ones who stopped him before, Darryl also becomes hostile.

Jamie is a burly Caucasian male with tattoos on his neck. A successful DC 10 Knowledge (streetwise) check reveals that they are prison tattoos. His blond hair is cropped short in an unfashionable buzz cut, and he wears khaki slacks, a denim shirt, and a baggy rain parka.

Jamie fits Darryl's requirements for a bodyguard nicely, since he has a criminal record that features numerous charges of assault.

Today, Jamie has no special mission—he is here purely as a bodyguard for Darryl. Thus far, he hasn't seen anyone threatening, but he would like to.

Jamie Oberholtzer (Male Strong Ordinary 2/Tough Ordinary 2): CR 3; Medium human; HD 2d8+4 plus 2d10+4; hp 28; Mas 14; Init +1; Spd 30 ft.; Def 17 (+2 light undercover shirt, +1 Dex, +4 class), touch 15, flat-footed 16; BAB +3; Grp +5; Atk +5 melee (1d4+2, unarmed) or +4 ranged (2d8, Desert Eagle); Full Atk +5 melee (1d4+2, unarmed) or +4 ranged (2d8, Desert Eagle) or +4 ranged touch (blinding, pepper spray*); Space/Reach 5 ft./5 ft.; AL Darryl Brzezinski; AP 0; Rep +0; SV Fort +6, Ref +1, Will +1; Str 15, Dex 13, Con 14, Int 8, Wis 12, Cha 10.

Skills: Drive +3, Gamble +2, Intimidate +4, Knowledge (streetwise) +5, Sleight of Hand +6.

Feats: Combat Martial Arts, Confident, Armor Proficiency (light), Personal Firearms Proficiency, Simple Weapons Proficiency.

Talents (Tough Hero): Remain conscious.

Starting Occupation: Criminal (class skills: Knowledge [streetwise], Sleight of Hand).

Possessions: Light undercover shirt, Desert Eagle (.50 AE autoloader), spare magazine (loaded), concealed carry holster, pepper spray*, cell phone, various personal belongings.

***Pepper Spray:** The target must make a DC 15 Fortitude save or be blinded for 1d4 rounds. The effect of pepper spray is limited to 5 range increments.

If the heroes announce that they have no intention of obeying the instructions given by the mysterious radio message, little things start going wrong for them immediately. Lights turn red, buses and accidents block traffic, the bottom melts out of a coffee cup and spills hot coffee on the lap of the hero who understood the message, and so forth. These incidents cost no money and deal no significant damage—they are merely clear signs that the universe has turned against the heroes.

If the heroes fail to stop the Hummer, either because they failed their checks or because they don't reach the railroad crossing in time, then Darryl and his bodyguards are struck by the train unless someone else saves them. Whether or not they die is up to you, but the subsequent adventures in this series will require alteration if they do. In addition, the heroes have a significant stroke of ill fortune within a day of the incident. Choose an event that is directly and obviously related to the hero who understood the message. If more than one hero understood it, each has the same problem. Possible choices include the following.

- The hero forgets an important tool and doesn't remember it until a critical moment in a job.
- The hero's car is stolen. (This punishment is especially obvious if the car is very difficult to steal, or if nothing has ever been stolen from the heroes before, or if the car isn't worth stealing.)
- One of the hero's favorite tools or weapons malfunctions in a way that it never has before, and at a critical moment.
- A contact refuses to speak to the hero ever again based on an issue the hero recognizes as a mistake, such as mistaken identity, false accusation, or the like.

Regardless of the precise punishments used, no evidence should be left behind. The heroes should have no way to track down the responsible party. You as GM must determine who is ultimately responsible (see Campaign Models for suggestions), but the heroes shouldn't be able to do so.

CONCLUDING THE ADVENTURE

This adventure has two possible conclusions, which are detailed below.

Success: If heroes stop the Hummer from crossing the tracks, they have diverted a chain of events that would have resulted in a terrible tragedy—though they have no way of knowing that. They may also have earned Darryl Brzezinski's friendship.

Failure: Consequences of failure include the punishments outlined above. In addition, the world slowly drifts toward a more horrible fate, unless the heroes avert that outcome in later adventures.

REWARDS

The rewards for this adventure should be based on stopping the Hummer. The heroes cannot earn enough rewards from

this source to attain a new level, but this adventure is a very short one. The lion's share of their advancement should come from regular adventures in the campaign.

CONTINUING THE ADVENTURE

This adventure purposely leaves many questions unanswered. You may want to pursue some of them further in your own campaign by tying them into future adventures.

- What's in Darryl's Hummer? In *Far Voices*, the heroes were supposed to keep Jamie from acquiring an electronic toy for his boss Darryl. If they failed, or if or you did not run that adventure, then the BunBun that Jamie got is in the Hummer now (see *Far Voices* for details). Considering his paranoia, lifestyle, and association with organized crime, Darryl's Hummer might also contain drugs or illegal firearms.
- Would the heroes like the same cell? If you ran *Far Voices*, the heroes may already have criminal records. If they don't make friends with Darryl before the police arrive, the situation is likely to go very badly for them. If they do, Darryl convinces the police that no criminal activity was involved and the situation was just an accident. In that case, the heroes are fine.
- Is Russian organized crime involved? Darryl may or may not still be involved with the *organizatsiya*, at your discretion. If later adventures contradict the decision you make at this point, any new information simply reveals truths that your heroes had not yet discovered.
- Who or what was in the other Hummer? The other Hummer is there to cause the heroes some doubt about whether they stopped the right vehicle. In fact they did, but perhaps whoever sent the transmission wanted them to create an incident that would frustrate the other driver and cause that person to get in an accident (though not necessarily with a train). The occupants of the other vehicle can be as exotic, dangerous, or mundane as you choose.
- What's up with the warning signs? The warning signs at the railroad track may simply have failed, or they may have been tampered with. Unless the tampering leads to a villainous mastermind in your campaign, it may be best to rule that the signs simply failed.

Future installments of *Grim Frequencies* will provide the answers to some of these questions. Look for *Distant Signals* next month!

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Before Rich Redman came to Wizards of the Coast's RPG R&D department, he had been an Army officer, a door-to-door salesman, the manager of a computer store, a fundraiser for a veterans' assistance group, and the manager of Wizards of the Coast's Customer Service department. Rich is a prolific game designer, having worked on the DUNGEONS & DRAGONS game, the *d20 MODERN Roleplaying Game*, the *Marvel Super Heroes Adventure Game*, and *Dark*Matter*. When he's not working as vice president of The Game Mechanics, a d20 design studio, Rich does freelance game design, cooks, and practices yoga, tai chi, and silat. For more, check out www.richredman.ws and www.thegamemechanics.com.

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